

The Borneo Bugle



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

February 1st 2005 Volume 3, Issue 3

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OUR NEXT MEETING
SUNDAY FEB 13th 2005
AT 10.00AM
IRWIN BARRACKS
KARRAKATTA

WELL DONE, MEMBERS!

by Ken Jones

The response that we have received for member's donations for the Sandakan Memorial has been remarkable. Since inviting members to donate we have received \$3,005 from 35 members. We have also received an additional \$ 690 from people (some who have no association with our group) who are interested in this Project. The Lions Club of Floreat has given \$500 and Hollywood Hospital and Equigold have pledged \$2,000 and \$1,000 respectively.

We have had preliminary meetings with DVA and Lotterywest and we are now going to proceed with our applications for \$4,000 (maximum) and \$5,000 respectively. This will give a shortfall of under \$2,000 but we are confident we can raise that amount from other sources.

If these are received in a reasonable time we are hopeful that we will be able to dedicate the memorial on Sandakan Day 2005.



Artist Impression of Sandakan Memorial at Kings Park - By Colin Prior

ANOTHER SOLDIER'S NAME ADDED TO OUR MEMORIAL

by Keith Jones

In the last edition of *The Borneo Bugle* President Allan noted the name of Private Wicksteed. This serviceman was captured in Malaya as a member of the **British** forces, but there was a suggestion that he may have originated from Western Australia.

We queried this with Lynette Silver, who kindly did some research for us and came back with more information on Pte Philip Henry Wicksteed as follows:-

“He turned up on documents recovered from the POW compound in Brunei on 22 June 1945, and is in my book on page 369, with ‘Australian’ in brackets after his name. He was sent up with the Kuching party to Labuan and died there on 6 August 1944. Other than the Brunei compound, where he appears as ‘Wickstead’, no other trace was found of him (i.e. no other paperwork, records, relics.)

His enlistment number, with the Federated Malay States Volunteer Forces was 13929. He joined 4 Battalion (Pahang). I listed him as ‘Australian’ as this was his given address, but of course, this was the address of his wife. He is commemorated on Column 391 in Kranji.” (Our thanks to Lynette for her help with this.)

By an amazing coincidence, we now find that two of our own members knew of him and his wife. Before the war our Alexa Hoffman was employed in the office of the Shell Oil Company in Perth, where she was acquainted with a nice chap named Phil Wicksteed who worked in the credit department. Then young Elsa Rosa Harrison joined the company as a junior typist, and as time went by she and Phil eventually became engaged. Some time later Phil accepted an offer of work in Malaya and wanted to take Elsa with him, so they married earlier than planned and left Australia.

Philip was working as assistant accountant at the Sungei Lembing Mine in the state of Pahang, Malaya, when he joined the local volunteer defence force. He was away from Elsa quite often on military training, then one day he did not come back and Elsa was warned to leave quickly. The company manager’s wife had a car which they drove down to Singapore, then boarded a ship home.

Our Paula Willis came to meet Elsa after her escape back to Australia, and learned much of her story over time. She eventually became a close helper to Elsa in her senior years whilst she was still living in her own home. Elsa never remarried. She is now living in a nursing home but has sadly lost all of her memory.

Philip was born here in Mt Lawley in 1912 as the only child of Frederick Dumas and Ruby Louise Wicksteed. Before he left for Malaya with Elsa he opened a bank account in Perth with a two year term deposit, likely as a nest egg for their return. Then the Japanese intervened, and changed their lives forever.

Private Philip Henry Wicksteed is to be included on our memorial to our West Australian servicemen.

NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome three new members since our last ‘Borneo Bugle’:-

Julia Hedley whose relative is **Private Alexander Hack** of 2/4 Machine Gun Battalion AIF.

Thomas and Kathleen Joynes whose relative is **Private Colin Joynes** of 2/4 Machine Gun Battalion AIF

APOLOGY – In the last *Borneo Bugle* incorrect details were listed for a new member. This entry is to correct that error. Please accept our apology for the mistake.

