

National Malaya & Borneo Veterans Association Aust. Qld Inc.

THE ONLY OFFICIAL NMBVAA INCORPORATED IN QUEENSLAND

<http://nmbvaaofincorporatedaustralianstates.org/>
Affiliated with the Navy Association of Australia

“Berita Queensland”

The Official Newsletter

“Lest We Forget”

“Bono Animo Este”

“Andai Nya Kita Terlupa”



The National Monument—Kuala Lumpur Malaysia

Located in the Lake Gardens in Kuala Lumpur, the National Monument consists of a great bronze sculpture designed by Felix de Weldon, creator of the famed Iwo Jima memorial in Washington U.S.A. It was constructed in 1966 to commemorate the Nation's heroes and all members of the various Security Forces and Civilians who fought in the cause of Peace and Freedom, thereby securing the democratic success that the vibrant country of Malaysia enjoys today.

It stands 15.54 metres high and is surrounded by a moat of clear water, with fountains and ornamental pewter water lilies, it is a must when visiting the country.

Queensland State

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Bob



Disclaimer. Letters and views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the editor, or of the association. Neither the editor nor the association accepts any liability for such articles. "Editing is the process of selecting and preparing written, visual, audible and film media used to convey information. The editing process can involve correction, condensation, organization, and many other modifications performed with an intention of producing a correct, consistent, accurate and complete work". We thank Ted O'Brien, Federal Member for Fairfax and his electoral office staff for the reproduction of this newsletter.

Queensland State

A much-needed sort out of old reports, records and general information was carried out by myself and the sub branch president. Reports older than 5 years were destroyed except for those required to be retained. Articles of interest or historical value have been retained in the archives. These include articles from past president the late David Kent and contain a number of photos from the emergency and also a number of photos of membership functions from the beginning of the association. These archives will be retained by the secretary and are available if members would like to view them.

Quarterly meetings appear to be working well with good attendance at both the sub branch and state meetings. Next state meeting will be Monday 2nd July.

On ANZAC Day we had a good turnout of members at Kawana Waters and other members attended their local ceremonies. The march at Kawana was led by a local army cadet unit with two drummers setting the pace. Unfortunately the pace was well over what us old matelots were used to and we almost had to run to keep up. Nevertheless it was a good day and we were looked after very well. A wreath was laid by our President Fred Simpson and wreaths were laid on behalf of NMBVAA QLD inc at other services.

To any of our members who have been unwell I hope that you are soon feeling better.

Secretary *Ivor*

Brisbane Central Sub Branch

Again, a quiet period has just past by but the lunches still attract the usual sort of numbers. The lunches are always enjoyed by those that are able to attend.

Members did not join the city ANZAC Day march as a group but several individually attended local marches and commemoration events. The last march attended by Brisbane Central members in the city mustered only a small group and that was for the special centenary year of the Gallipoli landing, so obviously there is not much interest there when one considers the many suburban events that have proven to be more convenient to attend.

The August lunch again falls on Brisbane Show Day as it did last year. However, this did not detract from the numbers attending or the enthusiasm of our diners. We will also hold our AGM before that so as to give all members the opportunity to put forward their names for the various positions and also any items for the agenda.

Yours in comradeship, *Bob Watson* (Secretary)

FUTURE LUNCH MEETINGS: - Lunch Coordinator George Wilson Ph 0424 878 291

June Wednesday 20th -1200 hrs **Club Southside**, 76 Mount Gravatt Capalaba Rd., Upper Mount Gravatt. Ph 3219 1103

July Wednesday 18th –1200 hrs **East's Leagues Club**, 40 Main Ave, Coorparoo
Ph 3397 8885

August Wednesday 15th –11.30 hrs AGM followed by lunch **Yeronga Services Club**, cnr Fairfield Rd and Kadumba St. Ph 3848 0796

Yours in comradeship, *Bob Watson* (Secretary)

Sunshine Coast Sub Branch

Nine of our members attended the Kawana ANZAC day service and remembered past members and friends before enjoying some good fellowship with Kawana RSL refreshments. Other members did attend with their own local RSL clubs and parades.

Good food and fellowship was had at our last lunch at the Buderim Tavern even though a few members were away on holidays.

It's good to see our State President Fred Simpson back on deck and rearing to go for another year.

Next Sub Branch Committee meeting will be held on **2nd July 2018** at my place at 10:00 hrs; all members welcome. The State Committee meeting will follow this meeting.

There are still a few membership fees due, so if you find a note enclosed with this issue of "Berita" it means that your fees are due.

