



Armi Nius

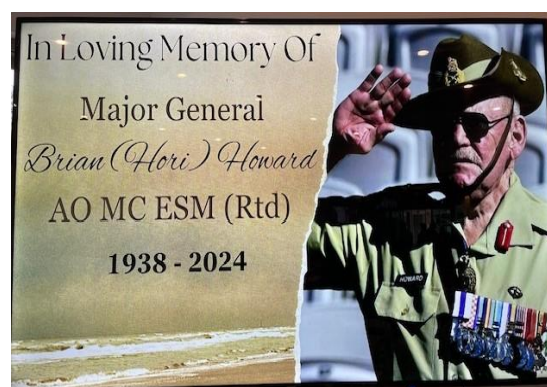
NEWSLETTER OF THE PIB-NGIB-HQ-PIR ASSOCIATION

2/2024

Dedication

Welcome to the post-Anzac Day edition of *Armi Nius*. We begin this edition of the newsletter on a note of sadness. As Association members will know by now, our Patron since 2016, Major General (Ret'd) Brian William ('Hori') Howard passed away in Canberra on 16 May.

Following a very successful career in the Army and in Emergency Services NSW, Brian 'Hori' - short for horrible - Howard became Patron of the PIB-NGIB-HQ-PIR Association in January 2016. Hori epitomised those many talented Servicemen who gained affection and respect in their leadership and education roles in the Pacific Islands Regiment before Independence. Hori was an exemplary Aussie Digger in his overseas postings and later within our Association. He was an outstanding *black hander*.



Above this, Hori was an unforgettable husband, father, grandfather and mate.

There are several interpretations of the term 'black hander'. Hori Howard said that it referred to officers of the PIR who spoke Tok Pisin to each other socially when they later encountered another ex-PIR Officer in Australia. Other Australian Officers, observing such conversations, would refer to ex-PIR Officers as 'the black handers'.

Hori regularly contributed funny stories to our Newsletter about his posting at Vaimo Outstation. (Sgt) Greg Ivey 2PIR, 1969-70

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Memorial Service for Major General 'Hori' Howard, NSW



There were nearly 300 people in attendance and the function room was packed (picture below). The man seated to the right of the resting crutches is General Peter Cosgrove, former Governor-General of Australia.

There were no group photo opportunities, but I took a photo of the table after the Poppy Service (left).

There were heartfelt tributes by Brigadier Groat on behalf of the Chief of Army; Lieutenant-Colonel Harry Clarsen who served with Hori; Dep. Comm. Damien Johnston of behalf of the SES; Mrs Lorna Calder who was head of HR at the SES; Mr Ray James on behalf of the RSL; Mr Kerry Howard, Hori's younger brother; and Mr Michael Howard, Hori's son, who read out an extended tribute from Peter Stokes, RMC classmate and fellow PIR Officer.



I also caught up with former Brigadier Phil McNamara CSC, who took over from Hori as DG of SES and also served in 2 PIR.

Having served with Hori in 1 PIR, I felt the tributes all confirmed that he was a likeable, gruff perfectionist, who did well in any venture that he took on. He will be sorely missed.

by (Major) Russ Wade, NSW & ACT Representative, PIB-NGIB-HQ-PIR Association

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Major General Brian (Hori) Howard and the 'Chalkies'

In early 2019, Garry Screen and myself started investigating venues for the 2019 Chalkies Reunion. As we'd both been posted to Singleton for Infantry training some 50 years before, the base (now Lone Pine Barracks) seemed a logical place to start. As the Singleton Barracks housed the Australian Army Infantry Museum with a PIR exhibition, this was also of interest. ('Chalkies' was the term given to National Servicemen, almost entirely teachers, who were posted to PNG Command from 1965-1972. The majority were posted with the rank of Acting Sergeant.)

When we visited the Museum in March 2019, there were three display cabinets for PIR, one of which was empty. There was limited material from the Pacific Islands Regiments on display. Maj General Howard – Hori – had always been keen to see this expanded, as he felt the PIR was the

‘forgotten regiment’ of the Australian Army. A number of us had the privilege of getting to know Hori over a number of years, primarily at the Kokoda Service held at Broadbeach, Qld on 8 August each year.

After some discussion, Hori suggested to Garry and myself that we, as in the Chalkies, take the third cabinet and use it to show the contribution we made in educating the PNG Army soldiers for independence. Hori then garnered the support of Major Don Graham (Ret) to facilitate the process and make it happen. Hori gave us a free hand to include those items which demonstrated the role we played in educating an Army for independence. The role of the Royal Australian Army Educational Corps in PNG was finally receiving some recognition.

Having an Army General champion the cause makes things happen. It was then up to us to provide material of sufficient quality to exhibit. This was achieved with the invaluable assistance of members of the Army History Unit, who were also responsible for displaying the material.

The material for the Exhibit has come from a number of “Chalkies” including Ian Ogston, Wayne Bensley, Russell Bates, Terry Edwinsmith, Rod Cassidy, Darryl Dymock, Rob Duff, Kev Horton, Greg Ivey, Greg Farr, Garry and myself, and numerous others. As Chalkies, we are proud to have contributed to the emerging nation of PNG and to have this recognised in the PIR Exhibit, which we have now doubled to four cabinets.

During a number of conversations over some years, Hori frequently commented on the positive impact of Education Courses on the PIR soldiers. He alluded to his pioneering work at Goldie River during 1962-63 (Hori was a Platoon Commander in the PIR) as an example of this, as well as his time at 1 PIR, 1969-72 as Commander of D Company and later as 2IC, 1 PIR. His support for the Chalkies then was invaluable and much appreciated. Hori always felt our impact on the PNG soldiers was way out of proportion to our actual numbers.

Garry and I were well aware that Hori had been responsible for initiating the PIR presence in the Infantry Museum at Singleton. So it was with great pleasure that we were able to invite General Howard to officially open the extended PIR Exhibit on 16 October 2019 as part of our Reunion. Hori expressed his gratitude to the Chalkies involved for filling the gap left by others in the PIR Exhibit.

Hori’s support was crucial to the Museum recognition of the RAAEC, and the Chalkies can feel proud that we helped Hori achieve his long-held Museum ambition.

(Sgt) Steve Beveridge 1 PIR, 1969-70

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Anzac Day 2024

Two Prime Ministers visit Kokoda-Isurava

Just before Anzac Day 2024, the Prime Ministers of Papua New Guinea and Australia visited Kokoda Village and then hiked together to Isurava Village to lead the Dawn Service at the joint Memorial honouring the casualties of the Kokoda Campaign in 1942. Their hike together and their joint participation in the Anzac Day Dawn Service symbolised the historic partnership between their two nations.

