



# THE OBSERVATION POST

*The official publication of the*  
**National Malaya & Borneo Veterans Association Australia Inc**  
South Australia & Northern Territory Branch

SA/NT Branch Patron:  
Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia

Volume 16, number 2 - FEBRUARY 2026



## 604 SQUADRON END OF YEAR PARADE

Don and Jenny Cameron attended the 604 Squadron End of Year Parade on 7 December 2025. With Senator Andrew McLachlan CSC, Senator for South Australia, Don presented the Squadron Executive Instructor's Award, donated by our Branch in 2022, which recognises a Cadet who has displayed consistent excellence in drill and ceremonial activities through the year and in representational roles, and has maintained the highest personal standards.

Congratulations to Cadet Warrant Officer Katarina Czechowicz. CWOFF Czechowicz has participated in three of our Malaya & Borneo Veterans Day commemorative services, notably as Catafalque Party Commander this year. She was the AAFC Banner Warrant Officer on Anzac Day, Catafalque Party Commander for the Modbury High School Remembrance Day Assembly, and a Division Commander for the 40 Australian Army Cadet Battalion 2025 End of Year Parade.



## NOTICES

### BRANCH COMMITTEE 2026

Paul Rosenzweig OAM  
*President, Secretary  
Public Affairs Officer*

Don Cameron  
*Vice-President  
Ceremonial Officer*

Paul Bayliss

Jenny Cameron  
*Treasurer*

Vicki Crannaford  
*Assistant Treasurer*

Di Davies

Beverley Dubois  
*Minutes Secretary*

Jeff Hiscock

Mal White  
*Merchandise Officer*

\* \* \*

Major Quentin Castle  
*Branch Chaplain*

### THANK YOU

*We thank Tony Zappia MP and the staff of his Makin Electorate Office for their generous assistance with all our printing needs*

## BRANCH UPDATES 'KEEPING IN THE LOOP'

We have heard more from our corresponding members regarding our newsletter which help to keep them up to date.

Our friend Lesley in Sarawak wrote: *"Always so interesting. I forward into a few others who are interested too"*.

Ros Bickford, daughter of Lieutenant Alec Bulford, a Batu Lintang POW who was liberated on 11 September 1945, wrote: *"Thanks so much for sending through the special edition of the Observation Post – very interesting read. I also thoroughly enjoyed seeing the video"*.

Ros is using our report about her father (Observation Post HB25-3 Special Edition-3) to put together her own article for the Malayan Volunteers Group, covering a bit more of his pre-war and post-war life.

Terry Yaxley from the UK visited Sarawak to honour his late uncle Gunner Bill Yaxley of the Royal Artillery, a Batu Lintang POW who died in captivity on 25 May 1945 (see our report in Observation Post HB25-2 Special Edition-2). He wrote: *"Dear Paul (Sir) – just a short note to say thanks again from my grandson and myself for your latest email from our VJ tour in Kuching"*.

In the December issue we noted the promotion to Brigadier of the Defence Advisor in Kuala Lumpur Corey Shillabeer CSC as he prepared to depart Malaysia. He wrote to us: *"Many thanks for a copy of the latest 'Observation Post'. Always a good read and I appreciate the shout-out in this edition – means a lot"*. Thankfully he wishes to remain on our distribution list so, with his new role as Commander 10th Brigade ('Long-Range Fires Brigade') at RAAF Edinburgh, we might see Brigadier Shillabeer at some of our events.

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February meeting: 1115h Friday 20 February  
Maid of Auckland Hotel,  
followed by lunch



<https://www.facebook.com/MaidEdwardstown>

Saturday 28 February: the 30th anniversary of the formation of the "National Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association (Australia) Incorporated", as a Company with Directors, registered with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (29 February 1996)

March meeting: 1115h Friday 20 March  
Maid of Auckland Hotel, followed by lunch



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Visit our Website:  
[https://www.nmbvaa.org.au/sa\\_nt.php](https://www.nmbvaa.org.au/sa_nt.php)



### CHRISTMAS LUNCH Saturday 13 December 2025

We held our annual Christmas Lunch once again at the Maid of Auckland Hotel in Edwardstown. The purpose was to celebrate a year of accomplishments, including two major commemorative events and a successful executive liaison visit to Sarawak, and to conduct fundraising for the schools in the Bau District which we sponsor.

And we honoured absent friends and fallen comrades with the traditional reserved place setting, and Vice-President Don Cameron recited the Ode of Remembrance.

We thank the Crannaford family for the major raffle prize, hand-made by Julie Centofanti – many thanks!



*We celebrated our various affiliations – we had on display our Friend of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Certificate, the Squadron Executive Instructor's Award we donated to 604 Squadron, and 604 Squadron's Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award Roll of Honour.*



*Congratulations to Don and Jenny Cameron, who received an SA Premier's Certificate of Recognition for Outstanding Volunteer Service. This certificate acknowledges and celebrates the selfless contributions of volunteers who have made a significant impact on their community or organisation.*





*We had a very enjoyable and relaxed Christmas Lunch – thanks to everyone who joined us. The SA/NT Branch has adopted a four-pronged approach to commemoration: Remember the fallen, Remember Malaysia, Honour the living, and Look to the future. We acknowledged The Fallen and Absent Friends, and raised funds for our future contributions to the four schools in Sarawak which we sponsor, located in areas in the Bau District where Australian military forces were deployed during Confrontation. We also honoured the living – Merry Christmas veterans!*





### WELCOMING THE NEW YEAR Thursday 1 January 2026

We have received many greetings for the new year from our various friends and corresponding members at home and overseas, including this postcard below from Dato Lim's son Wilfred and family.

We also noted as we entered the new year, that many of our members have been suffering health and medical difficulties including prolonged periods of treatment and hospitalisation. We send you our best wishes for your ongoing care.

One who was facing such struggles was Mal 'Digger' Digance, who passed away on 10 January 2026, aged 83 (see Vale notice in this newsletter).

And it was an especially difficult time for one of the Air Force Cadets of 604 Squadron, spending the Christmas-New Year period without his parents (see report later in this newsletter).

