

## **WORLD WAR II (1941-45): CAUSES, EVENTS, OUTCOMES AND NATURE OF AUSTRALIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN RABAU**

### **SOME CAME HOME: AN INSIGHT INTO THE FIRST ENGAGEMENT OF WWII ON AUSTRALIAN TERRITORY**

**CONTENT** (including links to Australian Curriculum):

#### **Examine Australia's relationship with New Guinea and its implications during World War II** (ACDSEH024) Literacy; Creative thinking

- Locate Rabaul on a map
- Identify how, when and why Rabaul became an Australian territory

#### **Investigate how the threat of a Japanese invasion contributed to Australia's changed allegiance** (ACDSEH110) Literacy; Critical and creative thinking

- Why did Australia support Britain so strongly in the First World War?
- Who became Australia's main ally in December 1941? Explain the reasons for this change, identifying key events and people.
- Explain why Rabaul was a key strategic military base
- Examine the different groups involved in the defence of Rabaul and the consequence of the Japanese invasion

#### **Examine Australia's responsibility to the people at Rabaul and Ambon** (ACDSEH107) Ethical Understanding

At the War Cabinet meeting on 12 December 1941 the Australian Government Ministers were presented with 3 options for the Rabaul garrison:

- 1) Do nothing
  - 2) Reinforce the garrison
  - 3) Withdraw and abandon the area
- What choice did the Government make?
  - What were the reasons for this decision?
  - Consider consequences
  - Reflect on whether it was an ethical choice

#### **The experiences of Australians during World War II** (ACDSEH108) - Critical and creative thinking; Personal and social capability

Examine the different reactions and recollections of POWs

- Appreciate diverse perspectives
- Identify and clarify information and ideas

### **STUDENT TASK**

This task can be completed by students, either as individual or group work, over two or three periods. It can also be broken into stand-alone sections with a brief background overview. Included are links, resources and templates to support the delivery of this unit of work.

**Part 1: New Guinea becomes a mandated Australian Territory**

**Part 2: The Fall of Rabaul**

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**Part 4: Remembering 1942: The Defence of the 'Malay Barrier'**

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**'SOME CAME HOME' free online DVD:**

**AN INSIGHT INTO THE FIRST ENGAGEMENT OF WWII ON AUSTRALIAN TERRITORY –**

**To be used together with the 15-minute free online DVD**

- 1. New Guinea Becomes a Mandated Australian Territory**
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- 4. Defence of the 'Malay Barrier' Source**
- 5. 'Some Came Home' DVD trailer**

## TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET

### AUSTRALIANS AT RABAU

For most Australians little is known of Australia's close relationship to New Guinea, or of the role Rabaul had in both World Wars.

#### Pre-World War 1 Rabaul

Australians, especially the Queenslanders, were concerned about the growing German influence in New Guinea. The fear was that Germany would take possession of eastern New Guinea. So, in 1883, the resident magistrate on Thursday Island was sent to Port Moresby to raise the British flag and claim all of eastern New Guinea for Queen Victoria. The problem was that the British Government did not agree to this arrangement. In November 1884 Britain and Germany agreed to share the territory of eastern New Guinea. On 1st September 1906 British New Guinea was handed over to Australia and renamed Papua. Hence, at the beginning of the First World War the island of New Guinea was divided up by three foreign countries: the western half was held by the Dutch; Germany had the north-east section; and Australia was in possession of the south-eastern area. Rabaul was the capital of German New Guinea.

#### First World War

On 6th August 1914, two days after Britain declared war on Germany, Australia and New Zealand were asked by Britain to occupy German New Guinea, capture the wireless stations, and prevent its harbours being used by German war ships. Australia quickly agreed and the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN & MEF), consisting of 500 Royal Naval reservists and a battalion of infantry and ancillary troops, was specially raised in the first week of the war. This volunteer force was recruited, equipped trained and left Australia for New Guinea on 5 August 1914, arriving Rabaul on 11 August 1914. See WWI diary by GPO HH Kemsley '*How and When New Guinea was Won – and the Loss of AE1*' at <https://pngaa.org/how-and-when-new-guinea-was-won-and-the-loss-of-ae1-by-gpo-hh-kemsley/>

Such was the support for the British Empire.

Six men from the AN & MEF were killed and four wounded in the successful battle to seize the wireless station at Bitapaka on 11th September 1914. They were the first Australian engagement casualties of the First World War. On 13th September 1914 the British flag was raised at Rabaul. On 14th September, AE1, one of Australia's first two submarines, was lost off the coast of Rabaul. This submarine was found on 20 December 2017 under water near the Duke of York Islands, near Rabaul. 16 men from the Royal Australian Navy and 19 men from the Royal Navy died. By the end of 1914 German New Guinea was secured and was placed under Australian military rule for the next seven years. On 23 April 2014 on ABC Radio National during the Historyonics segment of the RN Drive program David Howell from the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne was interviewed in regards to the Bitapaka battle. In this ten-minute interview David talks about the battle and its importance. Refer: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/drive/historyonic3a-the-battle-for-bitapaka/5407518>.

The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914 -1918, Volume 10, contains over 400 pages and the main body of the work is devoted to the administration of the German Possessions in the Southern Pacific. While this wasn't a major battle it is a very important part of Australia's military and general history. The six AN & MEF servicemen who died in the battle to capture the Bitapaka wireless station and the campaign fought should not be forgotten because it contributed to the British government's strategy to capture all German colonies. It also removed a real threat to

Australia by capturing the German radio station at Bitapaka and the strategic harbour at Rabaul, preventing their use by German ships. The following Australian War Memorial information sheets on these Australian operations:

Operations against German Pacific territories

AE1

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/E84777>

<https://awm.gov.au/collection/U50785>

### **The Paris Peace Conference**

After the First World War ended the question arose regarding control of the former German New Guinea territories. The commander of the AN & MEF, William Holmes, thought the islands should be retained as British possessions. At the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 the USA President, Woodrow Wilson, wanted the new League of Nations to have total responsibility for the former German colony. Australian Prime Minister, William Hughes, rejected this proposal, as he wanted Australia to annex the former German colony.

