



# ***Armi Nius***

**NEWSLETTER OF THE PIB-NGIB-HQ-PIR ASSOCIATION**

Patron: Major (Ret'd) D. D. Graham

**2/2025**

## **Welcome to members**

Welcome to the second Association newsletter for 2025. As is our custom, the second newsletter of the year is aimed at prolonging our thinking about what Anzac Day means here in Australia. Is it just a ceremonial day the great majority of us support; a public holiday, and then it's back to what we do in our day-to-day lives, and we'll do it again next year? Or is it something deeper in our culture that draws on unique values and beliefs about what is important about our nation that Australians hold deep in our minds? Is it 'the one day of the year', or is it something deeper that touches what it means to be Australian?

In this edition we explore those questions, as well as honouring veterans who continue to enrich us with their presence. There are also updates and some stories about experiences in Papua New Guinea, a poem from Dr Darryl Dymock and another Peter Darmody watercolour.

Happy reading, and as always, your feedback is welcome.

Norm Hunter; Ian Ogston; Dr Steve Beveridge (Editors)

## From the Association President

My thanks to everyone who marked Anzac Day by attending Services or Marching in memory of family or mates who served in PNG.



For Anzac Day 2025, I flew to Sydney then Russ Wade drove me to Leeton located in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area where WO Jock Wilkinson is now living. Russ has provided us with a copy of the local newspaper interview of Jock Wilkinson published the day after Anzac Day.

We believe that Jock is the last survivor of the PIB, and we believe there are only two survivors of the NGIB: Jock, and Laurie Siegle, aged 100, of Caloundra, Queensland.

Above: Seated at the Leeton Service are Garry Young, Jock Wilkinson, Greg Ivey with NSW Banner held by Russ Wade & Sam Wilkinson

The Association AGM was held in Brisbane on Sunday 1st June. As well as the usual lunch, the meeting included reports, a display of historical items, and a presentation to our newest Honorary Life Member, Major (Ret'd) Laurence Quinlivan.

Greg Ivey (Association President)

\*

## Anzac Day – ‘a terrible beauty is born’

In April 1916, almost exactly one year after Australian and New Zealand troops fought in the Gallipoli campaign, a small group of Irish nationalists in Dublin launched what has come to be known in Ireland as the Easter Rising. It was quickly put down by the British military, but lives were lost and sixteen of the rebels were executed by the British. It marked the beginning of the Irish nationalist movement, with the establishment of the Sinn Fein political party and many years of armed rebellion by the IRA and other militants that followed.

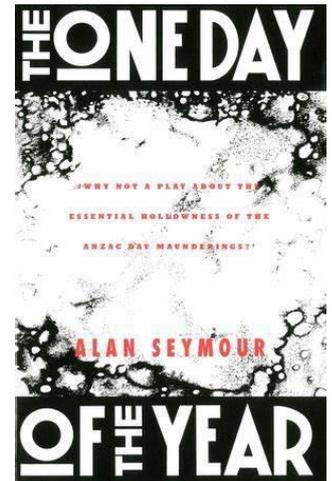


A few months after the Rising, the great Irish poet W.B. Yeats (left) wrote ‘Easter 1916’: a poem both recognising the aspiration of the rebels to be free of British rule but questioning if armed rebellion was the way to go about it.

Throughout the poem Yeats weaves the words ‘a terrible beauty is born’ into the text. Perhaps it takes a great poet to find the words for something like this, and perhaps those

words capture something that might help explain the journey we have travelled here in Australia to create a sacred day that stems from the Anzac campaign in 1915.

Yeats has presented us with a classic paradox. How can an event be terrible and something of beauty at the same time? Well, a similar paradox has been working its way through Australian minds over the decades since the First World War. There were times when Anzac Day was seen as important because of the bravery and loyalty to the Commonwealth of the young Anzacs. Then in the 1960s and 70s a strong anti-war feeling spread across Australia and the day was seen by many, especially young people, as glorifying war and all that goes with it. Alan Seymour's widely read play *The One Day of the Year* (1962) presented Anzac Day as something 'terrible' in the minds of young people, and something of 'beauty' in the minds of their parents.