We also report that the President of Hilton RSL Sub-Branch Billy Parry had an operation before Christmas to amputate a leg. He has been recuperating in the Royal Adelaide Hospital and hopefully will be moved to the QEH for rehabilitation soon. We wish Bill a speedy recovery.



# Adelaide High School

We received the following greeting from Amy Worswick, who is coordinating the AHS Old Scholar memorial project:

*Thanks so much for your email and for the terrific mentions in the 'Observation Post'.*

*The Vietnam Honour Board is about 2/3 the way through its manufacture. After the Vietnam Honour Board, we will focus on Korea (35 Adelaide High Old Scholars), Malaya (9) and Borneo (9) to get an Honour Board made up for these men and women. Happy New Year. We are so very grateful for all you keep doing for us, it has brought so many wonders.*

Jenn Buckler, Deputy Commissioner SA for DVA, will be meeting up with Amy in the near future to learn more about this project, and perhaps find a way for some of the students involved to talk to DVA about their project. More to follow on this great initiative.



*from the Lim family*



## OUR VISION



### **National Malaya & Borneo Veterans Association Australia Inc**

The South Australia and Northern Territory Branch of the NMBVAA has adopted a four-pronged approach to commemoration:

- ☞ Remember the fallen
- ☞ Remember Malaysia
- ☞ Honour the living
- ☞ Look to the future

## AFFILIATIONS

### SEKOLAH KEBANGSAAN

In our approach to commemoration, we 'Remember Malaysia' and 'Look to the future' by providing ongoing financial assistance to four adopted schools (*Sekolah Kebangsaan*, SK) in the Bau District of Sarawak, located immediately adjacent to the Sarawak-Kalimantan border. These schools stand on or near sites where Australian military forces were deployed in 1965 and 1966 during Confrontation.

In the First Division of Sarawak, Australian forces defended the line of approach from Indonesian territory to the Sarawak capital Kuching by taking responsibility for a sector of the Sarawak-Kalimantan border some 20 km in length. The Australian concept of operations consisted of three zones of layered defence – a rear depth zone (battalion headquarters, support elements and a rifle company as the battalion reserve at Bau), a middle zone (comprising three fortified rifle company patrol bases) and a forward border zone closer to the border (platoon bases).

The primary defensive effort was the development and occupation of the three rifle company patrol bases – at Kampung Stass (northern sector), Kampung Serikin (middle sector) and Kampung Gumbang (southern sector). Each company base included a Royal Artillery Fire Support Base. In Kampung Stass and Kampung Serikin, schools were subsequently established on these former company patrol bases. Even today 60 years later, war relics are being unearthed.



*President Paul and Vice-President Don at SK Stass in 2025, with Puan Jacelyn Nihar, Senior Assistant for Administration, and Puan Shane Anak Regok, Pre-School Teacher and Secretary of the SK Stass Parents and Teachers Association.*



### SEKOLAH KEBANGSAAN STASS

SK Stass school stands on the site of a small patrol base first established near Kampung Stass during Confrontation by a troop from 'B' Company, 40 Royal Marine Commando in 1963.

From January to June 1964 the site was occupied by a troop from 42 Royal Marine Commando, then a platoon of Gurkhas, 7 Platoon, 'B' Company, 1st Green Jackets (June to October), and then a rifle platoon from the 1st Battalion, 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles (October to March 1965).

'A' Company of the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment upgraded the site into a rifle company defensive position and patrol base (March to June 1965). 29 (Corunna) Light Battery, Royal Artillery established a Fire Support Base here, with one L5 105 mm Howitzer and a 'Green Archer' Radar.

The base was occupied by 'D' Company (June-July 1965), and then later by 'B' Company of the 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (April to September 1966) supported by 'V' Battery of 6 Light Regiment, Royal Artillery.

The SK Stass badge carries the motto *Usaha, Disiplin, Jaya*, which means "Effort, Discipline, Success".

During our visits we have planted a Bornean Ironwood tree or *Pokok Belian* (2023) and a Soursop tree or *Pokok Durian Belanda* (2025).



### SEKOLAH KEBANGSAAN SERABAK

SK Serabak school in Kampung Serikin stands on the site of a patrol base first established during Confrontation by a troop from 'B' Company, 40 Royal Marine Commando in 1963.

From January to June 1964 the site was occupied by a troop from 42 Royal Marine Commando, then by 5 Platoon, 'B' Company of the 1st Green Jackets (June to October 1964), and then a rifle company from the 1st Battalion, 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles (October 1964 to March 1965).

'C' Company of the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment occupied this rifle company defensive position and patrol base from March to July 1965. 29 (Corunna) Light Battery, Royal Artillery established a Fire Support Base here, with two L5 105 mm Howitzers and a 'Green Archer' Radar.

The SK Serabak badge carries the motto *Berilmu Berdisiplin*, which means "Having knowledge and discipline".

During our visits we have planted a Red Water Apple Tree or *Jambu Air Merah* (2019) and a Calamansi Tree or *Pokok Limau Kasturi* (2022).

Paul and Don had the privilege of planting three trees in 2025: an *Anak Rambutan Sekolah* (Rambutan Tree), *Pokok Pomelo* (Pomelo Tree) and *Pokok Mangga* (Mango Tree).



### SEKOLAH KEBANGSAAN GUMBANG

On the mountainside near Kampung Gumbang is the site of the 'Bukit Knuckle' patrol base which was first established by 4 Troop of 'B' Company, 40 Royal Marine Commando in 1963.

From January to June 1964 the site was occupied by a troop from 42 Royal Marine Commando, then by 6 Platoon, 'B' Company of the 1st Green Jackets (June to October 1964), and then a rifle platoon from the 1st Battalion, 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles (October 1964 to March 1965).

'B' Company, 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment upgraded the site into a rifle company defensive position and patrol base (March to July 1965).

29 (Corunna) Light Battery, Royal Artillery established a Fire Support Base here, with two L5 105 mm Howitzers.

The SK Gumbang badge carries the motto *Usaha asas Kejayaan*, which means "Effort is the Foundation of Success".



