



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 4 - APRIL 2026



ANZAC DAY

We look forward to seeing our veterans, supporters and family members on Anzac Day, Saturday 25 April 2026. The image above shows the Malaya-Borneo contingent in the Adelaide Anzac March fifteen years ago – on Monday 25 April 2011.

The first AGM of the re-formed NMBVAA Branch in South Australia was held at Hilton RSL on 21 August 2010, with the elected office bearers being Brian Selby (President), Don Cameron (Vice-President), Jenny Cameron (Treasurer) and Leonie Hughes (Secretary). Among the early members were Allan and Di Davies, Roger Burzacott, Ansel Matthews, Oscar Johnsson, Jim Deering and Mal 'Digger' Digance – pictured above (left) marching in 2011 with Don Cameron. Both had served at Terendak Garrison, on the Thai-Malay Border in 1964, and with 6 Platoon, 'B' Company, 3RAR at 'Bukit Knuckle' near Kampung Gumbang in Sarawak in 1965.



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'

This newsletter continues with the 'North West Frontier' theme. Firstly, Susan Rosenzweig has been back on duty in the APY Lands, where Jeff and Louisa Hiscock had worked in the early 1970s, but this time much further out towards the SA-WA-NT border junction. This complements our contribution as a Friend of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award to students at Indulkana Anangu School.

And our 'Medal of the Month' section features the India General Service Medal 1936-1939, which only had two clasps authorised – for the North West Frontier, '1936-37' and '1937-39'.

Our thoughts are with Barb Taylor, wife of Peter Taylor who served with 22 Construction Squadron, Royal Australian Engineers in North Borneo (Sabah) on Operation 'Granite' during Confrontation. Barb has recently been having a difficult time with health issues, and we send them both our very best wishes.

We also send our best wishes to Group-Captain Robert Black AM RFD (ret'd), a past President of the Air Force Association (SA Division) and veteran of service at RAAF Butterworth, with the UN Assistance Mission Rwanda, and a deployment to East Timor as a member of the RAAF Specialist Reserve.

The latest addition to our mailing list is Jonathan Moffatt, who is the archivist for the Malayan Volunteers Group. The MVG began as an informal gathering of a few British Malaysians who veterans of the Malayan Volunteer Forces; as their numbers gradually decreased over the years, the tradition was carried on by their children and families. One of the current executives of the MVG is Colin Hygate, who has featured in recent issues of 'The Observation Post'.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April meeting: 1115h Friday 17 April
Maid of Auckland Hotel,
followed by lunch



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

May meeting: 1115h Friday 15 May
Maid of Auckland Hotel, followed by lunch

Annual Lunch: Save the date: 1200h Sunday 31 May
Venue to be advised
*Marking the 30th anniversary of the formation of the
"National Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association
(Australia) Incorporated"*

June meeting: 1115h Friday 19 June
Maid of Auckland Hotel, followed by lunch



Visit our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/NMBVAAadelaide/>



Visit our website:
https://www.nmbvaa.org.au/sa_nt.php



SEKOLAH KEBANGSAAN STASS
“Effort, Discipline, Success”

SK Stass school stands on the site of a patrol base first established in 1963, later occupied by ‘A’ Company, 3RAR (March to June 1965), ‘D’ Company, 3RAR (June to July 1965) and ‘B’ Company, 4RAR (April to September 1966).

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
“Having Knowledge and Discipline”

SK Serabak school in Kampung Serikin stands on the site of a base which was occupied by the Australian diggers of ‘C’ Company, 3RAR (March to July 1965).

We have planted a Red Water Apple Tree or *Jambu Air Merah* (2019), a Calamansi Tree or *Pokok Limau Kasturi* (2022), and in 2025 an *Anak Rambutan Sekolah* (Rambutan Tree), *Pokok Pomelo* (Pomelo Tree) and *Pokok Mangga* (Mango Tree).



SEKOLAH KEBANGSAAN GUMBANG
“Effort is the Foundation of Success”

The ‘Bukit Knuckle’ patrol base near Kampung Gumbang was first established 1963, later occupied by Australian soldiers of ‘B’ Company, 3RAR (March to July 1965).



SEKOLAH KEBANGSAAN SUBA BUAN
“Perseverance will win”

SK Suba Buan school stands on the site of an infantry platoon patrol base used by Australian soldiers of ‘C’ Company, 3RAR (March to July 1965).





CONTRIBUTED IMAGES AND INFORMATION



Adelaide High School

The AHS Honour Board project currently recognises nine Adelaide High Old Scholars who were veterans of the Malayan Emergency, and ten veterans of service on the Malay Peninsula and on Borneo. Our stories published in 'The Observation Post' prompted Branch member Jon Niejalke to make contact with Amy at AHS, giving her another Borneo and South Vietnam veteran to add to their rolls.

Jon served as a Rifleman in 11 Platoon, 'D' Company of the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR). He embarked in Singapore on 20 March 1965, arriving in Kuching on 22 March. He was based at Old Bau Camp, but later in the deployment 'D' Company was sent to relieve 'B' Company in the forward defensive position at 'Bukit Knuckle' near Kampung Gumbang on the Sarawak-Kalimantan border. This was the southernmost of the three 3RAR forward rifle company positions.

We are grateful to Jon for providing these images of his time at 'Bukit Knuckle' in 1965.



A patrol with Iban Trackers crossing a river on a traditional V-shaped bamboo bridge, called 'Tiboyant' in Bidayuh. The modern Darul Hana Bridge in Kuching was inspired by this traditional Bidayuh bamboo bridge design.



A section from 11 Platoon, 'D' Company passing through Kampung Gumbang with two Iban Trackers. The battalion had 24 Trackers attached for operational duty, and four of them were assigned to 'D' Company.

Banga anak Rima, with Sarawak Ranger experience, was selected by the trackers themselves to be their leader. The others were Balai anak Nyelang, Engan anak Jawan and Gani anak Dugu.



A section from 11 Platoon resting after a patrol, beside the iconic giant granite boulders in Kampung Gumbang.



An 11 Platoon work party in Kampung Gumbang, preparing timber for use in construction.



CONTRIBUTED IMAGES AND INFORMATION

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SA Department of Veterans' Affairs

As our affiliation with Adelaide High School and their Honour Roll project continues, we have facilitated a visit by the Project Team to brief the DVA Deputy Commissioner SA Jenn Buckler and some key DVA staff about their progress to date.

On Wednesday 18 February, Principal Natasa Parhas and Project Coordinator Amy Worswick took a team of four students in to the DVA offices in Adelaide to deliver a 45-minute illustrated talk on the Vietnam Honour Board project.

Adelaide High School shared on social media: *"The four students, Meg, Ella, Gemma and Sharon, were an absolute standout speaking at length about what their involvement in the project has meant for them, and brought their exquisite artwork to show"*.

Amy wrote: *"The talk at the Office of the DVA went well, with the students doing a magnificent job and the audience showing interest and support. Our principal was able to attend and we were proud of the job and the presentation. Many grateful thanks for bringing us that opportunity, it was a day to treasure for me"*.