Prime Minister Marape spoke about the lessons of the War, the legacy of Australian soldiers, and the vital importance of Peace. He reflected: 'May the spirit of Anzac, underscored by the bravery and courage these young men exhibited and the mateship that grew between them and our Pacific soldiers never be forgotten. Our willingness to roll up our sleeves and lend a hand, to be there for our neighbours, and to give back to our communities keeps the Anzac spirit alive.'

Prime Minister Albanese told the multi-national group at the Memorial that 'this place has known the most pitiless ferocity of battle, fought with bullet, bayonet, mortar and the desperation of bare hands'. He had been briefed on the six-day Battle of Isurava fought by Australian troops and the Papuan



Prime Ministers hiking from Kokoda to Isurava (courtesy of Tim Swanston, ABC News)

Infantry Battalion against the invading Japanese Army. The Australian Prime Minister referred to the track as "this great artery of mud and suffering and perseverance that has come to occupy a place of singular power in Australia's shared memory." He also paid tribute to the local villagers who risked their lives to feed, guide and shelter Australians in desperate need along the Trail. Importantly he highlighted that '*for the Papua New Guineans, this was not a theatre, a backdrop or a battlefield. It was home.*'

Mr Marape, speaking later to a journalist, praised the initiative of Mr Albanese. 'His commitment and dedication to the past and his overview of the Pacific as a family of nations which should maintain respect to the past, especially those who paved the way for our democracy to be what it is today in terms of the Pacific nations having democracy, free market economy, respect the rule of law. And Australia is the biggest democracy in our part of the world, so to speak, and so for him taking this moment and reflecting on the past

symbolises that we can't take the present for granted. We too must plant our own memories, the memories of democracy, respecting each other, caring for each other, carrying each other, working for each other, and walking side by side. I think that was what (was) symbolised on this Anzac occasion.'

Mr Albanese also spoke later to a journalist: 'What we have done over the past couple of days is to get just a small insight into the courage and resilience of our soldiers, and the Papuan soldiers, and the people who provided them assistance, the local citizens. What they all did is quite extraordinary. The achievement that they did was to defend this nation and to defend Australia. It's a reminder of the decision of John Curtin to bring Australian troops back to our own region to defend our own land. That was a tough decision, but it was the right decision at that time, and it secured our future. But what the walk has also been about is us walking side by side, showing that we walk together today and into the future as well. We cooperate and have a great relationship as individual leaders, but our nations have a great relationship as well, and that was forged here on the battlefields during World War Two.'

[with acknowledgement to Departmental websites, *PNG Kundu* and *PNG Post-Courier*]

Videos of the two Isurava speeches are available on YouTube and are highly recommended.

(Sgt) Greg Ivey

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The One Day of the Year

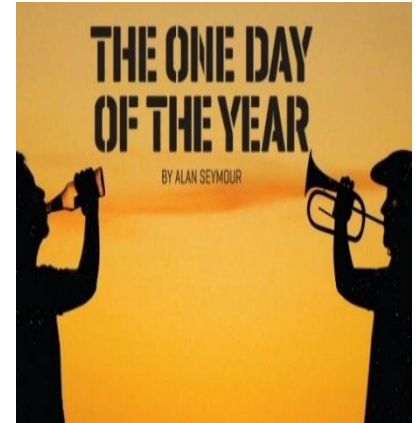


On the morning of 25 April 1968, along with my fellow national servicemen and almost every regular soldier from Taurama Barracks, Murray Barracks and Goldie River, I stood in the dark at Bomana War Cemetery and waited for the sun to rise over the Owen-Stanleys. Every 'Nasho' was there. We were there because we'd sensed that there was something special and important to the regular soldiers about this day and this piece of ground, and we wanted to join them and show our respect.

Back in Australia it was a different story.

In the mid-1960s I was attending Kelvin Grove Teachers' College, and also studying part time for an Arts degree at the University of Queensland. Under the subjects English Method at college, and English 1 at the university, there was a common text set for study: Alan Seymour's play, *The One Day of the Year*. It seemed to capture the zeitgeist of the times, with the older generation venerating the commemoration of Anzac Day and the younger questioning and challenging it.

Those were the years of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, the emergence of the anti-war movement and the accompanying resurgence of folk music, much of it reflecting the views of that movement. Seymour left it to the playgoer or reader to form a view, but he painted the picture skilfully, especially the view held by many young people that Anzac Day glorified war. That continued through the 1970s. Attendances at Anzac Day ceremonies dwindled, and it seemed that the negative view was going to prevail and Anzac Day would soon become a minor event.



Then in the 1980s, something changed. A new group of young people were emerging, and backpackers travelling in Europe began arriving at Gallipoli, camping overnight to observe the dawn on Anzac Day. And gradually their numbers grew: so much so that thousands – now including adults



Backpackers at Gallipoli, 25 April 2024

– have come to see that commemoration as a pilgrimage, and Anzac Day has become close to a sacred day in Australia, with Anzac Cove now close to sacred ground for Australians.

How do we explain what happened here? No charismatic political leader rose up to lead the revival; no particular event took place to change people's views; the popularity of folk music declined, as all music trends do, but it wasn't replaced by patriotic music. Something else had happened?

From a lifetime as a primary teacher, high school teacher and principal, I think I have some idea of what happened. In those years working with teenagers I came to the view that young people have an inherent sense of decency and hope for the future. It's not always the same as that of adults and they sometimes get it wrong. But so do we.

I've asked some of those young backpackers from back then what it was that drew them to be at Gallipoli on the morning of 25 April, and most of them can't articulate it. It was felt, not reasoned. The closest any came to finding the words were, 'It just seemed the right thing to do', or 'We just wanted to do it', or 'We just thought there was something special about it'.

So what was it that those young people sensed? Maybe this. In 1991, two years after the demise of the Soviet Union, Vaclav Havel, the inspirational leader of Czechoslovakia's 'velvet revolution' against Soviet repression, wrote:

Hope is ... the certainty that something makes sense regardless of how it turns out. It is this hope, above all, that gives us strength to live and to continually try new things, even in conditions that might seem hopeless.



Piper at dawn, Gallipoli, 2024

Could those young people who turned our understanding of the Anzac Day tradition around from glorifying war to something that 'just seemed the right thing to do', have held in their hearts an understanding of Vaclav Havel's idea of hope: *the certainty that something makes sense regardless of how it turns out?*

They didn't have the words for it, but maybe there was *a certainty that something makes sense* to those young people, and it's flowed through to us today in the way we see ourselves as Australians. And did they sense that it would also *give us strength to live*? Like them, I can't quite find the words to capture it, because it seems like something deeper than patriotism, but like them, I sense it.



