

The Borneo Bugle



BORNEO PRISONERS OF WAR RELATIVES GROUP
A MUTUAL GROUP TO HELP KEEP THE SPIRIT OF SANDAKAN ALIVE

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In This Issue

Sandakan Memorial	1/2
Borneo Exhibition	2
President's Corner	3
Manning Lions Club	3
Schools Pre-Anzac Day	4
United and Kindred	5
Windows Project	5
New Members	5
Soldier Profile	6

OUR NEXT MEETING

IRWIN BARRACKS
KARRAKATTA
SUNDAY APRIL 18th 2004
AT 10.00AM
SEE YOU THERE!

SANDAKAN MEMORIAL – LATEST NEWS

by Ken Jones Memorial sub-committee

Approval has been given by the BGPA Board to proceed with the Memorial. However, this has not come about without making some changes to the wording of the Dedication Plaque.

After the submission to the Board was made, I was asked to attend a meeting with senior BGPA staff on 21st March. I asked Mr. Bill Gaynor, the RSL State President, to also attend. We were informed that some of the wording in the second and third paragraphs was not in keeping with the Board's 'policy'. The specific words objected to were "due to inhuman treatment", "Japanese", "death" and "Many were executed".

The word "enshrined" was thought to be incorrect English and when the definitions of 'shrine' and 'enshrined' are examined this a correct assumption.

After some lengthy discussion the revised wording, as shown at the end of this article, was thought to be acceptable. The use of "death march" was agreed to after Bill Gaynor pointed out that it was a common term used by the media and in many publications in Australia and elsewhere.

The wording was presented to our Management Committee and it was agreed that this was a reasonable compromise. This was presented to the BGPA and on the 5th April we were informed that full approval was given.

I have held meetings with the two engineers, Mr. R. Loo and Mr. R. Neaves, who have agreed to assist with this project and we have finalised the construction working drawings. There was a problem with laying the face bricks at the angle we required but that has been solved. Other minor modifications have been made to improve the memorial practically as well as aesthetically. Quotes will now be obtained from contractors for the total construction package exclusive of the plaques. Meetings have been held with two plaque suppliers and their quotes will be received in the near future.

The sub-committee is now preparing the wording of our funding submission. At this stage I am confident that we can have the memorial dedicated on Sandakan Day.

Continued page 2

ABOUT THE BORNEO EXHIBITION

By Non Meston - Chairperson of the Sub-Committee for Community Education

Tributes to our efforts in presenting the Exhibition continue to come to us. One of the recent plaudits came from Doug George, the Manager of Public Programming for the Alexander State Library, who remarked that it was the most successful display put on in that venue in terms of both attendance and direct personal feedback. We have been invited to present it again in August – from August 15th to 28th – in support of our Sandakan Day observances. We are also planning a showing at the Air Force Museum in May, but the dates have not as yet been finalised. If you would like the opportunity to either volunteer or to simply attend, please ring me to clarify – or if you would like me to notify you I would be happy to do so.

One of the problems we have encountered in previous showings has been in informing members and inviting your support as dates have not coincided with the Bugle issue times. We urgently need the help of anyone who is willing or able to help as the list of volunteers is not great. It would take the pressure off that small band who have so far given their services in welcoming and talking to visitors, many of whom are veterans with stories to tell, and providing essential security supervision for the exhibition itself.

I would like you all to be aware of the amount of work that has been done by this sub-committee in developing and promoting this venture as well as the physical aspects of transporting and storing its components. But the major workload has been dealt with by Ryan Rowland in negotiating with essential organisations at two levels ie in providing materials (AWM for their contemporary photographic collection is an example, the Army Museum for their diorama another) and in arranging the support of local government and service groups such as RSL, Lions and Rotary in covering some of the essential costs of each venue. The remaining costs, which are considerable have been carried by Ryan himself.

As announced at the last General Meeting this sub-committee has been successful in applying for a grant from DVA to cover some of our further costs for specific purposes. A great deal of work is currently being done on many aspects of the project. I am proud to have worked with the many people in our volunteer group who have enabled us to succeed in this prime goal of the Group – “A Mutual Group to Help Keep the Spirit of Sandakan Alive”. We have not called on the Group for funds.

