

# The Borneo Bugle



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

October 1st 2004 Volume 3, Issue 2

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OUR NEXT MEETING  
SUNDAY OCT 10th 2004  
AT 10.00AM  
IRWIN BARRACKS  
KARRAKATTA

## SANDAKAN DAY 2004 REPORT

by Ken Jones

The weather this year was ideal and with the setting in Marri Walk it was 'picture perfect' for our annual Commemoration service.

Whilst we received widespread congratulations for the ceremony it cannot take place without a lot of support and my thanks go to the sub-committee of Rhonda Miller, Keith Jones and Allan Cresswell who gave many hours of their time in planning this event.

For their participation in the programme, thank you to Anita Willmott, Colin Prior, Rhonda and Allan; 13 Field Squadron's Catafalque Party; Highgate RSL State Wardens led by Phillip Skelton; the Australian Army Band Woodwind Quartet; the Chaplain, Captain Mitch Fialkowski and the various Associations for their Banners. For their help prior, during and after the service; Bob Brackenbury- flagpole, flags, chairs, lectern, trestles and their transport; Nola Jones, Margaret Jones and Dianne Greive- manning the programme tables; Keith Jones- operating the sound system; Harry Wrankmore, Colin Prior and Bob Brackenbury- wreath marshals; and all those that helped with the unloading and loading of Bob's truck and trailer.

My thanks to the members and their families who did attend, but as in previous years the support from our membership was not what could be expected.



View of part of the crowd at the completion of Sandakan Day 2004

Photo Courtesy Warren Cresswell

SEE PAGE 2 FOR MORE PHOTOS

## NAMES ON MEMORIAL

by Keith Jones – Chairperson Memorial sub-committee

Our POW memorial in Kings Park will bear two plaques listing the names of our WA servicemen who died in Borneo. Ken Jones did considerable research in checking published records to track down a total of 134 men who enlisted here, as confirmed by the army 'WX' prefix to their service numbers. Ken even searched all Australians who died at Borneo to see if any others had a strong WA connection. Two were located who gave a WA next of kin although they joined interstate. One was subsequently eliminated as his next of kin (wife) moved to WA to live with her brother and family whilst her husband was away. The other is believed to have run away to Victoria to join as his parents in WA refused to let him join up. He was born in WA and living in WA right up to enlisting according to family members. At this stage he is likely to be added to the list. It was then considered that we had it right and no one else would be included, until just recently!

At the Borneo exhibition in the Alexander library last August a chap showed up and pointed out that he was related to a serviceman who had died in Kuching. He was talking about a man named Smith who was a member of the **British Royal Air Force**, but who had joined up with them from WA!

A hurried search on our part soon confirmed this. Vernon Hopetoun Smith was born in Cottesloe, tried his hand at farming until caught up in the depression, then he worked in the coal and timber industries. He was married with two daughters and a son, and living in Victoria Park when he enlisted in the RAF Volunteer Reserve as 117114 Flying Officer V.H. Smith. He was based in north-west Malaya when the British saw what was coming and moved their Air Force personnel to Java to be evacuated home, but of course the Imperial Japanese Army beat them to it and they were trapped there.

FO Smith was then with British POW's who were sent first to Changi in Singapore, then transferred to Borneo into successive camps at Kuching, Jesselton, Sandakan and finally back to Kuching. It was there that he died on July 21<sup>st</sup> 1945, aged 44, just 25 days before the Japanese surrendered.

His name now becomes a new addition to our memorial, increasing the list of West Australians. We are currently researching the whole issue again, in case there are any other WA servicemen who might have gone unnoticed because of very rare circumstances such as this.