Hillbrook School students & wreath, Brisbane

Young people today don't get good press. The media present the worst behaviour, because 'bad news makes good news', and viewed through the lens of the media that appears to be the norm. But when you work with young people over many years and learn how to bring



'We just thought there was something special about it'

out the best in them, the results are often uplifting, and every now and then, inspirational.

That's what we saw back in the 1980s when some young people sensed something was important, then other young people did, then adults did, and now in every city and town across Australia, no matter how small or remote, we pause as a nation; and again, we remember.

Over 30 years ago young people found some meaning and wisdom where others couldn't see it, and they began the restoration of Anzac Day back to what it once was: Australia's one day of the year. Young people are our future, and in these trying times, the way that they saw the significance of something many were in danger of forgetting, surely gives us hope for Australia's future.

(Sgt) Norm Hunter, 1 PIR 1967-68, Newsletter co-editor

What is the 'story' that rests at the heart of Anzac Day?

Association President Major (Ret'd) Don Graham

The 60s and 70s generation had no experience of major wars: Vietnam was their only experience, and they had no 'feeling' for a global conflict that involved many other countries. Add to that the fact that the Gallipoli Campaign was a disaster. So 'good on' the next generation who saw it differently and realised what Anzac Day is really about and why it's so important in Australia.

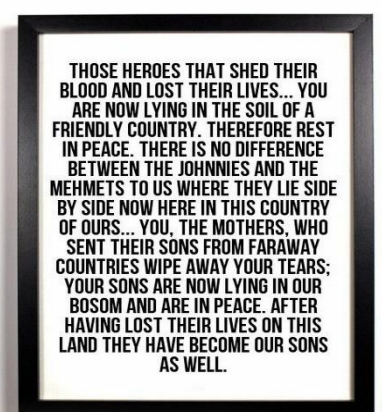
Gallipoli was the first major wartime operation involving Australian and New Zealand troops, and it was planned by British generals without proper reconnaissance: they just worked off a map. The only success of the campaign was the withdrawal, which was engineered by Australian and New Zealand strategists. It worked to perfection, and the Turks didn't realise they were gone till daybreak the next day.



Anzac Day is not a commemoration of the event itself. It's a day of remembrance, appreciation and respect for those who have fought and those who died fighting for our freedom to be who we are. They were not just fighting for Australia and New Zealand: they were fighting for those whose values are similar to ours, determined to protect them. That's why thousands turn up once a year to pay their respects, and many of them are young people, showing that they understand what it's about.



The word 'respect' used by President Don above had some historical significance. When the fighting was over and the peace settlements were in place, the Turkish leader Kemal Ataturk composed words of deep respect for the Anzacs and the Turkish soldiers they fought against. In 1934 his words were placed on a memorial that stands at Gallipoli today.



ALCOTE
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Mike O'Connor *Brisbane Courier-Mail*

When my father returned from the jungles of New Guinea at the end of World War II, he and his Army colleagues were sent to a camp in the RNA Showgrounds and told they were to sleep in the pig pens.

Dad was a sergeant, and his mates, thinking that this was not quite what they deserved after years of combat, looked to him for leadership.

'Bugger this,' he said. 'We're going home', so they shouldered their kit and marched out, inviting the guards on the gate to try to stop them if they dared.

We remember them, these heroes of yesterday, on Thursday, or at least those of us will who have a sufficient sense of national pride to feel gratitude for the selfless sacrifices that have been made to protect our freedom.

Duty, honour and country was their credo back then, and how quaintly old-fashioned these virtues now sound.

If my father and his mates were to rise from their graves and walk those same streets now, what would they think of the world that they'd found?

Iwan Jones *Courier-Mail*

Anzac Day Parade Brisbane Committee Chairman Kerry Gallagher AM said 'It's a very special day for the veterans, the dawn service is a little bit sombre and reflective, but the parade is when they get together with their mates and so perhaps it's a little more joyous for them.'

Mr Gallagher said this year's parade will feature a commemoration for the 22 Australian nurses that died in the Bangka Island massacre.



'I've always been in awe of the courage of the 22 nurses that were marched out into the water and then shot, one survived,' he said.

'The 22 who died are really symbolic of the courage of the service women that have defended Australia, that is not always recognised.'

95-year-old veteran Squadron Leader John Burgess served during peacekeeping operations in Kashmir from 1963 to 1965. Mr Burgess collectively served over 30 years, spending 18 years in the army and 16 years in the air force.

After all these years, Mr Burgess said it is great to see the Anzac Day tradition continue. 'It's getting bigger every year, it's good to see the young people coming in,' he said.

(Sgt) Ian Ogston Goldie River Training Depot 1970-71, Newsletter co-editor

ANZAC DAY is a day that leads to many thoughts intruding in my mind. There is, however, a single thought that keeps visiting me on this day.

It is a deep thankfulness that for the first time in four generations of my family, my children have not needed or been needed to go into military service. My grandfather went off to the trenches of the Western Front during World War 1 and my father fought

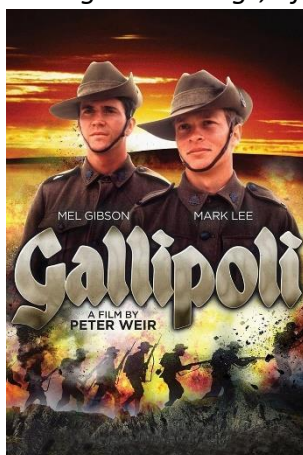
in the African desert and the jungles of New Guinea. And then, I was needed to do military service during the Vietnam War and served in Papua New Guinea.

I wish I could look to a future world of peace that did not expect the new generations to sacrifice themselves in the slaughterhouse field of armed conflict. But, when the Putins of this world choose to take it upon themselves to inflict themselves on their neighbours, I see without any trouble, the future may still throw up a need for communities to stand up and give all that they have – their lives.

Evan Williams, reviewing Peter Weir's film 'Gallipoli' in August 1981

Weir's purpose is ... to explain what Gallipoli (and by that we mean the First World War) means to Australia's history and our understanding of ourselves.

The film is an examination of enduring verities in our spirit and consciousness. It is a study, among other things, of idealism and folly, and the first serious attempt in an Australian film to come to grips with one of our formative traditions – the idea of mateship.



It asks such questions as, 'What is an Australian?' and 'What has gone to make us who we are?' 'Gallipoli' provides some of the answers. The film's abiding preoccupation is with waste and loss – loss of face, the blighting and subversion of good and natural human instincts like courage and honour, above all, of course, the loss of life - specifically the destruction of a generation of the world's manhood.

I do not think the scale of this disaster will ever be fully grasped.



Sandy Stone (Character created by Barry Humphries. Sandy lived at 36 Gallipoli Crescent, Glen Iris).

My mate Bert passed away last week. He's a returned man. Not many of us left now.