Then, in the 1980s, unannounced and without fanfare, small numbers of young Australian backpackers began to quietly gather overnight at Anzac Cove to witness the dawn on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April. Had they read the Ode? Maybe, maybe not, but somehow they had decided that 'at the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them'. Over the years the numbers have grown, and it has now become a pilgrimage for many Australians across all generations.



Left: Dawn at Anzac Cove

Revived by that small group of young people who found something special, perhaps even spiritual, in that particular place on that particular day, Yeats's paradox has come to life in a unique way here in Australia.

Each year on Anzac Day we come together and express our gratitude to those who have given their lives and made great sacrifices in war so we can prosper and be free. At the same time, we acknowledge the horror of war and the failure and futility of the Gallipoli campaign. In its own way, over the years here in Australia, from the Gallipoli campaign and through the wars that have followed, 'a terrible beauty was born'.

On Anzac Day 2025 crowds in their thousands attended dawn services, daytime ceremonies, parades and laying of wreaths in suburbs, towns and cities across the nation.

Right: Attendees at the Shrine of Remembrance Dawn Service, Brisbane



The Gallipoli campaign proved to be a fruitless exercise failing in its military objective, yet it has become a symbolic event in the cultural life of Australia. We have found a way to bring the generations together, pause on that one day of the year to say thanks. We acknowledge the horror of war and remember the courage and the sacrifices that have been made by those who came before.

We have found our own way to reconcile the paradox of a 'terrible beauty' that was born a hundred and ten years ago in a small cove on the other side of the world.

Norm Hunter

## ANZAC DAY 2025

### Perth

While many Anzac Day Services are conducted at coastal locations in the early morning with a rising sun over the ocean on the east coast, WA has what is considered the last Anzac Day Service on the Australian mainland.



This is conducted in the late afternoon at ANZAC COTTAGE located at 38 Kalgoorlie St, Mt Hawthorn, a Perth inner suburb developed in the 1910`s & 1920`s. The cottage is unique in that it was built over a weekend in early 1916 by the then Mt Hawthorn Progress Association as a "practical war memorial". It was to be the home for a wounded Gallipoli soldier 1013 Pte. John Porter, a member of C Company of the well-

known WA 11th Battalion. He and his family and subsequent descendants occupied the cottage until the late 1960s. A very worthy community project during WW1. At one point early in the construction phase, seventy drays were lined up with building materials.

Following the departure of the Porter family the cottage was owned by the City of Vincent and more recently transferred to the National Trust with the "Friends of Anzac Cottage Group" being the current custodians. Previously the WA Vietnam Veterans Group used it as their meeting place and were involved in extensive maintenance and refurbishment works.



Periodic events are conducted at the cottage including significant occasions during the year including Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. The presence of the cottage in Mt Hawthorn is well recognised by the surrounding residents as a

unique piece of Australian wartime history.

Separately, there is another ANZAC COTTAGE located at 16 Saunders St, Swanbourne which was constructed by a now defunct men's charity in 1917 and subsequently occupied by a war widow and her family. It is currently under the auspices of the Town of Claremont and is leased to an occupant. No Anzac or Remembrance Day Services are conducted there.

(Photos from the morning service at Cottesloe Civic Centre)

Graeme Johnson (WA Representative)

### North Queensland



The Townsville Branch of the National Servicemen's Association has two former PIR members. The Secretary is Major Ian Kuhl and the Minutes Secretary is Education Sergeant Graham Carnes. The branch participated in the ANZAC Day Parade with Major Kuhl riding in a jeep and Sergeant Carnes organising the 19 members and supporters for the march. The salute was taken by Sergeant Carnes.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> May, 16 members and supporters boarded a bus and travelled to Cardwell for the Battle of the Coral Sea commemoration. A parade was held with both members marching followed by a Commemoration Service. National Servicemen from Cairns and Innisfail also joined the service. After the service, members went to the Cardwell RSL for lunch before returning to Townsville.



