



# COMMANDO

AUSTRALIAN COMMANDO ASSN INC.

Registered by Australia Post ~ Publication No PP100016240

*News*

Edition 14 ~ 2018



Ian Hampel (L) 2/4 Ind Coy (WW2)  
and the Timor Leste President,  
Francisco Lú-Olo Guterres (R).  
Ian fought in Timor in 1942  
during WW2.



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**EDITORS:** Mr Nick Hill  
Mrs Marilou Carceller

The Australian Commando Association's membership consists of Servicemen & women who have served with WW2 Independent Companies, Commando Squadrons & Regiments, "M" and "Z" Special units, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Company's, 1<sup>st</sup> Commando Regiment, 4 RAR Commando & the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment. The Association also consists of Associate Members who have served in units who directly supported Commando units in time of war and peace and Social members who's 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.

Official Publishers:  
**Statewide Publishing P/L**  
ABN 65 116 985 187

PO BOX 682, SURFERS PARADISE QLD 4217

PHONE: 0432 042 060

EMAIL: russell@commandonews.com.au

Printed by **RABS PRINT & DESIGN**

Phone: 0438 881 854

Email: mike@rabsprint.com.au



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**Deadline for next edition (Issue 15):**

**SUNDAY, 3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2019**

All news on members and interesting articles accepted.  
(Subject to editors' approval.)

Nick Hill



**FRONT COVER:** Ian Hampel (L) 2/4 Ind Coy (WW2) and the Timor Leste President, Francisco Lu-Olo Guterres (R). Ian fought in Timor in 1942 during WW2.



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## A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

After many years at the helm and successfully releasing 13 editions and many years of nagging the State Association to get on board, Barry Grant, the ACA NSW President and Commando News Magazine Editor, have finally hung up his boots and has passed the baton on to me. It's now time to enjoy life as a retired man, so on behalf of all the Commando News readers I thank you for all you have done for the Commando News Magazine and especially for the ACA NSW. I have very big shoes to fill and I hope that I may do a job as well as you have. Again, thank you for all you have done mate.

The Commando News Magazine will be published three times a year and will cover a four-month period. This edition, #14 will be from December 2018 - March 2019 (Summer) and will be focusing on Commando events and actions from WW2 till now during that four-month period. The magazine will have a Significant Commando Dates page, an events page for the State you are in or closest to. Our National body will have a few words to say and our National DVA Rep will have updates to add to the magazine. DVA has come a long way in the past few years and I can attest to its changes from a personal point of few. The Magazine will have a Commandos For Life page and a Vale page as we have lost so many since WW2 from being Killed In

Action or Killed In Training or just tragically dying whilst serving in the Commando Regiments and Commando Company's or at after many years of a retired Commandos life.

All our members will be able to have their say in the Magazine so if you are a keen writer or a bit of a history buff please email me your submission for the next edition. You can email me your articles at the following email address...

editor\_commandonews@commando.org.au

From all of us at Commando News we wish you all a very Merry Xmas and a very happy new year for 2019.

*"Duty First, Strike Swiftly & Without Warning"*

**Commando For Life**

Nick Hill

Editor

Commando News Magazine

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**VICE PRESIDENT** – MAJ Steve Pilmore OAM. RFD. (Retd)  
aca\_vpresident@commando.org.au

**SECRETARY** – MAJ John Thurgar, SC. OAM. MBE. RFD. (Retd)  
aca\_secretary@commando.org.au

**TREASURER** – MAJ Bruce O’Conner, OAM. RFD. (Retd)  
aca\_treasurer@commando.org.au

**PUBLIC OFFICER** – MAJ Brian Liddy, OAM. (Retd)  
aca\_publicofficer@commando.org.au

**Web Address** – [www.commando.org.au](http://www.commando.org.au)

**Contact** - [aca\\_secretary@commando.org.au](mailto:aca_secretary@commando.org.au)

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## NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Hello Members,

Given our President is overseas as the team puts together this copy of Commando News, you have to read this from me – the lowly Vice President.

So! What’s new since we last went to press?

DVA have instituted a trial called the **“SOF Pilot”**. It is, as it sounds, a preliminary trial of a new way of looking at how DVA interfaces with their clients i.e. you guys. In the first instance it is based only on 2 Cdo Regt at Holsworthy. If it’s successful, the plan is to roll it out to the rest of SOCOMD and then to the rest of the ADF. What they are seeking amongst many outcomes I assume, is a drop in the average number of days it takes to get a veteran’s claim handled from start to finish – a number which I am led to believe is around 145 days currently. Any reduction in that number would be an improvement for sure.

At the same time the new Secretary of the DVA, MAJGEN Liz Cosson, AM. CSC. (Retd) has engaged our former boss – MAJGEN Jeff Sengelman, DSC. AM. CSC. (Retd) (who also was the CO of 4 Cdo 2000-2001) to run the pencil over the way DVA does its job and particularly the interface with its “clients”. Watch out for his report to be released - assuming it will be, as the MAJGEN tells it like it is.

The ACA is indeed in a state of change – you can see it is becoming more of a national body with only SA and NT not represented as far as state association presence is concerned. Nationally our committees are also well aware that we need to also change how we do business. Two initiatives that you will hopefully see make a difference: first there are many welfare activities that have been undertaken such as assisting a severely injured former member of 2 Cdo Regt in the necessary maintenance of his home, all the way to the adoption of the E- Chapter of the Association

which will allow members to communicate and vote on line from anywhere in Australia. Whilst these are vastly different activities, they both relate to the primary need we face of providing the reasons why the younger potential members of the Australian Commando Association will join us!

In closing I wish to address those younger former serving members out there!

I hear a lot of chat about the plan of forming a new Commando Association – one that more reflects the needs of the those who served in the last 20 years. There is a notion I suppose that the younger veteran doesn’t think that today’s ACA is something they can relate to or that understands them.

Well here’s an idea! Why don’t you join it anyway and watch what happens for a year and then stand and get elected so you can then change what you think needs changing to suit the needs of the “new veteran”. I can assure you those in the committees around the states, with just a few younger exceptions, are getting old and tired and are so hanging out to be shown what’s needed by your group of today. Nobody will stand in your way - in fact you will receive nothing but support to get the things done that you know your generation needs done.

Why start a new association as I can tell you it’s not easy, but more the point there is a perfectly good one already in existence almost all over Australia that is just waiting for your energy and input to make it the association that is reflective of your needs. What’s to lose and there’s a lot to gain.

**Commando For Life**  
Steve Pilmore  
Vice President  
Aust. Cdo Assoc.



# The Positive Relationship between 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.



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*"Ric has been amazing. He helped me gain skills so my life can move forward. He helped me with difficult thoughts and emotions whilst being very professional, approachable and honest. A great support which will be with me and my family for the rest of my life. The team at Living Valley have been incredible."* Alex Massouras

*"I gained a new perspective on the issues that I face. I've been to many psychologists and through a number of programs. Both Ric & Toby's approach to mental and physical health have been fresh and inspiring. No punches pulled and honesty that is backed with science and compassion. I felt comfortable and developed a good synergy very quickly, helping me to target issues and move forward."* Jimmy Harmsworth

*"Educated for the first time about "Why" and "How" my mental health condition occurred and what to do next. I have seen in excess of 20 doctors and psychologists. At Living Valley, for once I felt safe, supported and cared for. I also had a truly beautiful experience through the Mental Wellness Essential Oils Workshop. I have never been so re-energized and will be forever grateful for your passion and your prayers."* Amy Moss

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# A world-class wreck dive teeming with sealife and the echos of Australian naval history

A blanket of fish part like curtains opening as you swim through long corridors and the confined living quarters that would have once been teeming with navy personnel as they travelled the world on Australia's behalf serving in both the Vietnam and Gulf wars and countless peace keeping missions.

It can be an eerie feeling as the sound of your breathing is replaced by imagined echoes of footsteps and every day naval life, but it's one of the world's best wreck dives and its right here in the beautiful temperate waters of Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

The ex-HMAS Brisbane, now a marine park, was scuttled just three nautical miles off the coast just over 10 years ago and is now teeming with more than 200 species of sea life from small and large fish, to hard and soft corals, the smallest nudibranchs to larger occupants like resident bull rays and octopuses and seasonal visitors like grey nurse and leopard sharks.

From the moment you drop over the side of Sunreef Mooloolaba's comfortable catamarans from their two exclusive

midship moorings, the ship slowly reveals itself starting with the stacks, just five metres from the surface, and as you go deeper through schools of batfish, snapper and barracuda, the main deck and the bulk of the 133metre destroyer partially reveals itself.

From the main deck, 15 metres from the surface, you can begin exploring the exterior of the ship which is completely encrusted with hard corals, checking out the huge guns juxtaposed with the beauty of crown, scorpion and damsel fish. Stop and say hello to the resident octopus hanging out around the portholes before dropping down to the sandy sea floor at 28 metres where you will more than likely be greeted to Roxy, a huge bull ray and her entourage of sand and honeycomb rays.

Once you move inside, the sounds of the sea are muffled and with the darkness exploring becomes a close encounter, as the massive engine room, the confined bunkrooms and living quarters and their new undersea residents are revealed by your torchlight. Rather than naval commanders, the control room is now filled with glassfish and is also home to

feather stars and painted crayfish. Back outside, another highlight is swimming beneath the massive rear propellers ducked until the rear deck and if you are lucky you might be cruising the wreck with the occasional grey nurse shark in winter, or leopard shark in summer.

Sunreef's experienced instructors have travelled the world scuba diving, but they still list the HMAS Brisbane among their all-time favourite diving experiences and feel lucky to watch it change with the season. It's suitable for divers of all skill levels and was specially prepared before scuttling to allow easy and safe access throughout the ship. It's position also means its protected from strong surges and the visibility is great - from 15 to 30 metres.

To find out more or book a double dive that you will want to keep coming back to again and again, call the Sunreef team on +61 7 5444 5656 or visit [www.sunreef.com.au](http://www.sunreef.com.au).



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# SIGNIFICANT COMMANDO DATES

## DECEMBER - MARCH

### December 1941

2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Independent Company sent to New Caledonia to support the Free French against a Japanese invasion.

### December 1941

The re-raising of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Independent Company

### 17 December 1941

2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Independent Company arrives in Dili, Timor and begins to provide protection to the Dili Airfield.

### December 1942 – January 1943

2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Independent Company's begin withdrawing from Timor.

### 11 & 13 December 1944

2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Commando Squadron involved in significant engagements against the Japanese in Yourang & Kumbun, New Britain PNG.

### December 1944 – August 1945

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

### 22 January 1942

1<sup>st</sup> Independent Company began its fighting withdrawal from Kavieng, New Ireland PNG.

### January 1943

2<sup>nd</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Independent Company's fly into Wau Airfield to repel the Japanese invasion.

### January 1944

2<sup>nd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Commando Squadrons were raised as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Commando Regiment and 2<sup>nd</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Commando Squadrons were raised as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Commando Regiment.

### February 1941

No.7 Infantry Training Centre was established at Wilsons Promontory Victoria, the home and birthplace of the Australian Commando.

### 20 February 1942

Japanese troops land in Timor, beginning the guerrilla campaign by the 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Independent Company.

### Mid-February 1943

2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Independent Company arrives in Port Moresby.

### February 1945

2<sup>nd</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Commando Squadron begins combat operations protecting the flanks of the 2/5<sup>th</sup> & 2/7<sup>th</sup> AIF Battalions pushing south towards Maprik, PNG.

### 1 February 1981

1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Company's come under direct command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cdo Regiment when it was raised at Randwick Barracks, Sydney.

### 1 February 1997

4 RAR was re-rolled into a Commando Battalion at Holsworthy Barracks, NSW signifying the first full time Commando Capability since WW2 and would be commonly known as 4 Cdo until June 2009.

### March 1943

2/6 Cdo Coy reforms as the 2/6 Cdo Sqn of the 2/7 Cdo Regt at the Jungle Warfare School at Canungra, Qld after returning from New Guinea.



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## Australian Commando Association New South Wales Inc.

**PRESIDENT** – Mr Wayne Havenaar  
acansw\_president@commando.org.a

**SECRETARY** – Mr Bruce Poulter  
acansw\_secretary@commando.org.au

**TREASURER** – Mr Ivan Kelly  
acansw\_treasurer@commando.org.au

**Web Address** – [www.commando.org.au](http://www.commando.org.au) **Contact** - [acansw\\_secretary@commando.org.au](mailto:acansw_secretary@commando.org.au)

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## OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello all,

The Annual General Meeting of the NSW Association was held on Sunday, 20th October and after 18 years in the seat I stood down as me and my wife Jongdee have "things" we plan to do. So we now have a new President, Mr Wayne Havenaar. Wayne was a member of 1 Cdo Coy as a Medic. Also elected is a new Vice President, Mr Tony Marsden (pictured with Wayne Havenaar below right). The Secretary is again Bruce Poulter and Ivan Kelly will remain as our Treasurer.

So, we have a much younger management taking over the NSW State Association, and I look forward to mentoring these new "boys" as I will now be fulfilling the Immediate Past President's position.

On a very sad note, we have lost one of our

longest serving committee members, Mr Kevin Mahony 1st Cdo Coy, who passed away suddenly on the 13th November and we have just been notified as well of the passing of another longtime member, Mr James Michell of 1st Cdo Coy.

When we have funeral details we will let every know. Our condolences to both Kevin and James' families.

The editorship of the Commando News has also been handed over to Nick Hill, ACA QLD President, I am sure he will do an excellent job.

It can be time consuming.

*Commando For Life*  
Barry Grant  
Aust. Cdo Assoc. NSW



Outgoing President Barry Grant (L) and incoming President Wayne Havenaar at the ACA NSW AGM



NSW Vice President Tony Marsden (L) and NSW President Wayne Havenaar (R) at the 2018 Remembrance Day Service, National Maritime Museum Darling Harbour



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**PRESIDENT** – Mr Nick Hill      **SECRETARY** – Mr Graham Gough      **TREASURER** – Mr Wayne Douglas  
acaqld\_president@commando.org.au    acaqld\_secretary@commando.org.au    acaqld\_treasurer@commando.org.au

**Web Address** – www.commando.org.au    **Postal Address** – PO Box 185 Sherwood, QLD 4075  
**Contact** - acaqld\_secretary@commando.org.au

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### PRESIDENT'S WORD

**G**'day all, the last quarter (August – December) has seen ACA Qld grow with the addition of 11 new members, five of those as full members, two as affiliate members and three social members (one of whom is the mother of one of our KIA) and two sons of WW2 members. Again welcome to all our new members.

Unfortunately our second Cdo BBQ on Sunday 26 August was cancelled due to the only day in the past four months that it decided to rain heavily (mind you it was needed). A new date had been set for 21 October.

Sunday 15 July was the 73<sup>rd</sup> Commemorative Service of Operation Rimau by Z Special Unit. This year it was held on the Quarter Deck of HMAS Diamantina at the Qld Maritime Museum and again His Excellency the Governor of Qld attended as the guest of honour. It was a great day and was well attended by members and guests from other like-minded associations. The service went off without a hitch and huge thank you to all of the Committee and members that made the day a great success.

Unfortunately since our last report we have lost three of our WW2 members, WO2 Jack Tredrea MM, Z Special Unit who passed on 17 July 2018, AB Jack MacKay OAM, M&Z Special who passed on 11 August 2018 and SGT Lionel Veale OAM. MID of 1<sup>st</sup> Ind Coy & M Special who passed on 19 August 2018.

We have also lost eight Commandos during this period from our post WW2 Cdo Units, One – Killed In Action and seven Killed In Training whilst serving in the 1<sup>st</sup> Cdo Regt. Pause a moment to remember the sacrifices they've made for the service of our great nation and to the service of our Association.

The secretary and myself attended the Rhodesian Veterans Assoc Qld. (RVAQ) 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary service of the downing of Air Rhodesia Flight RH825 known as the Viscount Tragedy during the Rhodesian Bush Wars on Saturday 01 September @ the Corinda RSL Sub-branch. Lunch and drinks followed the service, and it was attended by a decent crowd of Rhodesian veterans and civilians and included several Selous Scouts, Rhodesian SAS, RLI and other units of the war. This was one of the most informative services I have

seen on the Rhodesian bush wars and as some of the Rhodesians said to me, this was their "9/11". Well worth attending in the future.

The Aust SAS Assoc Qld (ASASAO) had invited us to the ASASR birthday function at the Sgts/Off Mess at Victoria Barracks on Saturday, 08 September from 1500 for drinks and canapés. Good opportunity for us to chew the fat with another likeminded SF Association.

On Sunday 11 November saw the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of WW1; the RMAQ had the 99<sup>th</sup> Remembrance Day service at the QMM and was well attended by us and other Associations.

The ACA Qld AGM for 2019 will be held on Sunday 24 February @ 1000 at the Qld Maritime Museum followed by our Family Day and BBQ from 1200.

From all of us at ACA Qld we wish you all a very Merry Xmas and a very happy new year for 2019.

**Commando For Life**  
**Nick Hill**  
President



*Wreaths @ OP Rimau Day  
2018*



*HE Paul De Jersey AC SC  
Governor of Qld & Vice-Patron  
ACA Qld, Mr. Doug Baird,  
father of CPL Cameron Baird VC  
MG at the luncheon after  
OP Rimau Day*



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

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...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.**'



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.

## 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...

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## Australian Commando Association Victoria Inc.

**PRESIDENT** – COL Doug Knight (Retd)  
dougknight88@gmail.com

**SECRETARY** – Mr Glenn MacDonald  
acavic\_secretary@commando.org.au

**TREASURER** – Mr Chris James  
ceejay7@bigpond.com

**Web Address** – [www.commando.org.au](http://www.commando.org.au) **Contact** - [acansw\\_secretary@commando.org.au](mailto:acansw_secretary@commando.org.au)

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It has been a busy period since the last issue and unfortunately as will be seen in the Vale section we are losing many of our WW2 and early 1950's members and they will be sadly missed.

#### Donation of MV Krait Model to SASR

On 30 October 2018 Captain Don Bergman OAM, RFD (retired), accompanied by his son Trevor were invited by the CO SASR to visit Campbell Barracks, Swanbourne in order to present a model of the M.V Krait to the Regiment. The model was manufactured from timber recovered from the Lone Pine which had been planted at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne and the Pine had died in recent times. Fortuitously due to swift thinking on the part of Trevor, in his capacity as a Victoria policeman, a large limb of the Lone Pine was recovered and has been used by Don to manufacture two models of the MV Krait. One being presented to SASR and will be displayed outside of the new SASR theatre named the Jaywick Theatre, and the other presented to ACA Victoria for inclusion in their historical collection along with other Operation JAYWICK memorabilia.

Prior to the formal presentation both Don, Trevor and myself were escorted around the SASR historical collection and memorial gardens by 'Dave' who provided great insight into aspects of the gardens and the 'Memorial Rock' as well as enlightening us on the wide variety of equipment and displays in the collection covering the period from the early SAS Company days until recent operations. I for one was concerned that numerous items on display were also hanging in my wardrobe at home and realise it's time to clean out and donate some items to the ACAVIC Historical Collection.

While viewing the impressive collection on display Don was in his element being able to provide great insight and person experiences of much of the earlier 1950's and 60's era equipment on display.

Following our tour of historical collection we assembled outside the Jaywick Theatre which is inside the new SASR Headquarters building which is very impressive both from a size and modern facilities perspective. A small team of SASR Headquarters staff joined the CO and RSM in welcoming Don, Trevor and I and the CO gave a brief overview of Don's extensive service in Commandos before Don presented the M.V Krait model which will be displayed in the foyer of the Jaywick Theatre in a specially constructed cabinet.



*Don, Doug and Trevor at the SASR Memorial Rock*



*Don and Trevor at the Vietnam Huey and SASR patrol display*

Following this I presented an Operation JAYWICK plaque to the CO SASR from ACA Vic in commemoration of our shared heritage in Australian Special Operations. Following this a second Jaywick plaque was presented jointly by CO SASR and myself, on behalf of ACAVIC, to Don in thanks for his extensive work in manufacturing his two M.V Krait models and in donating them to SASR and ACAVIC.



*The M.V Krait model on display in the SASR Officer's Mess prior to the formal presentation.*



## Support to Running Wild 100km run and Wilson's Promontory

For the past few years several ACAVIC members have provided support to the annual Running Wild event at Wilson's Promontory by the manning of a safety checkpoint at the Telegraph Creek Track Junction. This is an important location for all runners who are undertaking either the 40, 60 or 100 km runs over the past few years several casualty evacuations have had to be undertaken. Following considerable deliberation and consideration of ongoing risks the ACAVIC Committee has decided to cease supporting Running Wild and are engaging with other local organisations at the Prom to ensure the Commando heritage is retained.



The ACAVIC Operation JAYWICK commemorative plaque.

## Tidal River Open Space Development

For the past 12 years local residents and frequent users of the 'Prom National Park' have been advocating for the creation of a meeting place within the Tidal River camping area and one of the few locations which provides sufficient space for the proposed project is adjacent to the Commando Memorial. ACA Vic has been engaged over the past few months in attending a number of coordination meetings with a variety of interested parties including indigenous groups, Parks Victoria, Parks and People Victoria and a range of other interested parties to consider the proposed design and consider ways of raising sufficient funds to undertake the project which is projected to be in the order of \$2 million. Our participation was critical as most of the other parties were unaware that the Commando Memorial site was gifted by the Government of Victoria to the Commando Association in 1964 IN perpetuity for the creation of the Commando Memorial. As a result of the participation of the ACAVIC President and Secretary the original concept has been modified as it impeded into the Commando Memorial site and some further ideas have been generated in which the historical contribution of Australian and some New Zealand Commandos can be recognised.

An addition to the project is a walking and possibly running track from the Tidal River camping area to the top of Telegraph Saddle and significant funding has already been made available by a generous donation for this to occur. The proposed track will generally follow the route taken by aspiring young Commandos in 1941 who undertook training in this area. One first tests upon arrival was to run cross-country to the top of Telegraph Saddle

and return within a limited time frame. Those who failed to achieve this difficult run in the required timeframe were invited to jump on the trucks on upon which they had recently arrived and were then returned to the units, being unsuccessful in their first test of becoming a Commando.