Amy Worswick from Adelaide High School (left) and Deputy Commissioner Jenn Buckler (right) in the DVA Conference Room with three members of the Honour Roll Project Team.

Adelaide High School noted: *"The theme of the talk was that the Adelaide High School community is deeply committed to connecting with its servicemen and women and perpetuating the memory of their contribution with Honour Boards, Memorial Garden to the Fallen, and an area accommodating a small museum and portrait gallery"*.

COMMEMORATION

ADELAIDE HIGH SCHOOL

Honouring the service of Old Scholars during the Malayan Emergency

Service in Malayan waters; eligible to receive the Naval General Service Medal, 1909–1962 with clasp 'MALAYA'

01109 Captain Errol Victor Stevens (1927-)

Royal Australian Navy:

Appointed Cadet Midshipman 1 January 1941

Promoted to Lieutenant 1 April 1948

Lieutenant-Commander 1 April 1956

Commander 1 April 1964

Also served: World War 2, from 29 January 1941 (Captain, Burma and Pacific); Confrontation (received the Campaign Service Medal, 1962– with clasp 'MALAY PENINSULA'); South Vietnam (received the Vietnam Logistic and Support Medal)

Held the rank of Captain when he received the National Medal for 15 years' long service on 22 February 1978; he received his first bar on 9 March 1991, and second bar on 5 May 2000 to recognise a total of 35 years' service Discharged from the Royal Australian Navy on 31 January 1987





COMMEMORATION

ADELAIDE HIGH SCHOOL Honouring the service of Old Scholars during Confrontation

Service in Malaysia – eligible to receive the Campaign Service Medal, 1962– with clasp 'MALAY PENINSULA'

The AHS Honour Board for Malaya will acknowledge Adelaide High Old Scholars who saw operational service during the general period of the Indonesian Confrontation with Malaysia, in northern Borneo from 24 December 1962, on the Malay Peninsula from 17 August 1964, and in contiguous waters including the Strait of Malacca, until the signing of the Malaysia-Indonesia Peace Agreement or 'Jakarta Accord' at Istana Merdeka in Jakarta, Indonesia on 11 August 1966.

Among them, five saw operational service on the Malay Peninsula or in the contiguous waters prior to 12 June 1965, qualifying for the Campaign Service Medal, 1962– with clasp 'MALAY PENINSULA'.



O1398 Commodore John Raymond Da Costa RAN (1934-)

Royal Australian Navy:

First enlisted 2 April 1955; commissioned 21 August 1959

Lieutenant (General Duties Pilot), No 816 Squadron, Fleet Air Arm embarked upon HMAS *Melbourne*

Served with the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve (BCFESR) in the contiguous waters off the Malay Peninsula, including the Strait of Malacca in 1966, providing anti-submarine and air protection during Far East Strategic Reserve operations

Received the Campaign Service Medal, 1962– with clasp 'MALAY PENINSULA'

Pilot of de Havilland DH.112 Sea Venom FAW.53, N4-900 number '866' of 'B' Flight, which crashed off the deck of HMAS *Melbourne* in the Philippine Sea on 28 April 1966 during an attempt to land – Lieutenant Da Costa made a successful low-level ejection and was rescued by helicopter, but the Observer Lieutenant Edward George Kennell RAN ejected just as the aircraft hit the water: searches by an airborne Wessex air-sea-rescue helicopter and diver were unsuccessful

Also served: South Vietnam (Lieutenant, Fleet Air Arm, HMAS *Melbourne*, 31 May to 22 June 1965, 25 April to 6 May 1966, 25 May to 9 June 1966)

Later a pilot (Lieutenant Commander) and Commanding Officer of No 805 Squadron embarked upon HMAS *Melbourne*; participated in SEATO exercise 'Sea Rover' in the South China Sea in 1970

Held the rank of Commodore when he received the National Medal for 15 years' long service on 14 July 1977; he received his first bar for an additional 10 years' service on 16 October 1980

A42407 Corporal Graham William Dunstan (1938-2023)

Royal Australian Air Force:

Enlisted in 1954 as a junior equipment administrative trainee

Aircraftman (Equipment Assistant) in Base Squadron, at RAAF Base Butterworth, Malaysia from December 1962 until August 1964

An interview transcript implies he received the Campaign Service Medal, 1962– with clasp 'MALAY PENINSULA'

Also served: temporary duty in South Vietnam (Corporal, Equipment Assistant, RAAF Transport Flight Vietnam, from 8 August to 24 September 1964)

Awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2012 Australia Day Honours List, "For service to veterans and their families through the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia"

43118 Corporal Jon Brian Niejalke (1943-)

Royal Australian Infantry Corps:

Private (Rifleman), 11 Platoon, 'D' Company, 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment

Listed in the Army GSM Medal Register as receiving the Campaign Service Medal, 1962– with clasp 'MALAY PENINSULA': served on Operation 'Crimp', the Australian Army deployments to the Malay Peninsula, which included 'special service' from 19 September to 24 November 1964

Served on Operation 'Magnus', counter-insurgency patrols on the Thai-Malay Border, from 20 February to 6 March, 9 March to 5 April, and 3 September to 24 October 1964

Also served: Sarawak (Rifleman, 1965); South Vietnam (Corporal, 3RAR, 20 December 1967 to 5 November 1968)

O1109 Captain Errol Victor Stevens RAN (1927-)

Royal Australian Navy:

Appointed Cadet Midshipman 1 January 1941

Promoted to Lieutenant on 1 April 1948; promoted to Lieutenant-Commander on 1 April 1956; promoted to Commander on 1 April 1964; subsequently promoted to Captain

Received the Campaign Service Medal, 1962– with clasp 'MALAY PENINSULA'

Also served: World War 2 from 29 January 1941 (Captain, Burma and Pacific); Malayan Emergency (received the Naval General Service Medal, 1909–1962 with clasp 'MALAYA'); Vietnam War (received the Vietnam Logistic and Support Medal)

Held the rank of Commander when he made a statement to the Second HMAS *Voyager* Royal Commission, 1 November 1967

Held the rank of Captain when he received the National Medal for 15 years' long service on 22 February 1978; he received his first bar on 9 March 1991, and second bar on 5 May 2000 to recognise a total of 35 years' service

Discharged from the Royal Australian Navy on 31 January 1987

R63343 Leading Seaman John Creswell Thompson (1948- 2022)

Royal Australian Navy:

Ordinary Seaman Quartermaster Gunner, HMAS *Duchess*

Served with the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve (BCFESR) in the contiguous waters off the Malay Peninsula, including the Strait of Malacca, 1965

Received the Campaign Service Medal, 1962– with clasp 'MALAY PENINSULA'

Also served: Borneo (BCFESR, 1965); South Vietnam (Able Seaman Quartermaster Gunner; HMAS *Duchess* 1965, HMAS *Hobart* 1967 and 1968, awarded a United States Navy Unit Commendation; HMAS *Sydney* 1971)

Discharged from the Royal Australian Navy on 3 April 1976

Name of Award	Description of Ribbon	Clasp or Emblem Worn (if Awarded)	Conditions of Award
General Service Medal (1962) with clasps:	Purple with green edges.	Mentioned in Despatches.	30 days service in:
SOUTH VIETNAM			South Vietnam between 24 Dec 62 and 28 May 64.
BORNEO			Sabah, Sarawak, or Brunei between 24 Dec 62 and 11 Aug 66.
MALAY PENINSULA			Malay Peninsula or Singapore between 17 Aug 64 and 12 Jun 65.