That's all for now so keep fit, in good health and most of all, happy.

FUTURE LUNCH MEETINGS: - Lunch Coordinator Kaye Kent, Phone 54451987

June: - Tuesday 12th – Dicky Beach Surf Club.

July: - Tuesday 9th – Mountain Creek Tavern, Near Woolworths Mountain Creek.

August: - Tuesday 14th – Maroochy Bridge Hotel "Trader Dukes" Denna Street.

August: - Friday 31st – MERDEKA DAY - Venue to be advised.

September: - Tuesday 11th – Alexandra Headland Surf Club, Alexandra Pde.

October: - Tuesday 9th – North Shore Tavern, Pacific Paradise.

November: - Tuesday 13th – Bright Water Hotel, 15 Freshwater Street, Mountain Creek.

December: - Working on possible Venue for joint lunch with Brisbane Central Sub Branch.

ALWAYS CHECK as the venue does sometimes change.

Yours in Comradeship **Brian McGee** President/Secretar

ANZAC DAY 2018

Each year attendances continue to increase at ANZAC DAY commemoration services; services that offer moving tributes to our past and present servicemen and women. Many young people participate and demonstrate their understanding of the meaning of ANZAC and the prosperous and tolerant democracy that has been passed on to us all. NMBVAA members attended services in various cities and towns across Queensland. Wreaths were laid on behalf of our association at several locations. *Ed*



Paul and Busara
At Buderim



Sir John Monash Centre
at Villers-Bretonneux
Opened 2018



President Fred at Kawana



Ivor and Brian



Kevin at Mudjimba

CERTA CITO SUB-ROSA
23 YEARS STRAIGHT IN SINGAPORE

By Jack Fenton

Defending forces in Singapore, in February 1942, included a specialist intelligence element of British wireless operators, technicians and analysts. In a 'Tempat Larangan' location, their operations of producing masses of 'Most' Secret intelligence took place in adjoining rooms with resulting information passed immediately to higher authority. Wireless operator, Dennis 'Jack' Seagar, commented that the wireless sets were only switched off when the invading Japanese Army had crossed the Causeway from Malaya. Then he had helped burn the remaining secret paperwork

When the operational Set Room had been cleared, the Operations Officer, accompanied by the operators of the last watch and others, watched in dismay as their Set Room door was closed and locked for the last time. The group swiftly dispersed, all hoping to return soon to their homeland in the United Kingdom. Jack Seagar didn't make it home; instead, he escaped to Australia, where he joined the Australian Special Wireless Group intercepting Japanese wireless transmissions in the Pacific Campaign. He transferred to Australian Signals as a Lieutenant.

Again in Singapore, this time in February, 1974, there was another dramatic close-down of the same kind of operation that had happened there 32 years before.

By 1970, Commonwealth Defence Forces had quietly included the Australian 121 Signal Squadron in Singapore as its specialist intelligence element in the ANZUK Brigade. Staffed with top-notch male and female wireless operators, technicians and analysts, it was relocated alongside the fulltime-guarded ANZUK HQ Receiving Station in Kranji that provided a cover of sorts for the Top Secret operations which were modernised versions of those in the World War II station.

The Operations Officer, a subordinate and friend of Jack Seagar, had feelings akin to déjà vu as he and the last watch witnessed the door closing after 23 years of proud service since 1951. The unit had had many months of careful wind-down of operations and plans to remove all equipment and documentation as the closure was a political issue, not an unexpected war disaster. The onlooking group swiftly dispersed to join others of the Unit Club for a Wake and to think of their approaching return to homelands in Australia or New Zealand under more comfortable circumstances than those of 1942.

The background to the later closure can be traced to the start of the Malayan Emergency in 1948. By the end of 1950, the Australian Army had fifteen men in theatre, including five from Signals. One, Sergeant Bernie Saunders, recorded that several saw action with the Malayan Scouts during their first year in theatre. Those five were not connected in any way with UK Government Communications or operations at Phoenix Park.

Members of other Australian Corps also served with their British counterparts around Malaya, while one or two were detached to another UK Communication Station in Hong Kong. The establishment of a centre to administer and co-ordinate personnel who were widely scattered was eventually effected with the raising of the Australian Observer Unit.

In February, 1951, Detachment No.1 of 101 Australian Wireless Regiment, from Cabarlah in Queensland, went to Singapore under Draft Commander, Captain Jack Seagar. Before returning, he settled members into Barracks then into operations in Phoenix Park with the UK Government Communications staff. A move about the end of summer 1952 to a new, larger edifice, Chia Keng 2 (CK2), near the RAF Receiving Station was later casually alluded to by an ex-operator then there.