It is anticipated that funding will shortly be available to continue with planning and be able to commence construction work following the annual ACA Commando Commemoration in November 2019.

## Tidal River Commando Cairn

The subcommittee under Phil Brabin has facilitated the refurbishment and upgrade of the Tidal River Commando Memorial Cairn with several new plaques being manufactured and installed reflecting some changes to WW2 Commandos and the inclusion of post WW2 Commandos who have been killed on operations. A grant of \$5,000 was obtained from the State Government – Victorian Veterans Council to assist with the repairs.



SOCOMD Plaque, Shrine of Remembrance Melbourne

## Special Operations Australia Memorial at the Shrine

Peter Champion of ACAVIC has worked tirelessly with the Shrine of Remembrance to install a SOCOMD plaque at the Shrine which commemorates all SOCOMD units and this was installed prior to ANZAC Day 2018. To date a dedication of the Memorial has not been undertaken and this is planned to occur in early 2019. The new plaque is located near the 1ST Commando Regiment Memorial Plaque.

## Historical Collection

The Historical Collection Sub-Committee under the leadership of Drew Gordon has undertaken a vigorous audit of our collection in conjunction with 2 Coy. We now have significant historical record of the collection and currently assessing items held in line with the recently approved SOPs for the receiving, managing, storing, displaying and disposing of the Association's Historical Collection. Discussions have been held with OC 2 Coy, 1<sup>st</sup> Cdo Regt regarding future requirements for displays and ownership/management of historical items in Depots. A part of the collection has been on display at Waverley RSL and recently additional space has been provided to enhance the collection. The Collection is to be enhanced



by the recent donation of several sets of WW2 Commando medals and memorabilia belong to former members of 2/10<sup>th</sup> and 2/11<sup>th</sup> Squadron.



Medals of SX13986 Pte Howard Penhale, 2/11<sup>th</sup> Commando Squadron



Memorabilia from SX33860 Trooper William Alsop, 2/10<sup>th</sup> Commando Squadron

### Welfare

ACA Victoria continues to liaise and attend regular meetings with the Victorian Veterans Council, Legacy, RSL and DVA network to promote ACAVIC's objectives/expectations and support requirements in the very crowded Welfare & Advocacy arena.

We have had two recent approaches for the provision of financial support to members and these have both been approved and reduced significant hardship for the members concerned. Anyone knowing of any current serving or ex commando needing welfare assistance please contact either the Secretary or President as soon as practicable with details so that timely assistance can be provided.



### Liaison with 1<sup>st</sup> Commando Regiment

ACAVIC have a strong and ongoing relationship with 2 Company and have recently Committed \$2,500 towards the enhancement of the All Ranks Mess Decking which will be dedicated to PTE Greg Sher and LT Mike Fussell, both of whom died on operations in Afghanistan, at the end of year BBQ on 9 December at 2 Coy depot and all ACA members are welcome to attend. In addition, ACAVIC funded Blind Tiger Yoga for 2 Coy members and families is drawing to an end following a yearlong program funded by ACAVIC. The OC and CSM both report on the positive outcomes of the Program and are recommending it be implemented and resourced within SOCOMD.

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# Leaving the ADF



At some point in their career, all ADF members will leave the military and transition to civilian life. It's a significant decision that can involve your family. Planning early will make sure you're informed and ready to enter the next phase of your life.

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
- offer career coaching during your transition and up to 12 months afterwards
- 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

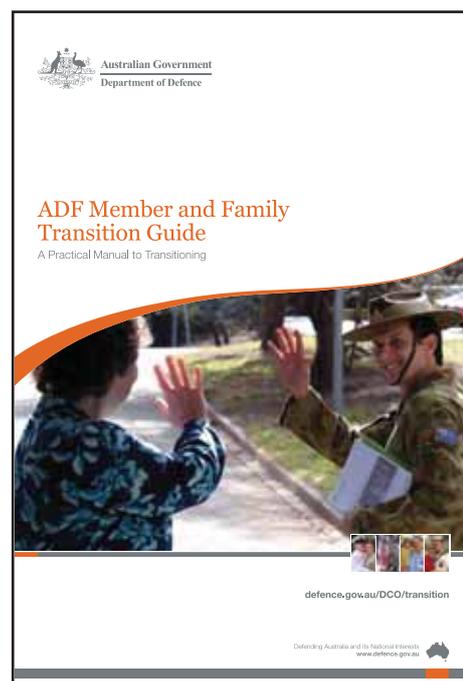
### ADF Transition Seminar

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.

### ADF Member and Family Transition Guide

The ADF Member and Family Transition Guide – A Practical Manual to Transitioning contains detailed information on the transition process for ADF members. The Guide includes information on support services and administrative requirement. It includes checklists to help you navigate transition process.





## Australian Commando Association Western Australia Inc.

**PRESIDENT/SECRETARY** – Mr Paul Shearer  
acawa\_president@commando.org.au

**VICE PRESIDENT** – Mr Rob Murray  
acawa\_vpresident@commando.org.au

**TREASURER** – Mr Darren Freeman  
acawa\_treasurer@commando.org.au

**Web Address** – [www.commando.org.au](http://www.commando.org.au)    **Postal Address** – PO Box 297 Bassendean, WA 6054

**Contact** - [acawa\\_secretary@commando.org.au](mailto:acawa_secretary@commando.org.au)

## PRESIDENT'S WORD



*Syd Freeman, David Aiton, Paul Shearer & Darren Freeman at the 2018 ANZAC Day March, Perth WA*

Welcome all, to our first sitrep (Situation Report), aptly named "The Winnie" after the radio the 2/2 Independent Company built whilst cut off in East Timor in 1942.

The Western Australian branch of the Australian Commando Association was established from humble beginnings in April 2017. Since then we have made serious progress to establish the fourth branch of the national brotherhood of the Australian Commando Association.

The founding members need to be recognised for their belief that we could make this happen. I personally thank the commitment of Darren Freeman, Syd Freeman, David Aiton, Ian Prothero, Whoopi Sanders, Garry White and Alan Joyce.

Our ethos is "Commando for Life". I extend this ethos to ensure our history is remembered and lives on.

Our base and our family comprise those that have

served in front line units and in support, those parents and siblings of those that have served in Australian Commando units and most significantly those who have paid the ultimate price for our country.

Since our inception we have made significant bounds not just in WA. We have representation on the national committee of the Association, we have finally marched on Anzac Day 2018 under our own banner, officially attended the 2/2 Independent Company commemoration, we have built solid networks across the established branches and we have participated in the inaugural "Commandos Return" pilgrimage to Timor Leste in 2017.

To all members I look forward to meeting you personally in the future as we continue to build the branch and fortify our Commando Family.

**Commando For Life**  
Paul Shearer  
President





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# THE CHARACTER OF WAR

## Some Thoughts on the Changing Nature and Characteristics of Post WW2 Conflicts in Which Australians Participated as Peacekeepers

By MAJ John (Jack) Thurgar, SC. MBE. OAM. RFD. (Retd.) - ACA National Secretary

### Introduction

This article is a tribute acknowledging the 80,000 men and women of the ADF and Australian Police who were deployed overseas, in the national and International Security and Stability interests post WW2, in an attempt to help them and other Australians 'to make some sense' of what those who deployed experienced whilst serving as Australian Peacekeepers and to promote discussion about those experiences.

With Peacekeeping the idea using Military to solve conflicts evolved beyond physical intervention to using dialogue and intermediaries to resolve the problems that threatened or ended open warfare. Governments and Historians need to adjust to this positive and successful development and begin to see Peacekeeping as the best solution and use of our armed forces to achieve a more stable and secure environment.

Unfortunately, perceptions of what an army should be and what its forces should do have remained stalled in the past. If the productive successes of Peacekeepers were put on a scale with the results of our involvement in interventionist conflicts like Iraq and Afghanistan they would tip the balance significantly towards Peacekeeping.

Consequently, those of our military who have served in Peacekeeping deserve the same respect as those who have served in combat deployments. For me, when personnel, be they Military or Police, who have passed a barrier test to enlist, are screened and selected on merit, undergo rigorous training, are subject to a disciplinary code, and committed to an overseas deployment by the Australian Government in our nation's national interest, into an uncertain environment with the prospect that they may be killed, wounded or injured during their deployment – should all be treated and referred to as veterans and be regarded equally before relevant legislation and regulations. It is pedantic and petulant to describe one deployment as a war, another as warlike or non-warlike, operational or non-operational or peacekeeping or peacemaking. In some circles Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) are incorrectly labelled as Humanitarian in nature. The level of actual risk remains constant for all



TPR John Thurgar  
1 Sqn SASR, Sth Vietnam 1970

deployments, the only dynamic that differs is the intensity and frequency of incidents. All personnel who deploy have to leave home knowing they may pay the supreme sacrifice and not return to their families.

### Terminology

Historically, the conventional concept of 'war' – was understood as an armed conflict between two States or belligerents. If such conflict occurred, the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) automatically applied. The second type of war was 'civil war', which was a condition of armed conflict between a State and an internally-located insurgent movement that had taken up arms against their sovereign nation. This was traditionally considered as a domestic concern, and did not

usually involve any international legal regulation at all. Only if the 'host' State or a third State recognised the insurgents as belligerents did the laws of war come into effect between the parties.<sup>1</sup>

International armed conflicts are by far the most highly regulated, with a raft of treaties and comprehensive customary international law regulating permissible State conduct. By comparison, non-international armed conflicts have few laws regulating their conduct. The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the 1977 Additional Protocols have over 550 articles combined, but only 29 of those regulate non-international armed conflict; The Hague Regulations of 1907 do not contain any provisions regarding non-international armed conflict.<sup>2</sup>

In short, this means, Australian peacekeepers play by the rules, the bad guys do not.

For example, Rwanda. In April 1995, elements of the Rwandan People's Army, while closing a large internally displaced person's camp at Kibeho in south-west Rwanda, opened fire on its inhabitants with automatic rifles, Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPG), mortars and crew served heavy to light machine guns. Thousands were killed. Australia had deployed a Casualty Clearing Post (CCP) with protection of a Platoon of Australian Infantry from B Coy 2RAR; who

<sup>1</sup>NSW State Library, International Humanitarian Law, Part 4.

<sup>2</sup>ibid



were elements of the Australian Medical Support Force (MSF) to the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR); including a Kenyan Infantry Battalion Group provided security to the Kibeho Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp; and UN Military Helicopters that supported a number of Medical Evacuation sorties.

The UN Rules of Engagement (ROE) prevented the Australian Infantry Platoon from protecting the IDPs who were being slaughtered in Kibeho. However, the Australian CCP and Infantry Platoon did their best and through incredible restraint, initiative and exemplary gallantry, collected and tended to the wounded as best they could under the most horrific circumstances. The Australian CCP feared that they would be killed, as had happened in the past to UN personnel in Rwanda, who had been witnesses to such heinous war crimes, however the UNAMIR Peacekeeping Force (PKF) were restrained by inadequate ROE and failed to conduct the modern UN ethos of "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) non-combatant civilians. So 'what was the response of the international community in the face of this war crime witnessed by its own personnel on the ground?' It was met with - "impotence and a hypocritical denial that anything much had happened."<sup>3</sup>

## Background

The majority of ADF and Australian Police (AP) deployments post WW2 have been on PKO. These international deployments have been brought about as a result of the breakdown of traditional methods of internal and International conflict resolution by the protagonists, who may be directly or indirectly involved in trying to mediate a solution, within or without a particular State. The significant difference between these post world war conflicts and the two world wars is that the world wars were two dimensional in nature (i.e. symmetrical, where two professional armies that are about the same size, of similar experience, resources, and technologies face off against each other) and therefore easier for the politicians and historians on the winning side, to record and administer the end result/aftermath, especially in processing recognition and repatriation of those members of their community who were actively engaged in the conflict. Whereas, the recording of, recognition and repatriation of those personnel engaged in post-world war 2 conflicts, I believe, have been let down, due to a number of factors which will be explored in this article.

## The Changing Face of War/Conflicts

For the Allies, with the conclusion of the 'Europe First' phase of WW2, attention moved to the SW Pacific and Asian mainland. However even before the war with Japan was addressed American military leaders in Europe were warning of the rise of Soviet Russia and saw 'a new menace' emerging<sup>4</sup>. Whilst the Allies turned

their attention to Asia, the Soviet Union got busy entrenching its position (power and influence) by creating 'satellite States' in the wake of the collapse of the traditional nation States within Europe.

The UN was founded in 1945 by 51 countries<sup>5</sup> committed to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights.<sup>6</sup>

The colonial European nations were 'war weary' and had no stomach for further conflict, especially with the rise of nationalism within their former colonies when they sought (and fought) for their independence. In many (or perhaps most) cases, hasty and/or ill-conceived withdrawal plans implemented by the colonising powers resulted in dissatisfaction and instability.

The first commitment of Australians to UN peacekeeping missions was in 1947 brought on by the Dutch withdrawing from Indonesia, followed by Kashmir in 1950 after the British left India, and soon after the Middle-East in 1956.

The growing power of the soviet bloc had resulted in the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1949<sup>7</sup> by the United States, Canada, and several Western European nations to provide collective security against the Soviet Union. Doctrinally it trained to deter and defend against an attack on Western European countries by Warsaw Pact countries headed by Russia. NATO was the first peacetime military alliance the United States entered into outside of the Western Hemisphere.

Australian and Western nation politicians and military commanders post WW2 had grown up with and were conceptionally experienced with two dimensional/symmetrical warfare. So, when the United Nations (UN) intervened on the Korean peninsula in 1950, that conflict was also dealt with in the same manner. And the two-dimensional approach failed as evidenced by no resolution having been reached even after 65 years post Armistice. It appears that existing doctrine never quite meets the requirement for winning the next war. The Chinese and North Korean political leaders at the time (and since) understood perfectly well what Karl von Clausewitz meant when he wrote in his book 'On War', that *War is the continuation of politics by other means*. Western leaders had failed to come to terms with the changing face of war in Korea and that challenge for them continued throughout the Cold War<sup>8</sup> and is still relevant to this very day.

<sup>4</sup>Especially General George S Paton

<sup>5</sup>Australia took a lead role in this enterprise

<sup>6</sup>Source - UN

<sup>7</sup>The History of NATO - source Google

<sup>8</sup>1945-1991 It was fought on political, propaganda and economic fronts and only had limited recourse to weapons. The Cold War also saw significant Human and Special Intelligence, covert information collection and coercion, Spy Networks, defections of spies, and the employment of subversive Electronic Warfare techniques.

<sup>3</sup>Gerard Prunier 2009



The failure by Western politicians in Korea to not adequately 'define the type of war' correctly into which they had committed our service personnel led to this parlous situation. Did the politicians accept the reality and consequences? No. They and ipso-facto historians, simply 'redefined' the Korean War to be relegated to being that of a lower standard of conflict (if there is ever such a thing) resulting in it being called a 'police action'. The Chinese and North Korean strategy will become evident later on. It took nearly half a century for the Australian veterans of that war to receive proper and appropriate recognition.

It seems to me that as Australia entered each new conflict our pre-deployment training was based on the doctrine of the previous conflict. However, this approach was not appropriate for the reality of the emerging new 'battlefields' during and after the Cold War, especially after the collapse of the soviet regime and the resultant 'power vacuums' that were created in the wake of the collapse of the bi-polar power arrangement.

The UN and in our case, Australia and other Western nations, (our traditional Allies) were not prepared for the challenge of paradigm change. They had not switched from the conceptual two-dimensional awareness of time and space to a multidimensional understanding of how the new theatres of war would be shaped. What has evolved since the 1950's through to today's adversaries, is that they work within a complex, inter-connected operational environment, and they have a very dynamic and flexible set of choices. Today's belligerents use all available means, such as: changing political objectives; economics; employ deception; and they always seem to be one-step ahead of our doctrine and tactical response by not being restrained by having to 'play by the rules'. It is within this atmosphere of seemingly uncontrolled, to Australian peacekeepers at least, senseless use of brutal violence, kidnapping and rape, witnessing acts of genocide or dealing with its terrible aftermath, extortion, child soldiers on the battlefield, Unexploded Ordnance (UXO), Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), booby-traps, mines, uncertainty, threats and blackmail, where emotions are intensified and the senses heightened that Australian peacekeepers have had to operate and switch from Peacekeeping to being engaged (wittingly or unwittingly) in warfighting, direct intervention and negotiation roles of some description without warning.

### Theoretical Frameworks Post WW2

Generally speaking, many of the post WW2 conflicts/wars that Australia has become involved in could be described as 'asymmetrical unconventional' type of warfare because it is characterized by a mixing of regular (conventional) and irregular forces fighting in territory defined by clear lines of battlefields and within a political context that is shaped usually by the collapse of the State. Such wars generally produce a high level

of violence, social upheaval, population dislocation and eventually require international intervention.

Almost 200 years ago, the Prussian military philosopher Karl von Clausewitz wrote, "War is more than a true chameleon that slightly adapts its characteristics to the given case." He goes on to state that "war is a remarkable trinity composed of violence and hatred, chance and probability, and political considerations – elements that play out through the interaction of people, military forces, and governments. These factors have been a part of war since the dawn of recorded history." Nevertheless, as war in the twenty-first century changes into seemingly unfamiliar forms that combine regular and irregular forces on the same battlefields, some defence analysts have labelled the emergence of a new type of war—hybrid war. That particular word has become fashionable among both civilian and military leaders in the US and elsewhere. However, as Clausewitz stated nearly two centuries ago, although war changes its characteristics in various circumstances, in whatever way it manifests itself, "war is still war".

The inherent challenge in classifying wars as conventional or irregular led to this name change to - 'hybrid war.' 'Hybrid wars embody a wide range of different methods of warfare, including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts involving non-discriminatory violence and coercion, and criminal outrages.

Another interesting consideration about modern war came from two Chinese military officers.<sup>9</sup> They coined the term 'unrestricted warfare.' Their definition addressed the complexity, interdisciplinary and multi-dimensionality of modern warfare. Modern war, therefore, imposes requirements and skills that most warriors are inadequately prepared to accomplish. War is actually won away from traditional battlefields. Noting the unique features associated with the new age wars, some authors introduced a new category of 'New Wars.' These are wars accompanied by ethnic cleansing, widespread waves of refugees, extensive sexual violence and transnational criminal aspects.

It was not till the 1990's that the Australian Army paid emphasis to the growing complexity of the nature of the operational environment, especially the presence of a large number of civilians, densely populated urban areas, and complex information activities. They based their basic concept of 'Complex Warfare'<sup>10</sup> on a trilogy of 'the field.' These three fields included physical terrain, human terrain and the information terrain. This concept also includes diffusion or blurring

<sup>9</sup>In February 1999, the PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House issued *Unrestricted Warfare*, a book written by two PLA air force political officers, Senior Col Qiao Liang and Senior Col Wang Xiangsui.

<sup>10</sup>Australian Army. *Complex Warfighting*. Future Land Warfare Branch (2004). In 2005, this work was adopted as an official operational concept for Future Land Operational Concept of the Australian Army. Former Lieutenant Colonel David Kilcullen the led the way.



of the types of conflict, combatants and non-combatants, and war and peace conditions. Some of the more recent deployments fall into this concept of warfare.

Underlying new theories of the Russian thinking on hybrid warfare were summed up by General Valery Gerasimov<sup>11</sup>, who simply stated that 'the future wars have a tendency toward blurring the lines between the states of war and peace.' The Russian new doctrine accuses the US/NATO of practicing all the instruments of power (diplomacy, information, military, and economic) and see that the military instrument per se plays only a limited role in this concept. Therefore, hybrid warfare employs military/non-military assets and methods in order to achieve political and strategic success. Such activities may include, but are not limited to: protecting target populations, encouraging local disturbances, using irregular forces, exploiting humanitarian measures, performing criminal acts, carrying out overt and covert operations, spreading narrative and propaganda, undertaking conventional attacks..., all of this in a highly integrated and combined plan.

### The Categorisation of War

Civil war is different from other forms of irregular warfare in that it often crosses the threshold between conventional and irregular warfare. What makes it unconventional is the fact that the conflict occurs within a defined national territory (intra-state) with the participation of two or more factions.

Nicholas Sambanis<sup>12</sup> used an expanded definition of civil war that enabled him to draw further conclusions. He based his definition of a civil war on 'six criteria:

1. The war has caused more than 1,000 deaths in connection with the fight;
2. The sovereignty of internationally recognized states has been called into question;
3. It takes place within the recognized boundaries of that State;
4. It includes the State as one of the main parties in the struggle;
5. It includes the rebels with ability to run the organized resistance; and
6. It includes parties who were not satisfied with the proposal of co-existence in the same political unit after the war.'

Sambanas further stated that Civil wars may be categorized as 'internationalised' when one or more countries intervene in the war. It should be noted that the current typology of wars is a result of change to the previous traditional typology that stressed two types of war – international and civil wars.

Because of the periodic systematisation of all wars

to new criteria, some of the wars/conflicts clearly shifted from one category to the other.

The primary classification of wars will certainly continue to change.

### Conclusion

A definitive critical analysis of each of the 60 plus conflicts/wars that over 80,000 Australians have served within PKO, in post WW2 in one capacity or another, regardless of the terminology and expressions used, should not remain unreported in a frank and fearless way. The current reporting of our history of Peacekeeping is fragmentary, subjective and incomplete.

Historical events surrounding the deployments ought not be changed but they ought to be viewed in a wider and proper perspective, and that perspective should acknowledge the role of the initiators of the conflict/war and define the reasons which led the Australian Government to make the political decision to deploy Australians to that conflict. Most, if not all, of the belligerents faced by Australian Peacekeepers were not 'quiet observers' in the democratic processes that led up to war and international intervention. Rather, they all chose to intervene and to play a major role in trying to shape the future of their nation and inevitably that has led to destabilising the region in which they live.