Graham Carnes (Regional Qld Representative)

### Brisbane

Each Anzac Day two ceremonies take place, honouring those who gave their lives and made sacrifices in war. The first takes place before the march on the lawn below the Anzac Square Cenotaph at the South -West Pacific memorial.



Left: Mr Rau introduces the multi-unit ceremony

Former and current servicemen and servicewomen gather to lay wreaths and affirm our relationship with Papua New Guinea. This year we were again honoured with the presence of Mr. Reatau

Maraki Rau, the Consul General of Papua New Guinea, based in Brisbane.

After the ceremony members and supporters left to take their places in the March and others took up vantage points on the streets. As always on this day, thousands lined the city streets to watch.

Right: Lt Col. Matthew Barnes (Commanding Officer) & WO1 Daniel Stewart (RSM) from the 39<sup>th</sup> Operational Support Battalion during the March. Both attended the PIB-PIR wreath ceremony before the march.



Left: Before the Brisbane March (L to R) P. Adam, K. Smith, Hon R. Rau, M. Baillie, K. Horton (courtesy of K. Boyne).

Picture: John Gass

After the march all gathered at a local restaurant for the traditional multi-unit Anzac Day lunch.

## New South Wales

### ***Leeton World War II vet shares his story***

(*The Irrigator* 26 April 2025; Cover story: Allan Wilson)

There are few like 104-year-old WWII veteran WO 'Wilko' Wilkinson. In the lead-up to Leeton's 2025 Anzac Day we spoke with Mr. Wilkinson about his service.



Originally from South Australia, formerly of Coleambally, and now of Leeton, he is the last living Australian member who served in both the Papuan Infantry Battalion and the New Guinea Infantry Battalions.

Left: War Veteran Jock Wilkinson leads RSL officers in reflection at the Leeton Memorial prior to the March

Thus, the PIB NGIB banner – normally carried in the Sydney parade – was to feature in Leeton this year.

### ***Looking back: war years***

At the start of WWII Mr Wilkinson was attending Roseworthy Agricultural College. When he turned 20, he enlisted in the second AIF and was later sent to Darwin en route to

Ambon and Timor as part of the 2/14 Field Regiment. Eventually he was sent to New Guinea, but a tropical skin condition landed him in hospital. There he read a Pidgin English Dictionary, and the knowledge gained was quite helpful.

'We then went on a stint against the Japanese where I was a Signaller at the front of the Infantry, preceded by a section of the Papuan Infantry Battalion under an Australian sergeant,' Mr Wilkinson said. The sergeant was evacuated with malaria, leaving Mr Wilkinson with his knowledge of Pidgin to take command of the section. When he handed back the company an Officer remarked how he got along well with 'the boys' and was offered a transfer. 'I had been trying to get transferred for some time, but I was told by the Major I couldn't go,' he said. 'So, I had the greatest pleasure in finally being able to throw him a salute and a "goodbye, sir".'

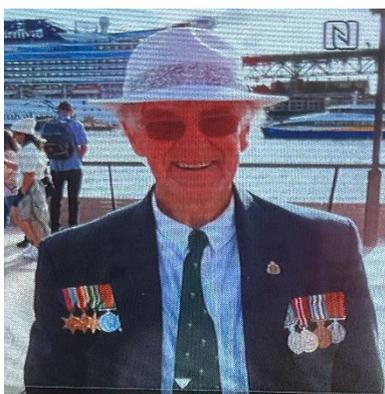


Three platoons of Papuan and New Guinea troops were formed, and Sgt Wilkinson was responsible for training. 'We carried out an array of duties, including capturing a village which the Japanese had occupied, Mr Wilkinson said. 'I became so proficient in Pidgin that they had me stand by a General giving an address at a parade, and I had to translate his speech into Pidgin.'