*“Australia had suffered 90,000 casualties in this war and lost 60,000 killed...The islands were as necessary to Australia as water to a city...If there were, at the very door of Australia a potential or actual enemy, Australia could not feel safe.”* William Hughes.

The British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, intervened and brokered a compromise. Australia could have control over the former German colony but there would be restrictions. On 9 May 1921, Australia formally was granted a mandate to administer what was German New Guinea on behalf of the League of Nations. Whilst this mandate was of a fairly low level it did prevent Australia from establishing military or naval bases or any fortifications in the islands. Australia adhered to this obligation, which had very serious consequences for Australia in the Second World War. Rabaul was the capital of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea and Port Moresby the administrative centre for the Australian Territory of Papua. Now Australia had to defend an area, which was more than twice the size of Victoria.

### **Between the Two World Wars**

The German properties were acquired with some compensation given to the owners. Australians, especially Australian returned servicemen from the First World War, were encouraged to buy the copra plantations and the other businesses that were put up for sale. Many of these ex-servicemen would die in the New Guinea Islands or on the *Montevideo Maru* during the Second World War. Rabaul became a large cosmopolitan town of about 5,000 people - 800 Europeans, 1,000 Asians (a large Chinatown), and around 3,000 Indigenous people. The Australian settlers saw themselves as permanent residents. Rabaul was sometimes referred to as “a suburb of Anzac”. There were also a large number of missionaries (some German as well as Australian) in the islands looking after the educational and spiritual needs of the native population.

### **New Guinea Volunteer Rifles**

Australia had been at war for over two years when the Pacific War commenced. On 4 September 1939, the Australian Government ordered the Administrator of the Territory of New Guinea, Sir Walter McNicoll, to raise the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (NGVR). Rabaul was battalion headquarters. NGVR had the distinction of being the only Australian army military unit raised, mobilised, fought and disbanded overseas, in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea between 1939 and 1943. A cosmopolitan group of men from Europe, the British Isles, New Zealand, Australia and

Asia, whose homes and livelihoods were in New Guinea hastened to join. <https://pngaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/KEEPERS-OF-THE-GATE-Phil-Ainsworth.pdf>

## **World War Two**

In April 1941 the threat of war with Japan increased. Rabaul was the forward observation point for Australia. The Australian Government sent forces to the islands as part of “The Malay Barrier” strategy in order to protect the airstrips north of the Australian mainland, and also the strategic harbour at Rabaul, from Japanese attacks. Japan had been active in the Pacific for many years before the attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941, ignoring its commitment under the 1922 Washington Agreement not to fortify hundreds of mandated islands.

**The 2/22nd Battalion** was sent to Rabaul with supporting units including Army nurses. The garrison of 1,399 at Rabaul was known as **Lark Force**. Similar size forces were sent to Ambon (Gull Force) and Timor (Sparrow Force). These battalions were undermanned and relatively poorly armed. They lacked significant naval or air support and would not be able to withstand any large-scale Japanese attacks. Australia also had little capacity to reinforce or resupply the vulnerable troops. There were also small Independent Companies, commando units, like the 1 Independent Company based at New Ireland.

When Japan entered the Second World War, the Australian women and children were evacuated from Rabaul and the New Guinea Islands. However, others including the Chinese population, and male civil servants and plantation owners were not allowed to leave.

Males over 16 were to remain in Rabaul with their fathers but, in a few cases, younger boys stayed. The evacuation order did not apply to indigenous, mixed race or Chinese people. The failure to evacuate Chinese women and children in Rabaul and Kavieng caused understandable bitterness in a Chinese community which feared the Japanese. The civilians who remained were mainly Administration officers, businessmen, planters, traders and missionaries. Most were settlers - ‘Territorians’ as they called themselves - and their livelihood was in New Britain. Many were former World War I soldiers, too old to enlist. Lark Force had not trained for the tropics and had no plans for retreat except for the final order “every man for himself”. Lark Force was not reinforced. This decision by the Australian War Cabinet, sent by cable to Washington on 12 December 1941, would eventually lead to the deaths of 1,400, perhaps 1,500 Australians – around 1,125 POWs and 275 civilian internees.

## **The Fall of Rabaul**

On 12 December 1941 the Prime Ministers Department sent a Most Secret and Important Cable to Washington referring to the Lark Force garrison at Rabaul as being “hostages to fortune”. The Japanese bombing of Rabaul began on 4 January 1942. The inhabitants of the islands were left to their fate and on 23 January 1942 5,000 or more Japanese supported by a large Naval Fleet attacked Rabaul. The fighting was soon over as the small garrison was no match for the huge Japanese armed forces.

## **The Aftermath of the Fall of Rabaul**

The possession of Rabaul by the Japanese Armed Forces gave them one of the largest sea and air bases in the Pacific. This was a severe blow to the Curtin Government. They now knew that the door was open for a direct assault on northern Australia. Within a month of the fall of Rabaul, Darwin was bombed. The British couldn’t help even if they wanted to. Fortunately, the chief of the US Fleet, Admiral Earnest J King, was also concerned by this Japanese presence and proposed a new US naval

command in the waters off the east coast of Australia, extending east to Fiji, to be known as the ANZAC command area. On 26 January 1942, Admiral King instructed the commander-in-chief of the US Pacific Fleet, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, to send a cruiser and two destroyers to the ANZAC command area. These joined two Australia cruisers to act as a deterrent to any Japanese movements into the waters south of Rabaul.