The withdrawal of the colonial powers from their colonies around the world and the collapse of communist regimes in Europe were certainly two great victories for the 'rights of the individual' in a democratic world, but they failed to adequately address the bigger problem that they created which was that of leaving behind a 'power vacuum'.

The very existence of these 'power vacuums' and by not ensuring that the will of the majority of people was adequately addressed and listened to and taken into account, meant that the system that was abandoned was doomed (or designed) to fail. A working infrastructure ought to have been left behind and a realistic timeframe for handover with effective security arrangements put in place, within these countries is the minimum that a 'reasonable man' would expect. By not rigorously trying to ensure this took place meant that it was 'a defeat'. With such failings conflict and war in these countries became inevitable.

It is important to establish a more holistic framework in order to understand modern warfare better. Politicians, Historians and International Relations specialists should refer to any conflict/war by its real name and be able to define its true character. The international community has become highly bureaucratic and seemingly ineffective regarding the crises following the power vacuums in the countries where international intervention of some description is required for the sake of humanity.

If military professional and political leaders are to be successful in resolving conflict, they must adhere to Clausewitz's famous dictum that one must first know

<sup>11</sup>General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of Staff Russian Federation 2014.

<sup>12</sup>Sambanis, Nicholas (2001) Do Ethnic and Non-ethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes? Journal of Conflict Resolution, 45(3): 259-282



what kind of war they are fighting and call it for what it is.

I do not think the Australian Government and the international community at large has fully understood the character of the emerging and ever-changing conflicts/wars post WW2 that we have become embroiled in, for if they did, perhaps our politicians and bureaucrats would allow our Historians to better record and try to capture in words the actual role, activities and real level of: uncertainty; horror; and danger (implied or implicit), faced by the 80,000 plus Australian Peacekeeper Veterans better and the long lasting impact it has had on their lives and that of their family members.

While the level of risk in terms of individual harm will differ within the major deployment categories (e.g. combat, peace enforcement and Peacekeeping), the consequences of those killed, wounded, injured or suffering from physical or mental illness remains the same for individuals and their families despite the

nature of the deployment

And although the degree of probability of physical harm may be interpreted as being 'of a lower standard' for those involved in Peace enforcement (A Colloquial term referring to Chapter VII of the UN Charter [To restore Peace by all means necessary]), and Peacekeeping (Normally within Chapter VI, using pacified means to maintain peace), the incidence of PTSD remains at similar levels to those deployed in combat operations. Stressors generated by the latter are readily acknowledged, but researchers point out that the inability to protect vulnerable population groups can also be considered as a major stressor in peace keeping operations

In any event, Australian governments should consider their responsibility for the continued health and well-being of veterans (and their families) exposed to potential harm during training and deployment through this prism rather than past approaches

This paper aims to start conversation about our categorisation of conflicts and the effects this choice of words has on the support, emotional, financial and physical, available to our veterans and recognition of their contribution to Australia. Their job was done, in spite of the words chosen to describe the conflict and in spite of the risks which remain present across the spectrum of conflict. It is the responsibility of politicians and our military leaders to ensure that our involvement is accurately recorded for the good of those who serve, not to serve a political purpose.

While popular culture, movies and books find it more entertaining to depict traditional warfare with good guys winning against bad guys policy makers should be aware that this black and white clarity belongs to another age and we need to move forward in our thinking to solutions where every attempt is made for intelligent and humane solutions without massive loss of life and that is where Peacekeeping comes in and that is something which Australia has made a proud contribution to and that contribution deserves 'fair and just' recognition.





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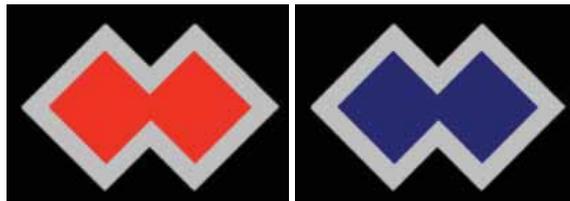
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# THE BATTLE OF TIMOR

## FEBRUARY 1942 – FEBRUARY 1943



2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Independent Commando Company's

The Battle of Timor occurred in Portuguese Timor and Dutch Timor during the Second World War. Japanese forces invaded the island on 20 February 1942 and were resisted by a small, under-equipped force of Allied military personnel—known as Sparrow Force—predominantly from Australia, United Kingdom, and the Netherlands East Indies. Following a brief but stout resistance, the Japanese succeeded in forcing the surrender of the bulk of the Allied force after three days of fighting, although several hundred Australian commandos from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Independent Commando Company (2/2) continued to wage an unconventional raiding campaign. They were resupplied by aircraft and vessels, based mostly in Darwin, Australia, about 650 km (400 mi) to the southeast, across the Timor Sea. During the subsequent fighting the Japanese suffered heavy casualties, but they were eventually able to contain the Australians.

The campaign lasted until 10 February 1943, when the final remaining Australians were evacuated, making them the last Allied land forces to leave South East Asia following the Japanese offensives of 1941–42. As a result, an entire Japanese division was tied up on Timor for more than six months, preventing its deployment elsewhere. Although Portugal was not a combatant, many East Timorese civilians and Portuguese European colonists fought with the Allies, or provided them with food, shelter and other assistance. Some Timorese continued a resistance campaign following the Australian withdrawal. For this, they paid a heavy price and tens of thousands of Timorese civilians died as a result of the Japanese occupation, which lasted until the end of the war in 1945.

### Background

By late-1941, the island of Timor was divided politically between two colonial powers: the Portuguese in the east with a capital at Dili, and the Dutch in the west with an administrative centre at Kupang. A Portuguese enclave at Ocussi was also within the Dutch area. The Dutch defence included a force of 500 troops centered on Kupang, while the Portuguese force at Dili numbered just 150. In February, the Australian and Dutch governments had agreed that in the event Japan entered the Second World War on the Axis side, Australia would provide aircraft and troops to reinforce

Dutch Timor. Portugal—under pressure from Japan—maintained its neutrality. As such, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, a small Australian force—known as Sparrow Force—arrived at Kupang on 12 December 1941. Meanwhile, two similar forces, known as Gull Force and Lark Force, were sent by the Australians to reinforce Ambon and Rabaul.

Sparrow Force was initially commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William Leggatt, and included the 2/40<sup>th</sup> Battalion, a Commando unit the 2/2 under Major Alexander Spence, and a battery of coastal artillery. There were in total around 1,400 men. The force reinforced Royal Netherlands East Indies Army troops under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Nico van Straten, including the Timor and Dependencies Garrison Battalion, a company from the VIII Infantry Battalion, a reserve infantry company, a machine-gun platoon from the XIII Infantry Battalion and an artillery battery. Air support consisted of 12 Lockheed Hudson light bombers of No. 2 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). Sparrow Force was initially deployed around Kupang, and the strategic airfield of Penfui in the south-west corner of the island, although other units were based at Klapalima, Usapa Besar and Babau, while a supply base was also established further east at Champlong.

Up to this point, the government of Portugal had declined to co-operate with the Allies, relying on its claim of neutrality and plans to send an 800-strong force from Mozambique to defend the territory in the event of any Japanese invasion. However, this refusal left the Allied flank severely exposed, and a 400-man combined Dutch-Australian force subsequently occupied Portuguese Timor on 17 December. In response, the Portuguese Prime-Minister, António de Oliveira Salazar, protested to the Allied governments, while the governor of Portuguese Timor declared himself a prisoner in order to preserve the appearance of neutrality. No resistance was offered by the small Portuguese garrison; however, and the local authorities tacitly co-operated, while the population itself generally welcomed the Allied force. Most of the Dutch troops and the whole of the 2/2 were subsequently transferred to Portuguese Timor and distributed in small detachments around the territory.

The Portuguese and the British governments reached an agreement that established the withdrawal



of the Allied forces from Portuguese Timor, in exchange for the sending, by Portugal, of a military force to replace them. The Portuguese force sailed from Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, heading for Timor on 28 January 1942, but the Japanese invasion occurred before they could arrive.

### Prelude

In January 1942, the Allied forces on Timor became a key link in the so-called "Malay Barrier", defended by the short-lived American-British-Dutch-Australian Command under the overall command of General Sir Archibald Wavell. Additional Australian support staff arrived at Kupang on 12 February, including Brigadier William Veale, who had been made the Allied commanding officer on Timor. By this time, many members of Sparrow Force—most of whom were unused to tropical conditions—were suffering from malaria and other illnesses. The airfield at Penfui in Dutch Timor also became a key air link between Australia and American forces fighting in the Philippines under General Douglas MacArthur. Penfui came under attack from Japanese aircraft on 26 and 30 January 1942, however the raids were hampered by the British anti-aircraft gunners and, to a lesser degree, by P-40 fighters of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Pursuit Squadron, United States Army Air Forces, 11 of which were based in Darwin. Later, another 500 Dutch troops and the British 79<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Battery arrived to reinforce Timor, while an additional Australian-American force was scheduled to arrive in February.

Meanwhile, Rabaul fell to the Japanese on 23 January, followed by Ambon on 3 February, and both Gull Force and Lark Force were destroyed. Later, on 16 February, an Allied convoy carrying reinforcements and supplies to Kupang—escorted by the heavy cruiser USS *Houston*, the destroyer USS *Peary*, and the sloops HMAS *Swan* and *Warrego*—came under intense Japanese air attack and was forced to return to Darwin without landing. The reinforcements had included an Australian pioneer battalion—the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Battalion—and the 49<sup>th</sup> American Artillery Battalion. Sparrow Force could not be reinforced further and as the Japanese moved to complete their envelopment of the Netherlands East Indies, Timor was seemingly the next logical target.

### Japanese Landings

On the night of 19/20 February 1,500 troops from the Imperial Japanese Army's 228<sup>th</sup> Regimental Group, 38<sup>th</sup> Division, XVI Army, under the command of Colonel Sadashichi Doi, began landing in Dili. Initially the Japanese ships were mistaken for vessels carrying Portuguese reinforcements, and the Allies were caught by surprise. Nevertheless, they were well prepared, and the garrison began an orderly withdrawal, covered by the 18-strong No. 2 Section 2/2 stationed at the airfield. According to Australian accounts the Commandos killed an estimated 200 Japanese in the first

hours of the battle; the Japanese army recorded its casualties as only seven men, but native accounts of the landings support the Australian claims. Another group of Australian commandos, No. 7 Section, was less fortunate, driving into a Japanese roadblock by chance. Despite surrendering, according to military historian Brad Manera all but one was massacred by the Japanese. Outnumbered, the surviving Australians withdrew to the south and to the east, into the mountainous interior. Van Straten and 200 Dutch East Indies troops headed southwest toward the border.

On the same night, Allied forces in Dutch Timor also came under extremely intense air attacks, which had already caused the small RAAF force to be withdrawn to Australia. The landing of the main body of the 228<sup>th</sup> Regimental Group followed up the bombing—two battalions totaling around 4,000 men—on the undefended southwest side of the island, at the Paha River. Five Type 94 tankettes were landed to support the Japanese infantry, and the force advanced north, cutting off the Dutch positions in the west and attacking the 2/40<sup>th</sup> Battalion positions at Penfui. A Japanese company thrust northeast to Usua, aiming to cut off the Allied retreat. In response Sparrow Force HQ was immediately moved further east, towards Champlong. Leggatt ordered the destruction of the airfield, but the dropping of about 300 Japanese marine paratroopers, had cut off the Allied line of retreat towards Champlong from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Yokosuka Special Naval Landing Force, near Usua, 22 km (14 mi) east of Kupang. Sparrow Force HQ moved further eastward, and Leggatt's men launched a sustained and devastating assault on the paratroopers, culminating in a bayonet charge. By the morning of 23 February, the 2/40<sup>th</sup> Battalion had killed all but 78 of the paratroopers, but had been engaged from the rear by the main Japanese force once again. With his soldiers running low on ammunition, exhausted, and carrying many men with serious wounds, Leggatt accepted a Japanese invitation to surrender at Usua. The 2/40<sup>th</sup> Battalion had suffered 84 killed and 132 wounded in the fighting, while more than twice that number would die as prisoners of war during the next two-and-a-half years. Veale and the Sparrow Force HQ force—including about 290 Australian and Dutch troops—continued eastward across the border, to link up with the 2/2.



Signaler Keith Richards, Corporal John Donovan and Sergeant Frank Press (left to right), from the Australian 2/2<sup>nd</sup> Independent Company, using a radio on a mountaintop in Japanese-occupied Timor, in about November 1942. (Photograph by Damien Parer)



## The 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Continues To Resist February – August 1942

By the end of February, the Japanese controlled most of Dutch Timor and the area around Dili in the northeast. However, the Australians remained in the south and east of the island. The 2/2 was specially trained for commando-style stay behind operations and it had its own engineers and signallers, although it lacked heavy weapons and vehicles. The commandos were hidden throughout the mountains of Portuguese Timor, and they commenced raids against the Japanese, assisted by Timorese guides, native carriers and mountain ponies. Although Portuguese officials—under Governor Manuel de Abreu Ferreira de Carvalho—remained officially neutral and in charge of civil affairs, both the Portuguese and the indigenous East Timorese were usually sympathetic to the Allies, who were able to use the local telephone system to communicate among themselves and to gather intelligence on Japanese movements. However, the Allies initially did not have functioning radio equipment and were unable to contact Australia to inform them of their continued resistance. Doi sent the Australian honorary consul, David Ross, also the local Qantas agent, to find the commandos and pass on a demand to surrender. Spence responded: "*Surrender? Surrender be fucked!*" Ross gave the commandos information on the disposition of Japanese forces and also provided a note in Portuguese, stating that the Australian government would later reimburse anyone supplying them. In early March, Veale and Van Straten's forces linked up with the 2/2. A replacement radio—nicknamed "Winnie the War Winner"—was cobbled together and contact was made with Darwin. By May, Australian aircraft were dropping supplies to the commandos and their allies.

The Japanese high command sent a highly regarded veteran of the Malayan campaign and the Battle of Singapore, a Major known as the "Tiger of Singapore" (or "Singapore Tiger"; his real name is unknown), to Timor. On 22 May, the "Tiger"—mounted on a white horse—led a Japanese force towards Remexio. An Australian patrol, with Portuguese and Timorese assistance, staged an ambush and killed four or five of the Japanese soldiers. During a second ambush, an Australian sniper shot and killed the "Tiger". Another 24 Japanese soldiers were also killed, and the force retreated to Dili. On 24 May, Veale and Van Straten were evacuated from the south east coast by an RAAF Catalina and Spence was appointed commanding officer, after being promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. On 27 May, Royal Australian Navy (RAN) launches successfully completed the first supply and evacuation missions to Timor.

In June, General Douglas MacArthur—now the Supreme Allied Commander in the South West Pacific Area—was advised by General Thomas Blamey—Allied land force commander—that a full-scale Allied offensive in Timor would require a major amphibious

assault, including at least one infantry division (at least 10,000 personnel). Because of this requirement and the overall Allied strategy of recapturing areas to the east, in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, Blamey recommended that the campaign in Timor should be sustained for as long as possible, but not expanded. This suggestion was ultimately adopted.

Relations between Ferreira de Carvalho and the Japanese deteriorated. His telegraph link with the Portuguese Government in Lisbon was cut. In June 1942, a Japanese official complained that the Governor had rejected Japanese demands to punish Portuguese officials and Timorese and civilians who had assisted the "invading army" (the Australians). On 24 June, the Japanese formally complained to Lisbon, but did not take any action against Ferreira de Carvalho. Meanwhile, Doi once again sent Ross with a message, complimenting Sparrow Force on its campaign so far, and again asking that it surrender. The Japanese commander drew a parallel with the efforts of Afrikaner commandos of the Second Boer War and said that he realized it would take a force 10 times that of the Allies to win. Nevertheless, Doi said he was receiving reinforcements, and would eventually assemble the necessary units. This time Ross did not return to Dili, and he was evacuated to Australia on 16 July.

## Japanese Counter Offensive, August 1942

In August, the Japanese 48th Division—commanded by Lieutenant General Yuitsu Tsuchihashi—began arriving from the Philippines and garrisoned Kupang, Dili and Malacca, relieving the Ito detachment. Tsuchihashi then launched a major counter-offensive in an attempt to push the Australians into a corner on the south coast of the island. Strong Japanese columns moved south—two from Dili and one from Manatuto on the northeast coast. Another moved eastward from Dutch Timor to attack Dutch positions in the central south of the island. The offensive ended on 19 August when the main Japanese force was withdrawn to Rabaul, but not before they secured the central town of Maubisse and the southern port of Beco. The Japanese were also recruiting significant numbers of Timorese civilians, who provided intelligence on Allied movements. Meanwhile, also in late August, a parallel conflict began when the Maubisse rebelled against the Portuguese.

During September the main body of the Japanese 48th Division began arriving to take over the campaign. The Australians also sent reinforcements, in the form of the 450-strong 2<sup>nd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Independent Company (2/4)—known as "Lancer Force"—which arrived on 23 September. The destroyer HMAS *Voyager* ran aground at the southern port of Betano while landing the 2/4, and had to be abandoned after it came under air attack. The ship's crew was safely evacuated by HMAS *Kalgoorlie* and *Warrnambool* on 25 September 1942 and the ship destroyed by demolition charges. On 27



September, the Japanese mounted a thrust from Dili towards the wreck of *Voyager*, but without any significant success.



The two engine blocks is all that remain of HMAS *Voyager* after running aground in 1942 on the beach South of Betano, Timor Leste. 2016.

By October, the Japanese had succeeded in recruiting significant numbers of Timorese civilians, who suffered severe casualties when used in frontal assaults against the Allies. The Portuguese were also being pressured to assist the Japanese, and at least 26 Portuguese civilians were killed in the first six months of the occupation, including local officials and a Catholic priest. On 1 November, the Allied high command approved the issuing of weapons to Portuguese officials, a policy which had previously been carried out on an informal basis. At around the same time, the Japanese ordered all Portuguese civilians to move to a "neutral zone" by 15 November. Those who failed to comply were to be considered accomplices of the Allies. This succeeded only in encouraging the Portuguese to cooperate with the Allies, whom they lobbied to evacuate some 300 women and children.

Spence was evacuated to Australia on 11 November, and the 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> commander, Major Bernard Callinan was appointed Allied commander in Timor. On the night of 30 November / 1 December, the Royal Australian Navy mounted a major operation to land fresh Dutch troops at Betano, while evacuating 190 Dutch soldiers and 150 Portuguese civilians. The launch HMAS *Kuru* was used to ferry the passengers between the shore and two corvettes, HMAS *Armidale* and *Castlemaine*. However, *Japanese aircraft sank Armidale—carrying the Dutch reinforcements—* and almost all of those on board were lost. Also during November, the Australian Army's public relations branch arranged to send the Academy Award-winning documentary filmmaker Damien Parer, and a war correspondent named Bill Marien, to Timor. Parer's film, *Men of Timor*, was later greeted with enthusiasm by audiences in Allied countries.

## The Australian Withdrawal December 1942 – February 1943

By the end of 1942, the chances of the Allies re-taking Timor were remote, as there were now 12,000 Japanese troops on the island and the commandos were coming into increasing contact with the enemy. The Australian chiefs of staff estimated that it would take at least three Allied divisions, with strong air and naval support to recapture the island. Indeed, as the Japanese efforts to wear down the Australians and to separate them from their native support became more effective, the commandos had found their operations becoming increasingly untenable. Likewise, with the Australian Army fighting a number of costly battles against the Japanese beachheads around Buna in New Guinea, there were currently insufficient resources to continue operations in Timor. As such, from early December Australian operations on Timor would be progressively wound down.

On 11–12 December, the remainder of the original Sparrow Force—except for a few officers—was evacuated with Portuguese civilians, by the Dutch destroyer HNLMS *Tjerk Hiddes*. Meanwhile, in the first week of January the decision was made to withdraw Lancer Force. On the night of 9/10 January 1943, the bulk of the 2/4 and 50 Portuguese were evacuated by the destroyer HMAS *Arunta*. A small intelligence team known as S Force was left behind, but the Japanese soon detected its presence. Aided by folboats (collapsible kayaks, or folding boats), with the remnants of Lancer Force, S Force made its way to the eastern tip of Timor, where Z Special Unit was also operating. They were evacuated by the American submarine USS *Gudgeon* on 10 February. Forty Australian Commandos were killed during this phase of the fighting, while 1,500 Japanese were believed to have died.

## The Aftermath

Overall, while the campaign on Timor had little strategic value, the Australian Commandos had prevented an entire Japanese division from being used in the earlier phases of the New Guinea campaign while at the same time inflicting a disproportionate level of casualties on them. In contrast to those in Java, Ambon or Rabaul, Australian operations in Timor had been far more successful, even if it was also largely a token effort in the face of overwhelming Japanese strength. Likewise, they had proved that in favourable circumstances, unconventional operations could be both versatile and more economic than conventional operations, for which the resources were not available to the Allies at that time. Most civilian deaths were caused by Japanese reprisals against the civilian population. The civilian death toll is estimated at 40,000 to 70,000.

Ultimately, Japanese forces remained in control of Timor until their surrender in September 1945, following the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Soviet invasion of Manchuria. On 5 September



1945, the Japanese commanding officer met Portuguese Governor Manuel de Abreu Ferreira de Carvalho, effectively returning power to him and placing the Japanese forces under Portuguese authority. On 11 September, the Australian Timor force arrived in Kupang harbour and accepted the surrender of all Japanese forces on Timor from the senior Japanese officer on Timor, Colonel Kaida Tatsuichi of the 4<sup>th</sup> Tank Regiment. The commander of the Timor force, Brigadier Lewis Dyke, a senior diplomat, W. D. Forsyth, and "as many ships as possible" were dispatched to Dili, arriving on 23 September. Cere-

monies were then held with Australians, Portuguese and other local residents. Australian troops then supervised the disposal of arms by Japanese work parties before returning to West Timor for the surrender of the commander of the 48<sup>th</sup> Division, Lieutenant General Yamada Kunitaro. On 27 September, a Portuguese naval and military force of more than 2,000 troops arrived to an impressive ceremony of welcome by the Timorese people. These troops included three engineering companies along with substantial supplies of food and construction materials for the reconstruction of Timor.