### SEKOLAH KEBANGSAAN SUBA BUAN

SK Suba Buan school stands on the site of an infantry platoon defensive position and patrol base used by elements of 'C' Company of the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment between March and July 1965. A similar platoon patrol base was established by 3RAR at Krokong.

29 (Corunna) Light Battery, Royal Artillery established a Fire Support Base here in direct support of 3RAR, with one L5 105 mm Howitzer.

Later, 'V' Battery of 6 Light Regiment, Royal Artillery operated a Fire Support Base here with one L5 105 mm Howitzer in direct support of the 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment at Krokong.

The new headmistress is Madam Sheila anak Christopher, who has been teaching SK Suba Buan since 2023.

The SK Suba Buan badge carries the motto *Tekun Pasti Jaya*, which means "Perseverance will win".



## No 604 SQUADRON, AAFC

### CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

After the parade, Vice-President Don Cameron presented certificates to the Cadets and staff who supported our 2025 Malaya and Borneo Veterans Day Service of Commemoration at the West Torrens War Memorial Gardens (Hamra Library) on Friday 29 August 2025

*Images by  
Leading Aircraftwoman (AAFC) Devanshee Jain*



### SQUADRON EXECUTIVE INSTRUCTOR'S AWARD 2025

Donated by the SA/NT Branch, NMBVAA to recognise consistent excellence in drill and ceremonial activities throughout the year





## No 604 SQUADRON, AAFC

### SQUADRON DINING-IN NIGHT Thursday 11 December 2025

Vice-President Don Cameron was a guest of honour at the 604 Squadron formal Dining-in Night at the Naval, Military and Air Force Club in Hutt Street in Adelaide.

Don presented a framed Certificate of Appreciation to the Cadets and staff of 604 Squadron for supporting our Malaya and Borneo Veterans Day commemoration service on Friday 29 August this year.

The certificate was accepted by the Squadron Executive Instructor, Leading Aircraftwoman (AAFC) Stuti Patel.

Stuti has supported four of our commemorative services, as both a Cadet and a staff member. She missed 2020 when no service was conducted due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and some later services while she was in Queensland completing a Bachelor of Aviation degree. It's great to have her back in Adelaide.



*LACW (AAFC) Stuti Patel is a Gold Level Duke of Edinburgh's International Award recipient. She first supported our 2019 Malaya & Borneo Veterans Day service as a Cadet in 2019, then again as a Cadet Sergeant in 2021 (Catafalque Party member), and attended this year as a staff member. She also supported our 75th Anniversary of the Start of the Malayan Emergency service on 31 May.*



*The Commanding Officer of 604 Squadron presented Vice-President Don Cameron with a AAFC coin in appreciation of his attendance and the NMBVAA's support of the squadron.*



*Don Cameron presented the Dining President Cadet Flight Sergeant Roshan Abraham with an SA/Branch NMBVAA coin for a job well done.*



## CONTRIBUTED IMAGES AND INFORMATION

### JOHN LYLE NOAKES MBE QSO JP MNZIS (1907-1992)

Lyle Noakes was a Batu Lintang Camp Internee who was liberated by Kuching Force on 11 September 1945.

Judy Pearson was unable to be in Kuching in September last year to honour her father during the 80th anniversary events, but was represented by her husband Les. We have received this message from Judy:

*I returned to Kuching from New Zealand. This morning I visited the small museum at Batu Lintang and saw the Puak Dahan memorial.*

*It was good to see that the Long Nawang memorial had been moved alongside it. Previously the Long Nawang memorial was in what I would call an out of the way corner. I now have to schedule a trip to Pending to see the memorial there.*

*Thank you for including my father in two articles in The Observation Post. I found the article about Len and Colin Hygate very interesting. I attended a talk Colin gave about his father at the Telang Usan a couple of years ago.*

*There has been much renewed interest regarding the Red Bridge. An archaeologist friend of mine much appreciated the information regarding Len Hygate and the whereabouts of the Red Bridge in relation to the Dahan Estate.*

*I will rummage around in my box of photos and news cuttings and see if I have anything else that may be of interest to you.*

*I am about to launch myself into a piece of artwork commissioned by a friend. She would like something with a little bit of Sarawak and the rest to be my inspiration and imagination.*

*I became a member of Sarawak Artists' Society last year but sadly missed the annual exhibition this year. Some of my artwork is on display at Southside Bistro and Cafe opposite the Sarawak Plaza. I really need to update what is on display.*

*The first two photos were taken today. You probably saw the memorials when you were here.*

*The other photos are some self promotion on my part.*

*The black and white drawing – I think I called it 'Batu Lintang Then' – was one of my favourites. It was sold some time ago along with 'Batu Lintang Now' but unfortunately I don't know who bought them.*

*Christmas has definitely hit Kuching, but by Boxing Day Christmas decorations will be coming down and Chinese New Year ones going up and then it will be Ramadan.*



*The Long Nawang memorial plaque at the Batu Lintang Teachers Education Institute pays tribute to those who were massacred by Japanese troops in an attack on the remote Dutch outpost of Long Nawang in east Kalimantan in 1942.*



*'Batu Lintang Then', a black and white line drawing by Judy Pearson.*

**A HEARTFELT TRIBUTE TO THE HONOURABLE  
DR BRUCE CHARLES EASTICK AM (1927-2025)  
FROM SARAWAK**

We wish to record our profound and deep sadness for the demise of the Honourable Dr Bruce Charles Eastick, a great friend, for his parting on 5th December 2025. We pray for his Rest in Peace.

Our heartfelt condolences to Michael Eastick and all his families and relatives.

In reflection, I am honoured to receive the visit of our late Dr Bruce Eastick in 2013 following the earlier 1986 visit by former House Speaker, late Mr Edward of Victoria, who was a member of Aussie force, escorting Sir Thomas Eastick on the surrender of Japanese Commander, Major General Hiyo Yamamura.

Dr Bruce Eastick with his delegation of families and wartime descendants visited our WW2 heritage sites of Batu Lintang Institute, WW2 Mini Museum, the visit of the POW Camp, etc, and sharing the historical heritage with his presentation of copies of the Japanese Surrender documents and papers of his father, Sir Thomas Eastick.

