



ARMI NIUS

NEWSLETTER OF THE PIB-NGIB-HQ-PIR ASSOCIATION

2/2023

Patron: Major-General B.W. (Hori) Howard AO MC ESM (Ret'd)

POST-ANZAC DAY EDITION

Introduction

I'm delighted to introduce this Post-Anzac Day issue of *Armi Nius*. There was a special nature to the Anzac Day commemorations in Australia and Papua New Guinea this year. In the pages that follow we open a window on some of the ceremonies that took place, and on responses from some of the members who participated in the day's commemorations.

This issue also features a tribute to Papua New Guinea's fourth Prime Minister, Sir Rabbie Namaliu, and celebrates birthdays for three veterans who look to be ageing like fine wine.



As President, I wish to acknowledge the contribution of all members, and the members of other Associations, in honouring the servicemen and women of Australia and PNG. Their sacrifices saved our democracies; and if this year's Anzac Day is any indication, their legacy is alive and well 81 years later. Let us make sure that continues.

Major (Retd.) Donald Graham

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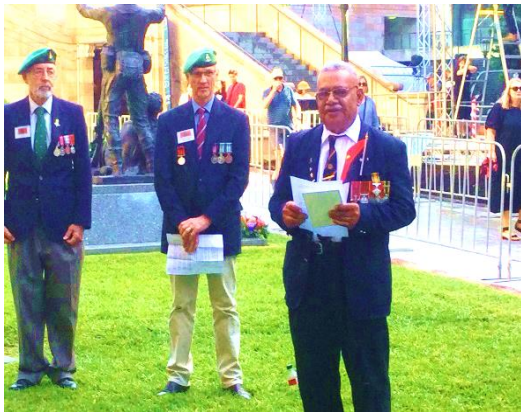
In Brisbane the day began with the traditional dawn service at Anzac Square. As usual it was attended by thousands and, as has become customary, it included many young people. That so many - young and old and in-between - gathered in the chilly darkness of a drizzly morning in late April suggests that this is not a day for old people reminiscing about the past. It is a day that is alive and important in the culture of this country.



Dawn Service, Brisbane

A few hours later ex-servicemen and their families and friends gathered for a ceremony at the South-West Pacific memorial on the grass at Anzac Square. Some travelled significant distances to be there, including Major-General Jerry Singirok, former PNGDF Commander for two terms, who introduced the ceremony.

Major-General Jerry Singirok:



On this Anzac Day we meet to remember those from our Units who died during and after the Second World War – particularly those who died in Papua New Guinea from the Papuan Infantry Battalion, the New Guinea Infantry Battalions, the 2nd/14th Battalion, the NGVR, the 39th Battalion and other regiments.

We thank them for their mateship, the love they gave to their families, and their sacrifices.

This year marks the 81st Anniversary of the many epic battles fought in 1942 against the Japanese Army across Papua New Guinea. We honour the soldiers (PNG and Australian) and the civilians who died because of those battles.

Association member (Sgt) Kevin Smith, 2 PIR:

During the Second World War, Osmar White and Damien Parer passed the wounded walking back from the Kokoda front line.

White said, 'At night I keep passing lines of wounded men. It is pitch dark. They shuffle at a snail's pace, holding each other in long, pitiful strings. At the tail of every string, men drop off and lie face down in the mud. The leaders help those who have collapsed, (helping them) into the bushes at the side of the Track...'

White also said, 'Coming back from Isurava, I pass a man who had his leg blown off by a mortar bomb, just below the knee. He has ligatured the stump, applied two shell dressings, and wrapped the remainder of the leg in an old sack. He crawls and hops vigorously. He says he is OK to reach Eora Village. I tell him I'll try to round up some stretcher bearers for him. He says, "Get them for some other poor (bloke). There are plenty worse off than me."'

White finishes, 'What is fine in these Australian men outweighs and makes trivial all that is horrible in their plight. I cannot explain it except to say that they are at all times cheerful, and help one another. They never give up the fight. They never admit defeat.'

Association President (Major) Donald Graham:

Here on this national day of remembrance at our PNG memorial, our PIB-NGIB-HQ-PIR Association pays homage to the PIB and NGIB members for their bravery and sacrifice throughout the New Guinea campaign, 1942-1945.



Of great significance, it was the Papuan Infantry Battalion (PIB) alone who opened the Kokoda campaign, with the ambush of the first Japanese invasion troops in Papua, one thousand yards east of Awala on the north coast of Papua New Guinea on 23 July 1942.

It was the subsequent gallant actions of the PIB supported by PNG carriers, and other Australian units on the Kokoda Trail such as the 39th & 2/14th, that saved Australia from Japanese invasion.