Det 1 underwent several title changes over the decades, becoming Wireless Troop (Type F) when AustArmy took control of some of the Troop's administration with the arrival of an Australian Infantry Battalion in 1955. Expansion to Squadron strength followed later.

Sub-sections of operators were deployed up country, first to Frasers Hill in Pahang in 1953 followed by relocations over 20 years to Brinchang, Penang Hill, Sungei Patani and back to Penang at Batu Uban. Ad hoc missions were many, one during attachment to a Company of 2 RAR, patrolling the Kroh area during Peace Negotiations, another more lengthy stay, performing various specialised duties in Vientiane, Laos. One-man operating and technical missions proved the initiative of operatives sent, sometimes, to more distant locations, details of one recorded in the Regimental Association Newsletter in "Up the Mekong." When the Brother Unit, 547 Signal Troop, in Vietnam needed them, operators would be sent there from Singapore.

The Konfrontasi Campaign was a brilliant highlight in the Squadron being on the Borneo War's very doorstep to render immediate, appropriate intelligence, providing experienced personnel in Kuching and a large operational base in Labuan as 221 Signal Troop, later changed to 693 Signal Troop. Some participants described it as like detachments operated on the Malay Peninsula, but of heroic proportions with more independence and personal innovation guaranteeing quality of results.

The UK Government Communication staff ceased operations in 1970 and CK2 closed down with operations taken over, with a prepared no-break system, by 121 Signal Squadron. That Australian unit took over full responsibility in Kranji, assisted by RAAF, RAN and civilians from the UK, Australia and New Zealand. Army and Navy women also served with distinction. For about 3 years, under 9 ANZUK Signal Regiment for administration, it had functioned smoothly with remarkably good inter-service cooperation. It was the Australian Government's decision to close down the operation. By the time the equipment was shared out, the premises cleaned and the personnel homeward bound, the only memento of 23/365/24 was a Singapore Spastic Hospital bus running around, painted in appropriate Corps colours and endorsed: "Donated by 121 Australian Signal Squadron".

Back in Australia, the writer of this summary was given a Signal Squadron next to St Marys, NSW, the suburb in which Jack Seagar retired. The Grand Old Operator was always welcome at the unit. *End*

Notes from *Ed*.

Certa Cito Sub Rosa = *swift and sure secretly (my translation)*
 Tempat Larangan = *forbidden place*
 ANZUK HQ = *Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom HQ*
 KONFRONTASI = *The Indonesian "confrontation" which in fact was a war of international aggression waged by Indonesia against Malaysia*

Military History Volume II, Number, Australian Army Journal

http://www.defence.gov.au/army/lwsc/Publications/journal/AAJ_Autumn05_blaxland_21.pdf

Lieutenant Colonel John Blaxland

Signals Intelligence in Borneo

Between 1959 and Confrontation in 1964, the signals intelligence detachment in Singapore was initially known as 201 and then 121 Signal Squadron. The squadron's wireless intercept role was such a well-kept secret that even many military personnel did not know that it performed radio intercept and analysis tasks for intelligence purposes. Indeed, following the Labor Party victory in the Australian Federal election of 1972, the newly elected Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, caused a stir by publicly announcing the previously secret nature of the roles and tasks of 121 Signal Squadron. Shortly afterwards, the forces stationed in Singapore were withdrawn. However, by the time of the withdrawal, another set of operational experiences had been added to the Australian Army's signals intelligence credentials in Borneo and later Vietnam.

During Confrontation in August 1964, the Australian Government gave approval for 693 Signal Troop to be deployed to perform wireless interception in place of a British Army signal troop.

The Australians were deployed to the island of Labuan, off the coast of Sabah, and personnel from Australia's Singapore-based 201 Signal Squadron staffed the troop.

On Labuan, the troop provided valuable intelligence information, and following the end of Confrontation its personnel were re-absorbed into 201 Signal Squadron. Operations during Confrontation were successful largely because the intelligence information gathered from wireless intercept and interrogations was combined with the effective tactical application of that information. In Borneo individual patrols benefited directly from information received by electronic interception.

Britain's Director of Operations in Borneo was noted as having praised the signals intelligence effort during Confrontation as being a significant force multiplier that helped wrest the initiative in favour of the British and Commonwealth forces.

Notes from Ed.