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The Gallipoli Landing and the Great Deception

When the sun rose on 24th April, we saw a float almost immediately opposite Gaba Tepe. We realised that the float had been intentionally dropped by the English. We asked permission from our section commander to move it, for the Gaba Tepe sector was opposite the float, which was the most suitable place on the peninsula for a landing, and was the nearest point to the ridges overlooking the Strait. Three or four of our good swimmers pulled the float out of the sea and, loading it on to a mule, took it to a far less suitable point about a mile to the north and replaced it in the sea. The English, who had not discovered our trick, landed the following day at Ari Burnu instead of Gaba Tepe."

– Unknown Turkish Veteran, *Watsons Pier* by Joshua Funder (2015)

Lieutenant Colonel Stanley Holm Watson's name and legacy is etched into the memory of the Royal Australian Corps of Engineers and the Royal Australian Corps of Signals. In addition to being one of the pioneering engineers to develop the discipline of Signals and oversee the construction of a pier at Gallipoli, he is also credited with being one of the last men off the beach during the evacuation in December 1915. A railway engineer and eventually Deputy Commissioner of South Australian Railways, Watson offers unique insights as an integral part of the landing into the events and actions that are insightful for us as soldiers in the modern era.

In April of 1977, Watson returned to Gallipoli with support from Andrew Michaelson, one of the Consular Attaches in Turkey, touring the area as part of one final visit. During their travels, the two were engaged by the innkeeper of where they were staying as well as the innkeeper's father, a veteran of the Gallipoli campaign, and others in an unknown village on the peninsula.

Whilst there was a language barrier, Michaelson was handed a diary at some point and had translated the above passage. The landing at Gallipoli is known to have been on the wrong beach, as has been documented in multiple accounts. Even on the Australian Parliament's 2017 recount of events it states that *"The Anzac forces landed about a mile north of the loosely planned landing site."*

The landing at the wrong site had a sizable strategic impact for the allies, namely:

- Murray Bridges and the planning staff knew the need to move fast and take multiple ridges.
- Landing right in front of the peninsula slowed down the Australians substantially, undermining the need for speed.
- The resultant delay gave General Otto von Sanders & General Mustafa Kemal Atatürk time to mobilise and counter the allied landings.

We have often been told a myriad of reasons for why the landing was at the wrong location, whether it be tides, the Royal Navy, issues with rowing in darkness – but could it be that an incorrect waypoint marker threw off the allied landings?

The greater deception of incompetence

Admiral Sir Cecil Fiennes Thursby and the Royal Navy are often blamed with landing the Australians in the wrong location; however, it is apparent from this account that neither are entirely to blame. Should they have anticipated manipulation of a landing marker? I do not believe that, in a time of structure and mechanisation of war that deception and adversarial action were as fully understood, but I do believe that the dismissiveness, blame games, and the election not to learn that has played out in the past 108 years has been far more dangerous.

To date, the Australian Parliament House account in 2017 even states that *"The reason is unclear and has been much debated over the years. Most likely, the naval ratings taking the troops ashore were disorientated and simply veered left."* 45 years on from Michaelson and Watson's jaunt and ongoing – albeit esoteric – publications, history has not yet been rewritten.

To the contrary, incompetence and blaming the British has now become fashionable; failing to study history and search for truth to such depth undermines greater learning that can be derived from such events.

The greater lessons

This is also very much the story of the value of soldiers thinking strategically and acting accordingly. The local Turkish soldiers, likely recruited from fishermen, intuitively knew the intent of the placed markers and on their own initiative, were effective at forcing the allies to make a landing that didn't work in their favour and create the ensuing landings at the wrong site.

Delay was defeat for the Allies and the Gallipoli Campaign. Churchill in his account of the first World War highlights that had the push through the Dardanelles occurred in March, there wouldn't have been the need for invasion. Had the April invasion been executed with speed, there wouldn't have been the need for the August offensive, and had the offensive in August of 1915 on the peninsula moved with speed and skill, a withdrawal in December would not have taken place. These actions can all be drawn down to ambiguity, obscurity, and ultimately a failure to create systems that could be trusted.

This is also an opportunity for learning and growth in the modern era. Within my own discipline of cybersecurity, injection flaws and improper validation of untrusted inputs are key risks to our systems. Malformed waypoints, inaccurate data ingested by our systems, as well as misinformation are reasonably well understood by our technical practitioners; however, tactical actions and strategic implications often fail to correlate at higher levels. I only hope this brief insight on events core to the Australian experience of war can enlighten and aid our leaders.

References (1) Funder, J. (2015). *Watson's Pier*. Melbourne University Publishing. (2) Watt, D. (2017, March 31). Gallipoli: a quick guide to frequently asked questions and general information – Parliament of Australia. [Aph.gov.au](https://aph.gov.au)

[courtesy of the ADF, especially *The Cove Communique*, February 2024]

by Major Edward Farrell (ADF Academy)

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Anzac Day 2024 Commemorations

Brisbane

As is now customary, our Association co-ordinated a wreath-laying ceremony before the March at the South-West Pacific memorial in Anzac Square. Among others, President Don Graham and Papua New Guinea Consul-General for Qld, Mr Reatau Rau laid wreaths at the sculpture.

Introduction by PNG Consul-General (Mr Reatau Rau)

On this Anzac Day we meet to remember those Servicemen 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, 2nd/16th Battalion and other Regiments.

This year marks the 82nd Anniversary of the many epic Battles fought in 1942 against the Japanese Army across Papua New Guinea. We honour the Soldiers (PNG & Australian) and the PNG civilians who died because of those Battles.



Text read by comrade Battalion member (Mr Ian Turner, 39th Bn Assn)

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 kept 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 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."

Text read by comrade Battalion member (Mr Trevor Pryor, 2/14th Bn Assn)

Poem written by Capt Bede G. D. Tongs, MM (3rd Militia Bn): 'Soldier at Rest in the Jungle'

Text read by comrade Battalion member (Mr Stephen Harrold, 2/16th Bn Assn)

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.'*



Mr Rau lays a wreath at the S-W Pacific memorial

Laying of Wreaths (by Servicemen and the public)

The Ode read by PNG Unit (President, Capt. Phil Ainsworth, NGVR & PNGVR Assn.)

Lest we forget

One Minute's Silence

Singing of PNG National Anthem

The Marchers:



Mr Rau & marchers after the March



Association marchers in Adelaide Street

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Currumbin, Queensland

Geologically known as 'chimneys', Elephant Rock is a well-known ancient volcanic formation located at Currumbin Beach. The Rock is a tourist attraction for many Gold Coast visitors and serves as a remarkable backdrop for the Dawn Service each Anzac Day that is



televised live nationally. was an early start for my family of five. After parking in the vicinity of the Currumbin RSL, chartered buses transported families to within a gentle five-minute walk of the venue.