Today we remember their bravery and their sacrifice.

Member of 2nd/14th Battalion Assn. Mr Trevor Pryor:

Verses from 'Soldier at Rest in the Jungle' by Lt. Bede Tongs MM

Please let me be, it is now so peaceful.

No more grenades, shot and shell to foul the air.

My earthen nest was made by soldiers true

Who braved as they dug the jungle soil.

Prayed, as we all have the same God.

I heard the praying, but I could not speak.

One said, 'We prayed together at school in Bowral town'.

Little did we know then, one would lay the other down

In a faraway place, fighting for home and country

In a vicious war.

...

Do not mourn for long, at times remember me.

I fought for peace.

I am at peace.

My loved ones, my friends, let me be...

Association member Mrs Barbara Kerr-Graham:

In the spirit of John Herrington's words after the War, we say, 'We remember them today: Jimmy, Pokino, John Metson, Bruce Kingsbury, Butch Bisset and all the rest ... the lost ones of the Pacific; the soldiers who copped it somewhere along the way so that Australia would be fit for heroes to live in.'

Herrington also said, 'We remember also what matters... We remember their friendship and the spirit that throbbed inside them. We shall remember them because we could not forget, even if we wanted to.'

Laying of wreaths

This was followed by the laying of wreaths, and in the stillness of an already quiet Brisbane morning, the gathering paused to hear the Ode and observe one minute's silence.



President Phil Ainsworth, NGVR/PNGVR Association: The Ode (from Laurence Binyon)

*They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.*

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old,
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We shall remember them.*

Participants then joined in singing the Papua New Guinea national anthem, led by General Singirok.



'O, ARISE ALL YOU SONS'

(Tok Pisin Translation by Kieran Nelson)

O arise all you sons of this land,
Let us sing of our joy to be free,

Praising God and rejoicing to be
Papua New Guinea.

Shout our name from the
mountains to seas

Papua New Guinea;

Let us raise our voices & proclaim
Papua New Guinea.

Sanap ol yupela pikinini bilong dispela kantri,
Mipela singaut amamas long yumi husat i
stap fri,

Amamas tru long God na bel i gut mipela i
Papua Niugini.

Singautim nem long maunten na solwara

Papua Niugini;

Mipela i tok strong long telimautim
Papua Niugini.

Closure

Vice President (Sgt) Greg Ivey (2 PIR) thanked everyone for their attendance and their spirit of commitment to the importance of the day, and declared the ceremony completed.



Brisbane



Sydney

The marchers moved off to take their place in the line-up for the march, and the others moved to spectator points, joining thousands who had already begun lining the route of the march.

Dawn Services



King's Park Perth



Hobart Tasmania



Geraldton W.A.

Papua New Guinea Commemorations



Bomana War Cemetery Pt Moresby



Coastwatchers Memorial Madang



Rabaul Memorial

(Images courtesy of Australian High Commission PNG)



Isurava memorial built by the Australian Government with permission.

(2023 images courtesy of Adventure Kokoda)

The Day After: Reflections on a Special Anzac Day

In the last few days, two significant events in Australia's cultural history have occurred. One was the commemoration of Anzac Day on April 25; the other was the death of Barry Humphries, three days earlier on April 22. They came together for me in a way I hadn't expected.

In 1967-68, along with a small number of national servicemen, I spent 18 months in the 1st Pacific Islands Regiment at Taurama Barracks, 20 kilometres or so out from Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. I was a sergeant in the Education Section, but this was PNG's elite infantry battalion and that was made very clear to us: we might be teachers, but above that we were infantrymen, with all the responsibilities that went with being a member of 1 PIR.

During that posting I had many experiences that helped shape the person I have become. Among those were the conversations I had with regular soldiers who had been in combat against enemy forces: a small number in the Second World War, others in Korea, Malaya, or Vietnam. As a young 21-year-old I was interested to hear about those experiences, but I was to be disappointed, then greatly respectful: none would talk about the actual experience of combat, and I quickly realised that was because it was too hard. What they saw and what they had to do was too difficult to put into words, and, they believed, beyond the comprehension of anyone who wasn't there. While it was now only a memory, it was with them still, very deep, and it was permanent. Further, some added they felt unappreciated by the wider community for how they had contributed to our freedom.