Left: Jock Wilkinson at the end of the 2025 March with Garry Young, Jock's daughter Susie & son Peter (turned around)

Mr Wilkinson says he became close to the NGIB soldiers. 'I really enjoyed my time with them, and I'll never forget that they cried when I left.' He maintained contact with one of them, Tungali, until his passing. 'I kept in touch by mail, and then finally his daughter wrote to me that he had passed away.'

'There were times when I thought about going back to New Guinea to see them, but the boys were scattered all over the islands, so getting them together would have been impossible', he said.



Left: Chalkie Wayne Bensley at the ANZAC Day Tribute Concert, Sydney Opera House

Right: John Hayne, Wayne Bensley, Bob Strachan, Peter Porteous, Ray Bassett at Hyde Park War Memorial after their Sydney march



## Nelson Bay

About 6 years ago my grandchildren at Shoal Bay Public School asked me to march with them in the Nelson Bay ANZAC Day march. All the Public and private schools in the Bay area march in the parade.

This year marks the end of my grandkids attending the primary school. However, with the exception of Covid, I have marched with the grandkids for over six years (grandson is now 14).

Right: Steve Beveridge & grand-daughter, Anzac Day 2025

Because Nelson Bay is close to RAAF Williamtown, we always have a very low fly-past from an F-35A. Most impressive!

Dr Steve Beveridge (Vice President)



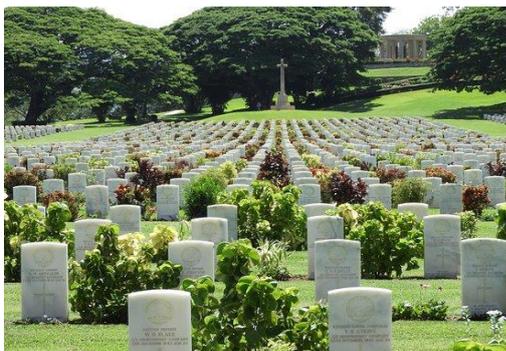
\*

## Anzac Day 1971: A Personal Reflection

(With thanks to Pete Seeger, The Byrds, Ecclesiastes 3, and John Morris)

Being relatively new to the Army and PNG, it was fascinating to see the rising reverence that ANZAC Day had for the regular soldiers around me at Goldie River Training Depot. With a father who was a World War 2 veteran, I was no stranger to understanding the significance of the day. This, however, was different.

Information was posted on the availability of transport from Goldie to the main service at Bomana War Cemetery. This necessitated a very early start as the cemetery was 40 km away in Port Moresby and we were wanting to be there for the Dawn Service.



certainly woke me up.

The Sergeants' Mess let it be known that an early 'gunfire breakfast' would be available in the early hours. Utterly intrigued by this notion, enquiries revealed that this consisted of a brew of rum and strong coffee. The proportions were alleged to be one half coffee and one half rum. I doubt there was half rum in the drink I had but it

We loaded into the bus transport at the Admin in the darkness of the Goldie morn. Among the regular soldiers accompanying us was Bert. Bert was a portly and jovial Infantry Sergeant. But not today. Bert was quiet and reflective for the entire trip.

The service was held at the Cross of Sacrifice at the central rotunda of the cemetery. The service proceeded in the required manner – speeches made, bugles sounded, and songs sung against the extraordinary surroundings of shafts of sunrise light beaming through the enclosing tropical trees on to the rows and rows of stark white gravestones across the gentle slopes around us. It was an infinitely sad and moving moment for all those gathered in that beautiful place.



Following the service, I searched for the grave of Corporal Jack French V.C. who was a member of my father's battalion, the 2/9<sup>th</sup>. Jack French was a former student of my high school, and I had laid a wreath in his honour at the school's ANZAC service in my final year at high school. Jack French was awarded the posthumous Victoria Cross for his bravery in the Battle of Milne Bay.



My search complete, I sought out the other members of the Goldie contingent and found my old acquaintance, Bert, and located him in the now-deserted rotunda alone with his clearly profound memories of times and mates from his service in Vietnam.