They then made a courtesy visit to our High Excellencies the Governor at the Astana and toured the room where Sir Thomas stayed during military administration of Sarawak after the Japanese Surrender 1945. They then also visited our State Assembly with our House Speaker and had their celebration at our historical Sarawak and thus made a historical page in Kuching, Sarawak.

In keeping with his love of the WW2 legacy of his father Sir Thomas Eastick and his historical heritage sharing by late Dr Bruce made his return visit in 2015 with Michael to walk down his memory lane covering the historical trail of Batu Lintang WW2 Memorial Square and mini-museum, the Kuching Main Bazaar, waterfront, etc. He revisits the Astana and not forgetting our Legislative Assembly for sharing his parliamentary service to the people.

Thus Dr Bruce's memories and spirit for service, I believed must have inspired Michael in 2019 to plan for another visit with the re-enactment of the 1945 Japanese Forces Surrender to his grandfather Sir Thomas Eastick on board HMAS KAPUNDA on Sarawak River.

I with the STF Heritage Development Committee took the challenge to plan for the development of our Sarawak Liberation Monument for this history heritage and also a Tribute to Sir Thomas Eastick. The onset of Covid-19 struck in 2020 and put over all this dream indefinitely.



However the WW2 80th Anniversary inspired us to liaise with our Kuching City South to successfully put in place our Sarawak Liberation Memorial for the due 80th Anniversary on this 11th September 2025 with Michael Eastick family delegation and all people for an important historical heritage with our tribute to our friend the late Dr Bruce Eastick.

And not forgetting Sir Thomas Eastick, also for their contribution to Peace and Humanity as an inspiration to all his descendants, also the young generation to make a better world of tomorrow.

We pray for his Rest in Peace

Dato Lim Kian Hock  
Former Chairman  
STF Heritage Development Committee

8th December 2025



We thank our esteemed friend Dato Lim Kian Hock OAM for sending us this tribute. On behalf of all members of the SA/NT Branch, NMBVAA President Paul Rosenzweig and Vice-President Don Cameron also offer our condolences to the Eastick family on the passing of Dr Bruce Charles Eastick AM in Gawler on 5 December 2025, aged 98.



## UPCOMING EVENTS



### Saturday 28 February 2026 NMBVAA Anniversary

This month we mark the 30th anniversary of the creation of a uniquely Australian association of Malaya and Borneo veterans.

An Australian national association was established as a Company with Directors, registered with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission under the name "National Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association (Australia) Incorporated" on 29 February 1996.



### Saturday 25 April 2026 Anzac Day

In accordance with the *Anzac Day Commemoration Act* of 2005 (South Australia), 25 April each year is designated as 'Anzac Day'. The SA/NT Branch, NMBVAA will form up for the 2026 Anzac March as usual on North Terrace near the Art Gallery.



### Friday 17 July 2026 2026 Annual General Meeting

This year's SA/NT Branch AGM will be held at the Maid of Auckland Hotel on Friday 17 July, starting at 1115h and followed by lunch. There will be a raffle with some interesting prizes to choose from, and merchandise to purchase.



## MEDAL OF THE MONTH

### INDIA MEDAL 1895-1902

The India Medal was instituted by Army Order 72 dated 1 April 1896 to reward service by officers and men of the British and Indian armies in minor campaigns and warlike operations in India from 1895 until 1902 – chiefly on the North-West Frontier between British India and Afghanistan.

The defence of the North-West Frontier against foreign aggression came to be the Indian Army's primary role.

The first pattern of this medal, issued between 1895 and 1901, bore the crowned and veiled head of Queen Victoria on the obverse. The reverse design portrays a British and an Indian soldier together carrying a standard bearing the inscription 'India 1895'.

The second pattern medal, issued after the death of Queen Victoria on 22 January 1901, bore the effigy of King Edward VII on the obverse. The reverse bears the same image of a British and an Indian soldier but with the inscription 'India'.

Medals for combatant troops were struck in sterling silver at the Royal Mint in London, and at the Calcutta Mint from December 1896.

Bronze medals were authorised for non-combatants and camp followers (native bearers and servants).

The Royal Mint medals have an elaborate claw mount attaching the medal disc to the suspension bar, whereas Calcutta Mint medals have a plain claw mount.

The India Medal was not issued without a clasp, and a total of 7 clasps were authorised. As subsequent clasps are awarded, they are added above the first-issued clasp so the 'record of service' reads upwards.

### BEARER MAGGUR

#### 2nd Battalion, 2nd (Prince of Wales's Own) Goorkha Regiment (the Sirmoor Rifles)

Bearer Maggur was an Indian enrolled non-combatant from the 2nd Battalion, who was attached for duty to the 1st Battalion, of the 2nd Goorkhas on operations against warring tribes on the Punjab Frontier between 1897 and 1899 with the Mohmand Field Force and the Tirah Field Force.

The ancient Sanskrit name 'Makara' and its derivatives including 'Mugger', 'Muggar' and 'Maggur' in modern Indian languages, refers to the Indian Freshwater Crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*). There are images of crocodiles associated with Shiva or Vishnu, and crocodiles are widely found as ancient Hindu cosmological symbols throughout India and Cambodia. The name 'makara' was applied to various mythological animals and cosmic symbolism such as the gateways of Hindu temples known as 'makara arches'.

This regiment had been raised as an irregular battalion on 24 April 1815, during the Anglo-Nepalese War, for service with the army of the British East India Company. It comprised men from the Sirmoor tribal area in the lower Himalayas in far western Nepal (now District Sirmour in the state of Himachal Pradesh in India, in the outer Himalayas), and was titled 'The Sirmoor Battalion'.

During the Indian Rebellion of 1857 (the 'Indian Mutiny'), when the Crown took over direct rule of British India from the East India Company, this battalion was one of the few Indian units that remained loyal to Britain.

The Gurkhas were armed with the breechloading single-shot Martini-Henry rifle, which first entered service in 1871. Martini-Henry variants were used throughout the British Empire for 47 years. Most regiments were re-armed with the Lee-Enfield rifle in 1901.

The Second Battalion was raised in February 1886, established in a cantonment at Kajlot village near Dharmsala.