Australia's defence strategy had changed. Our key ally was now the USA.

The soldiers who were able to escape from New Britain in 1942 were in a very poor physical condition when they were rescued. Many had spent months in the jungle; they had walked hundreds of kilometres and crossed crocodile infested raging rivers. They were suffering from lack of food, tropical diseases, and war injuries. All escapes endured the ever-watchful Japanese air-arm and navy. However, some of the soldiers were able to fairly quickly recover their health and resume their usual duties. One of these men was William Owen who was a Major in the 2/22nd Battalion. William Owen was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and assumed command of the 39th Battalion on 7 July 1942. Owen was mortally wounded on 29 July 1942 on the Kokoda plateau.

<https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/kokoda-track-1942-1943/events/fighting-retreat/first-engagement-kokoda-28-july-1942>

Some of the men in the 1 Independent Company who were on other New Guinea Islands and not captured by the Japanese became coast watchers. These men gathered intelligence about Japanese shipping and military movements. <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/world-war-ii-1939-1945/resources/coastwatchers-1941-1945>

## References

- Connor, John, Stockings, Craig ed., 2013, *The capture of German New Guinea from the book, Before the Anzac Dawn (A military history of Australia to 1915)*, Chapter 12, New South Publishing. University of New South Wales Press Ltd.
- Kelly, Paul, 100 Years: *The Australian Story: Farewell to Great and Powerful Friends*. Allen and Unwin. Cows Nest. NSW. 2001.
- Montevideo Maru Memorial Committee (November 2009). *The Tragedy of the Montevideo Maru. Time for Recognition. A Submission to the Commonwealth Government*. <http://www.memorial.org.au/Assets/Recognition.pdf>
- Nelson, H, Department of Pacific and Southeast Asian History, Australian National University and M. Piggott, Australian War Memorial (July 1984). *Introduction to Official History of Australia in the War 1914 -1918, Volume 10 (10th Edition, 1941)*. Published online by the Australian War Memorial with the assistance of the University of Queensland.
- Travers, B.H, Holmes, William, 1983, (1892-1917), *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 9*. Melbourne University Press
- Wurth, Bob, 2008, *Australia's Greatest Peril, 1942*, Pan Macmillan Australia.

## RESOURCES

**Student need access to an atlas or world map**

## INFORMATION SHEETS

## Part 2: The Fall of Rabaul

- The Fall of Rabaul overview <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/world-war-ii-1939-1945/events/japanese-advance-december-1941-march-1942/fall-rabaul> and then click on the menu (at left) for the following topics:

- Left to their fate...
- A miserable scene
- Hungry and ...cold

These web pages are from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (Canberra)'s Anzac Portal, Australia and the Second World War, website and they summarize the fighting and what happened to the Australians who were at Rabaul and in the New Guinea islands when the Japanese invaded.

At least 1,400 Australians died as a consequence of this Japanese invasion, including around 300 Australian civilians. This was the first time that an Australian territory was invaded and occupied. Over 1,000 Australians were killed when the *MS Montevideo Maru* was sunk by an American submarine on 1 July 1942. That is 15% of the total of Australian POWs who died in captivity. It is double the number of Australians killed in the Vietnam War and many more than died in the sinking of *HMAS Sydney* (645) and the hospital ship *Centaur* (268). Australians were killed in massacres and executions, and others just disappeared never to be found. Amazingly around 400 Australians were able to escape from the New Guinea island of New Britain thanks to the efforts of missionaries like Father Ted Harris and the patrol officer, John Keith McCarthy MBE.

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mccarthy-john-keith10910>.

More information about the MS Montevideo Maru and this Australian wartime history is at:

- The DVD, *The Tragedy of the Montevideo Maru*. Schindler Video Production. Montevideo Maru Pty Ltd. Northgate. Queensland. <https://www.montevideomaru.com.au/contact.php>. This DVD is also available to teachers through Screenrights and Enhance TV at <https://www.enhancetv.com.au/video/the-tragedy-of-the-montevideo-maru/35092>.

**Screenrights** was established in 1990 to administer provisions in the Australian Copyright Act that allow educational institutions to copy from television and radio, provided payment is made to the copyright owners. More information is at <https://www.screenrights.org/about-us/what-we-do/overview> and <https://www.screenrights.org/australian-educational-licences/>

- The list of men who are recorded as dying on the *Montevideo Maru* on 1 July 1942 is on the National Archives of Australia's website at <https://montevideomaru.naa.gov.au/>

- The National Archives of Australia Fact Sheet on the *Montevideo Maru*.

<https://www.naa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/fs-266-the-sinking-of-the-montevideo-maru.pdf>

- Looking for evidence. The handkerchief. <https://pngaa.org/rudy-buckley-and-the-montevideo-maru-maxwell-r-hayes/>

- Address by the Governor-General Ms Quentin Bryce AC CVO: 1 July 2012.

<https://www.memorial.org.au/About/BryceSpeech.htm>.

- One of the men who survived the Tol and Waitavalo Plantations massacres was Private Bill Cook. There is a film in the *Montevideo Maru* and Tol Plantation exhibit in the Australian War Memorial, WWII Gallery, Canberra, where Bill shows us where he was bayoneted 11 times.