*Editors Note: Pte P H Wicksteed 13929 F.M.S.V.F. who died 06.08.44 aged 32 years sent as POW from Kuching to Labuan had his 'Place of Origin' nominated as Perth, Western Australia. Another one to be investigated!*

### MORE SANDAKAN DAY 2004 PHOTOS



Nola Jones & Margaret Jones –Programs & Visitors Book

Photos courtesy Keith Jones



Harry Wrangmore & Colin Prior Preparing Wreaths

### 2004/2005 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

by Colin Prior

#### REMINDER NOTICE

Subscriptions have been due since 1<sup>st</sup> July and to date there has been a poor response. If you have yet to pay and wish to continue your membership please send \$15.00 to-

**The Treasurer**  
**23 Haddrill Street**  
**BAYSWATER WA 6053**

## President's Corner

by President Allan Cresswell

As your newly elected president I would firstly like to record in the Borneo Bugle my opening address to those present at our August 2004 General Meeting held at Alexander State Library, prior to the opening of the exhibition.

*Thanks Retiring President Bob for all that you have done for the group during the past two years. We are progressing now as an Association and we all appreciate the time, effort and dedication you have displayed during this time. You have always made yourself available to the members and represented the group at numerous functions and events. I thank you on behalf of the members. I know that you as Vice President will continue to work tirelessly for the group.*

*Keith Jones, we do warmly welcome you back to join the management of our Association and know that you will always positively contribute to our cause. We know also that you are heavily involved in other activities and thank you for placing the Association high in your priorities. If needed I will assist you in any requirements or tasks to try and help to lessen any large demands placed upon you. Great to have you here!*

*To all the members of our Association, thank you all for having the faith in me to carry out the functions of President by electing me. I will carry out the required duties to the best of my ability. We still have many tasks ahead of us but I know that through unity we will achieve our aims. By being open and fair to each other we will succeed. I personally have limited knowledge in conducting meetings and giving speeches and I rely on all of you for your support, both to myself, and the Association as a whole. I did accept nomination as President because I knew that all of you would assist me throughout my term. Thank you all again.*

*I also congratulate the other office bearers, Ken Jones and Colin Prior for being re-elected.*

*I would also like to thank Non Meston for the time and dedication during her term as Vice-President and as Chair Person for the Education Committee, and for her various contributions and assistance in the Sandakan Exhibition. Well done Non!*

*Finally I remind all of you that your support is needed both for the Sandakan Exhibition and for the Sandakan Day Ceremony in two weeks time. Thank You.*

The Sandakan Exhibition at the Alexander State Library was again a success. Although attendances were down on last year those that did attend all remarked on the quality of the exhibition. It was particularly pleasing to see many Asian students and former Borneo residents visit the exhibition. Many people commented that they were unaware of the exhibition and it was only because they were at the library and saw the banners that they attended. If the exhibition is to become an annual event at the library then more publicity through the various media outlets is required.

The time, effort and dedication by Ryan Rowland and Non Meston in getting the exhibition to the library is greatly appreciated. This exhibition is a great prelude to our Sandakan Day. The following people gave assistance during the two weeks in manning the exhibition - Trixie Sullivan, Bob Bavin, Bob and Stef Brackenbury, Keith and Nola Jones, Non Meston, Ben and Kath Hart, Clive Rosser, Ryan Rowland, Eric, Ken and Val Thurston, Reg and Coral Blewett, Allan and Jean Cresswell. Thanks go to these people for their time and thanks go to those who assisted in the setting up and dismantling of the exhibition.

During the next few months it would be great to see discussion and feedback by the association members as to where they see the direction of the group's future involvement and assistance towards the exhibition. Ryan has many great plans for the exhibition and if we as a group are to continue to assist and be involved in the exhibition then we require a greater commitment and greater support by our members. It needs to be known whether our association will provide full support, limited support or no support for future displays of the exhibition. We need members to consider the various options on this most important issue.

Sandakan Day was again a great success in 2004 due to the efforts and great planning by Ken Jones. Ken was well assisted by many members of our Association. Ken's report on Sandakan Day 2004 is featured on page one.

I had the pleasure of travelling to Boyup Brook in September for the annual Sandakan Ceremony accompanied by Association members, Trixie Sullivan and Jodi Bavin. Bob gives a full report on page 7. There are also photos taken by me on that page.

Vice- Pres Bob represented our Association at the annual NMBVA Merdeka Day on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2004 for a service at the Flame of Remembrance followed by a march down to the State War Memorial. Our banner was proudly on display there.