Along with other national servicemen I attended an early gathering this Anzac Day to honour those who fought in Papua New Guinea, and then watched the march. And somewhere in there, from forty years ago, Barry Humphries invited himself into my thoughts and took me back to the early 1980s when my wife and I attended his performance at Her Majesty's Theatre in Brisbane. We met Edna Everage and Les Patterson, and we laughed, often because we could see ourselves being affectionately sent up. That's what we expected. What we didn't expect was the appearance on stage about half-way through of an elderly man in a dressing gown and slippers, sitting in a rocking chair with the shadow of a Hill's Hoist on a screen behind him. The lighting was low, suggesting it was late in the day, and he was sitting facing partly away from the audience, reminiscing: perhaps to himself, or perhaps to an unseen person. He said he lived at 36 Gallipoli Crescent in Glen Iris, a suburb of Melbourne.

The man spoke sadly, looking back to friends who had died in the war he had fought in, and others who had died later as age took its toll. He referred to them as 'returned men'. He was sad about them, and about how they seemed to be forgotten, and how quickly the world was changing, seeming to be moving on without him. After a few minutes the shadow on the screen changed to a hand beckoning him. He asked, 'Is it time?' Then he stood up, and as the stage lights slowly faded, he walked, aided by a walking stick, into the darkness.

There was silence for a moment, then applause crept in, first a little tentatively, then enthusiastically, and it continued for some time. The same person who had us rolling in our seats with laughter had, within minutes, moved us to tears. It wasn't long before we were laughing again as Edna reappeared, but that brief interlude of pathos made me feel we were

in the presence of something special that night, through someone who had helped us to a deeper understanding of who we are, and where we've come from. He had gently touched what those soldiers at Taurama couldn't talk about. Somehow, it seemed that he knew; and if he didn't know, he sensed it. I learnt later that the man's name was Sandy Stone, one of Barry Humphries' least known, least performed, but much-loved characters.

If Sandy Stone could have been present yesterday in Brisbane or any of our other capital cities, or the many small towns in regional areas, he might have been surprised and reassured. He'd have seen thousands gathered at dawn to remember and express their gratitude to people like him; hundreds marching in the city centres; thousands lining the streets to applaud them; hundreds more in suburbs and regional towns, all doing the same thing, all over Australia. And he'd have known that on the other side of the world, as dawn rose over Gallipoli, thousands more were gathered, making sure that the flame of gratitude would keep burning.

And Sandy would have known that out of the world he thought was passing him by had come young Australian backpackers who instigated what has now become an annual pilgrimage to Gallipoli, increasing in attendance each year, all to ensure that we remember and honour people like him.

So this year Anzac Day seemed a bit more special than usual. Our sacred day of remembering the deaths of so many who gave their lives for our freedom happened just after the death of someone who, through humour and pathos, committed himself to helping us understand what it means to be Australian, and to be grateful for it. We will remember them, and I hope we will remember him.

(Sgt) Norm Hunter (1 PIR 1967-68)

26 April 2023

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In the Beginning ...

Anzac Day 2023 will soon fade into the past and we'll all move on with our busy lives until it comes around again next year, and we gather again to remember. Before that happens, it's worth taking a moment for a quick glance back in history, to remind ourselves where this special day came from, and where it has come to today.

The first Anzac Day was held in Adelaide on 13 October 1915. At a public meeting on 10



January 1916 Canon David Garland, Chaplain at the Enoggera Army Barracks in Brisbane, was appointed honorary secretary of the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland (ADCCQ). The Committee went straight to work, endorsing 25 April 1916 as the date to be promoted as Anzac Day, and from then on into the future. Other states soon followed, and within a few years the date had become a national day of reflection.

First Anzac Day parade in Sydney, along Macquarie Street, 25 April 1916

Inter-denominational tension was rife in Australia in the early decades of the 20th century, and became particularly passionate and open during the war, in particular over the issue of conscription. In light of this the Committee endorsed Garland's proposal of a non-denominational commemoration that would bring Australia's religious as well as non-religious groups together, thus establishing a framework for the commemoration of Anzac Day into the future. That framework included the Anzac Day dawn services, the marches, the wreath-laying ceremonies at memorials across the country, special church services, the two minutes' silence, and the gathering for lunch after the march. The two minutes' silence was conceived in lieu of prayer, opening the remembrance services to all whatever their religious beliefs, while attendees could still offer a silent prayer or other spiritual devotion if they wished. It was a visionary, inclusive concept, and remains essentially intact today.

The State Library of Queensland now holds digitised Minutes from the inaugural meeting of the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland, available for viewing online.