The honour Roll of all those who fell in Timor during WW2 located at Sparrow Force House, Dili Timor Leste 2016



Looking North over Dili from the memorial to the 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Independent Company's, Dare, Timor Leste ~ 2016



Sparrow Force House, Dili Timor Leste 2016

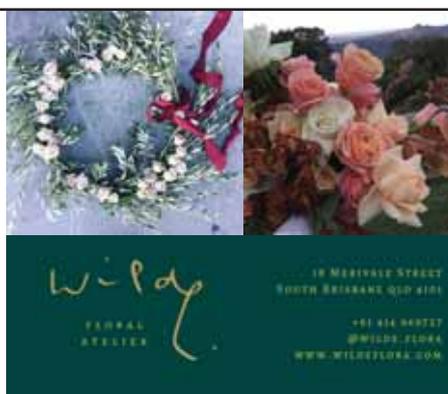
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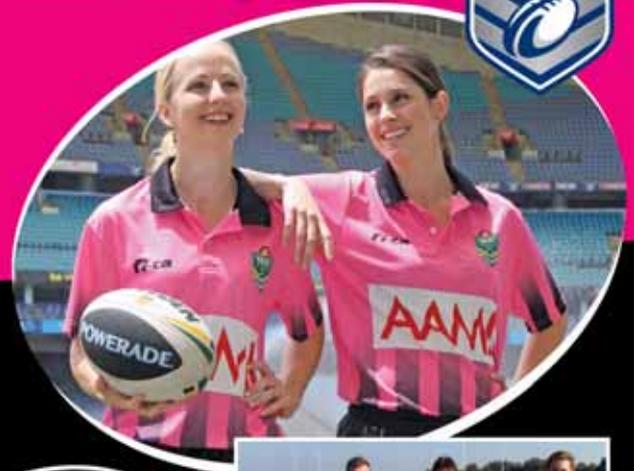
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# THE WHITE GHOST

## WX12804 CPL John T. Hanson

### 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> INDEPENDENT COMPANY, WW2

It figured that John T Hanson would fight in a war. His father John William Hanson fought in World War 1 with the Service Number 417 and he climbed the cliffs at Gallipoli as a member of the 10th Light Horse.

It was Jack's father who often told him "There will be another war. That bloody corporal, Hitler, is mad. He will cause us another war".

What John William Hanson didn't know was that his oldest kid of three was going to put his age up a year to ensure his place in the Australian Army and would then be selected out of some ten-thousand men to form 2/2nd Company, the forerunner of our SAS.

In Maryborough, Queensland where he and wife Valerie now live, Jack recalls.

"I was born in Subiaco Western Australia on 9 August in 1921. I put my age up and told them I'd arrived in the world in 1920. I remember Dad saying "Christ with that date of birth that was before we were even thinking of getting married". "

John William Hanson and Dora Katherine Hall had three children, Jack, Les and Dorothea. Leslie Milton, deceased, ended up following in his older brother's footsteps. He was actually trained officially by Jack at Canungra and then joined 2/9th Commando Squadron. His service number was 38386.

Says Jack, "My mother had some deep dark relationship with Ben Hall the bush ranger and George Hall the blacksmith. George Hall was a relation of Ben Hall. George was my grandfather. Mary Letz, my Grandma was in Glenrowan in Victoria when Ned Kelly was running around in 1876 and onwards. She was twenty years of age. Her father was a convict sent out from Britain because he stole a loaf of bread. He took up property around Busselton in Western Australia. They had Dora my mother.

"It was pretty bloody tough growing up; it was the Depression. If they think they've got it tough now they wanted to live in those days. There was no welfare. Dad got sustenance pay one day a week cracking rocks. Les and I fished at night for food for us. We had to really battle to live; there just wasn't enough money to go around. Motor cars were as rare as soap so in those days we never had one.

"I went to Beaconsfield School in Freo (Fremantle) till I was twelve. We had to move around in those days.

At thirteen I left school. I was average while I was there. My writing was not good so I got the cuts. The headmaster's name was Cowan. He was a bloody bully.



He was a big bloke, had a hefty build and liked the cane. At least once a week I'd get the cane for something.

"My favourite subject was maths. I did well at it. But you were lucky if you got a pat on the head for anything you did well.

"When I left school I worked for my father in his motor body business. I got ten bob a week, about a dollar in today's money.

Mum insisted on me going to night school four nights a week for two hours a night. She was going to make an architect out of me. I didn't do too bad. Mechanical drawing for architecture covered a multitude of things. I liked all of it. It was a good excuse to get out. We also did woodwork one night a week, including the construction of wheels and spokes. "I think it was because my Dad was so certain there was going to be another war he insisted I then enroll with the Commonwealth Correspondence School and I did aero rigging and fitting. That was about 1935 in between working with my father. Mum and Dad paid for that correspondence school. "I was always the bloody leader in everything. If someone was throwing stones I could throw them better, the same as later I could put a grenade exactly where it should go. I'd look at the object I wanted to hit and hit it. It was the same with my rifle; look down the length of the barrel and you've got the target.

"It was the same with the Sons of Heaven, the Japs. You sometimes don't know if you killed him or not; you just hit him. I tell you the Jap army was greatly over rated; they were bloody idiots. A leopard can't change his spots and neither will Japanese. We taught them lessons they'd never learned before. They came from cities and farms and straight into the jungle. We grew to be very ready for them.

"My father was like me, a scalawag. In the army he couldn't take authority. Like me, he always had his big mouth open. He knew horses backwards. "That's a good 'un, that's not", he'd say. He took his horse Pongo with him overseas. After Gallipoli they took their horses back to Egypt. At the end of the war they told my father and his mates they had to sell their horses or shoot them. Dad let Pongo go. He just took the bridle off him and Pongo ran for it. Dad reckoned that horse would always be alright because even when they were fighting Pongo managed to get into other horses' nose-bags. He was wounded twice. He was a great brave horse.

"Before I joined up I told me old man I was thinking about joining the service. He said "Don't join the navy



because you can't walk home". I said is it alright if I join the army? "Don't put your bloody hand up!" Dad said. He knew what war was like. I went to Perth to Forrest Place recruiting office and Dad tried to re-enlist himself even though he'd been badly wounded twice during WW1. He never got a pension for it. He forgave me for joining up, saying "We've got to get rid of Hitler because he's going to put the world into chaos".

"But I've always wanted to know what's happening. All my life. War was one way of finding out that. "According to recruiting, I was two years older than they thought. I was nineteen but I put my age up to twenty- one.

"I enlisted as a private. That was alright except for all this saluting and carrying on. They sent me to Northam where there were ten to twelve-thousand of us in training. We were all sand groppers, Western Australians, farmers, miners, all sorts. I was there six weeks.

"Some blokes came around saying we're looking for recruiting for a special unit. In June you'll be going overseas. They reduced us to about five-thousand, on the conditions we were not to be married, not corresponding with anyone in particular and probably a bit of a loner. Looking back all of us were bloody idiots. We were just going to go where the army sent us. We were reduced further, this time to one-thousand. Let's see if you can shoot, they said. Well, I'd been firing rifles since I was knee-high. We had to hunt rabbits and such to live. I used a .22. "Five-hundred of us were then picked out as possibles. Some blokes were very good at shooting, particularly the kangaroo shooters. They could put five bullets through one hole in succession. They gave us .303's, army standard rifles. They selected two-hundred or so of us and we went to Victoria, across the Nullarbor by train to Wilson's Promontory. It was fifty miles from camp to the nearest civilisation."

Jack recalls the head honchos were also recruiting New Zealanders. He says there were supposed to be three NZ companies and three Australian companies. "They were one side of the river and we on the other. We didn't have anything to do with them as far as I remember.

"These special missions we were told about were all very well but we couldn't find out where we were going. One Pommy bloke, a senior officer said "Wait till I get you in Scotland". That was the first clue about where we were going. We actually did get the feeling we were destined for the Middle East."

Jack didn't know it then but he was also destined to be among the first Australian commandos. But the initial forerunners of our commando movement met with terrible tragedy. Jack gradually learned of their story...

Jack says the newly-formed commando unit trained hard over very long days.

"Reveille was at 5am and we trained till nine at night. We learned about handling explosives and also learned lots of dirty tricks, which you're not supposed to talk about. But one trick involved a piece of tube that long and you'd drop a .303 down it till you feel it go click

and you'd leave a bit sticking out of the top. The next bloke treads on it and it goes boom!

We managed to get some steel pipes too. Fitted them up and the whole thing explodes under their feet; a live bloody round comes up under them. We'd chop a tree at its base and move it so we got a nice clear passage through it. When the Sons of Heaven came out at night, boom! I was the first to use that I think."

The men were taught how to bolt a fish plate on rail lines so the train derails. He says they taught the young commandos that early on because the plan at that stage was to have the unit operating in Europe.

"Different instructors, mostly Canadians and Rhodesians as they were called at that time, were on-hand for different skills. Unarmed combat was a major essential." Jack and his mates learned how to "break a bloke's arm and put him out of business. No more throwing punches and they also taught us how to kill with a knife. They were specialists at their game". Languages were not taught.

"We were all issued with a little gadget made out of a plastic tube, which had little clips on the side. It was actually a compass and you'd unscrew the bottom to get the cyanide pill in there. We were told if things got too tough and we were in a position we couldn't get out of to take the pill. It would kill you pretty much straight away.

"We'd arrived at the training camp in June and went through training on top of training until we left in October. "We were specialists in our game by then. A truly independent company. We didn't belong to anybody or anybody's army. We'd enlisted in the army but didn't belong to the army.

"We were about two-hundred-and-seventy-eight of us by then, a huge culling from the original ten-thousand or more. Some two-hundred-and-sixty were West Australians but we had a couple of Queenslanders and New South Wales men I seem to remember. We were named No 2 Independent Company before we left Victoria. I didn't realise then but I learned later. Once you're in Special Forces you belong to them for ever and ever and ever.

"Next we were sent to Adelaide where we were outfitted in sand shoes and a white uniform for running around doing physical stuff. Otherwise we had a khaki uniform based on the Canadian uniform with those felt hats and our black berets for parades.

"We actually got six days leave where I went home, saw me mates and family and drank beer. My father didn't ask about what I'd been doing and I didn't tell him. The code of silence was something he understood.

We travelled from WA by train and they put all of us in camp at Wavell show ground, a trotting course in Adelaide. No-one ran away. Whatever we were up to we were there for it. We were living in old chook pens and pigsties and sleeping on straw palliases on the ground. No-one complained. For three to four weeks they toughened us up; we ran up and down steps and on our marches we marched one-hundred-and-forty paces a minute while normal infantry only do one-



hundred-and-twenty. We were then carrying packs up to 100 lb. Everything you owned you had in that pack. One tin of bully beef per person per day was our main ration. Around the middle of that year it was 3am one morning when we all shot out of bed when Reveille sounded. Some sergeant called us out, "C'mon lads, we're on the move. Leave your palliases wherever they are".

"We were marshalled into a train on the dog box side of the show ground and off we went. Around midday the train stops and we're asking where the hell are we? I think we were in the middle of South Australia. Well, we saw two sheep so we killed them and had a BBQ right there. Quorn was the next stop and all these ladies from the Country Women's Association were there to meet us with lovely sandwiches and scones but we'd eaten the two sheep. We chugged off again and ended up in bloody Alice Springs where we slept in the bed of the Todd River on flat top semi-trailers. Then for three more days and nights we were on the train to Katherine. We were a lot of cranky bastards by then because we knew we were not going to England at all but further into the Northern Territory.

"We did know that we'd been trained in guerilla warfare and living off the land and were intended to be a strike force to go into enemy territory and stay there and fight on, exist there no matter what. If the enemy ever overran you it was ingrained into us you were meant to stay there and fight on.

It was the middle of the night and I was on guard duty at the ammo dump when the call came to get down and get your gear and get to the station. We kicked the cattle out of the trucks and sat on top of the carriages and were taken straight to the port and loaded onto the *Zealandia* troop ship. My father remembered it as a troop ship used in WW1. That's how old it was.

"We were flying blind as the convoy took off we still didn't know what was going on. Then someone said Pearl Harbor had been bombed. Our embarkation day was 8 December 1941, which caused me to think some bastard knew a lot more than we did. In fact we were to join 2/40th Battalion and the rest of Sparrow Force." *Sparrow Force divided itself between west Timor, part of the Netherlands East Indies, and east Timor, which belonged to Portugal. The 2/40th Battalion defended the capital of west Timor, Kupang, and the airfield at Penfui. Most of the independent company moved to the airfield at Dili, in east Timor, and the nearby mountains. Portugal was opposed to the stationing of a Dutch or Australian garrison in case this provoked the Japanese, but despite this opposition, on 17 December 1941, elements of the 2nd Independent Company and Dutch troops landed near Dili.*

On 20 February 1942 the Japanese invaded the island, attacking east and west Timor simultaneously. The 2/40th Battalion held out for three days, but were overrun. Most were either killed or captured although some men made their way to Portuguese Timor. Similarly, the 2nd could not hold the airfield and were

also driven back. But they were not captured and instead retreated to the mountains where they began to conduct the now legendary very successful guerilla campaign against the Japanese, which lasted for over a year.

By late 1941, the island of Timor was divided politically between two colonial powers: the Portuguese in the east with a capital at Dili, and the Dutch in the west with an administrative centre at Kupang. A Portuguese enclave at Ocussi was also within the Dutch area. The Dutch defence included a force of five-hundred troops centred on Kupang, while the Portuguese force at Dili numbered just one-hundred-and-fifty.

In February the Australian and Dutch governments had agreed that in the event Japan entered the Second World War on the Axis side, Australia would provide aircraft and troops to reinforce Dutch Timor. Portugal - under pressure from Japan - maintained their neutrality however. As such, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, that small Australian force - known as Sparrow Force - arrived at Kupang on 12 December 1941.

Meanwhile, two similar forces, known as Gull Force and Lark Force, were sent by the Australians to reinforce Ambon and Rabaul.

Sparrow Force was initially commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William Leggatt, and included the 2/40th Battalion, a commando unit - the 2nd Independent Company - under Major Alexander Spence, and a battery of coastal artillery. There were in total around one-thousand-four-hundred men.

The force reinforced Royal Netherlands East Indies Army troops under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Nico van Straten, including the Timor and Dependencies Garrison Battalion, a company from the VIII Infantry Battalion, a reserve infantry company, a machine-gun platoon from the XIII Infantry Battalion and an artillery battery. It also had twelve Lockheed Hudson light bombers of No. 2 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). Sparrow Force was initially deployed around Kupang, and the strategic airfield of Penfui in the south-west corner of the island, although other units were based at Klapalima, Usapa Besar and Babau, while a supply base was also established further east at Champlong.

Up to this point, the government of Portugal had declined to co-operate with the Allies, relying on its claim of neutrality and plans to send an 800-strong force from Mozambique to defend the territory in the event of any Japanese invasion. However, this refusal left the Allied flank severely exposed, and a four-hundred -man combined Dutch-Australian force subsequently occupied Portuguese Timor on 17 December. In response, the Portuguese Prime-Minister, Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, protested to the Allied governments, while the governor of Portuguese Timor declared himself a prisoner in order to preserve the appearance of neutrality.



No resistance was offered by the small Portuguese garrison however, and the local authorities tacitly co-operated, while the population itself generally welcomed the Allied force. Most of the Dutch troops and the whole of the 2/2nd Independent Company, were subsequently transferred to Portuguese Timor and they were distributed in small detachments around the territory.

Meanwhile, the Portuguese and the British governments reached an agreement that established the withdrawal of the Allied forces from Portuguese Timor, in exchange for the sending, by Portugal, of a military force to replace the Dutch and Australian forces. The Portuguese military force sails from Lourenco Marques, Mozambique heading for Timor on the 26 January 1942, aboard the transport ship Joao Belo, escorted by the aviso NRP Goncalves Zarco. Prevented from landing by the Japanese on the 7 February, the Portuguese expedition would be forced to return, heading first to Singapore and then to Portuguese India.

In January 1942, the Allied forces on Timor became a key link in the so-called Malay Barrier, defended by the short-lived American-British-Dutch-Australian Command under the overall command of General Sir Archibald Wavell. Additional Australian support staff arrived at Kupang on 12 February, including Brigadier William Veale, who had been made the Allied commanding officer on Timor.

By this time, many members of Sparrow Force - most of whom were unused to tropical conditions - were suffering from malaria and other illnesses. The airfield at Penfui in Dutch Timor also became a key air link between Australia and American forces fighting in the Philippines under General Douglas MacArthur.

Penfui came under attack from Japanese aircraft on 26 and 30 January 1942, however the raids were hampered by the British anti-aircraft gunners and, to a lesser degree, by P-40 fighters of the 33rd Pursuit Squadron, United States Army Air Forces, eleven of which were based in Darwin.

Later, another five-hundred Dutch troops and the British 79th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery arrived to reinforce Timor, while an additional Australian-American force was scheduled to arrive in February. Meanwhile, Rabaul and Warrego - came under intense Japanese air attack and was forced to return to Darwin without landing. The reinforcements had included an Australian pioneer battalion—the 2/4th Pioneer Battalion—and the 49th American Artillery Battalion.

Sparrow Force could not be reinforced further and meanwhile Rabaul fell to the Japanese on 23 January, followed by Ambon on 3 February, and both Gull Force and Lark Force were destroyed. Later, on 16 February, an Allied convoy carrying reinforcements and supplies to Kupang - escorted by the heavy cruiser USS Houston, the destroyer USS Peary, and the sloop HMAS Swan moved to complete their envelopment of the Netherlands East Indies. Timor was seemingly the next logical target.

Jack takes up the story...

"Within hours of Pearl Harbor we were on the move. I've always been a curious one and I still ask today how the hell did they get us from Katherine to Darwin and onto the ship before Pearl Harbor happened? Someone on our side knew Pearl Harbor was going to happen.

"We landed in Dutch Timor, Kupang and they took us some five-hundred miles and separated us from the infantry there. For a couple of days we were living in tents. We knew the Penfui airfield was there, it was a rough base and mainly the Dutch were in charge of the show.

"Then they took us to the wharf and loaded us onto the Dutch cruiser *Batavia*, once again we were on a very old ship. I was in B platoon, sixth section. We blokes were sitting on the stern of this nineteenth century boat swapping our bully beef with the Dutch sailors and getting horse meat from them.

"No. 2 Independent Company's leader was Major Spense and I didn't see much of him. Officers always get the credit but the dirty work is always done by the other ranks. At Gallipoli my father said the officers didn't go with the boys over the top. Pretty much the same was going to happen to us on Timor.

"We went to Dili, which was neutral country at that point. We swept up the beach and the officers talked to the Portuguese, saying we don't want to fight you, just look after the aerodrome. I believe our 2IC said that the only result would be in innocent people getting hurt.

"Our section HQ was supposed to be in neutral Portuguese territory and we saw that the Japanese were there as civilians. Before we got there they had been building a great big drain around the airport. 2 metres deep and 2 metres wide. They were getting ready of course. They were actually helping the locals by doing this sort of stuff for nothing. The Son of Heaven in charge turned out to be 2IC of the invasion force.

"The Japs invaded Portuguese Timor on 19 February, 1942."

On that night of 19/20 February one-thousand-five-hundred troops from the Imperial Japanese Army's 228th Regimental Group, 38th Division, XVI Army, under the command of Colonel Sadashichi Doi, began landing in Dili.

Initially the Japanese ships were mistaken for vessels carrying Portuguese reinforcements, and the Allies were caught by surprise. Nevertheless, they were well-prepared, and the garrison began an orderly withdrawal, covered by the eighteen-strong Australian Commando No. 2 Section stationed at the airfield. According to Australian accounts of the resistance to the Japanese landings at Dili, the commandos had killed an estimated 200 Japanese in the first hours of the battle, although the Japanese army recorded its casualties as including only seven men. Native accounts of the landings support the Australian claims, however.

Another group of Australian commandos, No. 7 Section, was less fortunate, driving into a Japanese roadblock by chance. Despite surrendering, it is



believed that all but one were massacred by the Japanese. Outnumbered, the surviving Australians then withdrew to the south and to the east, into the mountainous interior. Van Straten and two-hundred Dutch East Indies troops headed southwest toward the border.

On the same night, Allied forces in Dutch Timor also came under extremely intense air attacks, which had already caused the small RAAF force to be withdrawn to Australia. The bombing was followed up by the landing of the main body of the 228th Regimental Group—two battalions totalling around four-thousand men - on the undefended southwest side of the island, at the Paha River. Five Type 94 tankettes were landed to support the Japanese infantry, and the force advanced north, cutting off the Dutch positions in the west and attacking the 2/40th Battalion positions at Penfui. A Japanese company thrust north-east to Usua, aiming to cut off the Allied retreat. In response Sparrow Force HQ was immediately moved further east, towards Champlong.

Leggatt ordered the destruction of the airfield, but the Allied line of retreat towards Champlong had been cut off by the dropping of about three-hundred Japanese marine paratroopers, from the 3rd Yokosuka Special Naval Landing Force, near Usua, 22 km east of Kupang.

Sparrow Force HQ moved further eastward, and Leggatt's men launched a sustained and devastating assault on the paratroopers, culminating in a bayonet charge. By the morning of 23 February, the 2/40th Battalion had killed all but seventy-eight of the paratroopers, but had been engaged from the rear by the main Japanese force once again. With his soldiers running low on ammunition, exhausted, and carrying many men with serious wounds, Leggatt accepted a Japanese invitation to surrender at Usua. The 2/40th Battalion had suffered eighty-four killed and one-hundred-and-thirty-two wounded in the fighting, while more than twice that number would die as prisoners of war during the next two-and-a-half years.