*India Medal 1895-1902 with three clasps awarded to Bearer Maggur, struck in bronze at the Calcutta Mint (first pattern medal, issued between 1895 and 1901).*

## 2nd King Edward VII's Own Goorkha Rifles

The Sirmoor Battalion, one of the first Gurkha battalions raised on 24 April 1815 for service with the British East India Company, subsequently had the following titles:

- > 66th Goorkha Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry: the regiment became a regular infantry unit in 1850 and was taken into the Bengal line and under the authority of the British Crown.
- > 2nd Goorkha (The Sirmoor Rifles) Regiment: redesignated in 1861 when the Gurkha regiments were developed into their own Line of rifle regiments, numbered sequentially in order of their raising.
- > 2nd (Prince of Wales's Own) Goorkha Regiment (The Sirmoor Rifles): in 1876, the regiment acquired the then Prince of Wales (the eldest son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert) as royal patron.
- > 2nd King Edward's Own Goorkha Regiment (The Sirmoor Rifles): the royal title was granted by King Edward VII (the former Prince of Wales) in 1906.
- > 2nd King Edward VII's Own Goorkha Regiment (The Sirmoor Rifles): the royal title was amended by King George V in 1936.

The spelling 'Goorkha' is peculiar to this regiment and quite unofficial. The spelling 'Goorkha' was used for Gurkha regiments until it was standardised to 'Gurkha' in 1891, however 2GR continued to use 'Goorkha'.

### Indian Army followers

Maggur was assigned for duty as a Bearer to the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Goorkhas at Dharmasala in northern India.

Indian Army followers were non-combatants, employed according to various discreet categories:

- > Higher ranks of followers were listed in Rule 8 under the *Indian Army Act*, 1911 as the mule, bullock and camel draby (drivers) of the Supply and Transport Corps, the Transport veterinary dafadars, lascars in Arsenals and Depots of the Ordnance Department, and men of the Army Bearer Corps.
- > The second category were the followers attached to infantry or cavalry regiments. These were either public or private followers:
  - The public followers were those deemed essential to the mobilisation of a unit as a fighting formation and were paid by the central exchequer, such as a langri (cook for Indian troops), bhisti (sweeper) and mocha (saddler).
  - Private followers were paid from mess funds, deductions from wages, etc. These included barbers, dhobis (washer men), mess bearers (waiters), tailors and blacksmiths.

Officers paid for their own servants, a personal bearer (valet) and a syce (groom, responsible for caring for horses). Syces weren't limited to cavalry regiments in the Indian Army, as infantry regiments used syces to look after the officers' horses.



## 2nd King Edward VII's Own Goorkha Regiment (The Sirmoor Rifles)

*In 1876 the regiment adopted the crest of the Prince of Wales – a plume of three ostrich feathers within a royal coronet, with a scroll containing the motto ICH DIEN ('I Serve') above a large numeral '2'.*

*Upon Queen Victoria's death on 22 January 1901 Edward, Prince of Wales acceded to the throne as King of the United Kingdom, Emperor of India and King of the British Dominions. The regiment was redesignated in 1906, but the crest of the Prince of Wales was retained, without the numeral '2'.*



*This watercolour painting by Major Alfred Crowdy Lovett depicts Subadar-Major Gurung of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Goorkha Rifles, circa 1908. This image was published in 'The Armies of India' (1911). The scarlet facings and the Kilmarnock cap with the red and black diced headband (and red toorie) were worn in recognition of 2GR's close association with the 60th Rifles who fought alongside them in the Delhi Siege of 1857 during the Indian Mutiny.*

*The last two awards in this 2GR veteran's brooch of medals are the India Medal 1849-1895 with two clasps, and the India Medal 1895-1902 with three clasps.*

## **Punjab Frontier**

The North-West Frontier between British India and Afghanistan was an ongoing source of political tension for most of the 19th century and beyond. Until 1897, a degree of security was maintained though giving subsidies to the Afridi tribes on the Punjab frontier to guard the Khyber Pass, while a local Afridi regiment was stationed in the Pass.

In 1897, a particular crisis flared up when most of the tribes on the Punjab frontier rebelled at the same time: the tribes involved in this general insurrection were the Waziris, Mohmands, Swatis, Afridis and Orakzais who were practically independent and did not accept a new 'frontier' which had recently been established by the British.

The British Government of India was taken almost completely by surprise. In June 1897 an escort of Indian troops was suddenly attacked, and in August the village of Shabkadar was raided. The Afridi tribesmen captured all the posts in the Khyber held by their own countrymen, and attacked the forts on the Samana Range near the city of Peshawar. Following an attack on the Malakand camp north of the Kabul River on 26 July 1897, there were further uprisings in Mohmand country further west, and in Tirah country south of the Kabul River. Belligerent tribesmen also laid siege to the 11 fortified posts along the Samana Ridge, the two main ones being Fort Lockhart and Fort Gulistan.

Substantial military forces were mobilised to combat the tribes and take punitive action as necessary. One force proceeded to secure the forts around the city of Peshawar, and the other dealt with those in the Tirah area. The latter column, due to shortage of water and the extreme cold of this Himalayan region, ran into great difficulties and beat a fighting retreat, costly to both sides, until they could join forces with the Peshawar column. This combined force managed to secure the Khyber forts over Christmas 1897, and peace was secured the next year.

The Mohmand Field Force deployed between 7 August and 4 October 1897 to conduct operations against the Mohmand tribe along the north bank of the Kabul River – including the defence of Shabkadr Fort (7 August). It operated in concert with the Tirah Expeditionary Force, the Malakand Field Force, and the Tochi Field Force.

On 13 August 1897, the 1st Battalion of the 2nd Goorkhas (1/2GR) was ordered to move to Rawalpindi. The battalion was below strength because men were away on leave in Nepal, so it was reinforced by two Gurkha officers and 108 Gurkha other ranks from the 2nd Battalion (2/2GR).

On 31 August, exhausted and with several cases of sunstroke, after a gruelling march 1/2GR reached Kohat. However, on arrival it was immediately sent on another long march of 40km towards Hangu, where an attack by the Orakzais tribesmen was expected, and here it joined the 3rd Infantry Brigade, assigned to the Second Division.