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

BORNEO BUGLE - LAST ISSUE

For some this will be the last issue of the ‘Bugle’. We have supplied the last three issues to non-financial members and obviously this cannot continue. If you are not financial and wish to receive future editions please send you subscription of \$15.00 to-

The Treasurer
23 Haddrill Street
BAYSWATER 6053

President's Corner

by President Allan Cresswell

Things have been a bit hectic in the Cresswell household over the past four months and that is why a Borneo Bugle did not go out in December. Once again Ken Jones came to the rescue and sent out the minutes and details of our Christmas Picnic at Kings Park and kept the members informed.

Jean and I attended our Group's picnic which was held on Sunday December 12th and we had a great time. Attendance was low but we realise that it is a very busy time of the year. We also attended two other shows on that afternoon/evening and can appreciate what happens near Christmas time. At our picnic were Keith and Nola Jones, Stef and Bob Brackenbury, Ken and Margaret Jones, Jack and Louisa Arnell, Reg and Coral Blewett and Jean and Allan Cresswell. A few days later Jean and I were off to tour England, Scotland and Northern Ireland and we have only just returned.



Photo Courtesy Allan Cresswell

During November 2004 Vice President Bob attended Remembrance Day representing our Group whilst I attended the Schools Remembrance, both held at Kings Park.

On Monday 14th February 2005 at 11.00am the POW Memorial Service will be conducted at the Kings Park POW Memorial. If you are interested in attending please contact Allan or Bob (phone numbers on front page), who will be glad to supply directions etc of the service which is followed by a picnic.

On page 6 of the Bugle are details of this year's Wagin Woolorama which plans to honour our War Veterans through a series of displays and activities culminating in a Veteran's Reunion. The Borneo Exhibition forms part of the various displays and is an ideal venue to highlight this wonderful collection of Sandakan stories, memorabilia, photographs and documents.

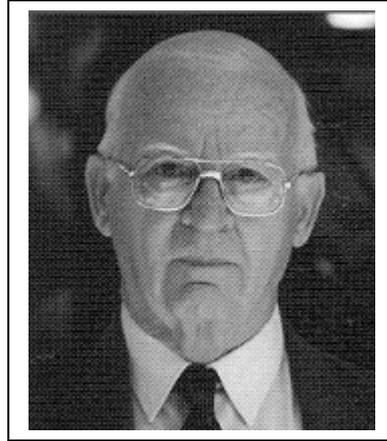
In January 2005, whilst in England, we received word that our good friend, Bill Young, of New South Wales had been hospitalized. Fortunately an email came four days later to say that Bill had been discharged from hospital and was on the road to recovery. Best wishes to you Bill and our group wishes you a speedy recovery. Bill's great story titled "Once Upon a Time in Kuching" continues in the Borneo Bugle on pages 7 and 8.

It is with regret I advise the passing of our member, Noel McKenzie. Deepest sympathy goes out to his wife, Alvie, and to Elizabeth and Jack Shurmer. Noel wrote an article on his brother, Don McKenzie, of "Z" Special Unit, which was published in the "Bugle" in February 2004. Rest peacefully, Noel.

Our next meeting is at Irwin Barracks **this coming Sunday commencing 10.00am**. Hope to see you there.

Vale Don Wall

By Allan Cresswell



Don Wall volunteered for service with the Australian Imperial Force in 1940. After training for desert warfare was sent to Malaya on the Queen Mary in 1941. He served with the 2/20 Battalion, 8 Division. After the fall of Singapore Don spent 1942 working on the wharves. He returned to Changi, and was then sent to Thailand with 'F' Force. He experienced the horrors of the Burma/Thailand Railway where the POW's suffered over 3000 casualties. Don returned to Changi and organised a small group to operate a wireless in the Gaol during 1944-1945. He was Mentioned in Despatches.