Extract from an Australian Army 'Summary of Conditions' leaflet (Army Form F-0022) dated December 1969, produced to guide personnel and veterans in the conditions relating to campaign medals, the wearing of medals and ribbons, and procedures for claiming replacement medals, service badges or certificates.



ANNIVERSARIES

ANNIVERSARY OF THE SARAWAK HEROES PARK

This year we mark 45 years since the ‘Sarawak Heroes Grave’ was first established, in July 1981, and 15 years since the fully redeveloped ‘Sarawak Heroes Park’ was declared open. In this and future newsletters, Paul Rosenzweig and Dato Lim Kian Hock will explore the history of this significant site, and its relationship with us.

BACKGROUND

The Australian connection with the ‘Sarawak Heroes Park’ really begins when Captain Lionel Matthews GC MC of the Second Australian Imperial Force was executed on 2 March 1944 and was buried in a mass grave with former Sabahan and Sarawakian prisoners-of-war. Australian wartime veterans of ‘Z Special’ Association located the mass grave with Lim Kian Hock in 1978 and established the ‘Sarawak Heroes Grave’ in 1981.

Members of the SA/NT Branch, NMBVAA visited the site with Mr Lim in 2014. The SASR Association unveiled a plaque here in 2015, the 4RAR Association unveiled a plaque in 2016, and later that year the SA/NT Branch, NMBVAA unveiled its memorial plaque. Then in 2017, the New Zealand Malayan Veterans Association also unveiled a plaque. The highlight was in 2019 when a combined Australia-New Zealand-Malaysia service of commemoration was conducted here on 29 August 2019 (top image). A similar combined ceremony was conducted on Monday 28 August 2023 (second image).



SARAWAK TOURISM FEDERATION

The STF Heritage Development Committee began its journey in 1997 when Audry Wan Ullok was elected to lead the Sarawak Tourism Federation. Lim Kian Hock was a volunteer in setting up the Heritage Development Committee within the STF framework. Mr Lim came to play a significant role in establishing the Heroes Cemetery in Kuching, to later include the graves of Iban Trackers who were killed during the Malayan Emergency.

He recalls that the Sarawak historical developments, especially the development of the Sarawak Heroes Park in conjunction with Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and local military and police veterans, were interwoven into his life and memory. This interweaving of life and heritage was explored in his 80th Birthday Celebration 2020, on the second day of the Chinese New Year.



SARAWAK HEROES GRAVE, 1978

Eight Sabahans executed near Batu Kawa in Kuching on 2 March 1944, who were arrested for rendering aid to prisoners of war in Sandakan POW camp in British North Borneo, and Captain Lionel Matthews GC MC, also executed on 2 March 1944, were buried in a mass grave at the side of St Joseph’s Catholic School. Also buried here were five Sarawakian Prisoners of the Japanese Kempeitai (the military police of the Imperial Japanese Army) who were arrested for rendering aid to prisoners of war in Batu Lintang camp, who died in the Kempeitai Prison at Jawa Road in Kuching after being tortured. After the war, the remains of Captain Matthews were relocated to Labuan War Cemetery.

In July 1978, members of ‘Z Special’ Association Australia made their first ‘Back to Borneo’ visit: they located the mass grave, and committed to restoring it.

SARAWAK HEROES GRAVE, 1981

The remains of the thirteen men were gathered together on a site on Jalan Taman Budaya, just to the west of the Sarawak Club, at what was called the ‘Sarawak Heroes Grave’. Renovation of the site and surrounds was undertaken and an overhead cover was erected in July 1981. The families of the Sandakan group had a marble grave stone made bearing the names of the thirteen gallant men of all races resting in this Sarawak Heroes Grave.



To be continued . . .



SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND NORTHERN TERRITORY BRANCH, NMBVAA

Marking the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Malaysia-Indonesia Peace Agreement or 'Jakarta Accord' at Istana Merdeka in Jakarta, Indonesia on 11 August 1966, which brought to an end the Indonesian Confrontation with Malaysia

Lest we Forget || Kami Jangan Lupakan || Andai nya Kita Terlupa

Sarawak Reunion – Operation 'Hornbill 2026'

In 2026 we will mark the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Malaysia-Indonesia Peace Agreement or 'Jakarta Accord' at Istana Merdeka in Jakarta, Indonesia on 11 August 1966 which brought to an end the Indonesian Confrontation with Malaysia.

Veterans and families from Australia and New Zealand plan to join with United Kingdom and Malaysian military and police veterans in a commemorative service and related reunion events in Kuching. The prime focus will be a combined service of commemoration honouring the fallen and reflecting on 60 years of peace.

'SARAWAK-ANZAC TREE PRECINCT'

During our school visits we have planted trees as a legacy for the future. Similarly, following the 80th Anniversary events last year, our President and Vice-President represented the SA/NT Branch in a tree-planting ceremony in the grounds of the Sarawak State Assembly – *Dewan Undangan Negeri*.

This was an initiative to advance biodiversity conservation sponsored by the Sarawak Tourism Federation and upholding the vision of Kuching North City Hall (Dewan Bandaraya Kuching Utara, DBKU). They planted a Bornean Ironwood (*Eusideroxylon zwageri*), known as *Kayu Belian*, which was officially designated as the official tree of Sarawak in 1984.

The NMBVAA tree honours Major-General Sir George Frederick Wootten KBE CB DSO* ED (1893-1970). As the General Officer Commanding the 9th Australian Division, he accepted the Japanese surrender for British North Borneo (Sabah) on 10 September 1945. Following the surrender, Wootten commanded the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit.

This complements the 'Eastick' tree, named in honour of Brigadier Tom Eastick DSO ED from South Australia, who was Commander Kuching Force at the end of World War 2. He received the surrender of the Japanese, and was then Military Governor of Sarawak from 10 September until the territory was returned to local civilian rule in December 1945.

A third *Kayu Belian* tree was planted in the DUN grounds to honour Dato Lim. These three trees now form a Sarawak-ANZAC Tree Precinct, which we hope to add to during our 2026 Reunion Visit.

Dato Lim has proposed that these trees could form the start of a short walking trail, connecting the trees to the present walkway – "The ANZAC-SARAWAK Walking Trail".

Dato Lim envisages that the site will include flag poles to display in solemn dignity the national flags of Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand together with the state flag of Sarawak.

This will create a unique ANZAC symbolic site of reverent reflection for local Sarawakians and visitors alike.



The hand-made banner produced by Dato Lim to mark the anniversary of the wartime Anzac-Sarawak relationship.





No 604 SQUADRON, AAFC

PROMOTIONS

Congratulations to AC(AAFC) Radha Agali Krishnamurthy, who has been reclassified to Leading Aircraftwoman (AAFC).