A newspaper article was printed in the Toowoomba Chronicle of Feb 7th, 1996 as a "DARLING DOWNS Despatch" entitled "7 SIG celebrates 50th anniversary", (*101 Wireless Regiment was renamed 7 Sig Regt in 1965....Ed*) It outlines the history of the unit and states. "The Regiment was involved in all major operational deployments throughout South East Asia including Singapore, Malaysia, Laos, Borneo, Hong Kong and Vietnam."

Kayes Kooking Korner

Lime Syrup Coconut Cake

Ingredients

124 gm butter
1 cup sugar
4 eggs
2 cups desiccated coconut
1 cup self raising flour

Syrup

1 cup sugar
1½ cups water
2 strips of lime rind
1 tablespoon lime juice



method

Cream together the butter and sugar. Beat in eggs one at a time. Fold in coconut and flour. Pour mixture into spring form tin. Bake in slow oven, (170c) for approximately 1½ hours.

Bring all the syrup ingredients to the boil then pour over cake while it is still hot in the tin.

Makan Sedap.....Kaye

NAVY in Indonesian Confrontation

By John Perryman (www.navy.gov.au)

Australian Service Medal - Far East Strategic Reserve.

At the end of the Malayan Emergency Australia agreed to keep forces in Malaya-Singapore as part of the British Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, and the RAN had two frigates, *Yarra* and *Parramatta* there on duty when the Indonesian policy of 'confrontation' began with the new nation of Malaysia. Malaysia had been formed in 1963, embracing the British colonies of Malaya, Singapore (later to withdraw) Sarawak (North Borneo) and Sabah. Fearing that the new Federation posed a threat, Indonesia's President Sukarno decided to demonstrate Indonesia's opposition.

Indonesian forces made shore landings in Borneo and Malaya, paratroopers were dropped into Malaya early in the confrontation and naval skirmishes occurred in the straits of Malacca. Grave fears were therefore held for the stability of the region. As tension mounted, Australia increased its presence by sending HMAS *Sydney*, the destroyers *Vampire*, *Vendetta* and *Duchess* and the frigate, *Derwent* to the area. *Sydney* had by now been converted to a fast troop transport and carried troops and equipment to Jesselton in North Borneo.

The 16th Minesweeping Squadron comprising six Ton Class coastal minesweepers was also assigned for duties during Confrontation arriving in Malaysian waters in May 1964. Initially their patrol duties were centred in Borneo. They had a standard displacement of 360 tons, a maximum speed of 15 knots, a crew of three officers and 30 ratings and were armed with two 40/60mm Bofors guns, together with light automatic weapons.

On 10 November 1964 Prime Minister Menzies told Parliament that there had been a 'deterioration in Australia's strategic situation' and announced big manpower and equipment increases in the navy, army and airforce. 'Indonesian attacks,' the Prime Minister told parliament, may create a real risk of war. It is tremendously important to us that Indonesia should not become Communist.

On 13 December 1964, as if to echo the Prime Minister's concerns, the minesweeper HMAS *Teal*, Lieutenant K. Murray, RAN, whilst operating as part of the Singaporean Straits patrol, was fired upon with automatic weapons by an unlit vessel. The attacking vessel (one of two) then shaped course for Indonesian waters but was overpowered and arrested by *Teal* following a further small arms engagement that resulted in the deaths of three Indonesian crew members. For his coolness and judgement during this, and a previous, interception Lieutenant Murray was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the only award for gallant or distinguished service made to the RAN during Confrontation.

Teal was involved in another interception on 23 February 1965 when she detected an unlit vessel nine miles off Cape Rachado. The suspicious vessel was closed and illuminated, and revealed nine fully armed infiltrators in uniform who surrendered immediately upon challenge. The contacts between December 1964 and February 1965 were symptomatic of a period of considerably heightened activity by the Indonesians, and although few of their infiltration parties actually made it ashore in Malaysia, the level of effort required to stop them stretched the security forces considerably.

Teal was not the only ship of the 16th Squadron to see action. On 13 March 1966 while patrolling off Raffles Light HMAS *Hawk*, under the command of Lieutenant J.D. Foster, RAN, came under fire from an Indonesian shore battery, even though the minesweeper was inside Singapore territorial waters. Two salvoes totalling 11 high explosive rounds were fired at the ship, landing within 200 yards of the vessel. *Hawk* retired at speed, and without retaliating, since fire ceased immediately the minesweeper got under way. The following morning *Hawk* 'evened the score' when it intercepted a sampan with five Indonesians on board who were promptly arrested.