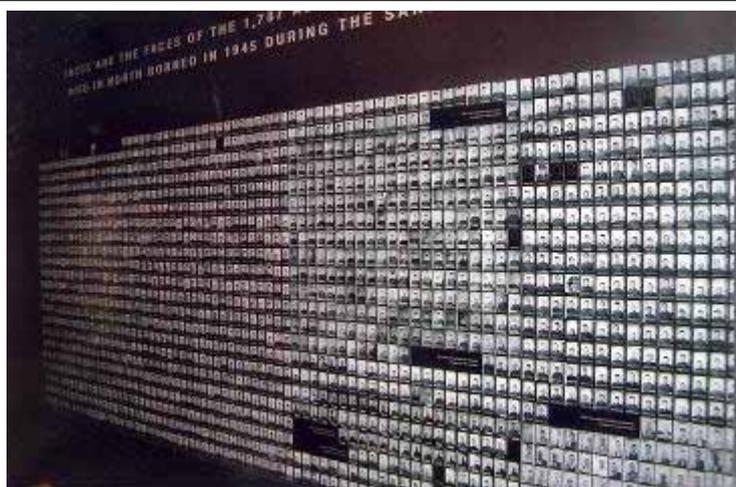
In 1982 Don commenced recording the events of the POW days. His military books were:

Singapore and Beyond
 Sandakan – The Last March
 Abandoned?
 Heroes of F Force
 Kill the Prisoners!
 Heroes at Sea

From a personal aspect, it was Don Wall's book, Sandakan – The Last March, that first made our family aware in 1988 as to what horrible events took place in Borneo. It was also knowledge for the first time that my wife's uncle had even been in Borneo. Don opened up a whole new chapter of information for many Australian and also for many British with his great book, Kill the Prisoners. Today this is the only available book that gives insight and solace directed specifically to our British cousins who were incarcerated in the then British North Borneo (now Sabah).

Don was awarded the Order of Australia (A.M.) in 1995 in recognition of his contribution to 8 Division History. He lived at Mona Vale New South Wales and died November 15 2004, aged 83 years.

From all of the members of the Borneo POW Relatives Association of WA.....a great military historian and a job well done!



SANDAKAN – THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

by Allan Cresswell

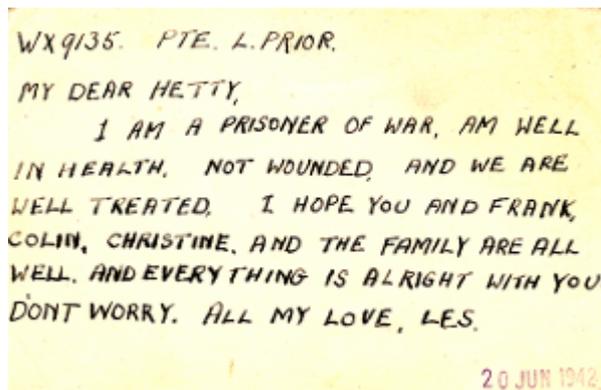
The Australian War Memorial at Canberra has on display all available photographs of those Australian Servicemen who died at Sandakan. This tribute that individually identifies 1787 Australians who never came home has a great impact on all who stand before it. A friend who recently visited the AWM and who has no connection with any of the servicemen listed just had to photograph the display and inform me of the immense strong impression that it left with her.