By 7 September, 1/2GR had moved on to the Samana Ridge which overlooked Hangu, and after some skirmishes eventually reached Fort Lockhart from where an estimated force comprising 10,000 tribesmen could be seen making its way along the Khanki Valley. There then followed a lull in hostilities while arrangements were made for the battalion to participate in the forthcoming advance into the Tirah in order to conduct operations against the Mohmands.

### **Samana**

The Samana Mountain Range, at heights between 1,800m and 2,100m, runs for approximately 48km in the Hangu District of the Khyber, and represents the southern boundary of the Tirah. During the 1890s, the British had established a line of outposts and forts along the range, the largest being Fort Lockhart and Fort Gulistan.

During August and September 1897, all eleven British or Frontier Police posts or forts on the Samana Ridge and beyond Kohat, from Kohat to Parachinar, were attacked by marauding tribesmen.

1/2GR arrived in the region of the Samana Hills on 31 August 1897 and remained there defending locations such as Dhar Fort on 7 September, Fort Gulistan (gateway to the Afridi Hills) on 13 September, and Fort Lockhart on 14 September.

On 2 October 1897, most of the garrison troops in the Samana posts transferred to the Tirah Expeditionary Force.

### **Tirah**

The Tirah expedition was an Indian frontier campaign between 2 October 1897 and 6 April 1898. Tirah is a mountainous tract of country to the south of the Khyber Pass and south of the Kabul River, in what became known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, now the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan.

The Tirah Expeditionary Force deployed from 2 October 1897 to 4 April 1898 to conduct operations against the Afridi and Orakzai Pathan tribes on the Afghanistan border with British India. The Force had a strength of around 11,000 British officers and men, 22,000 Indian troops and almost 20,000 non-combatants. It was estimated that the Afridi and Orakzai could, if united, bring up to 50,000 men into the field.

The force, in detached brigades and independent columns, traversed the Tirah district in all directions, and destroyed the walled and fortified hamlets of the Afridi. Negotiations for peace were then begun with the Afridis, who ultimately agreed to pay the fines and to surrender their rifles.

Within the Tirah Expeditionary Force, the Order of Battle of the Tirah Field Force included the 1st Battalion, 2nd Goorkhas assigned to the 3rd Infantry Brigade, assigned to the First Division.

On 10 October 1897, 1/2GR was at Shinaori with 3 Brigade. On 18 October, Divisional Orders were issued for two columns to capture the Dargai Heights, which rose to over 2,100m and were occupied by Afridi tribesmen.

## Battle of Dargai

The Right Column (4 Brigade) was to advance up the main road and launch a frontal attack, while the Left Column (3 Brigade) was to launch an attack from the left via a mountain mule track.

Multiple attempts to take the position failed, until further regiments were sent to reinforce the attack. Under a heavy artillery barrage, the irresistible rush of Highlanders, Sikhs and Goorkhas led the Afridis to vacate their position and after six exhausting hours the action was over.

On 21 October 1897, 1/2GR moved down the spur from Dargai towards Karappa to join 2 Division. The British force moved on towards Gandaki, and took and opened the Sanpacha and Arhanga Passes. They advanced into the Mastura Valley, and the Divisional HQ was established at Maidan. From Maidan, 1/2GR patrolled vigorously against the constantly marauding tribesmen who were forever harassing rearguards and piquets.

On 13 November, 3 Brigade secured the surrounding high ground and moved into the Waran Valley.

From 20 November 1897 to 4 April 1898, 3 Brigade (including 1/2GR) was on continuous operational service in the particularly challenging terrain of Afghanistan during mid-winter while being harassed by marauding Afridi tribesmen. The pattern of operations (known as 'convoy duties') was repeated as the British moved through steep defiles towards various enemy villages. Piquets had to be deployed along the heights to cover the movement of the Main Body of troops in the valleys. Yet throughout the campaign the enterprising enemy would follow the British who would always be vulnerable to attack wherever there were halts or bivouacs. In addition, the rearguard of any force, whether it was a column or company, would frequently be harassed by the enemy.

During the Tirah Campaign, 1/2GR was involved in no fewer than 32 major contacts exclusive of piquet skirmishes and coming under enemy fire while in camp or bivouac, and participated in 19 rear guard actions. Casualties during the Tirah Campaign were 139 – 30 killed, 4 died of wounds, 87 wounded, and 18 died of disease.

Bearer Maggur was awarded the India Medal 1895-1902 in bronze with three clasps for service in the march from Rawalpindi to Kohat and then to Hangu, on the Samana Ridge and beyond, and in the Tirah expedition. The clasps 'SAMANA 1897' and 'TIRAH 1897-98' were never awarded singly, but were always awarded in conjunction with the clasp 'PUNJAB FRONTIER 1897-98'.

Bearer Maggur's parent battalion, 2/2GR, was attached to the Lines of Communication troops for the Tirah expedition. He would not have qualified for the clasp 'SAMANA 1897' through this service alone however, so Bearer Maggur must have been among those attached as reinforcements to 1/2GR for service on the Samana Ridge and in the Tirah expedition.

**Clasp 'PUNJAB FRONTIER 1897-98'.** This was the third clasp created for the India Medal 1895-1902, authorised by Army Order 77 of June 1898.

This clasp was awarded to all units involved in the various operations against the Muslim Afridi and Mohmand tribes on the Punjab Frontier, in the Khyber Pass and along the north bank of the Kabul River, between 10 June 1897 and 6 April 1898.

Just three Gurkha battalions qualified for this clasp.

In addition, this clasp was awarded to the 1/2nd Gurkha Rifles (with reinforcements from the 1/3rd Gurkha Rifles) and 5th Gurkha Rifles through qualifying for the clasp 'SAMANA 1897' which was never awarded alone.

**Clasp 'SAMANA 1897'.** This was the fifth clasp created, in June 1898, for award to all troops for service on the Samana Ridge and at garrison posts beyond Kohat, between 22 August and 2 October 1897.