### **SANDAKAN MEMORIAL FUNDING**

**Funding for the Memorial has progressed to where we have support for over 60% of the required funds, of that DVA and the Lotteries Commission have indicated they could provide 48% and two private entities have promised 16%, and we will continue to approach the business sector for funds. However, it is now time for us, the members to show and give our support. A form is enclosed for your return, to give whatever can be afforded by your family. To date members have given over \$800.00 to the Memorial.**

## HONOUR AVENUES GROUP

by Ken Jones

Our Group is a permanent sub-committee of Highgate (WA) RSL and has the responsibility of maintaining to the highest standard all the Honour plaques, posts and colour patches situated in May Drive, Lovekin Drive and Marri Walk in Kings Park.

Maintenance consists of repainting plaques, painting and replacing termite-eaten posts and replacing metal colour patches with acrylic type in situ. Also, replacing posts and plaques broken by irresponsible motorists, particularly over the festive season, last year 12 posts were broken. The work is carried out each Tuesday (except over Christmas when a weekly patrol is carried out) by 6-10 members based in the workshop provided by the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority and some members will be working on Thursdays.

We are about to commence a major repainting programme of the cast iron plaques (over 900) which entails sand blasting and priming by an off-site contractor and then painting with two coats of black enamel and the letters with aluminium paint at our workshop.

New posts are pre-treated by the supplier with Copper Chrome Arsenate to H4 standard to prevent termite and fungal attack, they are then painted with three coats of best quality white paint at our workshop.

Other works are undertaken by members at their homes e.g. making acrylic colour patches and new plaques cast in aluminium, updating computer records for each plaque and general administration tasks.

We have recently received a Government grant which will enable us to continue to carry out the above work for the next 2-3 years. All the members time is voluntary.

We accept applications for new plaques and if they meet our criteria, plaques are made and allocated to a shared tree. The applicants pay a fee for each plaque which covers the manufacturing cost and later maintenance. When sufficient new plaques are ready a Dedication Service is held with the applicant's family and friends, the Chaplain, Highgate officials and the Honour Avenues members in attendance.

## NEW AUSTRALIAN MILITARY BOOK

by Bill Young

I have just finished reading Lynette Ramsay Silver's book- *The Bridge At Parit Sulong*, and I found it so hard to put down, I even read the end notes, and I can't ever remember doing that before. Anyway, I came away with the conclusion that in writing this book Lyn has excelled, she has detailed the battles with brutal honesty, and has uncovered the bodies, pointed the finger. I can recommend it to you, wholeheartedly. The battles, the atrocities, are there in soulful resurrection. Surely it will bring both tears to your eyes and a sense of frustrated pride, for all of our men who had fought so well, and in so many cases died so bravely, for what in the end, can only be described as the unmitigated muck up of all muck ups.

Weeks before the related events, when the groundwork for our eventual ignominious defeat was being perpetrated, a group of us out of the battalion's 3rd reinforcement, were hustled up to guard the dam on the Muar River, near where the events Lyn writes of took place. This was my first taste of battle preparation; at the time, the enemy were way up north, and here we were, getting ready to kick them back up to Nippon-land and beyond, or so we had thought back then. Unfortunately, we were only there for a few days before we were withdrawn, (young and naive we had itched to be in it; to see some action) yet, for all that, we did come away with some idea of the area around which the battalion, and the others, would be fighting over. Enough to help me when reading Lyn's account.

On thinking back on those days, when I'd helped mind the dam, I couldn't help but think on how peaceful it had seemed, and how quickly things changed; what was to follow is hard to reconcile. It was as if a naughty boy had come along and kicked over our sand castle. Our men had been let down, badly misinformed. To think that these few hundred men of ours, had been sent to try and stop a top line Japanese army. The Imperial Guards, China trained and ten thousand strong.

Now Lyn has come along and put the pieces together, and what a sad mixed up picture it makes; there are still so many pieces missing, so many tees to dot, so many ifs to dwell on. If only our army had been under our own command. If only we had fought over the country we'd been trained to protect. If only we had had a knowledge of the local people. If only we had known their language, and last of all, if only we had known, just a little about our enemy. Lynette's book highlights it all so well, pointing out what really did happen there, and just what went wrong and why. She has taken us back to those days with such authority, filling in the blanks, more than enough for anyone to follow.

## NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome one new member since our last 'Borneo Bugle':-

**Rebecca Simpson** whose relative is **Private Alvin Willmott** of the 4 Reserve Motor Transport Company, Australian Army Service Corps. Rebecca is the niece of Anita Willmott.

Commencing below is part one of an article recently written by Bill Young titled 'Once Upon a Time in Kuching'. Bill has in the past written a book, 'Return to a Dark Age', on his years as a POW at Singapore, Sandakan, Kuching and at Outram Road Prison and another article called 'Long Ago in Borneo'. His recent trip to Kuching in Sarawak brought back many memories, particularly when he visited the Hero's Grave. The five brave local men listed at the bottom of this grave were sentenced to death whilst handcuffed to Bill and his seven Australian mates who all received prison terms. Bill dedicates this article to the memory of these five brave men; Soh Kim Seng, Amigo Sik Bassan, Kassim Bin Jumadi, P.C. Kasiu and Sidik Bin Simeon. Thanks go to Bill for allowing us to share his memories.

## ONCE UPON A TIME IN KUCHING

By Bill Young

To think that it's over sixty years since the eight of us had sat chained together aboard the ex-Sultan of Sarawak's yacht. If I remember right, it was around noon, on about the 22nd. Of March 1943, when we'd steamed out of Sandakan bay, on the first leg of our journey down to a Japanese Military Prison in Kuching.



Leaving Sandakan

I can remember thinking at that time, fancy me traveling in a boat that had once belonged to a Sultan. Even so, it was way too scruffy now to be called a yacht. "I bet it didn't look as dirty as this, when the Brooke's owned it" I'd remarked to the others, as we'd sat watching the receding town, and the hills beyond to where the camp holding our mates, lay.

The fact that we were in chains; like a regular chain-gang, wasn't such a big deal, not until someone wanted to go to the toilet, that is; then that caused a bit of juggling about. In the end, the guards decided it was too much of a hassle for them, so they took the chains off; but only between ports of call, and not before giving us dire warnings of us being thrown overboard, if we tried anything.

Other than the uncertainty of what lay ahead, the trip; especially after the interrogations we'd just come through, proved to be a bonus. It was as if Time Out had been called. Giving us some breathing space in order to recover; time to recuperate on deck, while quietly watching the interplay of colours between the islands, the mountains and the sea.

If only they'd fed us on something other than those rotten fish balls, the trip would have been well worth the telling. Every day a ball of rice in aged, fish paste; they were dreadful things. Of course we ate them, we'd have eaten anything; certainly we were hungry enough.

The ship was on one of its regular journeys, visiting the various ports around the Island of Borneo. On our leg of the trip, we stayed overnight at the Island of Bangi Bangi, then we spent a few days in the clink at Jesselton, a night on Labuan Island, and a day in Brunei Bay. All up it had been a week of pleasant memories; finishing on up the Sarawak River where the Kempei Tai had a prison cell waiting us.

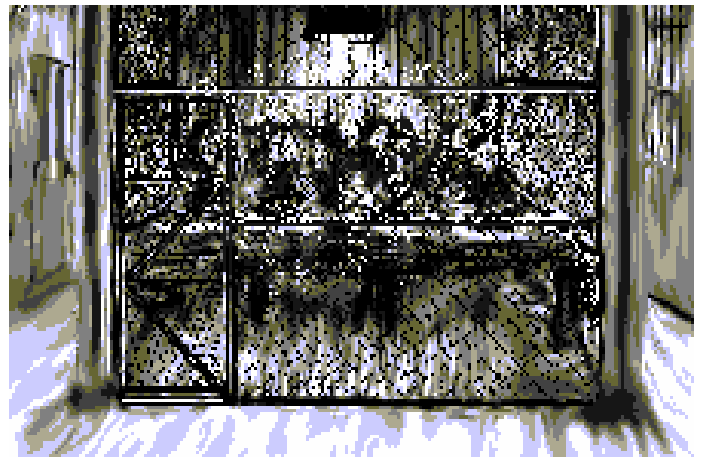
Seven of us were recaptured escapees, the other one had hit a guard; Alan Minty, Bill Fairy, Bruce McWilliams, Norm Morris and Fred New, had eluded the Japs for over five months before being recaptured; while sailing a Sampan back to Australia. Jimmy Brown and I didn't get far at all, as for Jimmy Darlington, he'd hit a guard while defending our old cook, and was so badly beaten he almost died on us.