Photo Courtesy Gail Dodd

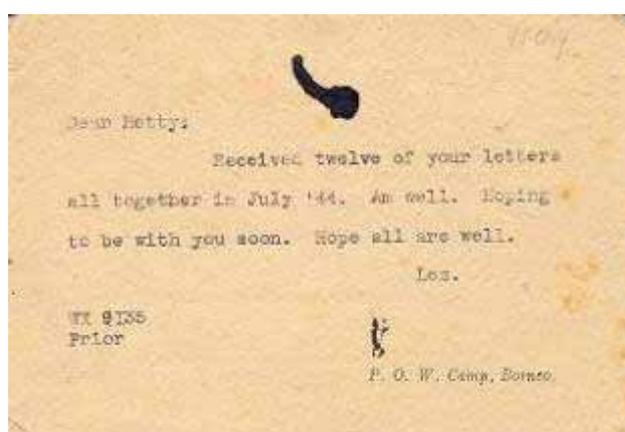
WORD FROM A POW CAMP

by Colin Prior

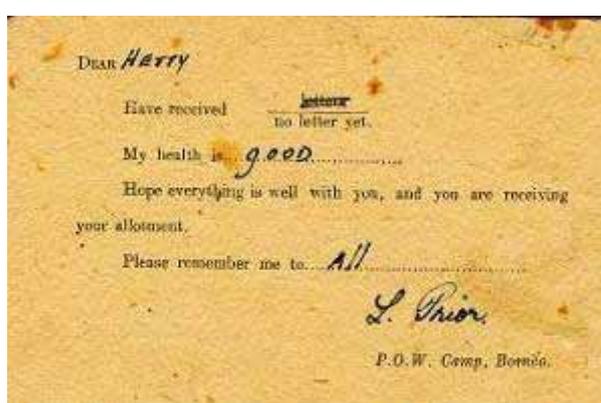
Many families have kept these special treasures in their family for what is now some sixty years since their soldier wrote to say that he was safe and well. These letters or cards from their loved ones were gratefully received by parents, wife, children and other family members. These items gave assurance that he was going to come home at the end of the war. These cards now document and record the false hope that many families would have held. They were later replaced by the fateful telegram that arrived in 1945 or early 1946.



CARD FROM SINGAPORE



FIRST CARD FROM BORNEO



SECOND CARD FROM BORNEO

Wagin Woolorama Honours Our War Veterans

Edited from an article by Ian Menzies of Wagin

The organisers of this year's Wagin Woolorama plan to honour our War Veterans through a series of displays and activities culminating in a Veteran's Reunion on Sunday, 13th March. Now in its 32nd year, Wagin Woolorama is regarded as Western Australia's premier rural agricultural show and regularly attracts 30,000 visitors each year. This year's show however, on Friday 11th & Saturday 12th March will be a rather special event to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the 90th Anniversary of the founding of the ANZAC tradition on the beaches of Gallipoli.

Individuals and organisation from around the south west of Western Australia will participate in bringing to the fore the history of our proud military traditions particularly to those of our younger generation. The setting for all of the displays will be the Wagin Historical Village with its twenty-two restored or replica buildings that bring alive the early social history of the south west. The Village is located right in the Wagin Sports / Show Ground, the venue for Woolorama.

Horse yards that replicate those used in the early 1900s will stable the horses of the Kelmscott-Pinjarra Memorial Troop of The Australian Light Horse Association. Well known horsemen Jack Matthews and Merv Wilson will ride their horses during the show and have on display in the Village saddlery, gear, photographs and weaponry used by the 10th Light Horse Regiment in both World Wars. As a comparison between the mobility of the Light Horse and more modern means of transport, there will also be a display of World War Two military vehicles from the Military Section of the Veteran Car Club of WA

The RAAF and Aviation Heritage Museum at Bulls Creek will also participate with photographs, toy planes and models of military aircraft.

The Men's Health Peer Education Unit supported by the RSL and the Department of Veteran's Affairs will offer information on medals and pensions and will be selling copies of Jack Sue's superb book on 'Z' Force operations "*Blood on Borneo*".

Items from the Ellam Collection, regarded as one of the finest private collections of military memorabilia in Western Australia, will be on display together with photographs of the 11th Battalion prior to their departure for Gallipoli.

The Village Hall at the Wagin Historical Village will house the Borneo Exhibition and the Sandakan Death March. The Borneo Exhibition is a sad reminder of the brutality and futility of war. It is a story that must not be forgotten.

The Perth based Australian Army Band will arrive at Woolorama on Saturday 12th March and after an initial introductory parade, their jazz combo will entertain patrons at Gourmet 2, one of the well patronised food service venues on the Showgrounds.

The feature event on Saturday evening however, will be a free outdoor twilight concert at 5.00 pm in the Wagin Historical Village that will signal the end of Wagin Woolorama.

At twilight we will honour those military personnel who have served our country in foreign lands and remember those who never returned. It will be a fitting public tribute.

Sunday morning the 13th March will see the Wagin Historical Village 'invaded' by veterans from both World Wars, the Malayan emergency, Korea, Vietnam and the overseas commitment made by our peacekeeping forces around the world. The gates will be open at 1000 hrs for "coffee" and a chat and to view the military exhibition and the various displays. At 1030 hrs the Army Band will entertain with a one hour concert during which there will be a short commemoration ceremony. A feature will be the music and songs so loved by those who served during World War Two.