SANDAKAN MEMORIAL – LATEST NEWS

Continued from page 1

The accepted revised wording is:

**THIS MEMORIAL IS DEDICATED
TO THE 3400 AUSTRALIAN
AND BRITISH SERVICEMEN WHO
WERE PRISONERS OF WAR IN
BORNEO DURING WORLD WAR II
AND DID NOT RETURN HOME.**

**THEY ENDURED GREAT SUFFERING
AND LOSS AT THE HANDS OF THEIR
CAPTORS AT SANDAKAN, ON THE
DEATH MARCHES TO RANAU, AT
KUCHING AND OTHER P.O.W. CAMPS.**

**THESE HONOUR ROLLS LIST THE NAMES
OF THE 134 WESTERN AUSTRALIANS
WHO DID NOT SURVIVE.**

**“THEY ARE NOT DEAD; NOT EVEN BROKEN;
ONLY THEIR DUST HAS GONE BACK HOME TO THE EARTH;
FOR THEY, THE ESSENTIAL THEY, SHALL HAVE REBIRTH
WHENEVER A WORD OF THEM IS SPOKEN.”**

- DAME MARY GILMORE

President's Corner

by President Bob Brackenbury

Inspiration to start my contribution to our Bugle came easier this time; less than a week ago Steffoni and I were again at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. There the message of Sandakan is delivered in a simple but powerful way, with the floodlit photos of every Australian soldier involved covering one wall from floor to ceiling in a half darkened room. A register in the room provides details of each soldier, accessed by either name or regimental number, State by State. The serenity of the room is disturbed only by only occasional voice-overs by survivor Keith Botterill describing events.

This year's **Anzac Day Dawn Service** will again be conducted by the Engineers at their Memorial area, adjacent to where we have our meetings. An open invitation is extended to our Group, their families and friends to attend if they wish. Unlike the larger City service this area does not have the huge crowds, so making it a more personal experience. It is professionally run in a dedicated manner in a beautiful setting. As President I will be laying a wreath on behalf of our Group, but anyone who wishes to lay one privately is encouraged to do so.

After the main service any Group members present are asked to gather at our plaque on the Honour Wall to change the Flanders poppies for new short-stemmed ones, which will be provided onsite. If you plan to attend the Dawn Service please wear your medals, and also your Group name-tags for the benefit of the Gate Security.

Our Group has again been allocated a position in the **Anzac Day March**. It is understood that the form-up points will be about the same as last year, but the March will be reversed due to the roadworks being carried out at the William Street end of the city, and the distance will be marginally shorter. Full details will be available at our next meeting. If you are intending to march keep an eye open for details in the West Australian or contact myself or Secretary Ken.

Our Exhibition project had a recent windfall in the donation by Ockerby Real Estate (through a friend who runs WA Corporate Interiors) of a large supply of good quality lightweight partition panels, which have a Velcro-compatible covering on both sides. When erected at any future Exhibition these panels have the benefit of a more comfortable reading height, more stability, and will be more easily transported. Our pictorial and written material will be more quickly and easily mounted. A big thanks go out to Ockerby Real Estate of Cottesloe for the donation and to Ken Thurston and Alan Keating in assisting me in dismantling and transporting the panels.

Reminders

- April 18th 10am Group General Meeting at Karrakatta**
- April ? 13 Field Squadron, Karrakatta - Volunteers needed to assist Engineers in cleaning up Memorial area prior to Anzac Day**
- April 25th 5.30am 13 Field Squadron Karrakatta Anzac Dawn Service**
Anzac Day March – Our Group's involvement – See above
- May ? Exhibition at Air Force Museum Bull Creek. Contact Non Meston if you can assist**

MANNING LIONS CLUB INVITATION

by President Bob Brackenbury

“9-11 Ground Zero” is the title of an interesting presentation by a serving West Australian fire-fighter who paid his own way to help out after the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in New York. I am hoping to finalise arrangements for him to speak at a Manning Lions Club function at the Cannington Bowling Club at 6.30pm on Tuesday May 3rd. A subsidiary guest will be a university graduate who is seeking people to make up a control group to enable comparisons with subjects in a Heart Research programme.

This is an open invitation to all who may be interested in attending.