The initial idea of the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee was for the day to be observed in Australia and New Zealand. That changed in 1934 when Turkish President Kemal Ataturk brought it onto the international stage by initiating a special observance in Turkey. On that occasion Ataturk offered beautiful words of reconciliation that reached out to his country's former enemies:

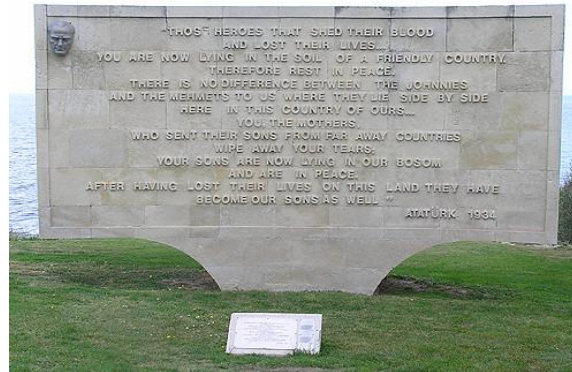
Those heroes who shed their blood

And lost their lives,

You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country;

Therefore, rest in peace.

*There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmetts to us
Where they lie side by side
Here in this country of ours.*



*You, the mothers,
Who sent their sons from far away countries,
Wipe away your tears.
Your sons are now lying in our bosom,
And are in peace.
After having lost their lives on this land,
They have become our sons as well.*

The day took on further international status in 2019, when the collection of Anzac Day Commemoration Committee Queensland documents was added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Australian Register. And we know that in 2023, along with Australia and New



Zealand, Anzac Day was commemorated in Papua New Guinea, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Turkey, Canada, Poland, India, Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, Brunei, Egypt, Hong Kong, Israel, Malaysia, Malta, a number of Pacific Island nations, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, the USA, Hungary, and Antarctica.

The Anzac spirit has touched so many diverse communities around the world that it has grown into a symbolic acknowledgement of remembrance, gratitude, and hope for peace among the nations of the world.

(Image courtesy of Ru Taylor, Gold Coast PNG Club)

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And a little more history ...

The original Anzac biscuits varied vastly in composition from the ones we enjoy today. During WW1 parcels were often sent from Australian homes to the soldiers on the front line. Many included home-baked goods. This supplemented their daily rations of bully beef (similar to spam) and hard tack (similar to Sao crackers). The original Anzac biscuits often contained rolled oats, golden syrup and flour, just like the ones today, with some additions and subtractions to the recipes used today. The ingredients made a densely nutritious biscuit from a calorific standpoint whilst maintaining high shelf life to survive the shipment overseas.

(*The Cove*, May 2023)

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Other News

Sir Rabbie Namaliu

A State Funeral was held in Port Moresby on 18 April for Sir Rabbie Namaliu, Papua New Guinea's fourth Prime Minister. In his tribute to Sir Rabbie, Prime Minister James Marape said, 'Sir Rabbie emerged from a simple missionary family into becoming an extraordinary Papua New Guinean'. Mr Marape listed some of Sir Rabbie's achievements:

- He was among the first intake of students to the University of Papua New Guinea in 1966, and among the first graduates in 1970.
- He was one of the first Papua New Guineans to undertake post-graduate studies at an overseas university.
- He was one of the first Papua New Guinean lecturers at UPNG.
- He was the first Chief-of-Staff prior to independence in 1975, and then to the first Prime Minister, Michael Somare; and a member of the newly established nation's Constitutional Planning Committee.
- He was the nation's fourth Prime Minister.
- In 1988 he was made a member of Her Majesty's Privy Council: a formal advisory body to the sovereign of the United Kingdom.

Mr Marape went on to describe the many portfolios and public offices Sir Rabbie held from 1982 to 2007, and his tribute concluded thus: 'Mr Namaliu's resting place lies under the shadows of Independence Hill with other former Prime Ministers. May his resting place serve as an important reminder to us and those who will come after us that this country was built on the shoulders of great men like Sir Rabbie Namaliu'.

(Our thanks to *PNG Haus Bung* for the information in this article)

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Birthday celebrations

It's birthday season for our three Second World War Veterans who live on the East Coast.

"Jock" Wilkinson (NSW) (below left waiting for 95 more candles) served in the PIB and in 2 NGIB. Jock turned 102 at home on 2nd April. Jock again led our members in this year's Anzac Day March in Sydney.

Don Collins (VIC) (below middle with wife, Anne) turned 100 at home on 15 March. Don served in 2 NGIB.

Laurie Stevens (QLD) (below right, in the driver's seat) also served in 2 NGIB, and turned 98 on 8 May (VE Day).

Congratulations to the three of you on these wonderful milestones. We offer our thanks and gratitude to you from everyone in the Association.



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(Image courtesy of Ru Taylor, Gold Coast PNG Club)

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