Radha serves as Finance Officer and Administration Officer, and is an Assistant Duke of Ed Leader. Last year, she was awarded the Premier's Certificate of Recognition for Outstanding Volunteer Service.

Radha has supported two of our Malaya & Borneo Veterans Day services, in 2024 and 2025. Following last year's service, she made a donation which we included in the presentations to SK Stass and SK Serebak. Thanks Radha!

Cadet Sergeants Dev Patel and Daneron Marshal were promoted to Cadet Flight Sergeant after completing residential Personal Development & Leadership Courses at RAAF Edinburgh in January. Recently, CFSGT Marshal was promoted to Cadet Warrant Officer (CWOFF), to be the Deputy Cadet Squadron Warrant Officer.

CFSGT Patel has now been promoted to Cadet Under Officer (CUO) to take on the role of Chief Instructor. He was the Banner Bearer for our Malayan Emergency 75th Anniversary service on 31 May 2025.



It has been a triple celebration for Cadet Under Officer Dev Patel – as well as two promotions in quick succession, he has successfully completed the Gold Level of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award.

The Gold Award is completed over a period of at least 52 hours, and includes two Adventurous Journeys and a Residential Project. Most importantly, the Gold Award is worth 20 Credits for SACE Stage 2.

STAFF COMPLIANCE

NOT a Valentine's Day photo:

On Wednesday 18 February the Commanding Officer issued heart stress balls to staff – to remind them to complete their annual recertification in HLTAID009 'Provide Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation' or, for those who were current, to keep practicing their CPR rhythm!





No 604 SQUADRON, AAFC



CADETS IN THE MEDIA

'Wings'. This national magazine of the Air Force Association delivers an informative and entertaining collation of Australia's proud aviation history, the latest aerospace research and technology, aviation industry and military news, and engagement with the veteran community. The Summer 2025 issue includes two stories on 604 Squadron Cadets.

Firstly, there is a report on our visit to the South Australian Aviation Museum which was the culmination of two residential training weekends at Keswick Barracks developing research, writing, photography, public speaking and general communication skills.

And secondly, there is a report on our provision of ceremonial support to the Malaya & Borneo Veterans Day Service in West Torrens on Friday 29 August 2025, hosted by the SA/NT Branch, National Malaya & Borneo Veterans Association Australia and conducted in the presence of His Excellency Dr Richard Harris SC OAM, Deputy Governor of SA.

Each year on the Friday nearest to 31 August, the SA/NT Branch, NMBVAA holds a Malaya & Borneo Veterans Day service of commemoration to honour the service and sacrifice of Australian and Commonwealth Service personnel during the undeclared Malayan wars – the Malayan Emergency, the Brunei Revolt and the Indonesian Confrontation. The Branch recognises a total of 17 aviation personnel who lost their lives on operational service during the general period of these post-war campaigns, including two members of the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Australian Navy who have no known grave.

The special guest was the Lieutenant Governor of South Australia, who attended on this occasion as the Governor's Deputy. Dr 'Harry' Harris is noted for the role he played with an international team which rescued a group of 12 boys and their soccer coach from a flooded cave in Chiang Rai, Thailand, for which he was awarded the Star of Courage (SC) and the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM), and Knight Grand Cross of the Most Admirable Order of the Diregunabhorn.

The Catafalque Party comprised CWOFF Katarina Czechowicz (Catafalque Party Commander), Cadet Sergeant Aishwarya Srikanth and Cadet Corporals Vama Nanavati, Delisha Panchal and Karthik Suresh. The Catafalque Party carried innocuous .303-inch SMLE rifles representative of the era of the Malayan wars.

We also provided the 604 Squadron Banner (CCPL Ishi Saini), two NMBVAA Banner Bearers (CCPL Mudit Prasad and LCDT Aryan Patel); Vice-Regal Door Openers (CCPL Manroop Kaur and LCDT Zoe Buerano), an Honour Guard and Tribute Layers. CCPL Rudra Mehta was the Announcer (preliminaries).

CADETS. AAFC

WORDS Flight Lieutenant (AAFC) Paul A Rosenzweig OAM

MALAYA & BORNEO VETERANS DAY

THE SOUTH AUSTRALIA & NORTHERN TERRITORY BRANCH of the National Malaya & Borneo Veterans Association Australia held its annual Malaya & Borneo Veterans Day service of commemoration in Adelaide on Friday 29 August.

The ceremony honoured the service and sacrifice of Australian and Commonwealth service personnel during the undeclared Malayan wars – the Malayan Emergency, the Brunei Revolt and the Indonesian Confrontation with Malaysia.

The commemoration service was conducted in the presence of His Excellency Dr Richard Harris SC OAM, Lieutenant Governor of South Australia, and was supported by Air Force Cadets, who provided an armed catafalque party carrying innocuous .303-inch SMLE rifles representative of the era of the Malayan wars.

The branch honours those personnel from Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Commonwealth military and police forces, including Malaya, Malaysia and Singapore, who served in the post-WWII Malayan wars on the Malay Peninsula and in Brunei, Sabah and Sarawak. It recognises 17 aviation personnel who lost their lives on operational service during the general period of those post-war campaigns, including two members of the



ABOVE Pilot Officer Alex Gordon Pritchard. Photo: State Library of South Australia.



ABOVE 604 Squadron Cadets and staff with His Excellency Dr Richard Harris SC OAM, Lieutenant Governor of South Australia.

Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Australian Navy who have no known grave.

The service and sacrifice of those Australians was not in vain, serving to uphold the sovereignty of the Federation of Malaya, allowing the successful attainment of independence on 31 August 1957, self-governance in Singapore on 3 June 1959, the creation of Malaysia on 16 September 1963, and the early development of Malaysia and Singapore as independent nations.

A special guest at the service was Army Worswick from Adelaide High School, which was preparing commemorative honour boards for old scholars known to have served in the Korean War and Vietnam War. Later they plan to make an honour wall for the several thousand old scholar

servicemen and women who served in WWII, and a memorial garden to the fallen, listing those killed in action. Among the names being researched are several service personnel believed to have served during the Malayan Emergency or Confrontation, including one RAAF member, Pilot Officer Alex Gordon Pritchard.

Alex Pritchard was the only son of the SA State Secretary of the RSL, AG Pritchard. He attended Adelaide High School between 1941 and 1945 and later worked as a schoolteacher on the Yorke Peninsula. He enlisted in the RAAF on 14 January 1952 and completed his pilot training with No 6 Squadron at Amberley, Qld.

He served with No 1 (Bomber) Squadron during the Malayan Emergency, on a nine-month operational tour in 1953-54, flying a

Lincoln B Mk 30 Bomber from RAF Base Tengah, Singapore Island.

Pilot Officer Pritchard later served with the Central Flying School at RAAF East Sale, Vic. He died in an aircraft crash at East Sale on 13 July 1954, aged 25, when his Wirraway crashed while he was practicing forced landings. He received a military funeral in Adelaide.

Army Worswick and Cadet Corporal Rudra Mehta from Adelaide High School placed a tribute in honour of Pilot Officer Pritchard during the service.



