

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

## 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.

Part 1: New Guinea becomes a mandated Australian Territory

Part 2: The Fall of Rabaul

Part3: The Fall of Ambon

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

Part 5: 'Some Came Home'

## TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET

### AUSTRALIANS AT RABAUL

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 I 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 (A.N. & M.E.F.), 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/site/blog/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 13<sup>th</sup> September 1914 the British flag was raised at Rabaul. On 14<sup>th</sup> 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 the year 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 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 A.N. & M.E.F. 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  
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/E145>

AE1  
<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.

### **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 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 2/22<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>st</sup> 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, planters, businessmen, 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 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/history/conflicts/kokoda-track/events/fighting-retreat/first-engagement-kokoda-28-july-1942>

Some of the men in the 1st 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/history/conflicts/australia-and-second-world-war/resources/coastwatchers-19411945>

## 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: Farwell 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 access to an atlas or world map

### INFORMATION SHEETS

#### Part 2: The Fall of Rabaul

- The Fall of Rabaul overview

<http://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/conflicts/australias-war-19391945/events/japanese-advance-december-1941march-1942/fall> 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's double the number of Australians killed in the Vietnam War and many more than died in the sinking of the *HMAS Sydney* (645) and the hospital ship the *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-keith-10910>.

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/content-users/australian-services/educational-licence>.

- The list of men who are recorded as dying on the *MS Montevideo Maru* on 1 July 1942 is on the National Archives of Australia's website at [www.montevideomaru.naa.gov.au](http://www.montevideomaru.naa.gov.au).
- The National Archives of Australia Fact Sheet on the *Montevideo Maru*. <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs266.aspx>.
- Looking for evidence. The handkerchief. <https://pngaa.org/site/blog/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

<http://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/conflicts/australias-war-19391945/events/japanese-advance-december-1941march-1942/fall-ambon>

### Part 5: Some Came Home

'Some Came Home' trailer, Schindler Entertainment

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

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### Websites

- 2/21<sup>st</sup> Battalion  
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U56064>
- 2/22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion  
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U56065>  
and 1<sup>st</sup> Independent Company <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U56146>
- POWs – New Britain and Timor <http://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/conflicts/thaiburma-railway-and-hellfire-pass/locations/australian-prisoners-asia-pacific-7>
- Hellships <http://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/conflicts/thaiburma-railway-and-hellfire-pass/events/journeys/peril-sea>
- New Britain 1944-45 <http://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/conflicts/australias-war-19391945/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-in-rabaul/9106728>

**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 70<sup>th</sup> 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 with Kross Kut Records 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. In early July 2018 her song 'Montevideo Maru 1942' reached:  
#17 on the Tasmanian Top 30 Country Music Charts, and  
#27 on the Australian Country Music Charts Top 40 Charts  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIF4sIKt27o>  
<http://www.kylieadams-collier.com/montevideo-maru>  
[https://www.memorial.org.au/Assets/Montevideo\\_Maru\\_1942.pdf](https://www.memorial.org.au/Assets/Montevideo_Maru_1942.pdf)  
<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 Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial is not far from the bronze sculpture of Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop. Both Weary Dunlop and Mack 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-mack-ramsay-ww2-hell-ship-victim/>

## DVDs

- **70<sup>th</sup> 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)

- 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 & 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 bookshops. This DVD is also available to teachers through Screenrights at <https://www.enhancetv.com.au/video/sisters-of-war/4239>.

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

## 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 which is 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, 2/22<sup>nd</sup> 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. Contact Peter Stone at [peter@oceans.com.au](mailto:peter@oceans.com.au). A very comprehensive account of the fall of Rabaul and what happened afterwards.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.
- **Rabaul 1942.** Douglas Aplin. Pacific Press. Broadbrach Waters. Qld. 1994. ISBN 1875150021.
- **Mangroves, Coconuts and Frangipani – The story of Rabaul.** Neville Threlfall. 2012. ISBN 978-0-646-58310-5. Contact the author, Unit 91, Nareen Gardens, 19 Bias Ave, Bateau Bay 2261. An excellent and well written publication. The author was a Uniting Church missionary. He learnt the local language and is able to broaden the historical perspective. Covers WWI, WWII and beyond. A good companion to the recommended reading, *Hostages to Freedom*.
- **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.
- **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 her book Alice Bowman tells her story – a story of the Rabaul nurses – 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
- **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).

- **The newsletters of the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society, 'Memorial News'**. These newsletters have been archived by the National Library of Australia on their Pandora Website at <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/tep/129475>. The July 2012 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>41</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

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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 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*

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'.

<http://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/conflicts/australias-war-19391945/events/japanese-advance-december-1941march-1942/fall>

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.

2/22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion

2/10<sup>th</sup> 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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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' [  
<http://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/conflicts/australias-war-19391945/events/japanese-advance->

[december-1941march-1942/fall-ambon](#) ] to answer the following questions

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

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

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

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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 un-lived 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



**5. 'Some Came Home' DVD trailer.**

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/> <p>Why do you think having someone like John May would help POWs survive?</p> <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/> <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 this memorabilia and what might the consequence been if it was discovered?</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Lorna Johnson (Army nursing sister)</p>  <p>photo</p>	<p>How were the POW nurses treated?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <p>Why did the nurses never give up hope?</p> <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/> <p>How did she know the war was over?</p> <hr/> <hr/>

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

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