### **Part 3: The Fall of Ambon**

- The Fall of Ambon overview <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/world-war-ii-1939-1945/events/japanese-advance-december-1941-march-1942/fall-ambon>

### **Part 5: Some Came Home**

'Some Came Home' DVD trailer, Schindler Entertainment (15 mins)

<http://www.memorial.org.au/Education/SomeCameHomePromo.mp4>

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

#### **Websites**

- 2/21st Battalion <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U56064>
- 2/22nd Battalion <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U56065> and 1st Independent Company <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U56146>
- POWs – New Britain and Timor <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/burma-thailand-railway-and-hellfire-pass-1942-1943/locations/australian-prisoners-asia-pacific/new-britain-and-timor>
- Hellships <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/burma-thailand-railway-and-hellfire-pass-1942-1943/events/journeys/peril-sea>
- New Britain 1944-45 <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/world-war-ii-1939-1945/events/last-battles/jungle-island>
- Remembering the Montevideo Maru and the Fall of Rabaul, Lt Gen David Morrison, Chief of Army 30 June 2012 <https://memorial.org.au/About/MorrisonSpeech.htm>
- Talk by Australian historian, Peter Stanley 'Remembering 1942: The defence of the 'Malay barrier. Rabaul and Ambon, January 1942' <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/1942-defence-of-the-Malay-barrier>
- The Tragedy of the Montevideo Maru.- Time for Recognition, November 2009, A Submission to the Commonwealth Government, Montevideo Maru Memorial Committee <https://www.memorial.org.au/About/Activities/Recognition.htm>.
- Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society's website at [www.memorial.org.au](http://www.memorial.org.au)
- Rod Miller's website at <http://www.montevideomaru.info/index.htm>
- Article by Max Uechtritz: Our National Myopia – A History Forgotten. [www.memorial.org.au/Education/Myopia.pdf](http://www.memorial.org.au/Education/Myopia.pdf)
- Radio Interview on ABC RN, 25 February 2018, about Gladys Baker: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/sundayextra/2018-02-25/9471914>
- Radio interview on 11 November 2017 – 'Why the World War II invasion of Rabaul has been left out of our national story' <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-11-10/how-did-australia-forget-wwii-catastrophe-inrabaul/9106728>

and



<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/the-war-we-forgot/9083624>

**This Australian history has also been included in the arts.** For example:

- Peter Garrett in the Midnight Oil song, *In The Valley*, wrote about his grandfather, Tom Garrett, going down on the *MS Montevideo Maru*, <http://midnight-oil.info/discography/song/In-The-Valley>
- The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial in the grounds of the Australian War Memorial, Canberra which was designed by the noted Melbourne sculptor, James Parrett, and dedicated on 1 July 2012, the 70th anniversary of the sinking of the Montevideo Maru. The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society, now integrated into the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia Inc and which has produced newsletters since 2009, raised close to \$500,000 for the memorial.  
<https://memorial.org.au/Memorial/Passage.htm> <https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/visitor-information/sculpture-garden/rabaul-montevideo-mar-memorial>
- Kylie Adams-Collier is a country music singer/songwriter and a national radio host on Good Morning Country. Kylie penned her tribute after visiting the Australian War Memorial in 2015 with her son. They found a *Montevideo Maru* exhibit mentioning Kylie's grandfather, Harry Adams as one of the civilians who drowned on the POW ship. Launched on 18 June 2018 '*Montevideo Maru 1942*' reached: #17 on the Tasmanian Top 30 Country Music Charts, and #27 on the Australian Country Music Charts Top 40 Charts

This song won two Brumby Awards for best heritage song, semi-finalist in the Tamworth Songwriting Awards and Songs Alive Awards and made #2 on the charts.

[https://www.memorial.org.au/Assets/Montevideo Maru 1942.pdf](https://www.memorial.org.au/Assets/Montevideo_Maru_1942.pdf)

<https://kylieadams-collier.bandcamp.com/track/montevideo-maru-1942>

<http://www.krosskutrecords.com.au/KKR209-Kylie-Adams-Collier-Little-Stone>

- A portrait of Tom Herket who was a POW during WWI and a civilian internee during WWII is in the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. He has been listed as dying on the *MS Montevideo Maru*. At least 58 WWI Australian veterans are recorded as dying on this Japanese prisoner of war transport ship on 1 July 1942. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/ART96812>

## **SPORT**

The original location of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial was not far from the bronze sculpture of Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop. Both Weary Dunlop and Mac Ramsay who died on the *Montevideo Maru* played rugby for Australia. They were two of many outstanding Australian sports people who fought for Australia in wars. <https://www.theroar.com.au/2017/06/30/remembering-wallaby-mac-ramsay-ww2-hell-ship-victim/> (Note: This file could take a few seconds to download.)

## **DVDs/Movies**

- **70th Anniversary Commemorative Events of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Tragedy.**  
<http://www.memorial.org.au/About/Activities/DVDs.htm> Contact the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia at [admin@pngaa.net](mailto:admin@pngaa.net) or [admin@memorial.org.au](mailto:admin@memorial.org.au)
- John Schindler has produced a number of DVDs as well as *The Tragedy of the Montevideo Maru*. These include *The Fall of Rabaul and Kavieng*, and *Some Came Home*. In the *Some Came Home* DVD there are gripping accounts from WWII Australian and American POWs and civilian internees about their wartime experiences after the fall of Rabaul. Contact Schindler Entertainment at P O Box 303

Northgate Qld. 4013 or at [http://schindler.com.au/dvd\\_the\\_fall\\_of\\_rabaul\\_kavieng](http://schindler.com.au/dvd_the_fall_of_rabaul_kavieng) (The Fall of Rabaul and Kavieng) and [http://schindler.com.au/dvd\\_sales](http://schindler.com.au/dvd_sales) (Some Came Home).