Veale and the Sparrow Force HQ force, including about two-hundred-and-ninety Australian and Dutch troops, continued eastward across the border, to link up with the 2/2 Independent Company.

By the end of February, the Japanese controlled most of Dutch Timor and the area around Dili in the northeast. However, they could not move into the south and east of the island without fear of attack.

The 2/2nd Independent Company was, (as Jack has said), specially trained for commando-style, stay behind operations and it had its own engineers and signallers, although it lacked heavy weapons and vehicles. The commandos were hidden throughout the mountains of Portuguese Timor, and they launched raids against the Japanese, helped by Timorese guides, native carriers and mountain ponies.

Although Portuguese officials under Governor Manuel de Abreu Ferreira de Carvalho remained

officially neutral and in charge of civil affairs, both the Portuguese and the indigenous East Timorese were usually sympathetic to the Allies, who were able to use the local telephone system to communicate among themselves and to gather intelligence on Japanese movements. But the Allies initially did not have functioning radio equipment and were unable to contact Australia to inform them of their continued resistance.

"You know the bombing of bloody Darwin was to cover the invasion of Timor, which was more valuable than Darwin to the Japs. Timor had three aerodromes on it and if the Japs could shut down those three aerodromes that would stop any support going to Malaya or Singapore or Java. It gave them control just to put Darwin out of action and they knocked the Christ out of us in east Timor. They put twenty-four-thousand into the southern end of Kupang and six-thousand into us so they ran over the top of us just like that.

"By then we were up in the hills and sick with malaria. They'd shifted us up due to the malaria mosquitoes hoping we'd get better and we were a lot better up in the hills. Anyway when the Japs were looking for us they couldn't find us. They couldn't put their finger on where we were even though they knew we were there and wanted to wipe us out if they could. When they did happen to catch someone they bayoneted them or beheaded them. The Japs took prisoners but killed them all. It didn't take long for the word to get around this was the kind of people you were fighting.

"We got one bloke back who'd been captured on a truck as he was going into town and they put a bayonet through his throat. Four Australian prisoners had been made to march some distance with their hands tied behind their backs, pushed into a drainage ditch beside the road the Japs fired on them killing three. The survivors, on moving, were bayoneted by the Japanese and Private Keithy Hayes was wounded again in the neck, regaining consciousness his hands free and wristwatch gone, he crawled away then was found by local natives and returned to his position on a pony. Ironically that bloke, Keithy Hayes, Squeaker we call him for obvious reasons, is the only man apart from me still alive from 2/2nd Independent. Keithy lives in WA. "We're bloody lucky that's all. I've lived much longer than I thought I would...considering.

"Our method of fighting was watching and waiting for the Japs to come out and wind their way through the hills. They'd get nice and exhausted, we are watching them quietly, very quietly and they're going back down the hills and then suddenly some rotten Aussie bastard jumps out and goes bang bang bang bang and about six of them are dead just like that.

"They'd go on a bit further and another group gets the next lot of them. They just couldn't see us. We were called the White Ghosts by the locals. My wife Val always says when I'm in the house she can't hear me. I still walk quietly. It never leaves you.



"Up in those pretty rugged hills we lived off the land. I've eaten everything thinkable and snakes are not too bad. The pigs we mostly ate raw. We got terrible worms from them, this long, you'd pull them out of yourself. The locals used to use the bamboo floors of their houses as toilets and underneath the pigs ate that stuff so we ate the pigs and got worms.

"We'd keep watching those Japs trying to get back with their one-hundred-man patrol after we've knocked off a few of them. I've been this close to them - from that wall to here - laying quietly in the bushes so you can see the buttons on their uniforms. We're that close. Every patrol you have always got a tail end Charlie who's got a sore foot or sore knee and right then some rotten Australians hop out with their Tommy gun and go bang bang brrr! The Japs go bloody berserk with another heap of wounded poor soldiers.

"A year in the mountains living off the land like this, when you got something from the local Timorese, you always promised you owed them and that the Australian Government would look after them. They were wonderful very good people and time and time again we owed our lives to them. The little Creados, boys about ten to fourteen helped us whenever they could and helped us get tucker, find food.

"We had early model Bren guns that weighed 28 kg and Thompson sub-machine guns, Al Capone guns. We hadn't lost a lot of our men after almost a year in those hills and mountains. We lost about fifty all told over that year. And we killed about fifteen-hundred nips."

As Hal Colebatch writes in his book *Australia's Secret War... The 2/2nd, plus a few survivors from other units, retreated into the wild mountains & jungle of the hinterland & were regarded in Australia as lost & written-off, but fought on. Their main weapons were .303 rifles, Tommy guns and a few Bren guns. Within days the Aussies organised a counter-attack. The engineers under Lt. Turton, destroyed the Dili aerodrome & many bridges in the route of the Japanese advance. They buried about 160,000 rounds of ammunition in dispersed dumps & began to walk barefoot against the day their inadequate boots would fall apart.*

*In total they were estimated to have killed more than fifteen-hundred enemy for the loss of about forty of their own men. They tied up two Japanese divisions amounting to about twenty-thousand combat troops, including the battle-hardened Japanese 8th Division. Later the Japanese were forced to send in another experienced division. Thus it is estimated the 2/2nd tied up something like thirty-thousand Japanese troops at certain times. Fighting odds of one-hundred to one in one of the most sustained, brilliant actions in military history.*

*The Japs brought in the "Singapore Tiger", a major reported to be the top in counter-insurgency & jungle tactician. At the head of his men he advanced from Dili. The Australians ambushed & shot the lot of them.*

*The 2/2nd had no working radio, but after months*

*they captured enough parts to make one building the wire for the circuits from solder. They also had to build a battery-charger & find valves, condensers & chokes, not available abundantly in the jungle. It was built by Signaller Loveless, sick with malaria & without any test equipment. It failed. So did the second. The third "Winnie the War Winner", carried to a mountain top worked. On 18 April 1942, an initially disbelieving Army HQ in Darwin learnt the men were still alive & fighting. No Australian unit was ever in action so long.*

"We had our observation posts, one was in a broken building where we lay flat on floor and waited. Japs would come into sight and our Creado ran ahead with a machine gun and blasted them. They were brave little fellas. It was pretty dangerous getting out there and lying so close. Often we didn't try to kill them, just watched them, seeing what they were up to. We had a good view from the mountain. We watched their aerodrome and to see whether ships were coming in and where the dugouts were. At two to three-thousand feet you could look straight down on them.

"We made a radio. Signaller Loveless made it, he built it out of pure nothing. He couldn't work it and told them he'd only built the bastard and they had to make it work and eventually three other blokes got it going on a mountain top. They couldn't believe it when they received the transmission in Darwin. They thought we were all dead, or POWs. My parents had received a telegram saying your son is missing, killed in action. It was a year before they heard I was alive. At times I didn't even know I was alive and well meself. That Loveless was a bloody hero, he saved our lives.

"Apart from the endless worms and lice, we lived in torrential rain and landslides. I had malaria about every week.

"The Japs got someone, a bloke from Singapore, the Singapore Tiger I think they called him. He called us brigands and outlaws and boasted I'll get rid of them, we knew that meant chop our heads off with swords. We wouldn't surrender. Everyone else had surrendered and this Jap said you alone do not surrender so you will be treated as brigands and executed as criminals. He swore he would get rid of us White Ghosts once and for all. "So after that we shot a few more of them.

"Three or four of us led by Ray Aitken, an ex-school teacher moved a bit down the hill to wait for this Tiger bloke to come up. Ray and our men watched the Japs crossing a little rough bridge and the Tiger stood out because he was wearing a white uniform. So Ray took aim with his .303 and bulls-eye landed this Tiger in the water.

"We didn't lose one man.

"One of our 'roo shooters told me Japs' heads were easier to knock off because they were bigger than 'roos."

*Meanwhile Colonel Sadashichi Doi once again sent David Ross, the honorary consul and local Qantas agent, with a message, complimenting Sparrow Force on its campaign so far, and again asking that it*



surrender. The Japanese commander drew a parallel with the efforts of Afrikaner commandos of the Second Boer War and said that he realised it would take a force ten times that of the Allies to win. Nevertheless Doi said he was receiving reinforcements, and would eventually assemble the necessary units. Spence responded: "Surrender? Surrender be fucked!" Ross gave the commandos information on the disposition of Japanese forces and also provided a note in Portuguese, stating that anyone supplying them would be later reimbursed by the Australian government. This time Ross did not return to Dili, and he was evacuated to Australia on 16 July.

"Jacky Penglase and Jacky Spencer, two of our section somehow found three of us in the mountains after they crossed Jap lines to reach us. We heard these Aussie voices singing softly, "We are the boys from Down Under". They'd come twenty-odd miles through Jap lines because we didn't know we were surrounded after we'd knocked off the Singapore Tiger. They were very brave men and probably saved our lives. That was me, Bert Burgess and Barry Lawrence and we were all in the observation post taking it in turns to do the observing. On the way out we found half a goat and chucked it over our shoulder. It was the only food for five days and we ate it raw because you can't light a fire and anyway if you cook goat it shrinks.

"Water was everywhere, bloody rain everywhere, raining every flaming day, we were constantly wringing wet. The Japanese had a big naval gun and fired five shells at our observation post, also strafing it with machine guns. They tried to sneak up within cooee but as usual we stayed quietly. They were not good soldiers.

"The Timorese used to say now you see them, they're here, they talk to you, then they're gone. That was why we became the White Ghosts. You learn guerilla fighting by being experienced at it. That's the only way.

As time went on I found out these independent units are priceless to an army because they're not part of anyone's problem.

"Our doctor Cliff Dunkley from Fremantle never lost a wounded man and we had some terribly wounded blokes. I don't know how he did it but he did. The first badly wounded man I saw had his jaw shot off, Alan Hollow, regimental no. 13013, he worked for the Melbourne tramways later in life.

"When the Japanese put barbed wire up around Dili to keep us out, who do you reckon was winning the war? We were and every day was another adventure.

"We were told we would be relieved by 4th Independent Company so they landed them in September and we tried to educate them, we tried to impart our knowledge to them, introduce them to local chiefs I met with six section and told them don't stand up and fight the bastards, kill as many as you can, then quietly fold up your tent and disappear.

"Eventually the Australians had regular flights dropping ammo to us but we wanted food, we were

starving, they didn't realise we were so bloody hungry. I went in at eleven stone and came out at six. I was a skeleton. But that's war."

During September the main body of the Japanese 48th Division began arriving to take over the campaign. The Australians also sent reinforcements, in the form of the 450-strong 2/4th Independent Company - known as "Lancer Force"—which arrived on 23 September. The destroyer HMAS Voyager ran aground at the southern port of Betano while landing the 2/4th, and had to be abandoned after it came under air attack. The ship's crew was safely evacuated by HMAS Kalgoorlie and Warrnambool on 25 September 1942 and the ship destroyed by demolition charges. On 27 September, the Japanese mounted a thrust from Dili towards the wreck of Voyager, but without any significant success.

By October, the Japanese had succeeded in recruiting significant numbers of Timorese civilians, who suffered severe casualties when used in frontal assaults against the Allies. The Portuguese were also being pressured to assist the Japanese, and at least twenty-six Portuguese civilians were killed in the first six months of the occupation, including local officials and a Catholic priest.

On 1 November, the Allied high command approved the issuing of weapons to Portuguese officials, a policy which had previously been carried out on an informal basis. At around the same time, the Japanese ordered all Portuguese civilians to move to a "neutral zone" by 15 November. Those who failed to comply were to be considered accomplices of the Allies. This succeeded only in encouraging the Portuguese to cooperate with the Allies, whom they lobbied to evacuate some 300 women and children.

On 11–12 December, the remainder of the original Sparrow Force, except for a few officers, was evacuated with Portuguese civilians, by the Dutch destroyer HNLMS Tjerk Hiddes. Meanwhile, in the first week of January the decision was made to withdraw Lancer Force. On the night of 9/10 January 1943, the bulk of the 2/4th and fifty

Portuguese were evacuated by the destroyer HMAS Arunta. A small intelligence team known as S Force was left behind, but its presence was soon detected by the Japanese. With the remnants of Lancer Force, S Force made its way to the eastern tip of Timor, where the Australian-British Z Special Unit was also operating. They were behind, but the unit's presence was soon detected by the Japanese. With the remnants of Lancer Force, S Force made its way to the eastern tip of Timor, where the Australian-British Z Special Unit was also operating. They were evacuated by the American submarine USS Gudgeon on 10 February. Forty Australian commandos were killed during this phase of the fighting, while fifteen-thousand Japanese were believed to have died.

"They gradually brought us down towards the beach where they'd arranged for the Dutch destroyer Tjerk



Hiddes to take us off, this time a brand new ship just come out of Scotland. We slowly worked our way towards the beach and were basically trapped in the near surrounds waiting for our rescue. We just weren't used to being so exposed after almost a year playing possum. But we soon learned that the Dutch captain refused in Darwin to take his ship to rescue us because of the risk of the Japs attacking. So Australians manned the vessel and thank goodness at around 2am got us on board up the scramble nets, after we went out to her in fold boats in our withered-away boots and worn out clothes and all bloody crook, but there was still plenty of fight in us. "They are the best, Australians are the best."

"One voice boomed out from up top as we swore fairly heavily about having to negotiate the nets. He said, "No swearing men, women and children on board!" You can't beat Aussie humour.

"They got us down below and I had my first piece of bread for a year. It was bloody good too."



*John Hanson is in the middle of the picture*

## From Death's Door back into war

"We were back in Darwin so quick it was unbelievable. A crew man told me before we left Timor to hang onto anything strong because "this bugger knows only one speed". In Darwin they told us there's the showers, chuck your clothing there and we'll burn it. We were all full of lice, ulcers, sores and worms and were destined to undergo medical treatment for a year.

"Eventually they loaded us on a train which took us past Katherine to a secret camp where a team of doctors and scientists looked over us confiding "We're going to see how many wogs you've got in you". I was there for a month and they let me go home about March 1943. By then my people had got a telegram saying I was alive and not killed in action after all. Survivors' leave was twenty-one days, only the third time I got home in five years. I can't remember much about that leave, I was too sick.

"Then it was back to Canungra where they sorted us into three heaps. The doctors sorted us. Those fit to go on in active service, those OK for other jobs in the army and those too sick and skinny at that stage to do anything except get the wogs out of their bodies. They

spent four months trying to get wogs out of my system and fed me nothing but green vegetables for four flaming months. Along with heaps of Epsom Salts, talk about blue lights coming out your rear end. Today I won't eat green veggies if I can get out of it, especially cabbage. "They sent us to Tenterfield recruitment camp, two dozen of us to be fattened up to get ready for action again. Bloody hell. But we were OK with that. We'd been trained to resist the Japanese to death if we had to and we wanted to finish the job. I wanted to fight those Japs to the very end, the bastards.

"Slowly we got better and that was when they sent sixteen of us down to Tenterfield. Once there we went AWOL, naturally.

You were dealing with some of the shrewdest blokes in the army by then so we just got in the truck and went into town and had a good time of course.

"We were doing light exercises as they were trying to get us fit again. One day a bloke said "Christ I'm bloody hungry, I haven't had decent feed since I've been here". So four of us went down to the officers' mess and pinched everything we could lay our hands on. There was all hell to play when they found out the stuff was gone. They pulled our tent down searching for it but it wasn't there any more because we'd put it under the orderly room.

So we had a marvellous feed because officers always get the best food. There are two grades in this country, officers and gentlemen and the others who do the bloody dirty work. The medals always go to the officers too. "Once we came back from AWOL after getting as far as Adelaide. We definitely were some of the shrewdest bastards in the army, we pinched someone else's identity so we could get through to Adelaide. We spent a couple of weeks in Adelaide and thought, oh well we'd better give ourselves up. The OIC was a good bloke and said I haven't got the heart to fine you but he did fine us five quid and put us on a train through Sydney to Tenterfield. This Captain Scott there at Tenterfield was busting to kill us, we were certainly going to be charged. We said we'd already been fined and he hit the roof but we all laughed our heads off. Then this Sergeant came up and said I've got bad news for you blokes. You're all leaving here tomorrow morning to go back to Canungra. Well, we just shouted hurray! because that's where we wanted to go. But when we got back to Canungra we were told you cant re-join your unit, 2/2nd Independent Company now in New Guinea because about ten of you are just still too sick to go.

"They gave me two stripes on my arm and made me an instructor for the next eight months but they managed to blow me up on a bridge by accident and a large tree fell across me and I crashed into rocks below and hurt myself pretty bad. There were bits and pieces off me everywhere. Bad hip, bad back, scars around my face. Down I went. They reckon I went down like a shot bird. Before that I actually trained my young brother Les there and he joined 2/9 Squadron.



"I was getting better when Colonel Fleay sent a message I want to see you. I was still in bandages. He said we've got a special job for you. You're to take a detachment of thirty men up to Ravenshoe in the Atherton Tablelands. You'll be Corporal of 2/12 Squadron. Well, I got there and they were all green as grass except for a couple of blokes who'd been in New Guinea. But I trained them for guerilla warfare.

While I was there I had to learn fifteen-hundred words of Malay from a magistrate from Malaya who ran the school so we could be conversant when the invasion in Borneo came about.

"You also had to learn advanced aerial map reading from pictures our aircraft had taken and you had to use them to translate what you were doing. They were preparing me again. It took weeks and weeks to learn all this new stuff. We also learned how to fire mortars from a very precise mortar team. We were preparing to go somewhere and we knew we were looking at some secret operation because that's what commandos do.

"We continually practised tactics. The ultimate sin was the Sunday church parade. Believers were sectioned into their separate faiths and I took non-believers on a route march instead. By the next Sunday non-believers had swollen to about twenty. Suddenly our march became very popular as the blokes heard about the game of two up out there in the bush. We'd march out for about three miles and righto, who's got the pennies? There were certainly more people behind me than in the church parades.

"I got bored sick with Ravenshoe then they told us we'd be going down to Cairns and some of us reckoned we were going to be put on two big landing craft for the invasion of Normandy. We did exercises for about a week then they put us with the Americans on a landing craft where we sat in the bow and had no protection at the front. So we'd come up onto the beach and lay on side and sometimes were chest deep in water. After all that it was back to the Atherton Tablelands and we were all cranky with the world, particularly bloody stupid Americans. We were typical Australians. Who's running this show, well we're going to run it.

"They decided finally they were going to send us overseas so we had to sort out our gear, our kit bags and we were all ready to go with the winds howling, the rain pouring down and we're in the middle of a cyclone. They put us on a train to Cairns and we set sail round New Guinea to Morotai Island. It was just our company and several other units but only about five of us turned up for breakfast. We said we'd be lucky to see the distance in this one. We dropped anchor off Morotai and saw this great mountain sticking out of the sea. They got us ashore and we were camped there for a couple of weeks but no-one told us where we were going. We had 11 and 12 Squadrons there and they put us onto five tiny little craft that looked like the top end of a submarine with silly looking ramps running down the front of them. A naval vessel corvette size from Morotai took us towards Bulia.

"Three days out all NCOs and officers had to assemble on the after deck and they showed us aerial photos of where we were going to land. You could see mangroves growing on either side of the peninsula and the mountains as looming grey shapes in the background. You'll land there, 12th squadron on the right hand side and 11th on the left. Two days later that operation was cancelled and we were still on the ship. Then they told us you'll be joining the invasion fleet to the north – sixty ships altogether. Going round the top of Borneo I saw this bloody great mountain and am sure I saw snow on the top. We were going steady steady all the way, no bursts of speed. Australian warships were handy and we were quite happy about that.

"We turned into this harbour at nine in the morning, kind of cruised in there and stopped there for bloody hours. Then they said we were going ashore. The infantry would be landing there and then your commando squad in between them, 11 in there and 12 in there. It was all very vague, the whole thing, as though we weren't intended to be there at all but just by accident. Then the captain hit the sand bar and we had to go down these ramps, absolute suicide. This was not my idea of a fighting ship at all. Anyway we landed and swept up the beach in what was Operation OBOE. So now we were in Borneo.

"Trouble was we landed right where the cemetery was. There was this bloody big tombstone there and suddenly a bloody Jap tried to kill me. He hit the tombstone next to me and I looked up at the writing on the tombstone which said something about a sergeant so-and-so killed in 1846 fighting pirates in the Sulu Sea. Christ it was nearly one hundred years to the bloody day. But I had been hit in the shoulder and ignored it as we scattered Japs everywhere with return fire. Years and years later a doctor took out "a foreign object" from that shoulder. My wife Val had thought it was a very large boil. In fact it was a piece of marble off that tombstone. Not long after we scattered Japs everywhere

"We got alongside the airfield and our mission was to go in behind the Japs to stop any of them escaping. There were bloody bombs everywhere, stacks and stacks all wired to the track with fuses out and we were going to walk over them. Our air force unwired the bombs and dropped them on the Japs, take your own back. We tip-toed around those bombs and the Japs' Juki machine gun started on us so we came under fire. We called it the Woodpecker because they sounded boop boop boop. We sent a runner back with info to HQ and kept our heads down. One of our ships blew the Japs out of existence and from that point we were able to go on. Eighteen or nineteen of us were in the lead section and moving fast. We got in behind the Jap position but some of them had got out, we were a bit late. We found lots of fortified positions and slots for snipers. Our 2nd/ 28 Battalion had to go through swamp so they lost a lot of men, they were getting shot at consistently. But our ships had tanks with flame



throwers and we could hear the Japs screaming for miles. That's when we spotted all the DDT on the trees. A lot of our blokes got crook with sores and lumps and Val and I had no children for the same reason I reckon.

"We took about six prisoners out of eight-hundred Japs, we killed the others mostly. We were in behind the Jap pocket waiting for instruction, what do you want us to do now? They said stay where you are so we sat around for a while. A group of civilian blokes came up near us and we warned them to stay put but they reckoned they knew the country, had no armaments anyway and belonged to the British Borneo civil administration. Next day they were all dead, six of them. We didn't think Japs were a joke, we killed everyone we saw at that time. "Our unit was told to proceed to the other end of the island where there was a coal mine, the eastern end of the island. Our objective was to find out if any POWs or Japs were there. Nothing. We got among the locals who hated the English but loved the Australians.