SCHOOLS PRE-ANZAC DAY SERVICE

by President Bob Brackenbury

On Thursday 8th April I was privileged to attend a moving and well conducted Memorial Service run entirely by five children of Bakers Hill Primary School children under the guidance of Acting Principal Barbara Stace on a lawn area in front of their flagpole.

These children, like those at the three Boyup Brook schools are well aware of the Sandakan history, having held a 'Welcome to WA' ceremony for Bill Young on his arrival last year, and having attended the Alexander Library Exhibition where Bill told his story.

Bill's pictures and the Sandakan Story formed a prominent part of their Anzac Day Display, together with pictures from Gallipoli and other areas. The children had also written letters imagining they were in the trenches on that original morning of the 25th April.

Four serving members of the SAS were present with two of their six-wheel-drive long range desert vehicles which had seen service in Afghanistan in vee formation behind the flagpole.

The children's presentations, all taking turns, were as follows

- 1 Welcome, and a message read out from HE Governor Sanderson
- 2 The first Anzac Service
- 3 Why we remember
- 4 The Spirit of Anzac
- 5 A short memoriam to a local soldier, Frank Smith
- 6 Congratulations to Bill Haskell, whom the children had met at his Thai-Burma Railway talks, on his recent award of the OAM.
- 7 'The Commando and the Captive' – an address by ex-Commando Ben Hall followed by one by Bill Young via conference phone linkup from Sydney.
- 8 An address by a 'conscript from the 60s'- a local Vietnam veteran, followed by the Captain of the SAS group – a volunteer.
- 9 Wreath laying followed the Ode of Remembrance led by Ben Hart.
- 10 The flag ceremony and the playing of the Last Post by a local bugler completed the ceremony.

At the conclusion of the ceremony the SAS leader invited the kids to inspect the vehicles. In an instant both were hidden under the combined onslaught of the 60 children present, who found delights such as ration packs, camouflage uniforms and kit to try on. One soldier's comment was that, by contrast, they were only too glad to be free of such gear whenever possible.

This year's Ted McLaughlin Scholarship Tour to Borneo lead by Ryan Rowland, will be leaving on April 19th. This is a major component of our programme of liaisons between schools both here and in Borneo, where the SANZAC College has been set up to commemorate the events in WW2, and to demonstrate the gratitude of those of our forces who served there.

At the opening of the Bakers Hill ceremony this week Ryan made a presentation of a plaque containing sand from Gallipoli in acknowledgement of the strength of that liaison.

Among those travelling this year are last year's scholarship winner, 14yo Alex Vaughn of Boyup Brook, together with Barbara Stace of Bakers Hill, and Ben and Kath Hart our notable new members. He served in Borneo during the final stages of the war and its aftermath.

UNITED AND KINDRED ASSOCIATIONS

by Ken Jones

At the meeting held on Tuesday 6th April, the Anzac Day March arrangements were confirmed and will be discussed in detail at our meeting on Sunday 18th April.

Another matter brought to our attention by the State RSL President, Bill Gaynor, was that the State War Memorial is to be fully refurbished at a cost of \$900,000, with both State and Federal governments sharing the costs. Commencing in September this year the Memorial will be completely dismantled and rebuilt in time for Anzac Day 2005. This work is necessary and urgent as the Memorial is being eroded by 'concrete cancer'.

WINDOWS PROJECT - ST. MICHAELS AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH- SANDAKAN

by Ken Jones

The design for the Windows was presented to the church by Lynette Silver and was supported and approved with great enthusiasm.

The work will be carried out by our country's best known stain-glass artist, Mr. Philip Handel. As Lynette has said "it is an elaborate and challenging piece of work requiring patience, skill and precision" and "the fact that it is the work of Handel will be itself a piece of history because Handel, who has made more than 1,000 stain-glasses for churches in Australia has offered his services to make this last mammoth work before he retires".

The church have volunteered an area on the right hand side of the main entry that will be set aside for a small POW chapel and is the area where the unit plaques will be displayed.

Originally, the windows were to be made from German glass, however a stock of French glass (which is considered to be the best in the world) was found in Brisbane and is now on the way to Mr. Handel's studio in Sydney.