The only Gurkhas to qualify for this clasp were the 1/2nd Goorkhas (with reinforcements from the 1/3rd Gurkha Rifles) and a detachment from the 5th Gurkha Rifles.

**Clasp 'TIRAH 1897-98'.** This was the sixth clasp created, in June 1898, for award to all units involved in the Tirah expedition, which comprised operations against the Afridi and Orakzai Pathan tribes south of the Khyber Pass and south of the Kabul River, between 2 October 1897 and 6 April 1898.

Eight Gurkha battalions qualified for this clasp.



*India Medal 1895-1902 with clasps 'PUNJAB FRONTIER 1897-98', 'SAMANA 1897' and 'TIRAH 1897-98' awarded to Bearer Maggur, struck in bronze at the Calcutta Mint (first pattern reverse design, portraying a standard bearing the inscription 'India 1895').*



**VALE || OM SHANTI**  
**Supriya Thakur**

We note with profound sadness the passing of Mrs Supriya Thakur on Sunday night 21 December 2025. Supriya was the mother of one of the Air Force Cadets of 604 Squadron. He has been staying with his extended family.

Various news outlets reported that at about 8.30 pm that Sunday night, police and emergency services were called to a home in Northfield following reports of a domestic assault.

When police arrived, they found a 36-year-old woman unconscious at the home.

Officers immediately commenced CPR but sadly, the woman could not be revived.

Her 42-year-old husband was arrested at the scene and was charged with murder. He appeared in the Adelaide Magistrates Court and was remanded in custody until April.

It was noted that Supriya had been building a life for her family in Australia after moving from India eight years ago, and was working towards becoming a registered nurse.

She is remembered as wanting to provide the best possible life for her teenage son.



**VALE**

**4410682 Corporal Malcolm Ashley 'Digger' Digance (1942-2026)**

It is with sadness that the SA/NT Branch, NMBVAA advises of the passing of a comrade who served in the defence of our nation – Mal 'Digger' Digance, who passed away in the morning of Saturday 10 January 2026, aged 83.

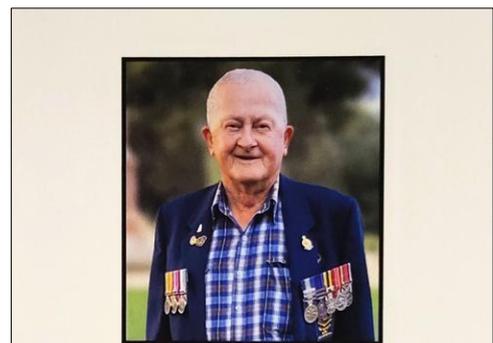
Born on 18 May 1942, Malcolm Digance served as a Rifleman in the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment.

He saw service at Enoggera Barracks in Queensland when 3RAR was a component of the 1st Division (Pentropic), at Terendak Garrison in Malacca (1964-65), and in Sarawak, Borneo (1965) with 6 Platoon, 'B' Company, 3RAR near Kampung Gumbang until 28 July.

Private Digance was a member of the second 3RAR advance party to Borneo, which emplaned in Singapore for Kuching on 19 March 1965, and he departed Sarawak with the battalion on 31 July aboard HMAS *Albion* for return to Terendak, Malacca.

He took his discharge in Port Augusta on 13 January 1967, and married Dianne Valecia Gibb on 11 November 1967. He later re-enlisted and served with the Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps (RAAOC).

Mal was a member of the NMBVAA from 8 August 2011. At the SA/NT Branch Christmas Lunch on Saturday 10 December 2022, Mal was announced as a recipient of a Certificate of Membership in recognition of 10 years' continuous membership of the Branch since its reformation in 2010.



*Malcolm "Digger" Digance*

**3RAR 4410682**

18.5.1942 – 10.1.2026

Aged 83 years.

Passed away at home surrounded by family.

Devoted Husband of 58 years of Dianne.

Loving Dad of Tracey and Brony.

Father-in-law of Shane.

Beloved Pop of Taylor & Chris and Ruby.

## VALE

4410682 Corporal Malcolm Ashley 'Digger' Digance (1942-2026)

### Thai-Malay Border, 1964-1965

#### † 4410682 Corporal Malcolm Ashley 'Digger' Digance (1942-2026)

180365-250565 C  
AAF-A274

Surname DIGANCE  
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Other Names M. A. PUNCHED

Personal or Army No. 4410682

Rank Pte.

Unit 3RAR.

RASBA 409913  
16/2/67

DISCHARGED  
13/1/67  
3 PARKSIDE RD  
PORT AUGUSTA  
S.A.

Born on 18 May 1942, Malcolm Digance enlisted in the Australian Regular Army and was assigned to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps (RAINF).

After recruit and infantry Corps training, Private Digance was posted as a Rifleman to the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment at Enoggera Barracks in Queensland, a component of the 1st Division (Pentropic).

Private Digance deployed to Terendak Garrison in Malacca, Malaysia on Operation 'Crimp', Australian Army operations on the Malay Peninsula.

During Operation 'Magnus', Mal participated in counter-insurgency patrols on the Thai-Malay Border with 'Bravo' Company, 3RAR, with 'special service' from 19 September to 24 November 1964.