This three day commemoration of our military heritage is supported by the Wagin RSL, the Department of Veteran' Affairs and Woolorama Committee of the Wagin Agricultural Society.

Continuing below is part two 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

PART TWO

By Bill Young

The above story brings with it the need for me to relate just how we came to get the screen erected, and how we came to put a spy hole in it. –Our cage being the first in line, faced the passageway that led into the guardroom, so enabling us to see into their inner sanctum.

Naturally, it bothered the guards, us being able to spy on all their nocturnal practices. For like soldiers the world over, they'd go off to the guard room for a smoko, whenever their officer in charge, left the building for any length of time.

And naturally, we took advantage, playing them at their own game. Whatever they did, our eyes clung to them like leeches on a blood filled leg. Eight pairs of eyes followed every move they made. When they ate, we drooled over every mouthful they chewed. They couldn't even fart, without us hearing.

It wasn't long before our little war of nerves paid off, perseverance had overcome adversity. Carpenters arrived and erected a light timber screen, between us and the archway, and it wasn't long before we managed to poke a small pin hole through a join in their screen; one just big enough to show whenever the light was broken, by whoever passed along that little passageway.

The difference that pin hole made to our way of life was way beyond measure. Now we too could enjoy little siesta's, and go for a walk around in the cage. We drew up a roster, and took turns at keeping nit at the peep hole; the fun we had watching as one sneaky guard after another, would come along on tippy toe, just busting to catch us up to no good. The creepy crawlies.

Our joy came in the anticipation; watching a guard creeping along, then popping out, only to find us models of straight backed, cross legged propriety. The obvious disappointment on their faces was enough to bring joy to our hearts; when you have so little, it takes so little to make your day.

The satisfaction we gained, never diminished, and for that a Jolly Hoo-ray! They never did tumbled to our little peep hole, and they never ever thought to put the guard room light out, before coming towards us– Even so, we'd have known something was wrong, by the fact of the light going out; for as they say- Let there be light.

During all the time we were guests of the kempei-tai, they search us thoroughly before allowing us to re-enter our cells. We'd strip off, bend over, let them take a look up the Kyber Pass, then carefully pick up our shorts and shirt, shake them vigorously, while jumping up and down with our arms outstretched, until the guard's yell of yummy (stop) signaled us to scamper back into our cells. Wherein, once safely locked up, we'd drool over whatever it was we'd managed to scrounge while being outside.

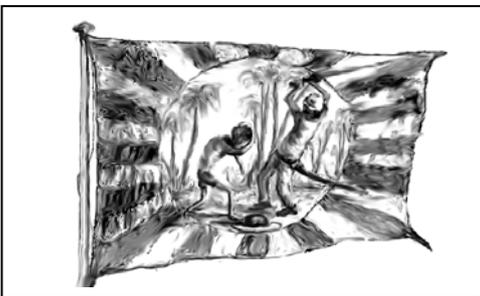
Those searches were thorough, absolute, spot on, except for the one small detail, they never ever looked in our hands; never ever. If the guard dropped a cigarette butt, great, into the hand it would go. A piece of wire or a fish bone, whatever was handy (that's a bit of a pun, I see).

My most prized find was the small stub of pencil; I came across that in the Kuching jail yard, and managed to keep it right up until the end of the war. The things that we collected over the years would amaze you. Whatever it was we saw lying about, if it was useful, and providing it was small enough to grab, then go for it; grab it, it's yours. We developed large hand spans during those days.

Once inside your cell, you were home free, and whatever was of no immediate use, would go into one of the many cracks in the walls; our Wall Safes, a benefit arising from our old, and crumbling jail.

Cigarette butts we kept for desert, I've always enjoyed pudding after a meal. Chewing away on a juicy butt; with care, you could make it last- and last. It was much like chewing on a stick of gum, and as for the flavour, caviar's OK, but, there is nothing like a good butt to chew on when your hungry.