We'd no sooner tied up at the Kuching Wharf than they bundled us into a truck and took us to what, at first glance looked to be an old warehouse. We soon found out over the next four months, that looks can deceive; it was a jail alright— very much a warehouse to beware of.

Inside looked more like an aviary, than a jail. Cyclone Wire wrapped around supporting columns, divided the floor space into a number of cell/cages; inside of which, prisoners sat perched up on platforms, so creating an impression of an aviary; one full of jailbirds; all of them with their wings clipped, and with not a cackle to be heard.

Whenever I see chooks perched in a hen house, I'm reminded of the time we spent in that foul prison, sitting perched, birdlike, waiting out the months. Waiting for those nippy people from out of Nippon to get a move on, and try us for whatever it was they were on about.

The first few weeks were the pits; not knowing what was what, or when was when. Wondering what on earth was going on in the rest of the world. Impatient with having



A cage full of chooks

patience thrust upon us; having the time but not having the inclination. Not only does it take patience, you needed to have the capacity for patience; plus room enough to move. In this place, time hung heavy all around.

Day after day of sitting hunched over, staring straight ahead, and still feeling somewhat bruised and battered from having had the stuffing knocked out of us up at Sandakan. While the sea voyage had helped mend the wounds, the mending had slowed, in keeping with time; in here, time was an unmoving lump.

Besides, westerners aren't shaped for sitting, backs straight, legs crossed, hands on knees, for forever and a day. Not being able to talk, that too was a bit thick; so over the years we developed a gift of the gab per, Morse Code, Semaphore, and the Deaf and Dumb finger language. It was enough to make walls talk, so much so, they became the prisons internet; Morse Coded Emails came scratching at our cell walls.

Adding to the dead weight of unleavened time, the building was lousy with bed bugs. The whole place teemed with millions of rotten little Vampires. Every crack was filled with bugs, and there were millions of cracks, and all of them were overflowing with the hungry bloodsuckers.

The whole rotten stinking jail was overrun with the blood seeking little mongrels, and to make matters worse, the bugs loved nothing better than feeding off tender young skin; so I became the flavour of the month, providing them with their own private Blood Bank; Blood on Tap.

Every night, never miss, out they'd come, teeth gnashing, in open attack formation, just thirsting for blood. We'd put up a desperate fight, as into the valley of death we'd go, squish- squashing away, our shirts and shorts stained red with their blood; come to think it, it was our own bloody blood that we'd been squish-squashing away with.

We were in a no win situation, with the bugs rushing upon us with kamikahzi zeal, biting left, right and centre, up until daylight called a halt. Then, with their tanks full, they'd retire from the field of battle, well satisfied with their effort, and ready for a nap. On the other hand, we'd sit out the day, with our legs crossed; literally bugged.



**The welcome committee**

Bleary eyed, tired out and worn, we pleaded with the guards for the use of some of their bug killer; disinfectant was distilled here by the truckloads. We kept at them until finally our persistence paid off, and the guards relented, and gave us some of the magical potent.

Oh how happy and glorious was the day we proved that those who sprayed together, stayed together, and more to the point, we got to sleep peacefully together. With sleep descending upon the cell, harmony came back to stay within the ranks. We had sprayed with gusto, with might and main, and for all the pain, our work was not to be in vain.

On the first night of spraying, we produced four heaped shovel fills of the rotten little bities; such a fantastic amount, was almost unbelievable. Even the guards had stopped and gaped at the heaps and heaps of bugged bugs. So with their encouragement, we sprayed on, day after day, until we knew for certainty that at least our cell was no longer bugged, and we could stretch out on the boards and roll into the deep blue sea of glorious unconsciousness.