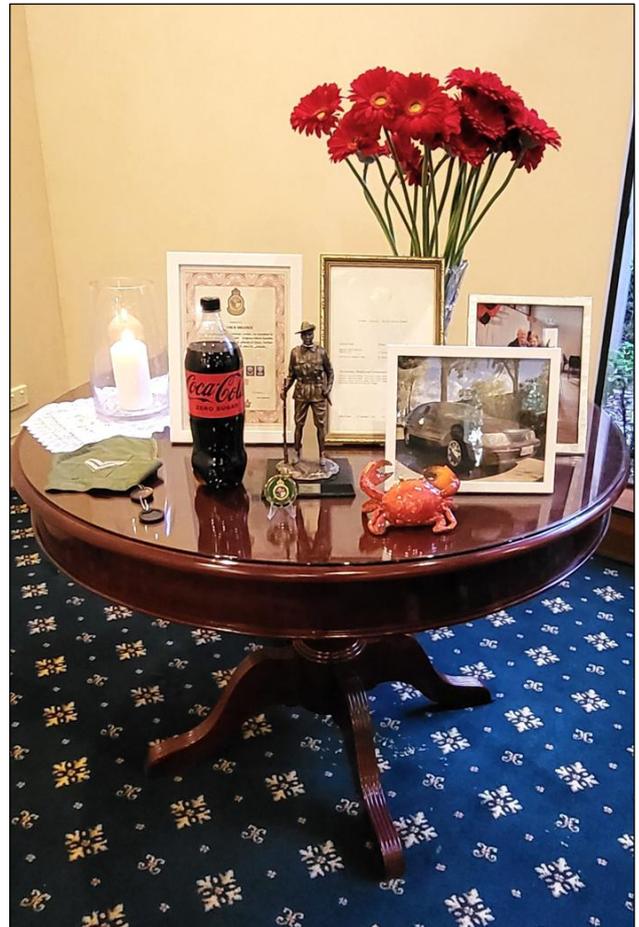
In 1965, Private Digance deployed with 3RAR to Borneo, serving near the border of Sarawak and Indonesian Kalimantan.

For his service in Malaysia, Private Digance received the Campaign Service Medal 1962- with clasp 'MALAY PENINSULA'. He subsequently received the Australian Active Service Medal, 1945-75 with clasps 'THAI-MALAY' (created on 7 February 2002) and 'MALAYSIA' (created on 13 July 2010).

### THANKS DIGGER

Virtual Museum and Commemoration Centre

<https://www.facebook.com/ThanksDigger> | [ThanksDigger@gmail.com](mailto:ThanksDigger@gmail.com)





### MALAYAN EMERGENCY Roll of Honour – February

Honouring the sacrifice of the 45 Australians who died on operational service during the general period of the Malayan Emergency, 16 June 1948 to 31 July 1960.

1/3822 Corporal David Arthur Seesink,  
3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment:  
28 February 1958

O3606 Wing Commander Norman Henry  
Nixon DFC, Royal Australian Air Force:  
9 February 1961

2/7789 Sergeant Lionel Aubrey Tucker,  
101 Field Battery, Royal Australian Artillery:  
26 February 1961

*Lest we Forget*

### CONFRONTATION Roll of Honour – February

Honouring the sacrifice of the 26 Australians who died during the general period of the Indonesian Confrontation with Malaysia, 24 December 1962 to 11 August 1966.

38094 Private Peter John Robinson,  
'B' Company, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion,  
Royal Australian Regiment:  
25 February 1966

*Lest we Forget*



#### 2/7789 Sergeant Lionel Aubrey Tucker (1925-1961)

Sergeant Lionel Tucker served with 101 Field Battery, Royal Australian Artillery during the Malayan Emergency.

On 18 September 1959, Sergeant Tucker embarked with the 1RAR group on the chartered troopship MV *Flaminia* for Singapore, comprising the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR), 101 Field Battery, RAA and 1 Field Troop, Royal Australian Engineers.

He disembarked at Penang on 4 October, where 101 Field Battery joined the 28th Commonwealth Independent Infantry Brigade Group in the continuing hunt for communist-terrorists.

The Government of the Federation of Malaya declared the Emergency over on 31 July 1960, but the 1RAR Group continued on operations until the end of its scheduled tour of duty in October 1961 (the battalion group left Penang for Australia on 29 October on the MV *Flaminia*).

Sergeant Tucker died in Malacca, Malaya on 26 February 1961 (illness – leptospirosis), aged 36. He was buried in the Cheras Road Civil Cemetery in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Sergeant Tucker's name was not added to the Australian War Memorial Rolls of Honour however, because he died after the closing date for the campaign – 31 July 1960, the date the government of Malaya officially declared the Emergency over.

Following protracted negotiations his name was added to the Roll of Honour in June 2013, under the title 'Southeast Asia, 1955-1975' (panel 2), with the relevant panel recast and replaced.

Lest we Forget



*The Kuala Lumpur (Cheras Road) Civil Cemetery is located south of the city, on the east side of the Cheras Highway.*

*The graves of military personnel from the Malayan Campaign of WW2 and the Japanese occupation of Malaya, and the Malayan Emergency are found in a Commonwealth War Graves Commission annex, enclosed by a perimeter fence and evergreen hedge.*



## OPERATION 'CHERAS ROAD'

In 2023, President Paul Rosenzweig travelled to Kuala Lumpur (at his own expense) to attend the investiture of Dato Lim Kian Hock with the insignia of the Medal of the Order of Australia.

He also visited the Kuala Lumpur (Cheras Road) Civil Cemetery.

Within the grounds, the graves of military personnel are found in a separate annex established by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, enclosed by a fence and evergreen hedge. Among the burials there are a total of six Australians.



*Tanah Perkuburan Perang Cheras is the final resting place for 156 Commonwealth personnel killed during WW2, particularly in the Malayan Campaign and the Japanese occupation of Malaya.*



**A197 Warrant Officer  
George Robert Tait (1910-1951)**

No 38 (Transport) Squadron,  
Royal Australian Air Force



**27789 Sergeant  
Lionel Aubrey Tucker (1925-1961)**

101 Field Battery,  
Royal Australian Artillery



**13339 Private  
Francis Noel O'Sullivan (1926-1963)**

3rd Battalion,  
The Royal Australian Regiment



**Diana Ruth Cumming (1963-1963)**

Daughter of Lieutenant-Commander  
Peter Maxwell Cumming RAN, died  
9 December 1963 aged 52 days



**330 Flight-Sergeant  
Douglas Allan Edean (1901-1946)**

Born in Ballarat, Victoria on 7 April  
1901; from Sandringham, Victoria:

Royal Australian Air Force  
(1923-37)

British Colonial Service,  
Federated Malay States  
(1937-43)

6 Topographical Survey Company,  
Militia ('V505964') and then Second  
Australian Imperial Force ('VX122955')  
(1943-45)

Died of illness in Malaya  
on 13 September 1946, aged 45

**13949 Private DR Barrett**

From Essendon, Victoria:  
2nd (Selangor) Battalion, Federated  
Malay States Volunteer Force