No 604 SQUADRON, AAFC



CADETS IN THE MEDIA

Blackfriars Priory School. Congratulations to Silver Level recipient in the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Framework, Cadet Corporal Rien Nair, who has been acknowledged by his school for his commitment to learning life skills, gaining prestigious recognition from the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award.

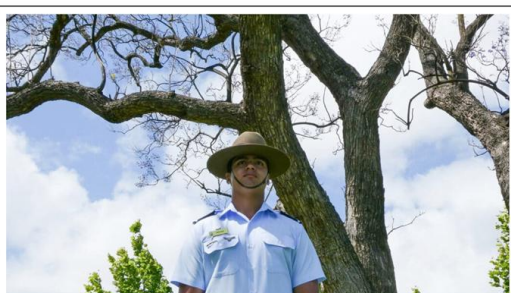
Year 11 student CCPL Nair was interviewed by his school regarding his participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Framework, and the Adventurous Journeys he completed – particularly one where he had nothing more than the clothes on his back and a handful of survival essentials squeezed into one tin can.

"Alongside fellow cadets, he was pushed to test his navigation, resilience and survival skills in the field. "Something like that makes you so much more resilient" Rien said".

"The adventurous journey was just one part of the 12-month process undertaken by Rien to achieve his Silver Level late last year". The school noted: "Rien – who is now working towards his Gold Level Duke of Ed – encouraged other Blackfriars students to take part in the program. "Just do it. You'll make friends along the way and you'll have an adventure".

Three days, one tin can: Student's Duke of Ed adventure

<https://blackfriars.sa.edu.au/three-days-one-tin-can-students-duke-of-ed-adventure/>



Student, Air Force Cadet reflects on importance of Remembrance Day

As a proud member of the Australian Air Force Cadets, Year 10 student Rien feels the weight of history and the honour of service.

[Read More →](#)

Commemorative events are among the many activities CCPL Nair has participated in. He has supported two Malaya & Borneo Veterans Day services – firstly as a Cadet in 2023, and then as a Tribute Layer in the 2025 service at West Torrens which was held in the presence of His Excellency Dr Richard 'Harry' Harris SC OAM, Deputy Governor of SA.

Last year, he supported his school's Remembrance Day event (see image left).

The school reported: *As a member of the Australian Air Force Cadets, Rien feels the weight of history and the honour of service — not just for those who once wore the uniform, but for those who continue to protect Australia today. "It's a lot of courage and pride," Rien said of his involvement in the Air Force Cadets. Not just in the country, but also for those who are currently serving and those who have served".*



THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S INTERNATIONAL AWARD

Part of our contribution as a *Friend of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award* offers assistance to students at Indulkana Anangu School in the far eastern APY Lands (Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara), west of the Stuart Highway. This support allows them to develop practical skills through culturally relevant, hands-on experiences where they may otherwise not have the opportunity.

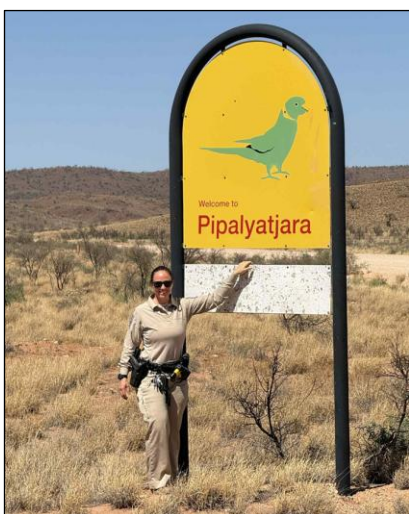
The Framework has allowed every young person to participate and succeed, supporting personal growth and fostering stronger community connections across the APY Lands – this is made possible by the funding received to support these young people.

This connection to the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands has significant meaning for us – Jeff and Louisa Hiscock worked there in the 1970s, based at Musgrave Park in the far northwest (now known as Amata). The bulk of Paul Rosenzweig's Army time in Darwin was spent serving with the North West Mobile Force (NORFORCE) – and now his daughter is doing duty up on the (South Australian) North West Frontier!

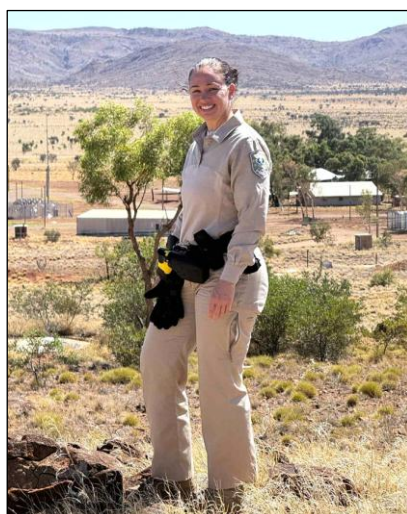
During her duty periods in The Lands, Susan has met up with numerous community members who have fond recollections of Jeff and Louisa. From Iwantja (Indulkana), Susan has been at various communities northwest through to the SA-WA-NT border junction – including Kaltjiti, Umuwa and Pukatja, out to Amata where Jeff and Louisa were based. More recently she has been in the very far northwest at Kalka and Pipalyatjara – these neighbouring communities are collectively known as 'Ninuku' in Pitjantjatjara language.



Susan Rosenzweig returned to duty recently in the very far northwest of The Lands – in the communities of Pipalyatjara and Kalka just to its north. From Iwantja (Indulkana) where we are giving support through the Duke of Ed framework, the main communities to the northwest are Kaltjiti (formerly Fregon), Pukatja (Ernabella) and Amata (Musgrave Park) where Jeff and Louisa were in the 1970s.



The community of Pipalyatjara near the SA-WA-NT border junction.



The community of Kalka, looking north towards the NT border.



Kalka and Pipalyatjara are known as 'Ninuku' in Pitjantjatjara language.



MEDAL OF THE MONTH

INDIA GENERAL SERVICE MEDAL 1936-1939

The India General Service Medal 1936-1939 was instituted by Army Order 167 of 1938 on 3 August 1938, superseding the India General Service Medal 1908-1935.

It was created following the ascension to the throne of King George VI, to reward operational service in India between 24 November 1936 and 31 December 1939 inclusive by members of the British and Indian armies, and the Royal Air Force.

The medals were struck in sterling silver, with an ornate swivelling suspender bar.

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

The obverse design features the crowned effigy of King George VI and the title REX ET INDIAE IMP (*Rex et Indiae Imperator*) – 'King and Emperor of India', signifying his rule over British India as its imperial head of state.

This India General Service Medal was not issued without a clasp, but only two clasps were authorised:

'NORTH WEST FRONTIER 1936-37'

'NORTH WEST FRONTIER 1937-39'

The second clasp was only struck and distributed after World War 2.



India General Service Medal 1936-1939 (right) with clasp 'NORTH WEST FRONTIER 1937-39' awarded to Rifleman Lalbahadur Rana, struck in sterling silver at the Calcutta Mint.

7119 RIFLEMAN LALBAHADUR RANA

2nd Battalion, 1st King George's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment)

Lalbahadur Rana was a Gurkha rifleman who saw operational service with Mohmand Force on India's north-western frontier between 23 February and 16 October 1935, and again in Waziristan in northwest India between 16 December 1937 and 31 December 1939 inclusive.