Our victory over the Bugs went deep into memory; for not only had we won back our precious sleep, we had also reduced the conscious side of our sentence by at least a third. Thus, the vanquishing of the evil vampires had served two purposes; dreaming our dreams while whiling away our time.

In the meantime, there were the guards to worry about, and there was no spraying them, and their sneaking ways; the little sneaks. Always on the lookout for evildoers, those who were not sitting up properly; or heavens to Betsey, those found talking. Between us and them, there developed a battle of wits.

We had to stay alert, forever vigilant, as there was always the chance of a guard suddenly popping his head around the corner, and pouncing on some unwary victim. The efforts they went to, in order to catch some poor devil out. It went way beyond belief.

I have this memory illustrating this point. It is of a courageous young Sarawak man; the guard had shoved him into our cage with more rancor than usual, saying that like us, this nasty fellow was also an escapee, and although he couldn't speak English, he was to stay in our cell until he was tried in the same court, and at the same time as we were going to be.

The guard's assertion hadn't fooled any of us, for he was such a bad actor. It was obvious that the new prisoner was a "plant" for the story didn't hold water. So it was that over the next hour or so, we'd remained mute, not wanting to allow this new man into our confidence.

Our uninvited guest on his own initiative decided to speak, and in plain English, he told us that the Japanese had put him in the cell with the promise of setting him free, that is if he informed on us. He was expected to tell them everything we did that was against the jail's many regulations. He smiled at that, saying, "While freedom was a nice thing to have, it wasn't worth paying such a high price, as that".

He turned out to be a nice bloke, and we became good friends. How he laughed when we showed him the little spy hole we had made in the screen; he even took turns at standing watch, thinking it was such a lovely joke on the kempei tai guards.

I have often wondered over the years, how he'd got on, and if he'd survived his time in prison. I can only hope that fate has dealt kindly with him, and that he has lived well and long, at least long enough to have participated in the rebuilding of his fine Country.

## SANDAKAN CEREMONY BOYUP BROOK

by Bob Brackenbury

The Sandakan Ceremony at Boyup Brook is always held at 11am on the second Tuesday of September each year. In earlier years a simple ceremony was held at the small memorial plinth adjacent to the rear of the Shire Offices but as it always seemed to rain on that day it is now held inside the nearby Shire Hall. The ceremony is carried out by the Boyup Brook Lions Club together with the Shire and local RSL for the 2/4 Machine Gun Battalion and Ex POW Association members and sundry veteran bodies. An initiative of Ryan Rowland involving the three local schools giving their various presentations on the Sandakan Story after the Remembrance Service has been gaining in participation. Originally four children, now this year fifteen, have taken part in the final judging for the Scholarship Programme which culminates in the one winner going on the following year's Anzac Tour to Borneo.

This year we had a fair representation of members of our Association, which consisted of President Allan Cresswell, his daughter Jodi Bavin, Ryan and Trish Rowland, Trixie Sullivan, Ben and Kath Hart, Steffoni and Bob Brackenbury. June Edwards who lives in nearby Collie was unable to attend. Our Association Banner was displayed and a wreath laid on your behalf by President Allan.

Travelling down with the Rowland Family was the special guest of the day, Mr Richard Chung, representing the Sandakan City Council. Richard gave us an idea of life in Sabah during those terrible times and of later meeting survivor, Owen Campbell. Since Boyup Brook Richard has been able to meet up with Jack Sue plus Bill Young and Frank Murray in Sydney.

Boyup Brook photos courtesy Allan Cresswell



# POW PROFILE



**Donald George Cedric  
MARSHALL  
Sapper WX10932  
2/6<sup>th</sup> Field Park Company  
R.A.E.**

**Written by Jean Cresswell (nee Marshall)**

I never met my Uncle Don. He died in a Japanese Prison Cell three years before I was born. Don's POW story and his escape attempts with his mates, Ted Keating and Carl 'Snowy' Jensen, have been told previously. I will attempt now to add some insight into his death and discuss the impact it had on my family. I will also detail some personal information that I now know about Uncle Don.