• ***Sisters of War***. ABC TV. Available online through ABC iView:

<https://iview.abc.net.au/video/DR0901V001S00>

This film is suitable for students of history. It is a drama based on the true wartime experiences of two remarkable Australian women, Lorna Whyte, an Australian army nurse, and Sister Berenice Twohill, a Catholic teaching nun from northern New South Wales. Although they were very different people, their friendship formed after the fall of Rabaul would survive the incredible events of the Second World War. It is story of strength, survival and forgiveness.

Teachers have also found this telefilm useful when their students study ***The Shoe-Horn Sonata*** by John Mistro in the senior English syllabus. John Mistro also was the screenwriter for ***Sisters of War***. The theme in ***Sisters of War*** is similar to the theme in ***The Shoe-Horn Sonata*** and teachers can use this telemovie to give their students a better understanding of the play.

Sarah Snook, playing Lorna White, won Best Lead Actress in a Television Drama in 2012 in the AACTA Awards and Claire Van Der Boom, playing Sr Berenice Twohill, won a Silver Logie for Most Outstanding Actress in the 2011 Logie Awards for their roles in ***Sisters of War***.

### Books

• ***Finding Darcy*** by Sue Lawson. Black Dog Books. Fitzroy. Victoria. 2008. ISBN 6781742030234.

<http://www.walkerbooks.com.au/Books/Finding-Darcy-9781742030234>

This book, suitable for boys and girls from 10 years old and upwards, is about a young Australian girl, Darcy Abbott, and her family, and the shadows that the past can cast on families and societies. The story is inspired by Sue Lawson's grandfather, **William McLennan, VX23813, 2/22nd Battalion**, who is listed as dying on the **MS Montevideo Maru** on 1 July 1942. Includes excellent classroom worksheets. When Darcy Abbott is sent to live with her surly grandmother and silent great-grandmother for three months, she discovers a mystery regarding the death of her great-grandfather during World War II. A school project sets her on a search for the truth. This book is suitable for students from upper primary to mid secondary. It was shortlisted for the 2009 Children's Peace Literature Awards. Classroom ideas on Finding Darcy are located at:

[http://www.walkerbooks.com.au/statics/dyn/1322808542329/finding\\_darcy\\_TN.pdf](http://www.walkerbooks.com.au/statics/dyn/1322808542329/finding_darcy_TN.pdf)

• ***Line of Fire***. Ian Townsend. ISBN: 9781460750926 ISBN 10: 1460750926 Fourth Estate (Harpers Collins). Sydney. 2017.

After Pearl Harbour came Rabaul. This is a true story of a forgotten war, a lost family, and a 11-year-old Australian boy who was shot as a spy. <http://www.iantownsend.com.au/line-of-fire/>

Includes audio interviews on ABC's RN and Phillip Adams 'Late Night Live'.

• ***Hostages to Freedom - The Fall of Rabaul***. Peter Stone. Ocean Enterprises Yarram. Victoria. 1995. ISBN 0646 2412490. <http://www.oceans.com.au/oehtf.html> or contact Peter Stone at [peter@oceans.com.au](mailto:peter@oceans.com.au).

An outstanding and comprehensive account for older readers. This book is predominantly about the importance of Rabaul in the Second World War and what happened afterwards. It has relied greatly on personal narratives and first-hand accounts, highlighting the incredible feats of nearly fourteen hundred soldiers left to defend the indefensible against the might of the Japanese war machine.

Abandoned by the Australian command against an inevitable invasion, they fought and ran. The inhospitable New Britain jungle took its toll – the Japanese took most. At Wide Bay, over 150 young Australians were lined up and slaughtered. Many more were captured and sent to Japan as prisoners of war, but one ship, *MS Montevideo Maru*, was sunk by an American submarine – the only Japanese hellship with no allied survivors.

This book is not complimentary to the Japanese military, nor to Canberra politicians. It tells of atrocities and bureaucratic bungling that left over one thousand soldiers and civilians Australians dead. There is no other book that has managed to cover the complete picture.

Over 300 photographs are included, many quite rare and never before published.

- **When The War Came: New Guinea Islands 1942.** Compiled by Gayle Thwaites and produced by the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia (PNGAA). Roseville. NSW. 2017. ISBN 978-0-6480085-1-4.

With over 150 contributors and over 400 photos and over 500 large print pages this book gives readers a unique insight into the fall of Rabaul and its aftermath. Many moving family stories. Available from the PNGAA – <https://memorial.org.au/Assets/WhenTheWarCame.pdf> .

- **Abandoned and Sacrificed: The tragedy of the Montevideo Maru.** Kathryn Spurling. New Holland Publishers. Chatswood. NSW. 2017. ISBN 9781742579092.  
<https://kathrynsurling.com/product/abandoned-and-sacrificed-the-tragedy-of-the-montevideo-maru/>

Lack of information for their families, along with an extensive government cover-up, made for **Australia's Worst Maritime Disaster** in history. This is the untold story of that disaster, and was written for the 1,000 families that were affected and who never knew exactly what had happened.

- **Keepers of the Gate: personal stories of NGVR soldiers.** Frank James (Bob) Collins. NGVR and PNGVR Ex-Members Association Inc. Park Ridge Qld. 2016. ISBN 9780992585570.

- **The New Guinea Volunteer Rifles, NGVR, 1939-1943 – a history.** Ian Downs. Pacific Press. 1999. ISBN 187515003X.

Easily readable with photographs included. This history is significant as this unit is the only Australian Militia unit to be awarded a US Presidential Citation. Ian Downs has an illustrious military service in PNG.