The Rana are a sub-clan of the Magar, an ethnic Nepali group native to the western and central regions of Nepal. The name 'Bahadur' in Nepali means 'brave and courageous'; many Gurkhas have 'Bahadur' as a middle name representing their martial ethos and heritage.

In about 1933, Lalbahadur Rana enlisted in the 1st King George's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment), at the 1GR Gurkha Rifles Recruiting Centre at Dharmsala in far northern India. In the Indian Army, soldiers in the infantry had carried the rank of 'Sepoy'; this term was no longer used for Gurkhas after 1920, and from that time a Gurkha soldier held the rank of 'Rifleman'.

1GR was the most senior Gurkha Infantry regiment of the Indian Army, 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 was a mixed rifle regiment comprising men from the Magar and Khas tribes, ethnic Nepali groups from the Kumaon, Garhwal and Kangra hills in the lower Himalayas in far western Nepal (now the Indian state of Uttarakhand in the Indian Himalayas). It was titled the 'First Nusseree (or Nasiri) Battalion'.

In 1885, it was decided to raise a second battalion in each of the existing Gurkha Regiments. Second Battalions were subsequently ordered in February 1886: the Second Nasiri Battalion was established in a cantonment at Kajlot village near Dharmsala. 1GR comprised Gurkha soldiers of Indian Gorkha or Nepalese nationality, especially from the Magar and Gurung hill tribes of western Nepal.

Rifleman Rana was assigned to the 2nd Battalion (2-1GR) at the regimental Home Station and Depot at Dharmsala in the Kangra Valley of the Punjab (far northern India), in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh.

The 2nd Battalion spent the period from March 1933 until January 1938 largely at home in Dharmsala, except for a short operational excursion to the 'Mohmand War' in the autumn of 1935. From the autumn of 1933, the battalion resumed the routine of training camps at Hoshiarpur and Jullundur during the two succeeding winters.

Jai Gurkha!

The tribes and clans (*jaat*) of Nepal are extremely complex, and their hierarchy, religious and social order is deeply rooted in ancient religion and mythology going back thousands of years.

During their military training, Gurkha surnames have been useful indicators of where a given recruit has come from. Traditionally recruits of Indian Gorkha or Nepalese nationality came from one of four major *jaat* groupings:

- > Gurung and Magar from western and central Nepal
- > Limbu and Rai from eastern Nepal

Magars are divided into the following six tribes, or clans: Ale, Bura/Burathoki, Gharti, Pun, Rana and Thapa. These tribes all intermarry with each other, have the same customs, and are in every way equal as regards to social standing.

Until 1914, the British and Indian Armies had primarily recruited Gurungs and Magars into their Gurkha regiments.

1st Gurkha Rifles

This regiment was raised in 1815 as an irregular Gurkha battalion, the 'First Nusseree (or 'Loyal') Battalion'. It subsequently had the following titles:

- > First Nusseri (Gorkha) Battalion: declared to be a 'Local Battalion' on 2 May 1823.
- > 66th (Goorkha) Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry': became a regular infantry unit in 1850.
- > 1st Gurkha Regiment: redesignated in 1861 after the regiments which had remained loyal during the Indian Mutiny were developed into their own Line of rifle regiments, numbered sequentially in order of their raising; formally known as the '1st Goorkha Light Infantry Regiment'.

The spelling 'Goorkha' continued to be used for Gurkha regiments until 1891 when it was changed to 'Gurkha'.

- > 1st Gurkha (Rifle) Regiment: redesignated as a rifle regiment in 1891, with the standardised spelling 'Gurkha' being adopted.
- > 1st Gurkha Rifles: adopted as part of a broad reorganisation of the Indian Army in 1901.
- > 1st Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment): 1903.
- > 1st Prince of Wales's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment): King Edward VII appointed the Prince of Wales Colonel-in-Chief of the regiment on 1 January 1906, and a new badge was sanctioned in July 1909.
- > 1st King George's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment): retitled upon the ascension of the Prince of Wales to the throne as King George V on 6 May 1910; the Royal cipher 'GRI' and the Tudor Crown were added to the regimental badge.
- > 1st King George V's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment): retitled upon the death of King George V, Colonel-in-Chief of the Regiment, on 20 January 1936.
- > 1st Gorkha Rifles: one of the six Gurkha regiments which transferred to the Indian Army on 1 January 1948 after independence under the tripartite agreement of 1947, with the spelling 'Gorkha' being adopted in 1949.



1st Gurkha Rifles

The original 1GR regimental badge worn before 1909 comprised a pair of crossed kukris with the blades facing outwards and downwards, with the numeral '1' above.



An officer (Subadar Major) of the 1st King George's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment), 1911.



1st KGO Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment)

The badge worn from 1909 comprised a pair of crossed kukris surmounted by the Royal crest of the Prince of Wales – reflecting the Royal designation granted in 1906 – with the numeral '1' and a stringed bugle-horn below the kukris.

North West 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. Campaigns were fought against the fiercely independent tribesmen throughout the 1920s, leading to the establishment of a permanent garrison at Razmak which allowed a period of relative peace in the region.

Mohmand

In mid-September 1935, the 2nd Battalion joined Mohmand Force ('Mohforce'). 2/1GR was attached to the 2nd Infantry Brigade, based on Ghalanai for road-protection duties. There was fierce fighting at the head of the Wucha Jawar Valley in September, where the Adjutant was awarded a posthumous VC.

In October the battalion conducted reconnaissance-in-force patrols.

During the withdrawal of Mohforce at the end of October 1935, the 2nd Brigade covered the forward brigades as they withdrew through Ghalanai, and 2/1GR formed the rear guard from Ghalanai, but suffered no interference from the tribesmen, rather from a swarm of scavengers and would-be looters. Mohforce ceased to exist from midnight 3/4 November.

The 2nd Battalion returned to Dharmasala, conducting training in its usual winter camps at Hoshiarpur and Jullundur throughout 1936-37.

The battalion then did mountain-warfare training near Nagrota in preparation for its impending deployment to Waziristan.

In January 1938, 2/1GR departed for its third and final tour at Razmak in Waziristan.

Waziristan

In 1936-37, a new generation of tribesmen had been taking action against the Government forces, and large-scale operations became necessary, lasting twelve months from November 1936, before a semblance of peace could be restored. By the end of 1937 most of the hostile tribes had submitted and given guarantees of good behaviour.

In 1938, Rifleman Lalbahadur Rana deployed to Razmak with the 2nd Battalion, 1st King George's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment).

They arrived in the depth of winter when the plateau was covered with a thick blanket of snow. During these snowy months the local tribesmen usually kept to their homes or joined the winter migration to the Plains.

Garrison life at Razmak was dominated by two recurring tasks – RP ('Road Protection'), also known later as ROD ('Road Open Days'), and column duties with Razmak Column ('Razcol').