The popularity of the 5:00am service is well-known with an estimated audience of 10, 000 utilising the surrounding dunes and beach to form a semi-circular amphitheatre below the red glowing Rock. As guests of my former Teachers College mate and Vietnam veteran Chris Madden, AO, our seats were secured in the large VIP section. The pipes and drums of a Highland band heralded in the official party, ex-service personnel and invited guests to their seats. Once settled, the distinctive humming of the didgeridoo broke the early morning silence, echoing throughout the precinct as a representative of the Currumbin RSL acknowledged the Welcome to Country coupled with a general welcome.

Throughout the ninety- minute service all speakers from the RSL undertook their roles with dignity and clarity highlighting events leading up to World War 1 and this effect on Australia, the ANZAC story, Australia's continued conflicts and peacetime tragedies resulting in the loss of life.

The program demonstrated a typical Australian flavour that followed the hymn Abide with Me. A four-piece folk group performed the well-known song 'And the Band played Waltzing Matilda' that clearly painted a picture of the commitment of the Australians soldiers who fought in the numerous World War 1 campaigns. Their home coming possessed vastly different emotions after losing their mates, and many had suffered both physically and emotionally - that continued for the remainder of their lives.

It was Macca in his Australia All Over radio program two weeks prior to ANZAC Day who interviewed singer Normie Rowe, a passionate returned National Serviceman

Normie indicated that he would be attending the Currumbin Dawn Service and, with the backing choir of forty singers from the RSL, would be performing his more recent song *'What have you done for Australia?'* Drawing on his experiences as a Cavalry Corporal in Vietnam, the song reflects upon the horrors of war and the lack of recognition by the RSL and the wider Australian community upon the soldiers' return. The sound of a lone Iroquois chopper concluded the song.

There wasn't a dry eye to be found by the conclusion of this emotionally charged rendition.

The song *'War,'* sung by John Lynam, was played while a pictorial presentation involving Australians in the Afghanistan conflict was shared on the large screen.



With the flags flying at half-mast atop the Rock, the essential rituals of the Ode, The Last Post, the One- Minute Silence, the flags returning to full mast with the playing of Reveille and Wreath Laying were conducted along with the release of doves of peace.

Being a service by the sea, the local surf club's members rowed their boats out just beyond the line of breakers to scatter the ashes of those RSL personnel who had passed away in the previous twelve months. A B-51 Mustang WWII aircraft undertook a low flight path to acknowledge the significance of this day.

The final speaker was a current uniformed officer who compared the beach at Gallipoli to where we all were today. He highlighted the ANZAC characteristics of mateship, larrikinism, a fair go and standing up for what is right that were developed on the field of battle. He stressed these idiosyncrasies are in our DNA/identity today and are shared by current serving military personnel at both home and abroad.

The message delivered by the two Palm Beach High School captains underlined the sacrifices made by our forebears during times of war. It was their belief that the adults of tomorrow are required to recognise the hardship encountered by the past servicemen and women to preserve the qualities embedded in our Australian way of life, valuing respect, tolerance, determination, perseverance and compassion across the social fabric of communities.

After the singing of the Australian and New Zealand national anthems, Normie and the choir, along with the folk group, returned to conclude the service with the singing of *'I Still Call Australia Home'* with both Australian and New Zealand flags being waved by the crowd.

Upon returning to the RSL club, a 'gunfire breakfast' was served and enjoyed by both returned soldiers and their families.

This well-orchestrated service reflected thorough planning and variety in presentation that reached out to all present. Its significance ensured a lasting impression on me. This opportunity to pause and be extremely grateful for the resilience, perseverance and loyalty forged by military personnel to build a more inclusive nation was very poignant.

(Sgt) John Morris, Goldie River, 1970-71



Townsville



The first PNGDF Officer to be appointed as Deputy Commander of an Australian Brigade is Colonel Boni Aruma now the Deputy Commander of 3rd Brigade which is based at Lavarack Barracks, Townsville.

Former Education Sergeant, Graham Carnes, and PNGDF Preventative Medicine Platoon Commander, Major Ian Kuhl participated in the ANZAC March in Townsville this year.

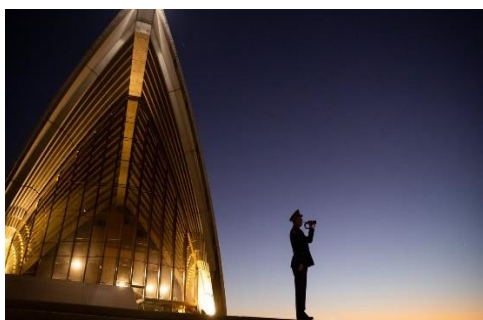
Graham marched with his green beret and called the Eyes Right for the team while Ian travelled in a Jeep.

Graham and Ian also travelled to Cardwell for the Battle of the Coral Sea Commemoration. National Service branches from Cairns, Innisfail, Ingham and Townsville meet in Cardwell and join the Battle of the Coral Sea committee to march and attend a memorial service each year. The US Navy always has representatives there also.

(Sgt) Graham Carnes, 1PIR & Lae, 1967-68



NSW



Dawn, Sydney Opera House



Sydney: the march gets under way

A true veteran leads the march at Leeton



PIB & NGIB veteran "Jock" Wilkinson, aged 103, leads the Leeton RSL Sub-Branch escorted by his son Peter & daughter Susie

Bunbury, WA

Member Mick Watson attended his local Anzac Day March at Bunbury wearing, for the first time, the medals of his great uncle, Major William (Bill) Watson. Major Watson was a decorated veteran of the First World War and lived in New Guinea before being appointed as CO of the Papuan Infantry Battalion in 1942. He showed great skill and great courage leading the PIB during the Kokoda Campaign and later campaigns. In about 1944, Watson was walking within an Army Camp in Lae with his 2IC, Harold Jesser, when a General and his aide approached. They passed without saluting the General. The aide was upset but the General replied, "Don't you know who that is?" It was Bill Watson, the "best" Serviceman in New Guinea.



Mick Watson (left) wearing his great uncle William's impressive array of medals. Mick was surprised that no-one asked him about the medals, given the number and status of them.

Maybe it suggests that the Anzac story still needs telling and re-telling.

Reader Competition

Readers are invited to identify all the Medals shown at left - awarded to Major William T. Watson, Commanding Officer of the Papuan Infantry Battalion, 1942-44.

The first correct entry received will win a quality military book in the post. Entries are welcome to Greg Ivey at greg_ivey@outlook.com

Closing date: 20 July 2024

Clues: *Major Watson was decorated in both World Wars; he was a Wallaby between the Wars; he was a post-War Australian diplomat in the USA.*

Rabaul

Dawn Service

On a beautiful Rabaul morning Commander Jonathan Corker, RAN, and Frazer Harry from the 2/22nd Battalion, both gave addresses. Following the service, a *gunfire breakfast* was held at the Rabaul Yacht Club.