- **We Were the First** – the Unit History of No. 1 Independent Company. Alexander 'Sandy' McNab, Australian Military History Publications 1998 ISBN: 0958669384

The comprehensive history of the No. 1 Independent Commando Company during World War II. The 1st Independent Company was formed in June 1941 and the following month, with the threat of war with Japan looming, it was sent to Kavieng, New Ireland. The company was based at Kavieng, where it was to protect the airfield, but sections were also sent to Namatanai in central New Ireland, Vila in the New Hebrides, Tulagi on Guadalcanal, Buka Passage in Bougainville, and Lorengau on Manus Island to act as observers.

- **Double Diamonds (Australian Commandos in the Pacific, 1941-45).** Karl James. Newsouth Publishing. (University of NSW). Sydney. 2016. ISBN 9781742234922.

This book includes a chapter on the 1st Independent Company, Australia's first commando unit raised during WWII, who lost 133 men on the *MS Montevideo Maru*.

- **The Coast Watchers.** Patrick Lindsay. Random House Australia (William Heinemann). North Sydney. 2010. ISBN 9781741669244.

- **The Coast Watchers.** Eric Feldt. Penguin Australia. 1991. ISBN-10:0140149260.

After Pearl harbour was bombed in 1941 the war in the Pacific gained momentum; Japanese troops began to move relentlessly south, towards Australia. Determined to provide an information network along the vulnerable coastlines of Northern Australia and its island screen of New Guinea, New Britain, New Ireland and the Solomons, the Australian Navy developed the Coast Watching Organisation. Many of the Coast Watchers worked voluntarily behind enemy lines, isolated and ill-equipped. Yet their radioed reports gave the Allies a decisive advantage in some of the most crucial battles of the war, including the famed battle of Guadalcanal. Those appointed included local civilians and administrators – they had to live by their wits and at great risk of capture and execution as spies. Their main communication was by telradio network in code. They were dependent on the assistance of native islanders, whose allegiance potentially could be undermined by Japanese conquest and ruthlessness, but who assisted them at grave personal risk. *The Coast Watchers* is a fascinating record of initiative and loyalty. Eric Feldt, commander in charge of the Coast Watchers in New Guinea, Papua and the Solomon islands from 1939-1945, writes with authority, meticulously documenting the intelligence strategies as well as the personal suffering and courage of these brave men.

- **Rabaul 1942.** Douglas Aplin. Pacific Press. Broadbrach Waters. Qld. 1994. ISBN 1875150021.

The tragic story of the 2/22nd Australian Army Infantry Battalion A.I.F., the men and women of Lark Force, including units of the RAN, RAAF, New Guinea Volunteer Rifles, 1st Independent Company etc and New Guinea residents who were caught up in the calamity following the January 1942 Japanese invasion of the New Guinea islands.

- **Mangroves, Coconuts and Frangipani** – The story of Rabaul. Neville Threlfall. 2012. ISBN 978-0-646-58310-5 or 0646583107. An excellent and well written publication. The author was a Uniting Church missionary who learnt the local language and is able to broaden the historical perspective. Covers WWI, WWII and beyond. Margaret Reeson has written: *'Key themes include race and class relations in a very mixed society, changing models of colonial administration, the growth of commerce, the significant role of Christian missions, tensions between Australian government policy-makers and the local administration, and significant challenges over land rights. Threlfall has drawn on archives, interviews and personal experience. The viewpoint of the indigenous people and the long-established Chinese and other ethnic communities is well represented in the complexities of exchanges over land, opportunity, authority and racism.'*

A good companion to the recommended reading, **Hostages to Freedom**, for older readers.

- **Every Man for Himself** by John Dawes. The Catholic Press Newspaper Co. Ltd, 195? The life of Father Edward Charles Harris MSC, 'Martyr' of Mal Mal, the man who would not retreat.

- **Hell and High Fever.** David Selby. Pacific Books. Sydney. 1971. ISBN 9780207122255. David Selby was a member of Lark Force and with around 400 other Australians, soldiers & civilians, was able to escape from the Japanese by walking through the New Britain jungle and eventually was rescued by boats who took them to safety. This book describes his war time experiences and how he survived in the jungle. After the war David Selby became a prominent Australian Judge.

- **Rabaul Diary: Escaping Capture in New Britain, the Fate of 'Lark Force' – 1942.** Gunner David Bloomfield. Australian Military History Publications 2001 ISBN 1876439076

The author gives a day-by-day account of what it is like to be on the run, struggling to stay alive, with no definite means of escape, and the Japanese Army hunting you down.

- **We who are about to Die** - the story of John Lerew – a hero of Rabaul 1942. Lex McAuley. Banner Books. 2007. ISBN 9781875593293. The first 10 chapters are particularly relevant to the times and compliment the book, **Hell and High Fever**.

- **Not Now Tomorrow** – ima nai ashita – Australian Civilian Nurses – Prisoners of the Japanese, New Guinea and Japan 1942-1945. Alice M Bowman. Daisy Press. Bangalow. NSW. 1996. ISBN – 10: 0646203606.

The author was a civilian nurse from the Government Hospital in Rabaul when Rabaul fell on 23 January 1942. In this book Alice Bowman tells her own story – a story of the Rabaul nurses who became prisoners of the Pacific War.

- **A Very Long War: The Families Who Waited**. Margaret Reeson. Melbourne University Press. Melbourne. 2000. ISBN 0522 849091. Written about the families who were evacuated to Australia just before the bombing and invasion of New Britain and New Ireland commenced.

- **Whereabouts unknown**. Margaret Reeson. Albatross Books. Sutherland. NSW. 1993. ISBN 0732410037, 9780732410032

In late June 1942, over a thousand men were taken from an internment camp in Rabaul, New Guinea. They were never seen again. Gleaned from original wartime records and vivid memories the book focuses on a group of missionary wives who were sent back to Australia before the Japanese invasion, and on a handful of missionary nurses who disappeared behind enemy lines.