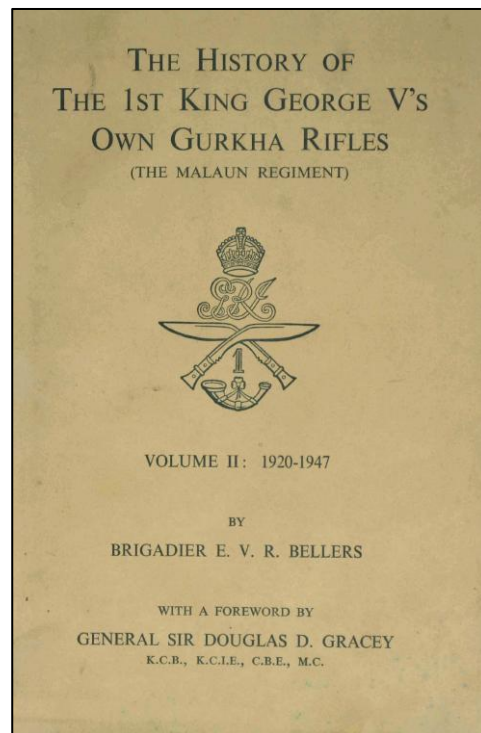
Razcol was the mobile striking force, which consisted of four out of the six battalions in Razmak (one British, three Indian and two Gurkha), together with Mountain Gunners, Sappers and others.

RP involved opening the 70-mile road from Bannu for the passage of motor convoys. This process demanded the deployment of two battalions and attached troops from Razmak, in addition to five or six other battalions from various camps or posts along the route. The two battalions from Razmak, accompanied by a mountain battery, and often by armoured cars and light tanks, were required to secure both flanks of the route while the motor convoys surged by.

On 30 May the 2nd Battalion set off with Razcol on a column which soon developed into something like a minor war. Three weeks later, Razcol joined the 3rd Brigade to form a combined force known as 'Wastrike' for operations in the Tochi Valley. The 2nd Battalion, in the Left Column of Razcol on the left, was tasked to attack uphill over rugged ground at dawn to capture in turn Burman Sar and Mazdak Punga peak.

July, August and September passed with normal RP duties at Razmak, livened up by occasional sniping and occasional engagements with large gangs.

At the end of September, the battalion accompanied Razcol in a march to Datta Khel Camp. From there Razcol made a surprise move due south into a vast wooded and precipitous valley north-west of Shuidar peak where they engaged a large gang of about eighty hostiles.



1st KGO Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment)

The 1GR regimental history (volume 2, 1920-1946) features the regimental badge sanctioned in July 1909, surmounted with the Royal cipher 'GRI' and the Tudor Crown which was adopted after the Prince of Wales, Colonel-in-Chief of the Regiment, acceded to the throne as King George V, King-Emperor of the United Kingdom and its Dominions, and Emperor of India – Georgius V Rex et Imperator ('GRI').

On 4 October Razcol withdrew, and the battalion was rear guard for the twelve-mile return journey, holding off gangs of about forty on each flank. These attempted to close in on each piquet as its turn came to disengage.

During winter Razcol, with the 2nd Battalion, took over RP duties at Damdil, downward to the hills overlooking the Tochi Valley. Early in December, Razcol was recalled to Razmak to prepare for a column to deploy into South Waziristan.

2/1GR joined the Kerama Column on a long march through difficult country, again suffering the effects of snipers and conducting successful small attacks. The column returned to Razmak, in a snowstorm, on 20 December. The battalion's casualties in this action took the total for the year of 1938 to 9 killed and 20 wounded.

The 2nd Battalion undertook garrison and RP duties for the first three months of 1939, initially split up between Razmak and the Tochi Valley during January. During February it was one of the two garrison battalions of Razmak. Early in March it moved to Damdil, with responsibility for securing twelve miles of road.

Political control in Waziristan reverted to the Governor, North-West Frontier Province, and a new era of peace was said to have started, although some gangsters continued their activities around Razmak, planting buried bombs and persistently sniping at RP troops.

Both battalions of 1GR were reorganised in May 1939 into four rifle companies, each of three platoons.

The outbreak of World War 2 had little impact at Razmak, as the battalion continued with its security duties. Additional casualties suffered in January and May took the final total of casualties for the whole tour to 12 killed and 31 wounded.

After 1939, the North West Frontier remained reasonably peaceful, and remained this way until the end of British rule in 1947.

The 2nd Battalion handed over to 2/2GR in May 1940 and returned to Dharmasala.

Rifleman Lalbahadur Rana was awarded two India General Service Medals for his operational service on the North-West Frontier.

Firstly, he received the IGSM 1908-1935 which had been used to reward service in minor campaigns and warlike operations in India over the preceding three decades. Then he received the new IGSM which was instituted by King George VI on 3 August 1938 to supersede the IGSM 1908-1935.

India General Service Medal 1908-1935

Rifleman Lalbahadur Rana was awarded the third pattern medal without a raised rim, struck in Calcutta, featuring the effigy of King George V in crown and robes as Emperor of India (issued between 1930 and 1935). The medal is named on the rim in small impressed capitals.

Clasp 'NORTH WEST FRONTIER 1935'. This was the twelfth, and last, clasp created for the IGSM 1908-1935, recognising service between 23 February and 13 April 1935, and between 15 August and 16 October 1935.

2/1GR and 1/4GR were the only Gurkha battalions to qualify for this clasp.

Rifleman Rana qualified for this clasp through his service with 2/1GR assigned to the 2nd Infantry Brigade of 'Mohforce' from mid-September until November 1935.

India General Service Medal 1936-1939

Rifleman Rana was awarded the new IGSM for service with the Razmak Column in South Waziristan. The medal is named on the rim in small impressed capitals.

Clasp 'NORTH WEST FRONTIER 1937-39'. This was the second clasp created for this medal, authorised by Army Order 217 of 1940 for operational service with Northern Command (India) in Waziristan between 16 December 1937 and 31 December 1939 inclusive.

Twelve Gurkha battalions qualified for this clasp.

Rifleman Lalbahadur Rana qualified for this clasp through his service with 2/1GR in Waziristan during 1938 and 1939, based on the Razmak plateau conducting duties with Razmak Column ('Razcol'), returning to Dharmasala in May 1940.