People spoke English so I didn't use much of the Malay I'd learned. We killed flying foxes for them which they loved and ate raw, like chicken they told us. And we waited for orders again.

"We moved into the mountains and through swamps and gullies and got the Japs one at a time. It was bloody hard going for those two weeks. A lot of Japs died of lead poisoning.

"I could smell smoke, the old guerilla betrayal of a position, so we snuck up a hill slowly slowly, no talking, no breaking even a twig. It's the exact opposite to what you see on television. Guerilla fighting is a hard won game. Up the slope I motioned our Bren gun bloke, a big bloke, to put a mag on top of the ridge. All these Japs were around a fire drying their clothes off. I said softly the target's yours, see what you can do with it. He had twenty-eight rounds plus a magazine. Nobody got up from that fire, that was the end of it. He was a NSW man and a bloody good bloke.

"The blokes in my unit were all bigger than me and all bloody marvellous. They protected me even though I'm quite capable at looking after meself. We never lost one wounded or killed while I was with 12 Squadron. I was always out in front because I wont ask anyone to do what I won't do myself - and I was just plain curious, a sticky beak. I wanted to know who was out there and what they were up to.

"We picked up a radio and a few souvenirs and took weapons from the dead Japs. Diaries were always the first thing they asked for when you get back. Did you get paperwork? Then those shiny arses asked us if we'd buried the Japs we killed. Flaming hopeless.

"You know those men you fight with become your brothers, closer than brothers. You never forget them.

"By August 1945 we didn't know about any bloody surrender, we just kept killing nips one by one. Stop shooting one bloke said to us, the war's been over six days. We went back to the base to get cleaned up.

We saw this Jap driving around in a khaki Chevy or something like that and we took the car and belted the Jap and seventeen of us drove around having a good time. An officer said I had struck the king's enemy and should be charged but instead he was going to prevent me from getting my sergeant's stripes which had been promised me. That was my punishment for beating up a bloody Jap.

When the actual surrender did take place I was in the front row and had a full view of it. That little Jap general Baba looked very small alongside the two big provos. Then we were moving again, this time three-hundred miles down the coast to Kuching where the Japs had held our POWs at Lintang Barracks. We jumped out of the American torpedo boat, onto the wharf and I gave the order to disarm the bastards. We marched either side of the column of captured Japs and our own POWs marched out like a unit in spite of the hell they had suffered.

"I was only a corporal but I'd been in two campaigns. Our officers went into town and never returned so I ran the camp. We had six-thousand Japs in there. We took away their boot laces and belts but I told my men not to thrash them. We are human beings, not animals."

Batu Lintang camp (also known as Lintang Barracks and Kuching POW camp) at Kuching, Sarawak on the island of Borneo was a Japanese internment camp during the Second World War. It was unusual in that it housed both Allied prisoners of war (POWs) and civilian internees. The camp, which operated from March 1942 until the liberation of the camp in September 1945, was housed in buildings that were originally British Indian Army barracks. The original area was extended by the Japanese, until it covered about fifty acres. The camp population fluctuated, due to movement of prisoners between camps in Borneo, and as a result of the deaths of the prisoners. It had a maximum population of some three-thousand prisoners. Life in the camp was harsh, with POWs and internees alike forced to endure food shortages, disease and sickness for which scant medicine was made available, forced labour, brutal treatment, and lack of adequate clothing and living quarters. Of the two-thousand-odd British POWs held there, over two-thirds died during or as a result of their captivity. The construction and operation of a secret radio for over 2 1/2 years, from February 1943 until the liberation of the camp, was a morale booster and allowed the prisoners to follow the progress of the war.

Discovery would have resulted in certain death for those involved.

Following the unconditional surrender of Japan on 15 August 1945, the camp was liberated on 11 September 1945 by the Australian 9th Division. On liberation, the camp population was two-thousand-and-twenty-four, of whom thirteen-hundred-and-ninety-two were POWs, three-hundred-and-ninety-five were male civilian internees and two-hundred-and-thirty-seven were civilian women and children.



Amongst official Japanese papers found at the camp following its liberation were two "death orders". Both described the proposed method of execution of every POW and internee in the camp. The first order, scheduled for enactment on 17 or 18 August, was not carried out; the second was scheduled to take place on 15 September. The timely liberation of the camp may have prevented the murder of over two-thousand men, women and children. "I was there for six months molly-coddling the little bastards. Geoff Hoskey was the corporal under me and when he suggested he cut the rations in half I didn't say he couldn't do it.

"Kempei Tai, the Jap secret police who were a bit like the Gestapo were among our prisoners. They wore white tops with a purple sash.

I told my blokes what I wanted done in that camp but none of us could speak Japanese. I asked did any Jap speak Malayan but all I got was blank faces. A little kid came up to me and said, "I speak Japanese, Tuan", which means boss. So he climbed onto a 44 gallon drum and conveyed my rules for the POWs. That lad, Jimmy we called him, was twelve-years-old and spoke five languages but couldn't read or write. His father was a school teacher.

"Geoff Hoskey came in saying I was wanted outside, there was a delegation. Four Japs all in their gold braid were there and one spoke perfect English to me, wanting this and that and wanting to see the supreme commander because they had surrendered so they weren't prisoners. Good Lord, they speak English and didn't speak it yesterday. I then learned one had been educated in England and the other three in America. I made it very clear that those two stripes I was wearing were the biggest general they were ever going to see. I reminded them of the Geneva Convention and how some bastard had wanted to chop my head off in Timor. So I gave orders to separate them, take off the gold braid and put them well apart in the camp. I also told them to think themselves lucky I didn't turn my blokes onto them."

The 2/12th Commando Squadron embarked from Townsville, Queensland in April 1945 bound for Morotai as part of the build up of Australian forces in preparation for operations in the Netherlands East Indies and Borneo. These operations were known collectively as "Operation Oboe", whilst the landings on Borneo were known as Operation Oboe Six. Whilst the 26th Brigade and the 2/4th Commando Squadron were in the mopping up stages of the fighting on Tarakan, the rest of the 9th Division and the 2/9th Cavalry (Commando) Regiment carried out an assault landing on Labuan Island and at Brunei Bay on the north-west coast of Borneo. The plan was to secure the island's oil and rubber resources and to establish an advanced fleet base.

During the early phase of the campaign the 2/12th Commando Squadron was held back as the divisional reserve and as such did not take part in the main fighting on Labuan Island. As the Japanese resistance

on the island was coming to an end and the focus of Australian operations moved towards the mainland of Borneo, the squadron was finally committed to operations when it was given the task of carrying out mopping up operations on the island.

Placed under the command of the 2/32nd Battalion the squadron landed on 12 June and began patrol operations nine days later. In the following eleven days the squadron was involved in a number of contacts, suffering one man killed and two wounded, while capturing one Japanese soldier and killing 27 others. The most notable incident occurred on 26 June 1945, when, following a Japanese raid on the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit (BBCAU) area two days earlier, a section from the 2/12th contacted the group that had been responsible for the raid and in a quick engagement fourteen Japanese were killed and two Australians wounded.

The fighting on Labuan Island came to an end by the middle of July and while the rest of the 9th Division was committed to action on the mainland, the 2/12th remained there and were used to carry out survey work, helping to improve the accuracy of the maps of Labuan Island.

Following the end of hostilities in the Pacific, the size of the squadron was slowly reduced as men who had enough points to do so were returned to Australia for demobilisation, whilst others were transferred to other units for occupation duties. In this time the squadron was transferred to Kuching in Sarawak, where they joined Kuching Force and carried out ceremonial duties. In January 1946, the squadron finally returned to Australia and the following month, while at Puckapunyal, Victoria it was disbanded.

During the course of its service during the war, the 2/12th lost one man killed in action and two men wounded.

"It was good to get home even though we were on an Italian ship.

"Before I left Borneo a sergeant major told me they were forming a battalion to go to Japan for the occupation and I would be going. I very swiftly said and not in great language that I'd been in the war for five years and I had no bloody intention now of not returning home.

"I eventually met the love of my life Valerie - for the second time, we'd met briefly years before when her brother, who had been a POW, introduced us - and we married almost sixty years ago. We have done everything together and that's the secret of a good marriage. These days the husband goes to the pub with the boys and the wife goes out partying with the girls.

"As for war, it should be banned and replaced with more sports and ball games for the young.

"War is a money-making concern for a few and absolute bloody hell for the majority. Trust me, I know." ■





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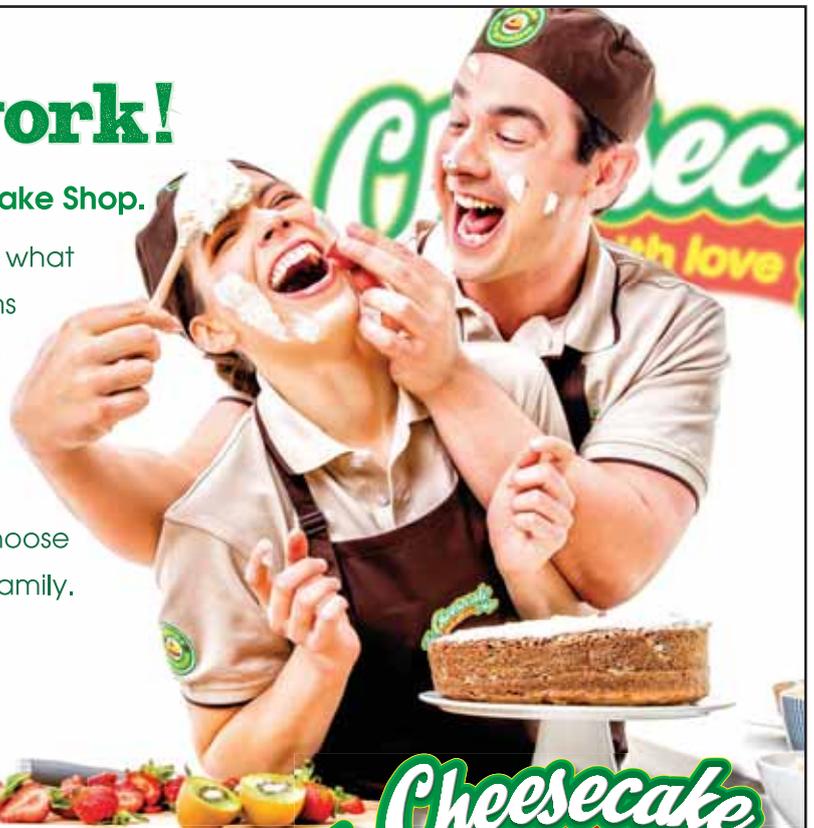
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# COMMANDOS RETURN 2018 (TA-7)

TIMOR LESTE 09 - 19 SEPTEMBER 2018

By Peter McCaffrey (ACA QLD) & Barry Higgins (ACA VIC)

On 8 Sep this year 27 participants congregated in Darwin in the 35deg C humid-heat (a welcome reprieve for the Southerners) in preparation for the second Commandos Return (CR18) and the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of Timor Awakening (TA-7). The group comprised a mixture of veterans, veterans' families and others with a historical interest in Timor-Leste. Also included were descendants of Sparrow Force veterans no longer with us.

The ACA participants included from NSW - 94yr-old WW2 veteran, Ian Hampel who served with the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Independent Company in Timor during 1942/43, (Ian became the "rock star" of the trip") and Rod Hilliker (ex 1 Cdo Coy). From QLD - Luke O'Brien (ex 4 Cdo) and Peter McCaffrey (ex 4 Cdo & 2 Cdo Regt) and from VIC - Geoff Woodman (ex 2 Cdo Coy) and Barry Higgins (ex 2 Cdo Coy). Ian's son Bruce attended as his carer. After meeting one-on-one with our individual mentors at the Novotel at Darwin Airport, we had a general information session before enjoying drinks and a get-to-know-you dinner at the poolside.

**Day 1** - Next afternoon as a team we boarded our flight for the short trip across the Timor Sea to Dili. Our fabulous leadership group, encompassing all areas of expertise, included MAJ Michael Stone (Retd) (ex 2 RAR & TA Co-ord), his dad LTCOL Gary Stone (Retd) (ex 1 RAR & President VCA), Michael Albrecht (ex 3 RAR), COL Bob Breen OAM (Retd) (ex 1 RAR), Simon Wilson, Arthur Davis, Wekku Saaski ("Sky Marshall") and Jorgen Sellberg - many decades of military service. CR 18 was both unique and uplifting. We were greeted on the tarmac by former President & Resistance leader Snr Xanana Gusmao. In the VIP lounge Xanana spoke passionately and emotionally of the importance of "peace" and personally welcomed our WW2 veteran Ian Hampel. As he was throughout our 11 days visit Ian was serene and dignified, although sometimes quietly emotional, and spoke calmly and with presence to his numerous audiences. Xanana greeted our leadership team with great friendliness (and humour) and only later did we realise the closeness of Xanana's relationship with Michael and Gary Stone and the other team leaders.

**Day 2** - We went to the Presidential Palace and, amidst many speeches, President Francisco Lú-Olo



*Timor-Leste president Francisco Guterres welcomes 2/4th Ind Coy Commando, Ian Hampel.*

Guterres (whose father was a Criado during WW2) presented each of us with a gift. President Guterres had previously served as acting president in February 2008 when then President José Ramos Horta was near death following an assassination attempt by rebel soldiers. In what was regarded as possibly a coup, led by Alfredo Reinardo, former President Xanana Gusmao's vehicle convoy was also attacked. At the president's reception, the various local dignitaries spoke of their appreciation of, and respect for, our WW2 soldiers in Timor, exemplified by Ian. After visiting the Timor Resistance museum that highlighted the 25-year struggle against the Indonesian occupation, we enjoyed a lunch and dancing display - yes, we joined in! - at the East Timor Development Agency (ETDA) school (which was founded and started by members of the 2/2<sup>nd</sup> Ind Coy). fledgling Trade School in Dili. They showed off the skills taught during hospitality and business studies courses by serving us a scrumptious lunch and afterwards performed traditional dances, dragging us up to participate. A lasting impression felt by participants was that the country has a bright future ahead based on the enthusiasm of the of the country's youth alone. We presented the students with crucifixes and badges. Back at our hotel the Dili Rotaract club members helped us prepare gift packages for students at the schools we would visit over the next few days. We finished a busy day with an enjoyable outdoor dinner and drinks with the Australian Ambassador, Peter Roberts, and his wife Lisa, at their residence.



**Day 3** - Saw us travelling along the Dili waterfront where the 2/2nd Ind Coy landed in Dec 1941 and the Japanese landed in Feb 1942. At the Santa Cruz cemetery where about 250 Timorese were killed by Indonesian soldiers in November 1991 after a protest march to the cemetery. Former cameraman Max Stahl who videoed the Santa Cruz massacre, concealing two cans of film in the ground where he lay hidden between two gravestones. When Stahl later retrieved his films and the shocking footage went worldwide, the Indonesian occupation of East Timor became an issue, finally leading to the independence referendum in 1999. After Santa Cruz we visited the former Balide Prison, now the Chega (Portuguese for "Enough") Museum, hearing horrendous details of the savage treatment and torture of the resistance fighters, and meeting some of them. A very sobering morning, but we enjoyed some tasty if unorthodox food at the Agora Food Studio – another training institution, presenting crosses as we left.

**Day 4** - We stopped at the Daré memorial and museum, dedicated to the 2/2nd and 2/4th Ind Coys and the Timorese, that listed the Australian men and their Timorese 'Criados'. We presented packages to the Daré school students – delightful children, as were all the young Timorese and their elders. We stopped at the 'Singapore Tiger' ambush location, where Mick Batchelor's father (one of the TA-7 participants whose father was a member of 2/2nd Ind Coy) took part. We lunched at Aileu, the FALINTIL headquarters from 1975 to 1999. The road conditions were horrendous until we reached a main road – still very winding and hilly. The roads were very 'demanding' most of the time, in our dusty 12 – 16 vehicle convoys as we traversed from

North to South, and East to West in ten days. We ended up overnighting in Maubisse where the 2/2nd attacked a Japanese Battalion that were camped in the markets.

**Day 5** - Bumping our way to Samé, where members of D Coy, 4 Cdo conducted the raid in 2006 to capture rebel leader Alfredo Reinardo, then on to Betano where on the night of 23/24 September 1942 where Ian came ashore on that fateful night, HMAS Voyager was to insert the 2/4th Ind Coy and evacuate the 2/2nd men, but sadly went aground on Betano Beach. On the beachfront the local officials welcomed us, with numerous passionate speeches, and Ian was formally regaled in traditional Timorese garments, making him a "family member", such was their respect for him. Ian signed a pre-prepared plaque and it was formally placed on the beach memorial. All that remains of the Voyager is the engine block and parts of the keel. Participants also met the children of Timorese veterans at the town of Same who are being sponsoring at the newly established Veterans University. It is a very modest school by Aussie standards, but a humble attempt by the Veterans to provide higher education to children unable to study in Dili. They are delighted and appreciative for being able to undertake courses in agriculture and humanities. They sang and danced for us and we were hosted (again) to a fantastic meal. It's amazing that a student can be sponsored for a full year at the university for a mere \$150 Aust.

**Day 6 & 7** - In company with 'veterans' and former guerrillas of the anti-Indonesian resistance, our convoy, by now about 16 vehicles, and with police escort, travelled for many hours: from Samé, to Ainaro, from where Xanana Gusmao controlled his resistance forces.



*Green beret participants. From left: Peter McCaffrey; Luke O'Brien; Rod Hilliker; Ian Hampel; Barry Higgins & Geoff Woodman.*



The area had many stories and evidence of Japanese destruction and atrocities in WW2, including the local church and the notorious "Japanese Cliff". It suffered again from the pro-Indonesian militia from 1999. We arrived at Liquica late in the day and next day travelled onto Balibo, location of the 'Balibo Five' murders. We stayed in the Balibo Fort, the location of BHQ of 4 Cdo in 2001, now a modern hotel. Veterans that had served in Timor-Leste had a chance to revisit sites of significance to them and recount some of their experiences with other members of the group. Reflections of the past day's experiences were talked about during 'Circle Work' (discussion sessions held most evenings or mornings). I know these sessions might sound pretty 'psychology centric' but the nature that they were conducted and the simple fact that veterans speak with a common understanding of military life, made the sessions extremely effective and promoted some strong bonds within the group.

**Day 8 & 9** - The next day we went to Maliana, the home of D Coy, 4 Cdo in 2001. Some hardy souls continued to Bobonaro, the site of the 2/2<sup>nd</sup> headquarters in 1942 and B Coy, 4 Cdo area of operations in 2001. Back at Balibo that evening we heard Timorese guerrillas, men and women, tell their sobering stories. The following morning, we held a service at the Royal Australian Regiment memorial below the Balibo Fort where Commando participants were captured here during a service at Balibo commemorating Australian Service Deaths in Timor, before returning to Dili via the boarder where A Coy, 4 Cdo was located in 2001. That evening we had the honour of dining at the home with former president Jose Ramos Horta, who because of the events surrounding his attempted assassination in 2008 was a personal friend of our team leaders Michael Stone, and Gary Stone. Horta recently wrote, *"Providentially, both Gary and Michael were on hand when I was shot in 2008, and were instrumental in my survival and the support of my family"*.<sup>1</sup>

**Day 10 & 11** - Some of the group, including Ian, took a helicopter ride to Atsabea (a WW2 AO for Ian) and dropped in at the local school and surrounds. That evening we enjoyed a farewell cocktail party at the outdoor Bar of the Dili Plaza hotel with all of the local people we had shared time with over the past 11 days – too many to mention individually – you know who you are! The final day saw us depart Dili for Darwin and our home ports. Some remained in Darwin and others returned home as soon as they were able to get on connecting flights.

In our 11 days in Timor-Leste we travelled from the north to the south coast, and from east to west, visiting areas of conflict that involved the WW2 forces, and more recently UNIFET and UNTAET troops, mainly

Australian, maintaining peace in a troubled country. Sadly, we heard accounts of violence during the 21<sup>st</sup> century unrest. Many of our Timor Awakening participants were involved in these tragic events, and benefited greatly from the program.

"Holistic Care" was the name of the game and the staff under administrative control of Gary & Michael Stone's Veterans Care Association, that sponsors the ongoing Timor Awakening programs, *"a program taking in holistic healing of the mind body and soul as well as immersing you into the experience of the Timorese people, landscape and its culture"*. From the exploits of "Sparrow Force" in WWII to the actions of 4 Cdo in 2001 & again in 2007, Timor-Leste's struggles have been inter-twined with Commando history. The experience of Timor Awakening can not be done justice in just a few paragraphs. The positive effects felt are inspiring me to try; to help those who need a hand, to offer support to friends feeling down, or simply lend an ear to a mate with something on his chest. In short, I feel my compass has been somewhat 'recalibrated' to set me on a road to a more meaningful life. Before I left Timor, I was on the phone to one of our brothers singing the praises of Timor Awakening and actively encouraging him to do the trip. If we could all convince a friend, comrade or relation facing life challenges to participate in Timor Awakening, the benefits will be felt within both your circle of friends and the wider community.

*If anybody can afford it, please consider sponsoring a student by contacting Veterans Care Australia.*

**Commandos Return 2019 will be held in September 2019 to coincide with the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of INTERFET and the beginning of Timor Leste's Independence.**

### Mr Alexander Ian Hampel



Ian Hampel enlisted for service at the Melbourne Town Hall in July 1941. In September 1942, he embarked for service in Timor with the 2/4th Australian Commando Squadron as a Private on the HMAS Voyager and served in Timor as a Bren gunner until the Squadron withdrew in January 1943.