The stub of pencil I carried in between my toe, from Borneo to Singapore. With the pencil and a page out of a careless guard's notebook, I made myself a tiny pack of cards. Many a game of patience's I played with the cards



enclosed within my crossed legs, and many a guard on looking through the peep hole, hadn't realized I was in the middle of a game- fortunately.

Being locked up provided the time and desire to plan, devise many a match stick or memory game; I Spy an insect, or read the pictures on the walls, the graffiti, the poems, or when the coast was clear, send Morse Code messages through the walls.

Dogs can hear what we cannot hear, so it was that we developed a sense of knowing where the guards were, and by the sounds they made, just who they were. Putting it over suspicious guards, was the biggest game of all.

The pencil and paper I put to many uses; a Kiwi fighter pilot by the name of Hatfield (he was executed by the kempei tai three days after the war had ended) having been shot down over Sumatra; he became a neighbor for a short while, and was able to write about D Day, and the sinking of the German battleship Von Terpitze, among other things. That was over in Outram Rd Jail.

The treat of treats was when they let us outside. Down some wooden steps we'd go, to an exercise yard. They were red letter days; an hour of breathing fresh air, taking in the sheds and buildings, the barb-wire fences, and above all, people other than our kempei tai guards; fantastic moments.

To walk on the little grassy patch, imagining for a brief moment that you were free. Free, to be free, with the sun shining down, feeling the grass growing under your feet, was really something else. The trees and the birds, free as the breeze, the birds going wherever they please.

As for the colours, after the black and white of inside, they took your breath away. The landscape full of colour; the brush work of the Gods, a veritable Garden of Eden, wherever you looked there was life. Being outside sure beat sitting inside, rotting in the cage.

If the guards happened to be in a good mood, they'd turn on the hose, and we'd shower away a week's grime; attend to our old wounds; wash our filthy bandages. They'd lasted all the way from Sandakan. We'd washed and wrapped them so many times; they looked more like pieces of string, now.

My arm had been broken up at Sandakan; a kind Japanese Orderly had placed my arm in the sling; Jimmy had marked it out as a chessboard. Now It was worn out, and full of holes. The chess pieces were held inside of it, and were threatening to fall through the holes, and bring about our downfall. So we decided the time had come to put our little armies out of their misery; the little bits and pieces were sprinkled onto the

ground. The ragged battlefield of a cloth, we dispatched with full military honours, into the rubbish bin.

It was a sad occasion for our little gang of eight, slinging the sling, pawning the pawns; the Kings and Queens reverting back to shirt buttons. The Royal Court, with its Knights, and Bishops had helped us royally, throughout the bad times, and now like old soldiers the world over, they've simply faded away.

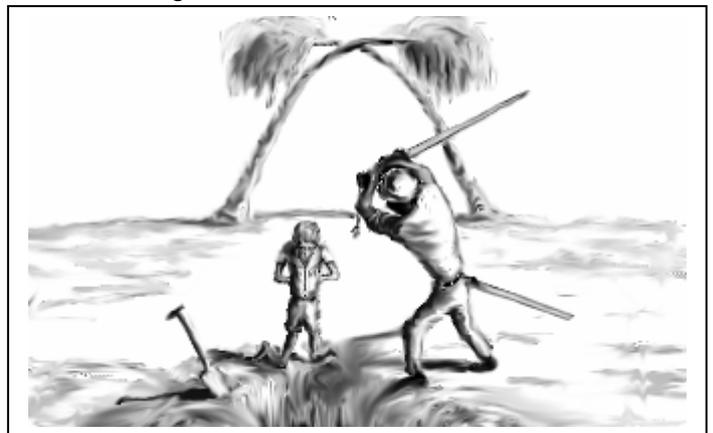
Many a game, many a tussle we'd enjoyed, and under the strangest of circumstances. While chess is not meant to be a game of chance, yet the way we played it, it was. Time and time again we'd risked getting caught while in the middle of a ding dong battle. With us, it was always a game of chance.

I remember once, I was keeping watch at our spy hole, when a guard came charging on down the passageway, he almost caught me out. I just managed to jumped back into my regular position, before he popped around the screen; I think at first, he thought he'd caught us out.