We left in silence and found our transport to Goldie for a sombre trip back to camp.

All of this was against the background of community disenchantment with the observance of Anzac Day at the time back in Australia– a dissatisfaction that was crystalized in the play, 'The One Day of the Year' and the general strong anti-Vietnam sentiment - it was 1971 after all.

For me to see Anzac Day being observed with such sincerity and solemnity, was somewhat disorienting and cause for a re-think of what I had come to think about this day.



These were people who had (probably fairly recently) lost comrades and endured the privations of warfare, all of which brought some once familiar words back to me, with

thanks to Pete Seeger and The Byrds  
(‘Turn, Turn Turn’), and Ecclesiastes 3.

Left: The Byrds perform ‘Turn, Turn, Turn’ in concert

### Ecclesiastes 3

*For everything there is a season  
And a time for every purpose under heaven:  
A time to be born and a time to die,  
A time to plant and a time to uproot,  
A time to kill and a time to heal,  
A time to tear down and a time to build,  
A time to weep and a time to laugh ...  
A time to be silent and a time to speak,  
A time to love and a time to hate,  
A time for war and a time for peace.*

Ian Ogston

\*

### **Memories of a RAEME Craftsman 1967 – 1969**

Upon flying into Port Moresby Airport, the first noticeable experience was the change from a wintry Victoria to the TPNG tropics.

Arriving at Murray Barracks I noticed there was no security fence around the entire area. This soon changed.

The original RAEME WKSP was a short distance behind the OR’s barracks (European) and a very old timber and corrugated iron structure. Shortly afterwards we moved to a brand new RAEME WKSP complex which I assume is still there today.



I was assigned to work in the Service Station. As a very young and junior Craftsman, my Corporal sent me to the Vehicle Park to bring in a Mk3 truck (left) for servicing. Opening the driver’s door, I was greeted by an approx.

two-foot-long living and snapping crocodile on the driver's seat.

After catching my breath, I quickly ascertained that this creature could not possibly have entered the vehicle by itself. I am certain I was set up and had to return to the barracks for a change of coveralls.

I can't recall how it got out of the truck but certainly not helped by me.

Later I was fortunate enough to be part of a Civic Aid Patrol around some of the islands travelling by Landing Ship operated by the RAE.

I think we were somewhere near New Ireland and disembarked to do pre-assigned civic work for the local villagers. It felt good to be camped on solid ground after being in the bowels of a cramped, noisy and smelly ship.

One night the Officer in Charge decided to show a movie for the locals as we had a movie projector and a roll of film – I think it was a Western which we had seen many times before.

Throughout the islands as you know the favourite pastime is chewing Betel Nuts. Everywhere you go there were splashes of bright red Betel Nut juice on anything that didn't move and sometimes did move.

About halfway through the movie the projector was suddenly covered in red Betel Nut juice. The projectionist instantly erupted in protest and a little physical activity followed. The movie night was cancelled to much disgust mainly because the projector failed to keep working.

The local administrator had earlier advised us that the locals were only one or two generations out of "head hunting". We all stayed on board ship that night.

I served for just over 20 yrs in various RAEME units retiring in 1986 from the Maintenance Engineering Agency (MEA) in Melbourne as a WO1 Artificer Vehicle.

Graeme Selwood

\*

## Happy Birthday Laurie!

Kev Horton and Greg Ivey attended the recent 100th Birthday Party for our NGIB Veteran Sgt Laurie Siegle at Caloundra RSL Club on 25 May. Laurie is in remarkable



physical condition, and he impressed everyone that night with his verbal summary of his life, on his feet & without notes. (Laurie says his recall of his War-time



experiences varies, depending on whether he feels motivated.)