Gunfire breakfast: the early cup of tea served out to troops in the morning before going on first parade. In the War [WWI] recruits in training always had 'Gun Fire' supplied to them, the work before breakfast being found particularly trying. The morning gun in a garrison town probably suggested the name. (E Fraser and J Gibbons, 'Soldier & Sailor Words & Phrases').



Anzac Day Dawn Service 2024, Rabaul

Bitapaka War Cemetery Commemoration

At 11 am guests gathered at the Bitapaka War Cemetery quietly appreciating the peaceful and solemn ambience of this place.

Commander Jonathan Corker, RAN, issued the introduction and welcome. Lt.-Col. Tony Evans presented a commemorative address, followed by a reading of the Ode by Commander Graham Lebetina, PNGDF. Rabaul's George Cheng, PNGDF, also participated in the service.



Schoolchildren at the Bitapaka War Cemetery Service, Anzac Day 2024

A dusk service was held on the evening of 24 April to remember the 2/22nd Battalion at the Montevideo Maru Memorial. As the sun set, providing rich colours over the harbour, a rainbow arched over Namanula, and the singing of 'You Raise Me Up' and the PNG Anthem by the local school students brought a special touch to the ceremony.

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Anzac Day Quiz

Try your hand at 12 questions about the Gallipoli Campaign

1. What is the name of the strait on which Gallipoli is situated?
2. Why was it important to keep the strait safe for Allied ships?
3. Which Australian military operation took place against Germany away from Europe before the Gallipoli Campaign?



4. What is the name of the Brisbane wild-life sanctuary that is named after one of the battles of the Gallipoli campaign?
5. What evidence was published in 2015 which explained why the landing boats arrived at the wrong beach?
6. Who is now recognised as the first Australian soldier to set foot on the Peninsula on 25 April 1915?
7. Which Battalion was the last to leave the Gallipoli Peninsula?
8. What is the name of the street in which Barry Humphries' character Sandy Stone lived?
9. Who wrote the play 'The One Day of the Year' in 1958?
10. How was this play significant in Australians thinking about Anzac Day?
11. Why are periscopes and cricket part of the Gallipoli story?
12. Where is the island of Lemnos, and why is it important in the Gallipoli story?

(Answers on page 30)

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Maclagan and Gallipoli

The Darling Downs township of Maclagan is little more than a fly speck on the map and consists mainly of a pub and a few houses. Its rather oblique connection to Gallipoli relates to its name. Maclagan was once called Bismarck after the highly influential Chancellor of Germany at the end of the 19th Century. The area around this township was settled by a significant population of German immigrants.

In 1916, the name was changed because of rising anti-German sentiment during the War. The name 'Maclagan' was chosen to honour the Scottish officer who commanded the Australian 3rd Brigade which led the landing on the shores of Gallipoli in 1915.

Interestingly, Maclagan was very sceptical about the likely success of the campaign because he believed the numbers of troops was insufficient for the task. Nevertheless, he led the Australian troops with vigour and imagination. After some time, he was evacuated to England because of illness.

Maclagan later returned to Gallipoli and further commanded Australian troops on the Western Front. He led the successful actions at Villers Bretonneux and Hamel. He was very highly regarded as a leader by Sir John Monash.

(Sgt) Ian Ogston

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From (Sgt) Graeme Johnson (WA Representative) formerly at 2 PIR, 1969-70

My recent duty at the AAMWA (Army Museum) in Fremantle revealed these two articles relating to PNG in the ADF newspapers which I am sure you are familiar with.

Air Force Newspaper dated 15/2/2024 Vol.66 No 2 has an article & photo on page 5 of seven PNGDF pilots undertaking aviation medicine training at RAAF Base Edinburgh SA.



AAMWA, Fremantle

Army Newspaper dated 15/2/2024 Edition 1551 features the new Deputy Commander of 3 Bde of the ADF, Col. Boni Aruma of the PNGDF whose appointment is a first. He is featured with text & photos on pages 1 & 3.

There is also mention of Col. Siale Diro the PNG Defence Attache to Australia. He is the son of Brigadier Ted Diro, PNGDF.

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PIB-NGIB-HQ-PIR Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held at the Geebung – Zillmere RSL Club, Brisbane on **Sunday 21st July**.

As in previous years, Lunch will begin at the RSL Club at 12 noon. The RSL has confirmed our booking for the Collins Room from **1pm onwards for the AGM and General Meeting**.

An outline of the AGM Agenda will be sent out to all members one week before the Meeting. If any members have an item of business they wish to raise or have discussed, please E-mail it to me **now** so it can be included.

As our Patron, Major General B W (Hori) Howard AO MC ESM has sadly passed away we will be discussing the appointment of a new Patron who would continue to support our Mission.

All Committee Positions are available for Nomination by Email to the Secretary now.

Kev Horton
Hon Secretary Phone 0418 750 189
kevhorton49@gmail.com

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NATIONAL REUNION Gold Coast 7 & 8 August 2024

What? - In 2024, we are celebrating the 80th Anniversary of the formation of 1 New Guinea Infantry Battalion and 2 NGIB in 1944. Our special guest at this AGM will be L/Sgt Laurie Siegle who served in 1 NGIB.

Why? – The PIB-PIR Association wishes to celebrate the **80th Anniversary** of the official formation of 1 NGIB & 2 NGIB in 1944 (3 NGIB & 4 NGIB were formed in 1945). While we have 2 Veterans of the **NGIB (New Guinea Infantry Battalions)** still alive, we should mark the brave role played by those Battalions during the Second World War. We are able to hold this Reunion at minimum cost by arranging a Dinner and a Lunch, before and after the annual Kokoda Service on the Gold Coast.

Who? – This Reunion is for everyone interested: Members, wives, family members, interested Servicemen from Australia & PNG, and guests.

Please help us to spread the word among former Servicemen around Australia and PNG.

Where? –

- **7/8/24 Informal Welcome** at Southport RSL Club, 36 Scarborough St Southport, 6pm
Table booked for “PIR Assn.”
RSVP: before **22 July** to Greg Ivey: greg_ivey@outlook.com

- **8/8/24 Kokoda Service** at Cascade Gardens, Bruce Highway, Broadbeach 10.30am Commemoration Service, organised by Broadwater-Southport Rotary Club, will include a Tribute to NGIB & PIB soldiers.

RSVP: **22 July** to the Rotary Organiser, Cathy: kokodaday.gc@gmail.com

Registration is essential for this Service.