With the disappointment showing, he'd paced back and forth along the front of our cage, sensing something, but what! Making a deliberate study of each of us in turn, he passed me with my arm hanging free, before pausing in front of Allen Minty, whose arm was in my sling. Looking long and hard; for a moment there we thought he'd twigged. In the finish he gave a shrug of his shoulder, and went off to bother the prisoners in the cages at the back of us.

From this distance it may seem an insignificant encounter, but believe me, it wasn't. It could well have been the straw that broke, either the camels back, or ours. Losing out on your food for a day, may in itself seem a small thing to swallow; but believe me, it wasn't. Not when your looking through the magnifying glass of perpetual hunger.

Part Three is Continued in the Next Borneo Bugle



POW PROFILE

Continued From Page 10

Next day, Wednesday 21st May 1941, he marched with his unit, the 2/6 Field Park Engineers, thru the streets of Perth. We spent the rest of the day at the South Perth Zoo, -- where the ants ate my rainbow cake -- (such are the memories of a nine year old).

The next thing I knew, we had mail & photo's from Singapore, describing the culture, monkeys & children, parcels of exotic gifts in rubber, bamboo & wood carvings.

As time went on, we read the news reports, we knew things were not going our way, especially when the Prince of Wales & the Repulse were sunk, & then came devastation, -- when Capitulation was announced on the 15th of February '42.

The next couple of years, news from Dad consisted of a couple of months old post cards, ----- with YES/NO -- &, GIVE MY REGARDS TO ----- questions on them.



Doris May Moore

One printed statement on the post card was, --- my health is GOOD/EXCELLENT; Well Dad crossed out GOOD & at --- "GIVE MY REGARDS TO-----", --- he put, --- "The Man O Hoyts", ----- (a coded message meaning, --- Don't tell me all that 'Bull' -- tell the Man Outside Hoyt's Movie Theatre, the bloke in the Top Hat & Tails 'spruiking', for customers) --- & we still have that much treasured post card.

So, while these post cards came, we knew he was at least alive, -- if nothing else. Then late in 1945, the dreaded telegram came to our front door. Murray & Marilyn (8 & 6) were home from school for lunch & of course, ran to see who was knocking, -- from then on it was 'bedlam', (those memories -- never fade). For you see, the 'gram' said that Dad had died of 'illness', on the 29th of March 1945.

The army would tell us nothing --, for without the help of people like author Lynette Ramsay Silver, we would never have known that our father was identified by his wooded Japanese POW Identity Tag & was buried in number 2 compound at Sandakan, but who now lies unidentified, somewhere in Labuan Cemetery, --- a marvelously kept beautiful place (all credit to the dedicated Malaysian family who still tend those grounds).

We will always be grateful to the author -- Lynette Ramsay Silver.

My brother Murray & I, together with about 100 others, (including Bill Young), made the pilgrimage to Borneo on the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, in 1995 & were at last -- able to bring closure to our tragedy.

Though my memories of Dad are sketchy at best, I grieve for my brother & little sister, who have far less to remember of our father than I. He was an English gentleman, who became a 'Dinky Di Aussie', but sadly died

for his family & his country ----- R.I.P. Dad

Gerald Moore -- Morwell, Victoria.

As a rider to the story about our Dad,

I remember the telegram and the chaos it brought to our home, plus the childish anger I displayed at school in Mosman Park, whenever anyone mentioned the word - "Japanese". But really my life was "normal". I had a wonderful childhood, although my Mum, I recall, remained a homebody, always sending us kids to do the shopping with her list of things to get.

Then at school one day, maybe around 1947 or so, some new kids were introduced to our school assembly- they were the Thurstons- Janet, Diane, Ken and 3 others- 6 young kids in all. Well we were told to be especially kind to these kids, for their Mum had sadly been killed and their Dad had died in the war - little did I know that their Dad had been killed with mine in Sandakan.

The girls were very attractive I do recall (even at my young age) and they had to pass our house on their way to their new home up the hill at "The Coopers" in Wellington Street - their aunties. My sister Marilyn teamed up with Diane and they became good friends.