- **He's Not Coming Home**. Gillian Nikakis. Lothian Books. South Melbourne. 2005. ISBN 9780734408143

- **Masked Eden: A History of the Australians in New Guinea**. Anne McCosker, ISBN 0 646 35289 X Matala Press

- **Yours Sincerely, Tom**. A Lost Child of the Empire. Margaret L Henderson. Openbook Publishers. Adelaide. 2005. ISBN 0646396404, 9780646396408

- **Yours Sincerely, Tom Revisited**. Seaview Press. Henley Beach. South Australia. 2005. ISBN 1740083296, 9781740083294

- **Heroes at Sea**. Don Wall. Don Wall Publications. Mona Vale. NSW. 1991. ISBN 0646035789. Honour Rolls for 1,800 Australia POWs and civilian internees who died on hellships, including the MS *Montevideo Maru* during WWII.

- **Deaths on the Hellships: Prisoners at Sea in the Pacific War**. Gregory F Michno. Naval Institute Press. Annapolis. MD. USA. 2001. ISBN 1557504822. The author concludes from the statistics that it was more dangerous to be a prisoner on the Japanese hellships than a U.S. Marine in the Pacific Campaign. (The *MS Montevideo Maru* was the first Japanese hellship loaded with POWs to be sunk by a U.S. submarine and the only one with no allied survivors).

- **The Kavieng Massacre: A War Crime Revealed**. Raden Dunbar. Sally Milner Publishing Pty Ltd. 2007 ISBN 978 1 8635 1368 5

The shocking truth of the Kavieng Massacre in March 1944. During the push south in the Pacific by the Japanese in WWII, a large group of expatriate Australian men and German Catholic missionaries

were trapped on New Ireland, PNG, many interned by the Japanese. They disappeared without trace. The Japanese naval officers responsible for the Kavieng massacre elaborately concealed their embarrassing crime to mislead Australian investigations, however the Australian Government commenced a largely secret enquiry into the fate of the missing civilians discovering that all Kavieng internees had been secretly murdered by their captors. Suitable for older readers.

- **Memorial News**, the newsletters of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society to 2012. These newsletters have been archived by the National Library of Australia on their Pandora Website at <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/tep/129475>.

From 2013 *Memorial News* has been included in *Una Voce*, the quarterly journal of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia which changed its name to *PNG Kundu* in 2020. [www.pngaa.org](http://www.pngaa.org)

The July 2012 Memorial News newsletter has records of the 70th Anniversary Commemoration Lunch in Canberra and the Dedication of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial in the grounds of the Australian War Memorial. Included are speeches by Lt General David Morrison, Chief of the Australian Army; the dedication speech by Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC CVO, the Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia; and Margaret Henderson who was evacuated from the New Guinea Islands. pp 27 -47

**'SOME CAME HOME' DVD: AN INSIGHT INTO THE FIRST ENGAGEMENT OF WWII ON AUSTRALIAN TERRITORY**

To be used together with the 15-minute free online DVD available at:

<http://www.memorial.org.au/Education/SomeCameHomePromo.mp4> and resources through the

Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Group Education Package:

<http://www.memorial.org.au/Education/index.htm>

### 1. New Guinea Becomes a Mandated Australian Territory

Australia's sacrifice in the Great War had been immense — 59,000 dead. In a population of 4 million, nearly 420,000 men had enlisted. Billy Hughes would now invoke this blood sacrifice. His opportunity came at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. World leaders gathered to decide the fate of defeated Germany and its colonies. The key figure was US President Wilson, who dreamt of creating a new international body, the League of Nations.

Hughes had contempt for Wilson's dreams. Wilson wanted the new League of Nations to have ultimate responsibility for the former German colony. Hughes rejected this. He was insistent that Australia must annex the former German colony.

*"Australia had suffered 90,000 casualties in this war and lost 60,000 killed . . . The islands were as necessary to Australia as water to a city... .... If there were at the very door of Australia a potential or actual enemy, Australia could not feel safe."*<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>(AA A981/1, WAR P16

Britain's Prime Minister, David Lloyd George watched the clash between the two men.

*"Mr Hughes... listened intently with his hand cupped around his neck ...The President asked him slowly and solemnly, '... that if the whole civilised world asks Australia to agree to a mandate in respect of these islands, Australia is prepared still to defy the appeal of the whole civilised world?' Mr Hughes answered; 'that's about the size of it, President Wilson.'" (ref: Lloyd George diary — p.542.)*

But a compromise was agreed. Lloyd George forced Hughes to abandon annexation and accept a trustee system where New Guinea was administered by Australia.

*"Our first duty as Australians is to Australia, its industries both primary and secondary but our next duty is to Britain upon whose strength and power our safety and progress depends."* Source: excerpts from '100 Years: Australian Story' Episode 5.2 [http://www.abc.net.au/100years/EP5\\_2.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/100years/EP5_2.htm)

Not everyone at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 supported Australia's request for the former German New Guinea becoming an Australian Territory.

Complete the following table with the roles and opinion of these three key men.

Britain's Prime Minister, Lloyd George	USA President, Woodrow Wilson	Australian Prime Minister, Billy Hughes

Prime Minister Hughes wanted Australia to annex German occupied New Guinea but ended with a League of Nations' mandate over the territory. What is the difference?

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What responsibilities did Australia now have for New Guinea?

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## 2. The Fall of Rabaul

In late 1941, the Australian Federal government realised the dangers of stranding an under strength and under-supported garrison in Rabaul, but conscientiously believed this measure was justified in the defence of the Australian mainland. So the government chose to retain Lark Force and civil administrators in Rabaul, and they did not encourage other civilians to leave this Australian territory until it was too late.