- **8/8/24 Informal Reunion** at Bowls Club, 169 Surf Parade, Broadbeach 12.30pm Table booked for Lunch. Event includes a Toast to the NGIB 80th Anniversary by the Qld Consul-General for PNG.

RSVP: before **22 July** to Ian Minns: ian.minns@gmail.com

Questions? – Secretary Kev Horton: kevhorton49@gmail.com; Greg Ivey: greg_ivey@outlook.com

Extra details will follow later by Email, but your responses are invited now.

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This article by 'Hori' Howard was published in the RAR journal *Duty First* in early 2024.

HISTORY

The Pacific Islands Regiment

Hori Howard

A large number of Australian officers and senior NCOs served in the Pacific Islands Regiment (PIR) from the time it was re-raised following World War 2 to when Papua New Guinea became independent in 1975. They were known as the "Black Hand Gang" as they had the annoying habit of conversing in the language of the PIR after they had joined Australian units. For those who did not have the privilege of serving there or would like to reminisce, here is a snapshot. Sadly there is no official history of this most interesting Regiment although there are several excellent books which will be listed at the end of this small piece.

The PIR was an Australian Infantry Regiment although its roles were quite different. From the Royal Australian Regiment. They were:

War: To provide medium range reconnaissance patrols, local defence, guides and advisors and reconnaissance detachment for other Australian Army units.

Peace: Maintain forces in selected areas, gain knowledge of the topography by extended patrolling., Provide a basis on which additional units could be raised if required. Provide a medium for the study of tropical warfare. Support the Civil Authority if called upon in the maintenance of law and order.

The PIR had its roots in the Papuan Infantry Battalion which was raised mainly from the Royal Papua and New Guinea Constabulary, and later the New Guinea Infantry Battalions all of which fought bravely alongside the Australians throughout the war. The Regiment was disbanded in 1946 and re-raised in 1951.



Australian troops en route to Port Moresby. AWM 012926

The re-raised Regiment was based at Taurama Barracks a few kilometres out of Port Moresby. The structure was relatively standard having a Headquarters, four Rifle Companies and an Administrative Company. There was no Support Company until much later and the Administrative Company also had responsibility for the Pipes and Drums and the Pioneer Platoon which was commanded by an Engineer Officer.

There was also a large civilian work force administrated by Admin Company. A Training Company was established at the Goldie River in the foothills of the Owen Stanley Mountain in 1957. It was common for new recruits to be required to construct their own accommodation and recruit training was six months long with a heavy emphasis on English. In 1964 it was transferred to the control of the National Military Headquarters which had been established at Murray Barracks in Port Moresby.

Two company outstations were established, one at Vanimo near the Dutch and then Indonesian border in 1952 and the other on Manus Island in 1954. Eventually Manus was closed in 1962 and Wewak opened. It became 2PIR in 1965 and assumed control over Vanimo. Rifle companies spent six months each year on outstation duty, where there was a heavy emphasis on patrolling in the interior. As concern grew about Indonesia's intentions, a third PIR Battalion was to be raised in Lae, but it never eventuated and a company of 1PIR from Port Moresby was sent to Lae from 1968 to help occupy the brand new, but empty barracks.

The official language of the PIR was Neo Melanesian Pigin or "tok pisin" in that language. All Australians were required to become competent and while many of the soldiers understood some English they preferred to speak in tok pisin. The language master was the Catholic Chaplain Fr Ray Quirk who was a legend in the Regiment and served for many years in PIR.

A feature of PIR service was long range patrols mainly at platoon level over very rugged, often unexplored and poorly mapped country with no roads. Many patrols were over a month long and they were a significant challenge for the young platoon commanders. Planning for resupply was critical as it generally had to be pre-positioned at one of the very few airfields, free dropped in one of the open areas or into rivers. Local carriers were required where there were long distances between resupply points. If a patrol member became ill or was hurt, he had to be carried to the nearest airfield as there were no helicopters in the early days and there were no Defence air assets in Papua New Guinea until 1965. Subsequently more air support was available and company sized patrols were possible.

DUTY FIRST | 38

Patrols were conducted in consultation with the Civilian Administration and were required to collect topographic and demographic information and to show the flag to the local people particularly in the more remote areas. They were often accompanied by small detachments of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary.

Some of the more challenging patrols were:

- Mount Hagen to Wewak: 30 days.
- Kiunga to the mouth of the Fly River: 42 days.
- Vanimo via Ambunti to the Sepik River: 42 days.

The companies stationed at Vanimo mounted regular platoon patrols of the border. From Vanimo they generally walked to Amanab or Green River, which took between 8-12 days depending on the route taken, then patrolled west towards the border villages for 8-10 days, and finally walked back to Vanimo. Resupply was usually pre-positioned at Amanab, where there was a light aircraft strip, or Green River where there was a larger airstrip.

In 1966 a patrol from 2PIR led by Lieutenant Bob Sayce discovered a new tribe in a remote corner of the West Sepik District. They had previously had no outside contact.

From 1967 onwards, Civic Action Patrols were conducted throughout Papua New Guinea, particularly in the more remote areas. Following consultation with the Administration, PIR patrols would work with local villagers to construct aid posts, school rooms, and market places of local materials. Every soldier possessed basic building skills from their home villages. Prestige Patrols were mounted periodically to the major regional centres, often associated with recruiting drives. The Pipes and Drums were a key element of these patrols and they would often perform in front of several thousand people.

Soldiering in the PIR was very different from Australia. Apart from the language, the soldiers liked parades and were always immaculately dressed, generally in starched shorts and sandals except when on parade. They saluted their officers whether in uniform or not including when they encountered them in Port Moresby. They were also generally quite superstitious, with the most common demon being a masalai which tended to inhabit company magazines at the outstations. One of the more famous ones "killed all the fish in the Taurama Barracks sewerage farm." Your author prided himself on his grasp of tok pisin but wasn't able to effectively translate photosynthesis, so hired a local witch doctor!

Perhaps the most outstanding element of the PIR was the Pipes and Drums. The Pipers could read music but most could not read or write English. They were formed in 1962 and took part in the ceremonies for the Queen in 1964. The Pipe Major was WO Lou McLennan who was so skilled that he was able to parade the Pipes and Drums after only 6 months training. This could have been expected to take 2 years. He served in PIR for six years and then handed over to WO Jamie Whitecross. Both had



Perhaps the most outstanding element of the PIR was the Pipes and Drums. The Pipers could read music but most could not read or write English. AWM 093304

served in the British Army. Jamie Whitecross handed over to WO2 "Jock" Peni a Papua New Guinean in 1971. The PIR pipes carried the tartan of the Clan Cameron, and the Regimental March of the PIR was Bonnie Dundee.