My point in relating this small tale is that - how did "those kids" cope with losing both parents so early in their young lives and the effect that it has had on them, - ever so more that the "effect" on us, losing only our Dad in those atrocious conditions in Borneo.

Just wonderful to see Ken and his wife, plus their extended family at the groups activities!

Murray Moore -- Busselton, Western Australia

POW PROFILE



**Alan Wilfred "Gerry"
MOORE
Sapper WX8412
2/6th Field Park Company
R.A.E.**

**Article Written by Gerald Moore
Additional Comments by Murray Moore
Photographs Courtesy Marilyn Richards (nee Moore)**

"You're not leaving me here with four kids"--!! Mum's anger, frustration & despair, was obvious to me as I stood on the back verandah. Our Dad was going for his medical --, England was in trouble & he HAD to join up ---.

My father, A.W. "Gerry" Moore, arrived from England in 1929, looking for a fellow Queens Scout who had migrated & lived in the wheat belt town of Merredin W.A., Dad found work on a farm 80 km further south at Muntadgin.

At the Saturday night dance, my mother asked her employer who the good looking stranger was – the one with the leather patches on the elbows of his sports coat -- (poor fellow, they thought—not knowing it was the latest Harris Tweed). –It was, - 'love at first sight' - & they were married in two weeks.

All was bliss until the "Depression" arrived; Dad had built a house in Muntadgin with a shop front, where he'd cut hair & Mum made pies & pasties (where the local cricket team would gather after a game). But soon, with no money about, things were getting desperate & so Mum, my sister Jaqui & I, came down to North Fremantle on the back of an old Ute, to stay with our "Nanna" Merrillies, while Dad did everything possible to send money to us. He built two houses with the help of an Italian Stone Mason (for little money), still cut hair, anything, but soon, he too had to retreat to Condon Street North Fremantle where – 'All' – of the extended family now lived – times were tough.

Dad took a job as a Fetter; laying railway track between Norseman & Esperance. We joined him, arriving by train at a place called Higginsville – ("Bloody Higginsville" – as Mum always called it). There's nothing there!!!!!! – just a place name on a map--. Imagine it, - Mum gets off the train in a suit, hat, gloves, stockings & high heels; there were tears, but she was determined to be with Dad & stayed to live in tents with flies & ants for extra company.

As the line extended south, ---- every 25 km we packed, -- throwing whatever we had up into open wheat wagons, then travelled down to the end of the line, pitching the tents & starting all over again, still with the bush, flies & ants. The only thing that made life bearable, were the people with whom you worked, lived & shared those privatisious conditions.

Next was the – 'Collie Line' -, I remember the little town of Allanson --, pretty country. Mum used to say they were some of the happiest days of her marriage, still in tents, sitting around the evening campfire, solving the world's problems with men of high intelligence, who could find no better job, --- than working for the Government – "on Sustenance".

By 1937 Dad had a job as a green-keeper, at the Royal Fremantle Golf Links – he loved Australia & working outdoors; -- A workers home (Govt. Housing) became available in Mosman Park, -- our dreams were becoming a reality (house & land – 500 pounds -- =\$1000).

Then war broke out, ----- England was in trouble & he had a family he had to fight for.

Dad enlisted at Claremont on the 18th of October 1940 at age 35. It didn't take Mum long to be proud of her man --, he looked great in uniform, ---- tall, - with a deep tan, - quiet & non aggressive.

He had two great mates he brought home at times (Arthur King & Bill Clemesha – (Soldier Bill)). – Well, they turned up one day with a story to tell; ----- Dad still had some of his educated English accent & was taunted & ridiculed by another in his unit, this didn't worry Dad – 'until' – this bloke started throwing things at him, -- so Dad –up & "dropped him" --, everyone in the unit was over the moon at this ----- And I was as proud as punch!!!!

The seven months training at Ascot was over & pre-embarkation leave was granted, Dad swept the chimney & cut a huge pile of wood, -- I'll "NEVER" forget our last evening meal together, nor the words he left with me.

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