It is anticipated that the dedication will be held on Anzac eve on Sunday 24th April 2005.

NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome seven new members since our last 'Borneo Bugle':-

John Goldie whose brother is **Private James Goldie** of the 2/4 Machine Gun Battalion, Australian Infantry and John's wife **Anne**.

Joan Rakich whose uncle is **Lance Corporal Roderick Spence** of the 88 Light Aid Detachment, Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and Joan's husband **Andrew**.

Noel McKenzie whose brother is **Sergeant Donald McKenzie** of Special Operations Australia*, Australian Infantry and Noel's wife **Alvie**.

Beatrice (Trixie) Sullivan who was the fiancé of **Private Edward Burton** of the 2/4 Machine Gun Battalion, Australian Infantry.

* The Army is insisting on this terminology being used.
Z Force is now considered incorrect.

POW PROFILE



**John Alfred Leslie
CARTHEW
Sergeant NX47042
2/10th Field Ambulance
Aust Army Medical Corps**

Written by Bob Carthew

My father was born at Broken Hill NSW on 27th October 1907. He was the eldest of five children born to Leslie John Alfred Carthew and Edith (nee Carnie). The family moved to Newcastle in mid 1920 where John worked at various jobs. His primary occupation was a cabinet maker which he hated but finished his apprenticeship to appease his mother. It was when he was at BHP that he was appointed to the First Aid Post where he apparently learnt the skills which would ultimately entice him to the 2/10th Field Ambulance.

In 1929 he married Cepha Madeline Ham and they had five children; John Maxwell born 11 November 1929, Brian Leslie Joseph 29 May 1932, Pamela Edith 12 August 1935, Ian Gregory 6 August 1939 and myself on 26 January 1942. Around 1937, Jack, (he was calling himself now) joined the 16th Hunter River Lancers who were based at Rutherford, west of Maitland. It was a reserve unit and a part time job for my father. This was a unit whose origins went back to the NSW Cavalry Troops of 1854 and later formed part of the 2nd Light Horse Brigade in the Boer War.

On 22nd July 1940 Jack joined the permanent army at Newcastle as did a lot of the 16th HRL. He was attached to the 2/10th Field Ambulance, which was formed that same month with a total of 292 men, many of whom came from the Newcastle and Hunter Valley Region. This unit was formed by Col. E McArthur-Sheppard, who personally selected his soldiers from the Newcastle Recruitment Centre, which totalled about one hundred men.

The unit left Sydney on 29th July 1941 aboard the MV Johann Van Oldenbarneveltdt headed for Perth where they and other ships from Melbourne and Perth sailed for Singapore. The capitulation of Singapore by the Commonwealth Forces in 1942 is now history and Jack Carthew and his unit were now Prisoners Of War.

Jack later travelled to Borneo with 'B Force' where a total of 112 men of the 2/10th Field Ambulance died at Sandakan or on the Ranau track. The finality for Sgt Jack Carthew NX47042 came on the 12th February 1945 at Sandakan Number One Camp when he perished of malnutrition. Official Japanese records nominate his cause of death as acute enteritis. There has been no closure for the family as his remains were never identified and his grave is known to God alone. My father is commemorated on Panel 25 at the Labuan War Cemetery.

I never knew my father as I was born six months after his departure and only two weeks prior to the fall of Singapore. My mother never discussed my father at all to me.....no stories.....his name was never mentioned. My mother worked hard at the local golf club to raise her family and later remarried in 1956. My brother Brian recalls some moments during those war years....."I still remember all the people standing on Broadmeadow Railway Station the day the troop train took them away for the last time and as everyone sang "Auld Lang Syne" as the train pulled out and disappeared behind the high level bridge on Lampton Road. I was only young at the time but that song will still bring a tear to my eye". Also from Brian..."About August 1945 a telegram arrived at the Charlestown Post Office where Mrs Marlin, the Post Mistress, handed me an unsealed envelope. She looked at me and I am sure that she had a tear in her eye. There appeared a number of similar telegrams in the boxes behind the counter and she had no doubt been handing these out for many days and knew that there would be many more to come".

This article has been compiled from generous contributions from my brothers John and Brian. Thanks also to my new friend, Fred Goode of Maitland NSW.

RIP Jack Carthew