Kev Horton & Greg Ivey with Laurie

Association President Greg Ivey pays  
tribute to Laurie

***'They do not know'***

*(For my mother, Peggy, who was 17 when WWII broke out)*

*They do not know,  
those who came after,  
how the bugle call sounded  
and the men went away;  
when ration cards sold  
in back streets of the city  
and meat cost as much  
as a single week's pay.*

*They do not know,  
those with buds in their ears,  
how we listened to rumours  
of invasion to come;  
how we lived with anxiety,  
with gossip and blackouts,  
and ran for the shelters  
but refused to succumb.*

*They do not know,  
those reaping high salaries,  
how we once had sweet fun  
on next-to-nought pay  
in the arms of young soldiers  
at dances and parties,  
knowing the foe  
was just islands away.*

*,  
  
They do not know  
the punters and brokers,  
how we bet on the future  
with our wounded and dead;  
not knowing if lovers  
would ever come back to us,  
not knowing if there were  
more dark days ahead.*

*They do not know,  
those planning their futures,  
that there was a time  
we had hopes and dreams too;  
but our visions were clouded  
by tears for the dying;  
the best we could pray was  
we'd all see it through.*

*They do not know,  
those who came after,  
of that unreal existence  
when nothing was sure,  
or why we still yearn*

for missed fun and laughter:

those who grew up

when the world was at war.

Dr Darryl Dymock



\*

*Tenkyu tumas olgeta*

After a long career in the public service spanning 33 years, Australia's High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea John Feakes is retiring. As part of his departure, he has written a farewell to Papua New Guinea - a country very close to his heart.



*Left: Mr John Feakes (image courtesy of AHC, Port Moresby)*

*In the hierarchy of Australia's international relationships, there is one that too often escapes the headlines but remains central to who we are and where we live: Papua New Guinea*

*This bond is not merely geopolitical. It's deeply personal, historical, and, crucially, grounded in a future we face together. Our shared geography and history provide the foundations, but it's the values and challenges we now share that make the Australia–Papua New Guinea relationship more important than ever.*

*Over eight years and three diplomatic postings to Port Moresby – most recently as Australia's High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea – what's clearer to me, more than ever is this: the relationship is evolving for the better. Australia is starting to get more things right when it comes to PNG. There has been a genuine shift – a “step change” – that goes beyond politics. Regardless of who is in government in Canberra, there is now a deeper partnership being forged.*

*But to be frank, the process of getting here hasn't always been pretty. High-level decision-making is rarely neat, and policy is often messier than it appears from the outside. Yet, what I've witnessed over the course of my time here in Papua New Guinea gives me confidence that we are heading in the right direction. The intention is clearer. The commitment is real.*

*That said, there's more to do, and we need to continue approaching this relationship with humility, not just goodwill. Papua New Guinea, like all nations, has choices. Our partnership must be earned – not assumed. And increasingly, it is being earned through genuine engagement and shared purpose.*

*But the fact remains that for Australians, our relationship with Papua New Guinea is a deeply personal relationship, and a relationship unlike any other. Our support, now and into the future, can be banked for as long as Papua New Guinea wants it. No ifs. No buts. As Papua New Guinea looks toward its 50th anniversary of independence, we celebrate with you – as neighbours and mates, and partners and equals.*

*We look to the next 50 years with confidence and optimism. Papua New Guinea, like Australia, is a young nation and ancient land that is embracing the opportunities before it. Our nations are walking together into the future, side by side and step by step.*

*For me, ending this journey and leaving Papua New Guinea is bittersweet. The warmth of your friendship with the Australians like me who call Papua New Guinea their second home is the main reason people like me keep returning. Living and working in this*

*wonderful country has been an unforgettable experience and one that has affected me deeply – I have spent more time here than in any country bar Australia.*

*I will never forget the kindness that has greeted me here from the highest in the land to ordinary Papua New Guineans. Nor will I forget the talent, resilience and humility of all Papua New Guineans.*

*You have given me far more than I can ever repay.*

*God bless our two countries.*

John Feakes 2025

\*

### **From a new member - Trevor Shelley**

*I thought I would send you a short story on my father and his time on the Kokoda Trail before launching into any stories about myself.*

NX 39009 Frank Lewis Shelley travelled to the Middle East with the 2/1st Battalion, 16 Brigade, as part of 6<sup>th</sup> Division.