Donald George Cedric Marshall was born on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1906 at Coolgardie Western Australia, the fourth son to John Arthur Marshall and Mary Agnes (nee Giblett). He had three sisters and another two brothers were born after Don. The family was into mining and his father was an Insurance Agent and at one stage he was the publican of the Denver City Hotel. Later the family moved to Kalgoorlie. Don's big brother Frank went off to the First World War and was shot in the eye. He wore a patch when he came home. He served with the 'C' Company, 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, A.I.F. and took part in the famous landing at Gallipoli.

Don worked at various mining leases including a Gold Mining Syndicate formed by the Marshall family and others in 1932. They were operating in the Eastern Goldfields near Gindalbie. Don also invented the 'Marshall Power Head' that replaced the orthodox type of cylinder head and went into partnership with Lindsay Hummerston to construct and commercially exploit the invention. He submitted a patent application to the Commonwealth Government in 1930 and formed the Marshall Power Head Company Ltd with a nominal capital of two thousand pounds. It was depression days and the wrong time to venture into the world of inventions and capital investment for a new project like this.

Later in the 1930's his family moved to Perth but Don remained in the Goldfields as he continued working in the mining industry. He resided at the Cremorne Hostel in Coolgardie during 1938/39 then the Denver City Hotel in 1940/41 leading up to his enlistment. His trade was Electric Welder although he was competent at all facets of gold mining exploration and extraction. Don was also a bit of a ladies man and very likeable chap, according to his nephews. He was so loved by his family.

Don wrote to his family from Coolgardie regularly and later when he enlisted and was sent to Singapore with the 2/6 Field Park Coy RAE he continued to write to all his family. I have many of his letters in my possession. He thought the war would be very short and that the Japanese would be easily repelled on their march down the Malay Peninsular. How wrong he was!

I remember as a child always going to the Anzac Day Marches and afterwards the family would gather at Don's Plaque in Kings Park. Most of his brothers saw active service and all wanted to forget the bad days so the circumstances of Uncle Don's death was relayed to me as only; that he had tried to escape five times, was betrayed and he died. Nothing else was ever discussed. Uncle Ben was also a POW at Changi but he never talked about those times. Later I was to learn that Uncle Ben even viewed Don's body at the hospital.

In 1966 my husband and I visited my Aunty Win, who was Don's eldest sister, to take her for a drive in Allan's pride and joy, his fully imported Toyota Crown. She was looking forward to the drive but when she saw the Toyota name on the back of the car she exclaimed, "I'm not going in a Japanese car!" There was anger in her statement and she stormed off!

It was 1983 when I visited Don's plaque with my husband, Allan. He asked, "Whatever happened to your Uncle Don?" I didn't really know. All the family had passed on and I knew nothing of the circumstances of his death. I thought then that we would never really find out. It was not until 1989 when we accidentally found Don's name in Don Wall's book, 'Sandakan - The Last March' that the story started to unfold. He had been to Borneo! He had been tried in a Japanese Military Court and sentenced to Outram Road Prison! Allan located Carl Jensen and 'Snowy' came around to tell more on how Don died. Carl had been to see Don's family back in 1945 to tell them what had happened but his story was never passed by the family onto the next generation, well not to me at least.

Then we located records at the National Archives including all the Post Mortem papers relating to Don's death, which described the terrible condition he was in when he died. His mate, 'Snowy,' was with him when he died in that hell hole called Outram Road. Other books were located about Sandakan, The Underground Movement, Kuching and Outram Road Prison. We now knew more than we ever felt possible to know about Uncle Don and how he died. We then had the privilege to meet both Ted Keating's family and Carl Jensen's family and to join the Borneo POW Relatives Group. A trip to Borneo in 2002 helped to build on the knowledge we had gained. Now a trip to Singapore in December this year to visit Kranji War Cemetery will complete the journey. We also now know why Aunty Win was so angry back in 1966.

**Rest in Peace Uncle Don**