During his time in Timor he was struck most by the loyalty of his fellow servicemen. Ian believes that it was the sense of deep co-operation and spirit of sharing that made the squadron such an effective guerilla group. It was this closeness that made losing a friend in action all the more difficult. Ian found it particularly hard to bury his friend Snowy Hourigan, who was killed during an aborted ambush. Snowy, who had recently lost his mother and brother, died in what appeared to Ian to be a suicidal last attempt to kill as many of the approaching enemy as he could. Ian and a few others created a makeshift grave for Snowy with the dirt on the track where he died.

Ian also saw overseas service in Milne Bay between August 1943 and March 1944. Discharged from the Army in June 1944, he joined the Royal Australian Air Force the next day as an aircrew trainee, and spent the remainder of the war with the RAAF. Following discharge in October 1945, Ian trained as an Aeronautical Engineer through the Commonwealth Reconstruction Scheme. It was while working on a shipyard in Sweden in 1951 that he met his wife, and they had three children together. In his recreation time, Ian enjoys cross-country skiing, and still skis up to 10 kilometers at a time. As with many who served in Timor, Ian developed close relationships not only with the men of his squadron, but also with the local people. His greatest hope in returning to Timor is that he may meet up with some of the Timorese people who ensured the survival of the Australians who fought there.

<sup>1</sup>Gary Stone with Bob Breen, Duntroon to Dili, Echo Books, 2014.



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# HELPING A COMMANDO FAMILY

By John Roxburgh ACA QLD

In April this year Mueller College north of Brisbane invited one of our members, John Roxburgh, to deliver the address for their Anzac Day service. During the address John spoke about the role of Commandos and their operations in Afghanistan.

A few weeks later the College informed ACA Qld that two of the senior students, Abbey and Jayde, wanted to raise some money specifically to donate to a Commando family in need. Over the following months the College raised a massive \$3000! The Rotary Club of Alstonville and Cam's Cause also generously donated some funding.

ACA Qld suggested the Hodge family would be the perfect recipients of this donation. Andrew Hodge is a former member of 2 Cdo Regt who suffered a brain injury, torn muscles and nerves, and multiple fractures whilst deployed in Afghanistan. Since returning home even the simplest of tasks around the home can be very difficult for Andrew, his wife Monica Hodge, and their two daughters. DVA would only provide funding for some other minor improvements to the home to assist Andrew and his family.

After speaking with Andrew and Monica we put together a list of jobs and soon realised we would need some qualified tradesmen to help. After placing a post on our ACA Facebook page a few weeks ago asking for tradies to donate their time, we had an overwhelming response. A local builder, Luke Irwin, and a carpenter, Adam, volunteered their time and tools.

On Saturday, 27 Oct 18 Jack Thurgar (ACA Nat Sec) and myself, 13 students and teachers from Mueller College, two local tradies, and some other volunteers embarked on a backyard blitz at the Hodge home.

Luke and Adam with the help of some volunteers went to work replacing an old driveway gate, building a brick letterbox, building a deck under the clothesline, and hanging a door. The Mueller College students spruced up the garden, pressure cleaned around the pool, painted the deck, removed some old shrubs, and shovelled

approx. 2 tonnes of garden waste and rubbish. Lynette Zito from Legacy Far North Coast organised a BBQ and the Mueller College students cooked up a storm for the team at lunch.

Another former 2 Cdo Regt member, Nick Andrew from Shot Imagery, generously donated his time and expertise to capture video on the day, including interviews with the various participants. Nick and his team will be editing the footage into a short video to tell the story of the day. We will add the video to our Facebook and web page at a later date.

It was an amazing day and a great example of local and extended community spirit coming together to help a Commando and soldier in need of some help. We would especially like to thank the following organisations for their support albeit in the form of funding or help on the day:

- Legacy Far North Coast
- Cam's Cause
- Mueller College
- Adam - Carpenter
- Luke - Builder
- Rotary Club of Alstonville
- Far North Coast Woodcrafters Club
- Hitek Security Systems
- Ballina Bunnings
- Shot Imagery
- JR Medals

This is what Commando For Life is about and why the Australian Commando Association exists – to remain connected with current and former members of our Regiments and to step up and help a brother in his time of need.

*Commando For Life*  
John Roxburgh  
Social Media Admin  
ACA Qld



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## Australian Commando Association Inc.

### VALE



#### Garry Lobb MM

2 Squadron SASR & 2 Commando Company  
31 August 1944 - 08 April 2018



Garry Lobb MM, served in New Guinea, then in Vietnam with 2 Squadron, Special Air Service Regiment from February 1968 to February 1969. During mid-1968 Garry's 2 Sqn conducted numerous patrols, with many direct contacts with the VC. Physically strong, on patrol he carried up to 45 kilograms, including an M60 and its 700 rounds, grenades and Claymores plus his standard equipment. During this period of frenzied activity, in a contact on June 17<sup>th</sup> 1968, Garry directly confronted the enemy, despite an SLR stoppage. Garry was wounded in another action on 14 July 1968 but despite his own injuries he assisted in the evacuation of his Troop Commander, Lt Sam Simpson. Garry was awarded the Military Medal for his bravery during those two enemy contacts. Garry proudly took his 2 Squadron number into 2 Commando Company, serving for a short time during 1971 alongside his brother Graham, and was a keen and supportive Commando Association member over many years. Garry also jumped with the Commando Skydivers during the early 1960s.

#### WO2 Jonathan "Jack" Tredrea, MM

Z Special Unit  
15 May 1920 - 17 July 2018

WO2 Jonathan "Jack" Tredrea, MM was just 24 years old when he parachuted into Borneo in March 1945, armed with only a few maps, some guns and grenades, and a cyanide pill to swallow in case he was captured. "Z was a different operation to anything else," Jack has said. "You were never told what you were going to do. You weren't allowed to talk about what you were training for. We didn't know ourselves ... where we were going until the day we got on the plane. [That was] in case any of us were caught. You could have been tortured and divulged information, [but] we didn't have it." Jack was awarded the Military Medal (MM) for his actions during

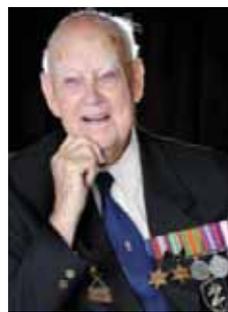


Operation Semut 1 in Borneo in 1945. Jack was a Life Member of both Z Special Unit and the Qld Cdo Assoc.

Jack aged 98 passed away peacefully in Adelaide with his family by his side.

#### AB Jack Mackay, OAM

M & Z Special Units  
17 November 1924 - 11 August 2018



AB Jack MacKay, OAM aged 93 passed peacefully with his family by his side on 11 August 2018, just one month after his loving wife Audrey of nearly 70 years.

Jack was part of the build up training for Operation Jaywick, the first raid on Singapore Harbour by Z Special Unit operators in Oct 1943. Unfortunately due to illness Jack was not able to go on the famous mission and eventually transferred to M Special Unit as part of the Coast Watchers operations in the Pacific campaign.

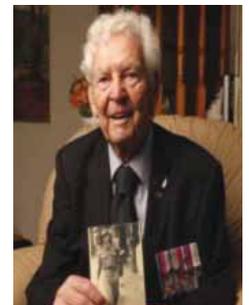
Jack was a Life Member of the Z Special Unit & Qld Cdo Associations and a past President of both. Along with other long time QCA members, Jack was instrumental in the amalgamation of QCA & ACAQ in 2012 and for his services to the veteran community he was awarded the OAM in 2014.

#### SGT Lionel Veale, OAM MiD

1<sup>st</sup> Independent Company & M Special Unit  
30 August 1918 - 19 August 2018

SGT Lionel Veale, OAM MiD passed away just 11 days shy of his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Lionel was one of our last members 1<sup>st</sup> Ind Coy & M Special Unit. Lionel joined the AIF in 1940 and was one of the original members of 1<sup>st</sup> Ind Coy when it was raised in Wilsons Prom in 1941. He deployed to the Pacific in 1941 and after returning to Australia he was transferred to M Special Unit where he was redeployed to New Guinea and spent the rest of the War reporting on Japanese shipping and troop movements. Lionel Mentioned in Dispatches (MiD) from his time in WW2.

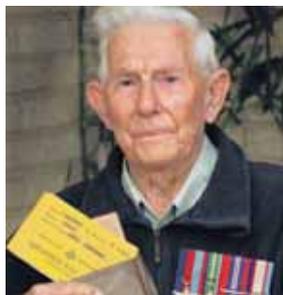
Lionel returned to Australia in 1945, he became married, had children and a very successful career.



Lionel wrote four books on his time as a M Special member and was a Life Member of QCA. He was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in 2016.

Lionel passed peacefully away with his family by his side in Ashmore, SE Qld.

**Mr Keith Hayes, OAM**  
2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Independent Company  
1921 - 23 August 2018



Mr Keith Hayes, OAM aged 97 passed peacefully with his family by his side on 23 August 2018. Keith was an original member of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> during WW2 and was fortunate enough to survive the attempted execution by Japanese troops in Dili, near the present location of the

Australian Embassy. Keith was shot and Bayoneted by the Japanese but survived by the kindness of Berta Donnabella Martinas who cared for him and after 10 days he was taken back to the men of the 2/2<sup>nd</sup> by Timor pony. Keith was evacuated back to Australia in July 1942 and after recovering he joined the 2<sup>nd</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> Bn in New Guinea. Keith was one of the founding members of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Association. Keith survived all but one of the 272 original men of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>. He was buried at Karrakatta Cemetery and ACA WA members provided the Honour Guard for him.

**SGT Norman Alexander Wallace**  
Z Special Unit  
19 February 1926 - 17 September 2018

Sgt Norm Wallace joined the army on January 6<sup>th</sup> 1942 in Caulfield Melbourne aged just 15 yrs 11 months old. He had forged one of his parents' signatures and convinced the Recruiting SGT he was 19 ½ years old. In late 1943 the army asked a group of men if they wanted to volunteer for "something". They didn't say what, and once again he said yes and was accepted into Z Special Unit. He was still 17 years old. He was sent to WA to train for OP Rimau but due to injury (or luck) he missed out on the infamous mission which all 23 Z Special men were killed. He was sent on OP Agas III the recovery of escaped POW from the infamous Sandakan Death March. He parachuted into the Renau region of Borneo on 18 August 1945 with nine others. They recovered four POW's, only six survived the Death March. He was made a life member of the Australian Commando Association just recently and Norm passed peacefully with his family by his side.





**DEFENCE FORCE WELFARE ASSOCIATION**  
*Patron-in-Chief: His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd)*  
A Member of the Alliance of Defence Service Organizations

**INFORMATION FOR ALL ADF and EX-SERVICE MEMBERS LIVING IN OR VISITING SYDNEY**

**Complimentary Entry to  
Australian National Maritime Museum  
Darling Harbour, Sydney NSW**

The Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC) has partnered with the Australian National Maritime Museum to provide complimentary free access to Australia's Maritime Museum in Sydney for all Defence Force serving members, veterans, and current cadets.

**THE OFFER**

Located in Sydney's Darling Harbour, this must-see museum provides the opportunity to explore Australia's rich maritime heritage, including the history of the Royal Australian Navy and the experiences of past servicemen and women, plus the museum's exciting program of exhibitions and events.

Complimentary entry includes access to the Museum's Action Stations experience, which tells the story of life in the Royal Australian Navy, as well as the opportunity to climb aboard ex-Navy destroyer HMAS Vampire and submarine HMAS Onslow.

Visitors can explore all areas of the unique indoor-outdoor museum, see many historic fleets and exhibitions—including the acclaimed Gapu-Monuk Saltwater exhibition of stunning bark paintings by the Yolnu people of north-east Arnhem Land, and the immersive James Cameron – Challenging the Deep exhibition.

"There is no doubt that the history of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and the men and women who serve, is an important, fascinating and ongoing chapter in Australia's maritime story. It's an area we have researched, collected and shared with our visitors since opening in 1991. I'm particularly delighted that, with the generous support of CSC, all Australian Defence Force members, cadets and veterans will have even greater access to the museum, our collections and importantly their history," said museum director Kevin Sumption PSM.

"CSC greatly values and appreciates the commitment and loyal service of our veterans, serving members of the Army, Navy and Air Force, and cadets, and providing free entry to the Museum is one way for us to show our gratitude and thanks," said CSC's Corporate Affairs Manager, Damon Whittock

**ACCESS TO THE OFFER**

To access the offer, current Australian Defence Force members, current cadets and veterans simply need to show a valid ADF ID card, DVA-issued card or service medals to the museum's front of house team, or arrive in uniform, and they will receive free entry.

This offer runs until September 2020.



14 December 1955  
MAJ John Anderson  
2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Company  
Killed In Training  
Plymouth, United Kingdom



04 January 2009  
PTE Gregory Sher  
2CC, 1<sup>st</sup> Commando Regiment  
Killed In Action  
Urazghan Province, Afghanistan



06 February 2017  
SGT Peter Cafe  
DCC, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment  
Died In Service  
Sydney, New South Wales



13 February 1963  
REC Anthony Matulis  
1<sup>st</sup> Commando Company  
Killed In Training  
Sydney, New South Wales



14 February 1981  
LCPL Stephan Kennedy  
1CC, 1<sup>st</sup> Commando Regiment  
Died In Service  
Gosford, New South Wales



30 March 1966  
PTE Phillip Stewart  
1<sup>st</sup> Commando Company  
Died In Training  
Gan Gan, New South Wales



17 February 1960  
WO2 George Drakopoulos  
PTE Edward Myer &  
PTE Roger Wood  
2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Company  
Killed In Training  
The Rip, Victoria



# COMMANDO WELFARE TRUST

## NOVEMBER 2018 REVIEW

By MAJ Steve Pilmore OAM. RFD. (Retd.) ACA National Vice President  
& Commando Welfare Trust (CWT) Executive Officer

### Inception

The Commando Welfare Trust (CWT) was officially launched in 2010 when it became clear that there were aspects missing in the existing support structures for the family of a serving member lost his life in Afghanistan.

While the Department of Defence, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Returned and Services League, Legacy and other organisations provide significant and valued support, they are often unable to provide the full support required by soldiers and their families due to the limited parameters within which such welfare organisations are authorised to operate; administrative approval processes that delay responsiveness; the difficulty of identifying situations of need; and limited dispensable resources.

### Progress since inception:

Since the beginning in 2010 the progress of the CWT has been consistent, supporting families where and as required, yet remaining financially strong due to a well-managed asset portfolio.

The CWT is a perpetual trust (no prescribed cessation date) which exists to support the welfare of members who are Qualifying Persons in accordance with the Deed of Trust, and their dependents.

As a guiding principle, the CWT is designed to provide assistance, within available resources, to qualifying persons where gaps exist in existing support mechanisms. The trust is not designed to replace support provided by Defence or the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The trust aims to be objective, transparent, fair and consistent in its provision of support to qualifying members.

The primary focus of the CWT is the education, development and wellbeing of the children of personnel affected by such tragedies. The Trust Deed also provides for additional support beyond this core purpose.

### Supported units:

Under the terms of the Trust Deed, personnel from the following units may qualify for support:

- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiments
- Parachute Training School
- Special Operations Training and Education Centre
- Special Operations Headquarters
- Special Operations Engineer Regiment
- Special Operations Logistics Squadron
- Elements of 6<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment supporting SOCOMD units
- Headquarters Special Operations Command.

In addition, members of units providing direct support to SOCOMD operations are also potentially eligible for

support - for example 4 Squadron RAAF who provide Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTACs) as well as the Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicle drivers from the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment.

### The approval support process

Qualifying personnel are recommended to the CWT Trustees by a Military Advisory Board (MAB) as potential beneficiaries at the same time providing sufficient advice to allow the Trustees to determine the level of financial relief the recipient should be allocated. In accordance with the Deed of Trust, the MAB does not possess any authority other than to provide confirmation of the facts and then recommendations for persons qualifying as beneficiaries.

The MAB is comprised of the Commanding Officers/Officers Commanding and Regimental Sergeant Majors/Squadron Sergeant Majors of the Special Operations Command (SOCOMD) units, which are supported by the CWT.

### Key documents

Since the formation of the CWT, four key strategy documents have been formalised following in-depth study and advice from both inside and outside of the Command. These documents are:

1. Marketing Strategy – June 2013
2. Corporate Strategy – August 2013
3. Corporate Investment Strategy – October 2013
4. Corporate Communications Strategy – November 2013

These strategies identify the key responsibilities and objectives and in particular, set out the guidelines for soliciting funds and/or accepting funds on behalf of the CWT as well as determining when and what level of funds are to be paid to a beneficiary.

The four basic strategy documents are always being revisited and updated by the Trustees, as the support environment dictates.

**Trust Structure:** The CWT Board consists of a Chairman, Deputy Chairman, a current Special Operations senior officer plus six additional trustees comprising of two legal professionals, an accounting/financial professional, two public relations/advertising executives a senior business executive and a senior public servant – the Chairman. It should be noted that the Trustees are not remunerated from Trust funds.

The Trust also employs a Trust Executive Officer.

Major General Tim McOwan AO, DSC, CSM was appointed the inaugural Patron of the Trust and the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson AO has recently joined him as a CWT Patron.



### Major Milestones:

- The CWT in 2010 successfully applied to the ATO for DRG status (Tax exemption);
- nearly \$5 million dollars has been raised after an initial grant of \$8 million dollars from the Federal Government. (Note the earnings only on this amount are available for distribution – the principal cannot be spent). Currently CWT net assets (over \$11 million dollars) are invested allowing the Trustees to make significant payments to beneficiaries since 2010;
- An independent auditor has been appointed, the Trust has nominated the Commonwealth Bank of Australia as the banker for the CWT and has the services of a professional investment advisor who forgoes his fee on an ongoing basis;
- Clear protocols have been established for all Trustees when approaching organisations and individuals for donations;
- established the CWT website including a secure link for donations to the Trust's bank account.
- provided Christmas gifts of \$500 to all dependent children each year;
- supported over 40 dependent children at school and in January each year with each child allocated \$1,000 for back-to-school expenses;
- 9 children who were supported by the Trust have moved into the workforce or tertiary studies since support for the families of fallen members commenced just over 8 years ago; and
- provided financial support to the Australian Commando Association for the "*Commandos Return 2017 to Timor Leste*" project.

### Types of support provided:

Other than the main school fee payments, financial support at Christmas and back to school expenses the Trustees have also supported the following initiatives:

- extra-curricular school sporting activities;
- overseas excursions;
- extra school subject tutoring;
- travel expenses for bereaved families attending memorial services for the fallen;
- physio and massage treatment for the wounded when not covered by Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs;
- provision of a COMPEX Muscle treatment machine at 2 Cdo Regt Soldier Recovery Centre;
- provision of a portable breathing device to allow a grandfather continuing outdoor recreation with his beneficiary grandchildren;
- vocational training for former members entering the civilian workforce;
- provision of a Computer Graphics monitor for former member with artistic skills;
- Sharing of the costs in repatriating a terminally ill former member from overseas;
- legal fee relief and advice for a former member with a business dispute;

- provision of numerous laptops for school age beneficiaries;
- vocational training for surviving partners of fallen members;
- tool kit purchased for a beneficiary dependent who was entering the construction industry;
- significant renovations to an injured former member's home including a gym and art studio;
- multiple family reunion trips especially for children to visit grandparents; and
- purchased a specific therapeutic bed for a severely injured member in financial difficulties.

### The future:

The CWT will continue to provide positive direct and indirect relief to qualifying persons by way of assisting with the provision of education for dependent children as well as providing cash payments for food, clothing, essential goods, family relocation expenses, home modifications for those seriously injured, security, legal and medical services and many aids to rehabilitation.

Whilst the CWT remains financially sound which enables it to accomplish its current role in providing financial relief to qualifying beneficiaries, it is expected that the increase in the demands for support for personnel suffering from service related injuries or illness will have a significant on-going impact on CWT resources over the next two decades. The provision of sustainable financial assistance will require a concerted effort to ensure that the CWT Trustees have the financial capacity to support the requirements of any future Beneficiaries.

The Commando Welfare Trust has after 8 years seen the retirement of the inaugural Chairman - Colonel Graham Ferguson (Retd). Graham served in SASR in the water ops environment and commanded the first offshore Tactical Assault Group and concluded his military career at HQ SF as a Colonel. Graham took on the job of CWT Chairman at the behest of the then Special Operations Commander Australia MAJGEN Tim McOwan and has seen the Trust through its formative years and almost to the end of the first decade.

The new Trust Chairman is BRIG Mark Smethurst DSC AM (Retd) and was the Commanding Officer of 4 RAR Commando 2006-07 and now moonlights as the Commissioner of the NSW State Emergency Service.

We also have a new Patron to serve alongside MAJGEN McOwan - The Hon DR Brendan Nelson AO has taken on that role alongside MAJGEN McOwan. Dr Nelson, who most of you would know of, is Director of the Australian War Memorial and has been a great supporter of the SF community both before and since he took over that role, particularly of the Commando Welfare Trust.

For further Information please contact me at;  
[steve.pilmore@commandotrust.com](mailto:steve.pilmore@commandotrust.com)  
[www.commandotrust.com](http://www.commandotrust.com)





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# DEPARTMENT of VETERANS AFFAIRS

## NATIONAL VETERAN ADVOCACY UPDATE

By Paul Copeland OAM. ACA DVA Representative

*Dear Fellow Commandos,*

The last 12 months has seen a tumultuous change within the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA). These changes have been driven by the controversial suicide of former 1RAR Soldier and Afghanistan Veteran PTE Jessie Bird on 27 June 2017.

Some of the fallout of Jessie's unfortunate choice can be read on:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-10-14/jesse-bird-veteran-affairs-inquiry-finds-failings/9050594>

However, Jessie's death was not in vain, it was virtually the last straw for the Government and a struggling DVA with a concerned public and Veteran Community.

Significant measures have been put in place and others yet to be completed, along with a Productivity Commission Inquiry; Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) Review into DVA; an Advocacy Study; along with a number of Senate Inquiries - which include an Inquiry into Tafenoquine and Mefloquine.