Dad came back to Australia when the Japanese were moving in on Port Moresby and our forces were removed from the Middle East. After being left sitting in Ceylon for six weeks with the rest of the division, he managed to finally get back to Monteagle, a little hamlet in South West NSW outside of Young to meet his son and catch up with his wife. Two days later he was called back to his unit and sent to New Guinea. And up the Kokoda Trail they went in 1942.

Dad was involved in action all the way up, but the (Second) Battle of Eora Creek was as far as he got. He was wounded in that action and received a bad wound to his head: lacerated brain and a fractured skull. Until his death he carried a blaze of stark white hair and a huge platform along the side of his head to remind him.

It was not long after this action that the Australians re-occupied Kokoda, so it was decided that Dad be carried up to Kokoda and flown out. They tried, but at the time there were still lots of Japanese Patrols marauding through the area, so the decision was then made to carry him back to Myola. He was conscious the whole time, but all balance was gone plus many other motor functions. For the rest of a long life (96) there were motor function problems and pain.

He was carried back to Myola and there he remained. Some six weeks he lay there, too critical to move further towards Port Moresby. In that time, he lay there conscious but unable to even sit upright, and nothing but boredom except someone found a Gideon Bible. Dad read it and then read it seven more times. In later years, although not a religious man, he could quote long passages from the Bible. Actually, it became a bit of a party trick.

During all of this time a rough airstrip was being hacked through the grassland at Myola and at last Dad was evacuated. A Ford Trimotor flew in and picked him and two others up and took them to Port Moresby. And on its next trip into Myola the bloody thing crashed. The wreckage is now in Port Moresby, having been lifted out in the 1990s by a RAAF Chinook.

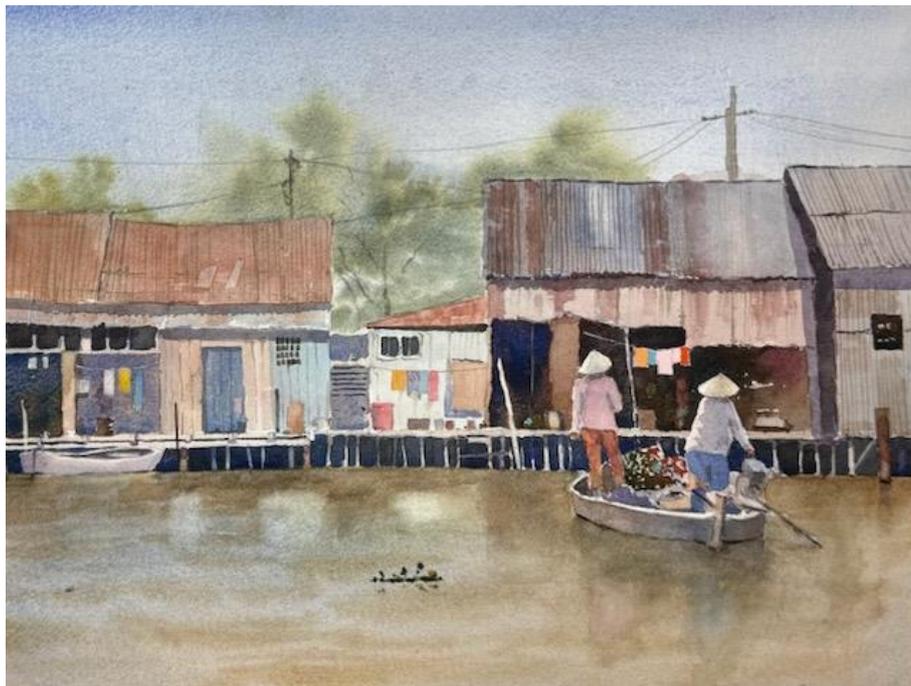
But Dad's saga progressed, and he was eventually admitted to Concord in Sydney and underwent a barrage of operations. Meanwhile back up in Monteagle nobody had any idea where he was or his condition. Mum had initially received a telegram just after the October 1942 Battle that her husband had been critically wounded but nothing else.