Source: *The Tragedy of the Montevideo Maru. Time for Recognition - A Submission to the Commonwealth Government* <http://memorial.org.au/Assets/Recognition.pdf>

Locate Rabaul on a map. Why would Rabaul, a deep-sea harbour, be of strategic importance during war time?

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On 12 December 1941 the Prime Ministers Department sent a Most Secret and Important Cable to Washington referring to the Lark Force garrison at Rabaul as being “*hostages to fortune*”.

What does this mean?

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What is the difference between Prisoners of War (POWs) and civilian internees?

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Source: ‘Australia’s War 1939 – 1945: The Fall of Rabaul’.

<https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/world-war-ii-1939-1945/events/japanese-advance-december-1941-march-1942/fall-rabaul>

Using this source, add information to the boxes below regarding numbers, equipment, training and strategic planning and preparation for invasion of the different groups at Rabaul.

2/22nd Battalion

2/10 Field Ambulance



Australian army Nursing Service

Anti-tanks and coastal artillery batteries

New Guinea Volunteer Rifles

24th Squadron

1st Independent Company

Civilians

Why was the defence of Rabaul over in a couple of hours?

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\_\_\_\_\_

Who gave the order 'everyman for himself' and why?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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Why was the 24th Squadron able to successfully escape, even though their aircraft had been decimated, while most of the men of the 2/22 were captured or killed?

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Why do you think there is limited reference to the civilian population of Rabaul at the time of the invasion?

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### 3. The Fall of Ambon

Use the information sheet, 'Australia's War 1939 – 1945: The Fall of Ambon' <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/world-war-ii-1939-1945/events/japanese-advance-december-1941-march-1942/fall-ambon> to answer the following questions

Who was given the task of defending the Bay of Ambon and the airfields at Laha and Liang?

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What were Lieutenant-Colonel Roach's concerns and what was the result of his request for reinforcements of men and equipment?

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Gull Force suffered over 75% casualty rate. What were contributing factors for this large loss of life?

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### 4. Defence of the 'Malay Barrier' Source

1: The Victorian RSL magazine, *Mufti*, published an article in 1954 headed, '*Forget the Bad, Remember the Good*'. It recorded that twenty people had attended a ceremony at the cenotaph to remember the twelfth anniversary of the fall of Rabaul. The anonymous writer was not writing to lament that so few people turned out on this day: he was arguing that the anniversary should not have been marked at all. 'Defeats', he wrote, 'are depressing enough ... without dwelling on them'. He urged that if Rabaul was to be remembered at all it should be on the anniversary of its 'recapture' in 1945.

'The disasters which befell Australians and their Dutch and indigenous allies in the defence of the mis-named Malay barrier were only the first of a string of defeats which Australians faced in 1942. Exactly sixty years after, it is fitting in this place, above all others, we should remember them and those to whom they brought so much suffering.'

Extracts from a speech by Peter Stanley, 26 January 2002, 'Remembering 1942: The defence of the 'Malay barrier. Rabaul and Ambon, January 1942'. <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/1942-defence-of-the-malay-barrier>

**Source 2:**

'War is a terrible thing. It reaps souls and lives unlived and leaves waste, sorrow and broken years in its wake. Too often our remembrance can appear to give more emphasis to the nobility of sacrifice, rather than face the anguish and deep personal sorrow such sacrifice demands of those who go on living. At times, our ceremonies can gloss over the mistakes that are made in war, but mistakes and miscalculations are intrinsic to battle because war is solely a human endeavour. That is not the case today, for at this gathering we remember one of the most tragic episodes in the annals of Australian military history. The sinking of the requisitioned transport vessel, the *Montevideo Maru*, by an American submarine, the *USS Sturgeon*, forty miles west of Luzon on the 1st of July 1942 was the culmination of a chain of disastrous strategic and tactical decisions.'

Extract from a speech by Lt Gen David Morrison, Chief of Army, 30 June 2012, 'Remembering the Montevideo Maru and the Fall of Rabaul' <http://memorial.org.au/About/MorrisonSpeech.htm>

Use a graphic organiser to compare and contrast the three views expressed in these two sources.

At the War Cabinet meeting on 12 December 1941 the Australian Government Ministers were presented with 3 options for the Rabaul garrison:

- 1) Retain the present position
- 2) Reinforce the garrison
- 3) Withdraw and abandon the area.

Which choice did the Government make?

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What may have been the reasons for this decision?

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Complete following table after watching the DVD

<p>John May (Padre)</p> <p>Photo</p>	<p>Why did John May feel he should not point out he was a POW?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>Why do you think having someone like John May would help POWs survive?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Norm Furness</p> <p>Photo</p>	<p>What insight did Norm Furness give of the character of the diggers and why would recalling these memories be so emotionally painful, 70 years later?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Rudy Buckley</p> <p>Photo</p>	<p>In 1942, when Rudy was 12 years old, he saw Australian servicemen and civilians being taken to a vessel anchored in the harbour. A soldier threw Rudy his army issue handkerchief on which was written his name and serial number. Rudy kept it in a buried tin box, along with other Australian items. He witnessed the brutality of the Japanese, including the death of his father. Why do you think Rudy kept these memorabilia and what might the consequence been if it was discovered?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Lorna Johnson (Army nursing sister)</p> <p>Photo</p>	<p>How were the POW nurses treated?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>Why did the nurses never give up hope?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Sister Bernice (Catholic nun)</p> <p>Photo</p>	<p>What did the Japanese tell Sister Bernice and the internees to make them think Japan was winning the war?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>How did she know the war was over?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Why do you think John Schindler choose the title '**Some Came Home**'?

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This document was updated August 2021, first published 2014