Unfortunately, for the latter, it would appear that the Repatriation Medical Authority (RMA) on 18 August 2017, will not be raising a Statement of Principle (SOP) for the condition of Chemically-Acquired Brain Injury caused by Mefloquine, Tafenoquine and Primaquine. Link: <http://www.rma.gov.au/sops/condition/chemically-acquired-brain-injury-caused-by-mefloquine-tafenoquine-or-primaquine>

The matter above, is before a Senate Inquiry for further examination into the effects of taking these Malarial Prophylaxis medications whilst serving on Deployments and within Australia. The Inquiry is now all but closed, however it has a reporting date of **29 November 2018**, after a request and approval by the Government for an extension. Link: [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign\\_Affairs\\_Defence\\_and\\_Trade/Mefloquine](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/Mefloquine) (Watch this space).

I am unable to provide much information toward the progress and outcomes of the **Special Operations Forces Pilot (SOF-P)** at 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment, Holsworthy. My avenues of enquiry (both formal and informal) haven't been answered by the SOF-P people. However, what I have managed to ascertain is that the SOF-P has looked at streamlining a wide number of medical conditions as a result of a Special Operator's service.

Therefore, ECN 079 (Commando) and ECN 353 (SASR Trooper); will have a streamlined set of medical conditions as a result of their occupational hazards and exposures. This streamlining will give minimal time taken to process (TTTP) for claims in the future. I am at this point time unable to confirm if the support staff to

SOF and other occupations within SOF have been included in this streamlining.

In addition has been the identification of problematic transitions for Special Operators exiting the ADF, particularly for our Commandos gaining meaningful employment after their service. This problem however is widespread for Members leaving the ADF, more difficult for those who served in Combat related roles. There have been initiatives made by the PM Employment Assistance Program (EAP), and other initiatives in a wide number of areas. More on this later.

The huge amount of official information is now available in the Veteran Space, which can be confusing and overwhelming. I highly recommend that if you are considering lodging a claim for a medical condition(s), that you seek advice from a qualified Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP) Advocate. A list of these Advocates is available at:

<https://www.atdp.org.au/eso/index.php>

At this point in time the ACA is seeking volunteers to become involved as ATDP Compensation and Welfare Advocates. This is so that we are able to specialise in supporting our own tribe, with the empathy and understanding of an individual who has served in a Commando unit. Should you have an interest in this area, please do not hesitate in contacting me.

As you may observe, the Veteran space is evolving very quickly and it can be difficult to keep up with all the changes and Inquiries. However, the ACA has been represented in a range of State and Federal Veteran Fora. There is much to do in this space, however after being an advocate for over 20 years, I am seeing changes for the better. It is unfortunate that Jesse Bird had to make the ultimate sacrifice to get these changes through and the Government to wake up to the difficulties that our veterans and their families have/are experiencing with the very Department whose purpose is to look after those who have served.

There is light at the end of the tunnel and things can only get better.

*"Commando For Life"*

Paul Copeland OAM, JP,  
Advocate Level 4,

National Veteran Compensation Advocacy Adviser,  
Australian Commando Association.

E: [chook126@bigpond.net.au](mailto:chook126@bigpond.net.au)



## Transforming DVA

The Veteran Centric Reform (VCR), has seen a new approach by DVA, particularly the new Secretary, Ms Liz Cossons AM, CSC. Liz outlined her three priorities for DVA at the Ex-Service Organisations Round Table (ESORT) on 14 August 2018. These were:

1. Putting Veterans and their families first;
2. Recognising the Unique nature of Military Service; and
3. Reflect, Remember & Respect Military Service.

More: <https://www.dva.gov.au/about-dva/publications/vetaffairs/vol-33-no3-spring-2017/plan-veteran-centric-reform>

## Australian Veteran Covenant

Veterans and their families are at the centre of a fresh package of initiatives from our Government to recognise their vital role and service to Australia.

Link: [http://minister.dva.gov.au/media\\_releases/2018/oct/va109.htm](http://minister.dva.gov.au/media_releases/2018/oct/va109.htm)

## The Veteran Card

Anyone who is eligible for a DVA White, Gold or Orange card will be eligible for the Veteran Card, including veterans who are transitioning or have transitioned from the Australian Defence Force (ADF). It also includes certain Reservists.

The Veteran Card will support up to 600,000 veterans, in Australia.

The card will help Australian businesses, service providers and community organisations to identify veterans so they can offer their acknowledgement and respect. For example, the card could provide a platform for businesses and community groups to provide tangible recognition and service to holders of the card.

This initiative will formally start in **December 2018**.

Veteran Cards link: <https://www.dva.gov.au/benefits-and-payments/veteran-card>

## Veteran Payment

From **1 May 2018**, Veteran Payment provides interim income support to veterans who have lodged a claim for a mental health condition under the Military, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 or the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988, are under age pension age and are incapable of working more than eight hours per week. Partners will also be eligible for veteran payment whilst the veteran is receiving Veteran Payment.

Veteran Payment is an income and asset tested payment, paid fortnightly, with a maximum rate of \$981.30 per fortnight for single persons and \$764.30 (each) per fortnight for members of a couple. Eligible renters may also receive Rent Assistance and those with dependent children may apply to receive Family Tax Benefit Part A through the Department of Human Services without having to satisfy the means test.

Link: <https://www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-is189-veteran-payment-overview>

## Veteran Rehabilitation

In DVA rehabilitation, a rehabilitation provider will talk with the veteran to find out what is important to them. A personal plan will be tailored, taking into account

individual circumstances and match them with suitable supports and services to meet the veterans' needs.

The booklet Rehabilitation for DVA Clients is available at [www.dva.gov.au/rehabilitationbooklet](http://www.dva.gov.au/rehabilitationbooklet)

## Reimbursement of costs for Medical Reports for VRB and SMRC

As of 1 April 2017, clients can claim a reimbursement of up to \$1,000 for costs incurred in obtaining relevant documentary medical evidence to support a review or appeal by the Veterans' Review Board (VRB) or the Specialist Medical Review Council (SMRC).

The reimbursement amount applies to each medical condition. The maximum reimbursement amount available previously was \$467.50 per condition.

## Proposed Change of Veterans' Incapacity Payments

Currently, an eligible veteran's incapacity payments reduce to 75 per cent (or a higher percentage depending on weekly hours worked) of their normal earnings after a period of 45 weeks in receipt of incapacity payment.

Under this measure, an eligible veteran who is participating in a DVA rehabilitation plan, and studying full-time as part of their plan, will receive incapacity payments at 100 per cent of their normal earnings. Their payments will not be reduced after 45 weeks while they maintain full-time study as part of their rehabilitation plan.

This change aims to provide financial surety to veterans and their families, to facilitate ongoing meaningful employment and reduce future reliance on taxpayer funded support. It will benefit veterans who are studying full-time as part of an approved return to work DVA rehabilitation plan.

The change will take effect from **1 November 2018**.

## Proposed Change to include Oral Claims for Compensation under MRCA

Veterans covered under MRCA are now able to claim for compensation with respect to their service related conditions both orally and in writing.

Presently, veterans need to put a claim for compensation in writing in order for it to be treated as a valid claim by DVA. This is unnecessarily burdensome on veterans and creates administrative inefficiencies.

The amendment enables a veteran to indicate orally that he or she is seeking some form of compensation under the MRCA and for that oral indication to be treated as a valid claim under the MRCA. Should veterans prefer to do so, they can still continue to make a claim for compensation in writing and give it to the Commission.

This amendment supports the veteran-centric reforms being made by DVA and will lead to improvements for clients. The changes make it simpler for veterans to claim compensation.

This change took effect **25 July 2018**.

## White Card on Transition

From **mid-2018**, access to mental health care has become even easier for transitioning ADF personnel when they automatically receive a White Health Card to access mental health treatment, without the need for claiming.

All mental health conditions are covered by this initiative including PTSD, anxiety, sleep disorders, alcohol



use disorder and substance dependencies. The condition does not need to be service-related.

Personnel who have already transitioned from the ADF, who do not have a White Card for mental health treatment, may still be able to access this treatment by contacting DVA via email [nlhc@dva.gov.au](mailto:nlhc@dva.gov.au) or calling 1800 555 254. More information can be found at [www.dva.gov.au/nlhc](http://www.dva.gov.au/nlhc). Another way is to register as a DVA Client on the new DVA My Service Portal <https://www.dva.gov.au/my-service/#/>. A guide on how to register is at the YouTube video <https://youtu.be/Y9zJIC8A6W4?t=79>

### Family Support Package

This initiative is designed to assist veterans maintain connections with their family, community and employment. Implemented on **1 May 2018**, the following support will help alleviate some of the pressure when families need it the most:

Additional childcare arrangements in specific circumstances for:

- veterans who have rendered warlike service, post 1 July 2004 and are in receipt of incapacity payments and participating in a DVA Rehabilitation Program under the MRCA.
- the spouse/partner of veterans killed in recent conflicts or veterans who have taken their life after returning from warlike service.

### Counselling support

- for the immediate family members of MRCA veterans, to enable the family unit to maintain its connections to community, employment and social interaction, and manage within its budget.

### Home assistance and counselling support

- for the spouses/partners of veterans killed in recent conflict or veterans who have taken their life after returning from warlike service, to assist them to adjust to life after the death of their partner.

For further information please see the links below  
<https://www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-mrc52-family-support-package-veterans-and-their-families>  
<https://www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-mrc53-family-support-package-widowers>

If you have any questions about the Family Support Package, please send an email to:  
[FAMILY.SUPPORT.PACKAGE@dva.gov.au](mailto:FAMILY.SUPPORT.PACKAGE@dva.gov.au)

### Carer Allowance – Important Information

Are you a Carer? Have you received a request from Centrelink asking for details of your income? From **20 September 2018**, the Government introduced an income test for Carer Allowance, which is paid by the Department of Human Services (DHS) through Centrelink. As a result, recipients of this payment must now have an income under the income test limit (currently \$250,000 for individuals and couples).

Recipients of DVA income support payments, such as the Service Pension, Veteran Payment and Age Pension, will automatically meet the new income test requirements. However, DHS has advised that it has already issued letters

to Carer Allowance recipients, some of whom may be DVA income support recipients, requesting they complete the Carer Allowance adjusted taxable income details form.

If you have received a letter requesting your income details and would like more information, or an extension of time to respond, you can contact Centrelink's Carer's Line or the new Carer Gateway. Centrelink Carer's Line: 132 717.

Carer Gateway DVA is working with DHS to address veteran community concerns as a matter of urgency.

More: <https://www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/home-and-care/aged-and-community-care/carers/carers-allowance-important>

### DVA Online Services are joining myGov

DVA has joined its online services with myGov to expand the self-servicing capability and enable veterans and their families to access DVA services online. Supported by the myGov platform, MyService is currently being improved to become DVA's main online channel providing a simpler and more efficient way of interacting with DVA for veterans and their families. For the first time, families and students receiving support through the DVA Education Schemes can now submit claims and lodge supporting documents online. Using MyService, current and former ADF members and, for some services their families can:

- register as a client
- lodge a claim for compensation
- access free mental health treatment
- apply for an increase in the disability pension
- view an electronic copy of a DVA Health Card and accepted conditions
- submit claims for Education Allowance through Education Schemes
  - keep personal details up to date, and
  - track claims made online.

From **30 July 2018**, DVA veterans and their families will need to create an account with myGov and link with DVA in order to access our online services. This will only need to be done once and you will use the same login and password to access myGov and DVA online services.

Link: <https://www.dva.gov.au/about-dva/news-and-updates/dva-online-services-are-joining-mygov>

### Submitting Claims for Wholly Dependent Partner Compensation Under MRCA

A referral to Service Coordination should be considered if a family would benefit from a single point of contact within DVA to assist with streamlining claims processes, exploring potential entitlements and linkage into relevant services.

For enquiries, please send an email to: [SERVICE.COORDINATION@dva.gov.au](mailto:SERVICE.COORDINATION@dva.gov.au)

Reference Link:

<http://clik.dva.gov.au/military-compensation-mrca-manuals-and-resources-library/policy-manual/ch-7-compensation-death/710-continuing-permanent-impairment-and-incapacity-etc-payable-wholly-dependent-partners-and-eligible-young-persons-bereavement-payments>

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## Australian Commando Association Inc.

# UPCOMING EVENTS DECEMBER 2018 - MARCH 2019

### NATIONAL

**Sat 09 Feb 19:** ACA Annual General Meeting and Dinner in Sydney  
Location and Time: TBC  
Contact Nat Secretary

### QUEENSLAND

**Wed 9 Jan 19:** Committee Meeting, Lord Alfred Hotel, Petrie Terrace, Brisbane @ 1830.  
Contact ACA Qld Secretary.

**Wed 13 Feb 19:** Committee Meeting, Lord Alfred Hotel, Petrie Terrace, Brisbane @ 1830.  
Contact ACA Qld Secretary

**Sun 24 Feb 19:** AGM & Cdo Family Day, QMM, Southbank Brisbane from 1100.  
Contact ACA Qld Secretary & Social Member

**Wed 13 Mar 19:** Committee Meeting, Lord Alfred Hotel, Petrie Terrace, Brisbane @ 1830.  
Contact ACA Qld Secretary

### NEW SOUTH WALES

**Wed 12 Dec 18:** NSW Christmas Party, Location & Time TBA.  
Contact ACA NSW Secretary

### VICTORIA

**Fri 25 - Sun 27 Jan 19:** Wilsons Prom Walk, RV at Prom Gates @ 1100. Camping Permit Required  
Contact Peter Beasley

**Sun 17 Feb 1:** The RIP Memorial Service, Shortlands Bluff, Queenscliff @ 1130,  
Contact Keith Hughes

**Sat 09 - Mon 11 Mar 19:** Family Weekend Retreat, Buchan.  
Contact Keith Hughes

**Sat 16 Mar 19:** AGM, Box Hill RSL from 1030  
Contact ACA Vic Secretary

### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Nothing Planned at Time of Writing

### REGIMENTS

**Fri 1 Feb 19:** 1 Cdo Regt Birthday (1981),  
4 RAR Cdo Birthday (1997)





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- Return economy class SALE airfares from Sydney to Samoa with Samoa Airways including checked luggage and pre-paid airport taxes (Packages are available from other major cities. Inquire today!)
  - **6 Nights accommodation at Coconuts Beach Club in a Coco Suite** inclusive of 40% Room Discount
  - 2 x 30-minute massages\* per room per stay
  - Choice of **FREE** Continental Breakfast or **FREE** Mini Bar
  - **FREE** Return Airport Transfers
- (\*Spa Treatments are subject to appointment availability, not transferable or redeemable for cash. Unused treatments will be forfeited)



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PER ADULT (TWIN SHARE)\*

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(OR UNTIL SOLD OUT)  
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03 JAN 2019 - 31 MAR 2019

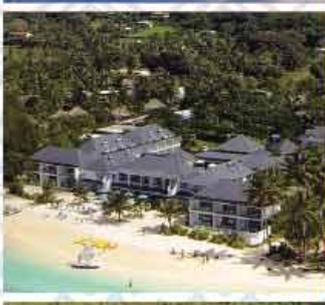
- Return economy class SALE airfares from Sydney to Vanuatu with Air Vanuatu including checked luggage and pre-paid airport taxes (Packages are available from other major cities. Inquire today!)
- **5 Nights accommodation at Ramada Resort Port Vila in a Junior Suite** Inclusive of 48% Room Discount
- Daily Buffet Breakfast
- **FREE** airport pick up/transfer to resort (plus transfer from resort to airport on departure)
- 1 x Access to one of the resort's theme buffets of the week for two or set dinner at Akiriki restaurant for two



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06 JAN 2019 - 31 MAR 2019

- Return economy class SALE airfares from Sydney to Fiji with Fiji Airways including checked luggage and pre-paid airport taxes (Packages are available from other major cities. Inquire today!)
- **6 Nights accommodation at Yatulé Resort & Spa in a Pool View Bure** Inclusive of 45% Room Discount
- Plated Breakfast Daily (continental buffet breakfast + 1 hot plate)
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- Return Private Car Airport Transfers
- **SPA BONUS OFFER: Pay only F\$100 per adult whilst at the resort & receive 1 x 60 minute massage per adult each day for 3 days\*.**



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BOOK BY: 30 NOV 2018  
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TRAVEL DATES:  
NOW - 31 MAR 2019

- Return economy class SALE airfares from Sydney to the Cook Islands with Virgin Australia including checked luggage and pre-paid airport taxes (Packages are available from other major cities. Inquire today!)
- **5 nights accommodation in a Premier Garden Room at Muri Beach Club Hotel** Inclusive of 25% Room Discount
- Tropical Breakfast Daily
- Complimentary use of snorkeling equipment & stand up paddle boards
- Complimentary use of internet at reception
- Invite to Managers Cocktail Hour
- Return Airport Transfers



**5 NIGHTS IN TONGA**  
**FROM \$1,055**  
PER ADULT (TWIN SHARE)\*

BOOK BY: 30 JUNE 2019  
TRAVEL DATES:  
NOW - 30 JUNE 2019

- Return economy class airfares from Sydney to Tonga with Virgin Australia, including checked luggage and pre-payable airport taxes (Packages are available from other major cities. Inquire today!)
- **5 Nights accommodation at Liku'alofa Beach Resort in a Garden View Fale inclusive of 1 FREE Night** (Stay 5 Nights / Pay 4 Nights)
- Guaranteed EARLY CHECK-IN
- **FREE** Tropical Breakfast Daily
- **FREE** Coconut Demonstration & Kava Ceremony
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Terms and conditions: Prices include sale economy class airfares, accommodation, return airport transfers and all taxes departing from Sydney. Enquire for your travel dates and airfares from other major cities.

## Adding exercise into routine mental health care

*Exercise physiologists are using research to add exercise into mental health treatment to help patients during their admission and beyond.*



Exercise Physiologist Kirrily Gould, who works at St John of God Richmond hospital, said her own research and external research had shown positive results when exercise was used in the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), drug and alcohol addiction, anxiety and depression.

“Our research is adding to a body of work worldwide showing that exercise can be a form of medicine,” Kirrily said. “We are providing lifestyle interventions here looking at people’s daily activities and trying to incorporate exercise as medicine for the treatment of their mental illnesses.” All patients at the hospital have access to the gym and other facilities, on top of treatment and care provided by exercise physiologists.

Patient Michael, who after a career as a police officer developed PTSD and depression, said exercise had been a key part of his recovery. “It’s changed my life a lot. It has given me my confidence back again which I had lost, I could sleep better and my moods are better,” he said. “With Kirrily, I set my goals and she helped me get back into a routine – which I think is the main thing.”

### Tips for Starting:

#### 1. Start at your own level

Set small goals and build your way up to 30 minutes of exercise per day. If you already have a set exercise regime, try something new like meditation. Guided meditations can improve relaxation and concentration.



#### 2. Find a time in the day that suits you

Even on a rainy day, there is plenty you can do inside – like yoga or meditation. One study found that even a single session of mindful exercise can improve mood and reduce stress.

#### 3. Choose activities that you enjoy

Exercise doesn't have to mean going to the gym, whether you like bush walking, swimming, Pilates or walking the dog, even 10 minutes of physical exercise daily is proven to have a positive impact on both your mental and physical health.

#### 4. Remember to reward yourself for incremental changes

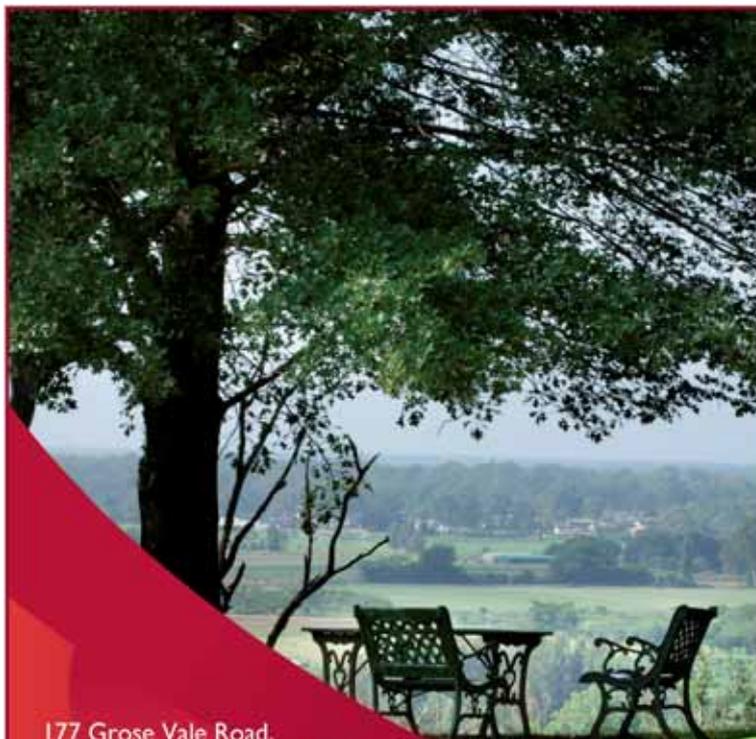
It won't all happen overnight, just make sure to take the first step to a better frame of mind. When you reach a milestone tell someone who you know will be able to celebrate it with you.

#### 5. Give yourself a break

If you miss one session, one day or one week, don't be too hard on yourself. You can pick back up where you left off and refocus on the goals that you have set for yourself.

#### 6. Take your friends or workmates along for the ride

If you are living with a mental illness, it can be difficult at times to socialise, however, asking a friend to join you in physical activity is a great way to stay motivated. It gives you the chance to share an experience with someone while keeping your plans accountable to one another.



## Expertise in Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

Set in the foothills of the Blue Mountains only an hour from Sydney, St John of God Richmond Hospital provides a safe, structured and supportive environment for individuals recovering from exposure to traumatic events.

Our team of caring professionals are experienced in working with the specific needs and concerns of people who have been injured in the line of duty.

PTSD is an operational injury like any other injury – it does not have to be a life sentence.



**ST JOHN OF GOD**  
Richmond Hospital

Find out more at  
[sjog.org.au/richmond](http://sjog.org.au/richmond)



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