Dad himself had little idea of what was going on at that time. Luckily my Aunty Wyn, Dad's sister, was in the Land Army and doing a Sunday visit to Concord Hospital to visit wounded patients. She noticed a man being helped to sit and settle down in a sunny spot in the garden and his head was swathed in bandages. He looked familiar and she went over to him and was flabbergasted.....it was Dad! The rest is history. Our relationship with PNG had commenced.

Trevor Shelley

\*

Watercolour from Peter Darmody (below): **A Mekong River Scene, Vietnam**



## Vale (Signalman) Arthur Leggett OAM

What a week it was. All go here in Perth with the above very special occasion of the State Funeral for Arthur Leggett. The weeks preceding the 10th of May were filled with radio, television and news reports, newspaper articles and of course official State Government announcements and notices. (We have the total printed material dossier.)



We both knew Arthur very well. My late father was in the same Unit, the 2/11th Battalion, originally raised with all WA enlistees.

As is always the case as the War progressed, there were reinforcements from most of the other states including Queensland when they were shunted to the Wewak / Aitape sector in 1944.

If you watch these you tube clips you may see a bloke you know.

Enjoy the viewing: <https://youtu.be/gxvalFtU0cg?si=20WdD7mX7GxPGIRb>

Graeme Johnson (WA Representative)

\*

***The President, Board and Members of the Rotary Club of Broadwater Southport are pleased to advise the following for your Diaries:***



***Date Claimer: Friday, 8 August 2025***

***83rd ANNIVERSARY KOKODA DAY MEMORIAL SERVICE  
ROTARY KOKODA MEMORIAL WALL, CASCADE GARDENS, BROADBEACH***

Formal Invitations will be extended soon.

***Meet and greet from 9:30 am | Service commences at 10:00 am***

***Guest Speaker: Ms Nova Peris, Olympic Gold Medallist and former Senator***

---

## And finally, another tale from Vanimo by Garry Young (ACT Representative)

### *Deployment to Vanimo*



After the usual briefings by the 2PIR IO Capt John Salter MC, I was told by the CO, Lt Col Laurie Lewis, that I would be deploying with my platoon to Vanimo by LCM8, a riverine flat bottom craft used in Vietnam. That sounded very much like Boys' Own Annual stuff, so off I headed for Vanimo on the LCM8 which, while it had a canvas cover rigged over the deck, was very uncomfortable as it bashed its way west for a 36-hour trip.

The skipper was an RAN coxswain with two local deck hands from the PNGDF. There was a tiny wheel-house and galley and a primitive 'head', however the coxswain advised that my platoon couldn't use the facilities - we had to do our business perched over the stern hanging onto a toggle rope to prevent us falling overboard.

I was expecting to arrive at Vanimo at first light on the second morning, and before trying to sleep on the deck I asked the coxswain to wake me an hour before the beach landing in Vanimo.

Right: An Australian military LCM8



At about 0300hrs I was woken and spoke to the coxswain who was pointing to a large cluster of lights off the port bow. (We had seen virtually no lights along the coast until then). He looked concerned, I was just plain confused as I had been told Vanimo relied on generator power. After a long gaze at the chart and the coxswain scribbling madly on a piece of paper, we did a 'hard about' and left the capital of Indonesian West Irian, Jayapura, and headed back east to Vanimo which was still in total darkness.

Not a career enhancing move, but I was later advised I was not the only platoon commander to have sailed past Vanimo, nor did I get the Normandy/Jayapura invasion medal (or extras), although the CO did make mention of my exploits when he went 'finis' in December 1973. *Navigation is an all arms, all corps, all services responsibility.* Another lesson learned!

\*

*At the going down of the sun and in the morning ...*



*We will remember them.*

\*