Port Moresby was a great town in the early days before the squatters arrived. There was plenty of sport, lots of young Australian girls on contract to the Government departments and banks etc and it was quite safe. PIR had a rugby league team before rugby union was created and several members including soldiers made representative sides including the South Pacific Games.

No story of the PIR would be complete without mention of the "Chalkies". When it was obvious that independence was looming, the Chalkies played a major role in the development of the Regiment. Around 60 qualified teachers were posted to PNG every year. They were mostly conscripts and were all trained as Infantrymen. On posting to PNG they were promoted to the rank of Sergeant. They taught maths, English, history and map reading throughout the Regiment. They were integral parts of the life of the two battalions. Most were single, they accompanied patrols, played in the sporting teams and were generally fully integrated into their units. Their contribution was very significant. Many are still active in the PIR Association.

While there is no official PIR/PNG history, the following are excellent. We owe a debt of gratitude for them to Lieutenant Colonel Maurie Pears MC, a CO of 1PIR:

The Life and Times of Pacific Islands Regiment. Volume 1. - Yesterday's Heroes 1895-1950 by James Sinclair.

The Life and Times of the Pacific Islands Regiment 50th Anniversary Commemorative Edition by James Sinclair 1990. Compiled and edited for the Trustees of RPIR by Lt Col M. B. Pears MC.

Green Shadows. By G.M Byrnes.



We feature two more watercolours by (Sgt) Peter Darmody, these from his recent visit to China.

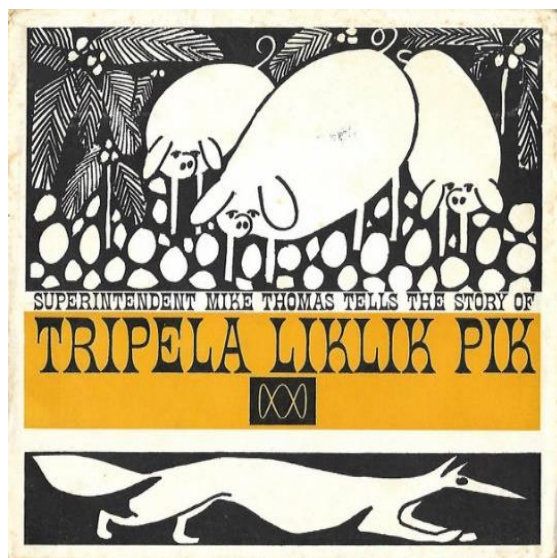
Both were painted on location.

We thank Peter for permission to publish his work in our Newsletter.

A back street of Tong Li, near Shanghai.



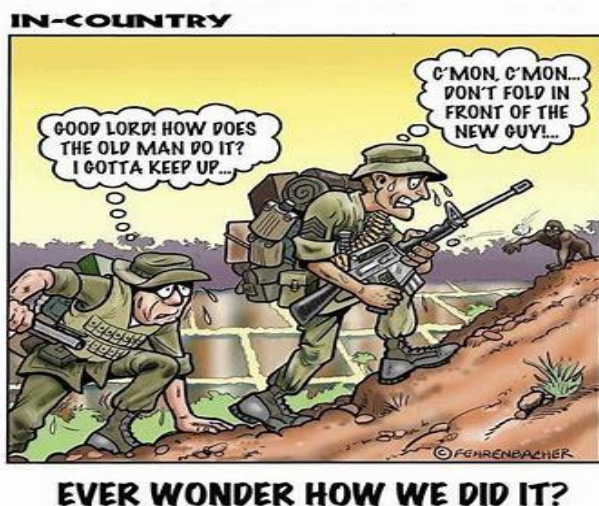
Karst mountain country in Guangxi autonomous region in southern China. The river is the Li.



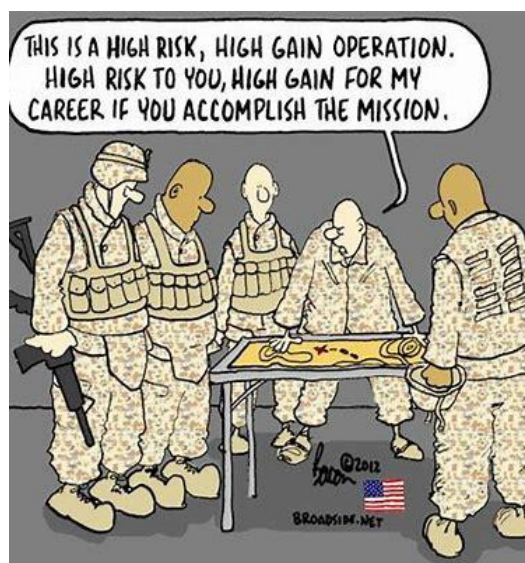
Peter informed us that one of the world's literary treasures is now available on YouTube: *Tripela Liklik Pik* – the story of *The Three Little Pigs* told in Tok Pisin.

The back cover of the record says: 'This unique story of the Three Little Pigs was translated into Pidgin and adapted to a Melanesian setting by The Reverend Paul Freyberg of the Lutheran mission at Madang. Mr Freyberg was the Chief Translator of the Nupela Testamen – the New Testament in Pidgin. The story was broadcast by Superintendent Mike Thomas in the ABC's Daily Learning Pidgin Series'.

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EVER WONDER HOW WE DID IT?



Answers to Anzac Quiz

1. The Dardanelles; 2. To supply Russia's Black Sea ice-free ports in winter.
3. Australian soldiers and sailors fought successfully against German forces in the Battle of Bitia Paka near Rabaul in September 1914. 4. Lone Pine.
5. 'Watsons Pier' by Joshua Funder revealed that on 24 April Turkish soldiers moved an English marker buoy from the sea off promising Gaba Tepe beach to the sea off disastrous Ari Burnu beach.
6. Major Duncan Chapman (1888-1916) of Maryborough, Qld; 7. Australian troops evacuated between 15th and 20th December 1915. The last troops to leave were French and British forces between 8th and 9th January 1916.
8. Gallipoli Crescent; 9. Alan Seymour; 10. The play began a new conversation about the meaning of Anzac Day. It encouraged people to look more critically at the Gallipoli campaign and the way it was commemorated.
11. Periscope: This was an apparatus which allowed safe observation over the top of frontline trenches. Cricket: this was played as part of a plan to deceive the Turks into believing everything was business as usual in the Australian lines when, in fact, the withdrawal was being undertaken.
12. Lemnos is an island about 100 km from Gallipoli which served as a staging place before the landing and then as a hospital during the campaign.

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Bitia Paka War Cemetery outside Rabaul (photo courtesy Stephen Hull, PNGAA FB page). Graves here include Australian Servicemen from 1914 to 1945 & PNG Servicemen from 1944 to 1945.

Editors: Norm Hunter (nrhunter@bigpond.net.au)

Ian Ogston (ozoggies2@gmail.com)