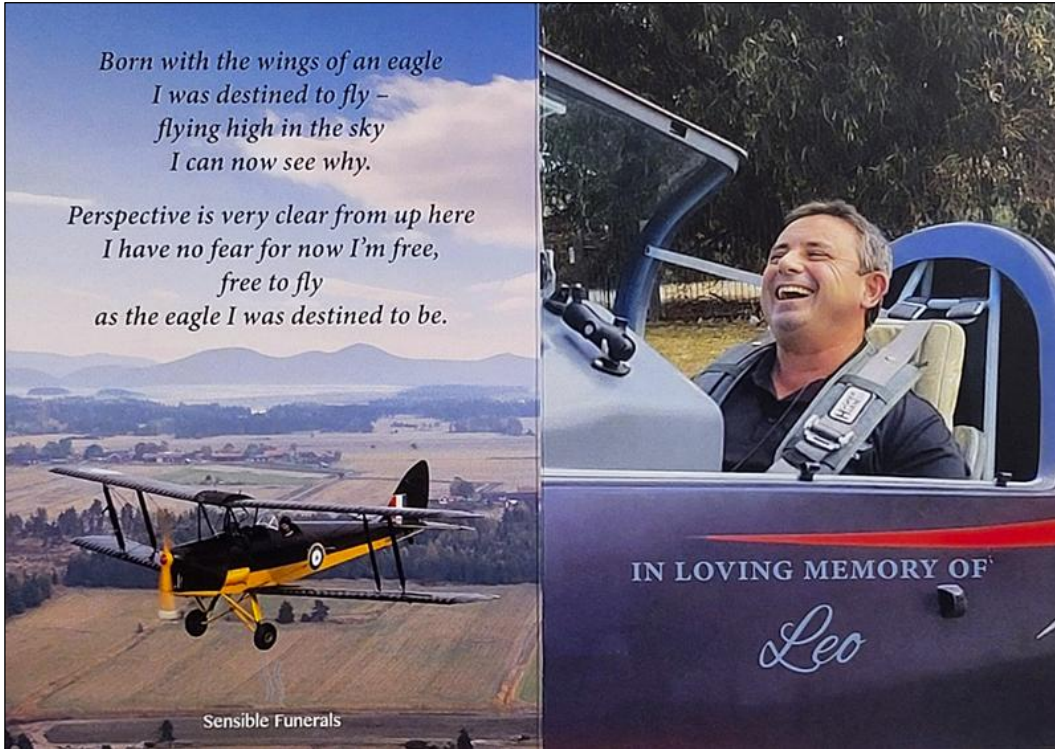


The reverse of the India General Service Medal 1936-1939 depicts a tiger standing astride a mountain range.



IN MEMORIAM
Leo Howard (1972-2026)

Members of the SA/NT Branch, NMBVAA joined family and friends in the Heysen Chapel at Centennial Park on Thursday 26 February to farewell Leo Howard, who died in a tragic aircraft crash at Long Bay off the Murray Mouth near Goolwa South on 6 February, aged 53. We send our sincere condolences to Chris and Barbara, and our thoughts are with Leo's sister Mercedes and her husband Michael, and Leo's son Jake.



Leo Howard
 15.11.1972 - 6.2.2026
 Passed away on 6 February 2026
 Aged 53 years
 Beloved son of Chris and Barbara
 Loving father of Jake
 Dearest brother of Mercedes
 and brother-in-law to Michael
*So dearly loved and sadly missed.
 May he fly on forever.*

~~~~~

*Forever in our hearts  
 and always in our thoughts.*



## MALAYAN EMERGENCY Roll of Honour – April

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.

A197 Warrant Officer George Robert Tait,  
No 38 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force:  
22 April 1951

A31167 Warrant Officer Heathcote Byron Brown,  
No 1 Squadron,  
Royal Australian Air Force:  
9 April 1953

R49694 Able Seaman Robert William  
Spooner, D37 HMAS *Tobruk* (I):  
26 April 1957

*Lest we Forget*

## CONFRONTATION Roll of Honour – April

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.

42960 Signaller John Darrell Tassell,  
208th Signals Squadron (Commonwealth):  
4 April 1966

6363 Warrant Officer Class 2 Maxwell Clyde  
Hutchinson, 21 Construction Squadron,  
Royal Australian Engineers:  
8 April 1966

Lieutenant Edward George Kennell RAN,  
No 816 Squadron, Fleet Air Arm:  
28 April 1966

*Lest we Forget*



### A31167 Warrant Officer Heathcote Byron Brown MID (1907-1953)

Warrant Officer 'Heath' Brown of No 1 ('Bomber') Squadron, RAAF died in Singapore on 9 April 1953, aged 45.

Heathcote Byron Brown was born in Penguin, Tasmania on 2 November 1907. He enlisted on 12 October 1938 and served during World War 2. As a Warrant Officer, he was Mentioned-in-Despatches in May 1945 for distinguished service in the South West Pacific area with 10 Operational Group, RAAF in the battles of Tarakan, North Borneo and Balikpapan.

He then served in Japan for two years with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force. After serving at Sale and Richmond, in July 1950 he deployed with No 1 ('B') Squadron, with A73 Lincoln B Mk 30 bombers based at RAF Station Tengah Singapore.

After a year back in Australia he deployed again on 22 August 1952, as Warrant Officer Disciplinary with No 1 Squadron at Singapore. In 1953, during Easter Leave with friends at Melim Nawah in Perak, Heath Brown suffered a heart attack on 8 April.

He was evacuated to Batu Gajah General Hospital in Perak but died the following day after surgery. His body was taken by helicopter to Kuala Lumpur, and then in a Lincoln bomber to Singapore where he was buried in Pasir Panjang Cemetery.

By the early 1970s, the Singapore Government was finding it necessary to close down Ulu Pandan and Pasir Panjang cemeteries to make way for urban development. The Government announced their intention to have Pasir Panjang Cemetery cleared by 1 January 1974.

In November 1973, Brown's next-of-kin were notified of a choice of alternative options to be carried out at public expense (although the return of cremated remains to Australia would be at their expense).

The family chose to have his remains exhumed and re-interred in Kranji Military Cemetery in Singapore.

Warrant Officer Brown is one of 50 Australian fallen from the Malayan wars who still remain buried overseas. Six of the fallen from the Malayan Emergency remain buried in Kranji Military Cemetery.

*Lest we Forget*





### 0632 Lieutenant Edward George Kennell RAN (1936-1966)

Lieutenant Ted Kennell was an Observer with 'B' Flight of No 816 Squadron, Fleet Air Arm when he died in a flying accident on 28 April 1966 while providing anti-submarine and air protection during operations in the southern Philippines.

Born in Cairns in North Queensland on 10 August 1936, 18 year old Ted Kennell enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy in Brisbane on 22 January 1954 for six years, dated from 10 August 1954. He completed his basic training as a Recruit Seaman on 26 January 1954, and was rated Ordinary Seaman on 22 August 1954. Selected for the Fleet Air Arm, on 4 January 1955 he was rated Provisional Naval Airman (Aircraftman) and was posted to RAAF Uranquinty to join the Basic Flying Training School.

He trained in Tiger Moths and Wirraways, and then joined an Observers Course. He was promoted Midshipman on 4 December 1955 and was drafted to HMAS *Albatross*, the Naval Air Station at Nowra. On completing a 12-month Observer Training Course on 22 November 1956, Kennell was promoted Acting Sub-Lieutenant (O) and was granted a 7-year Short Term Commission. In 1957 he completed a specialist Observer's night-fighter training course. He joined No 724 Squadron at Nowra and trained on the de Havilland DH.112 Sea Venom aircraft; he was promoted to Sub-Lieutenant (O) on 23 November 1957.

Kennell was promoted to Lieutenant on 22 September 1958, and the following year he joined No 816 Squadron specialising in anti-submarine operations. He then served successively with 805, 724 and 816 Squadrons, including several embarkations on HMAS *Melbourne* for South East Asia duties, and on 2 June 1963 was granted a Permanent Commission.

On 25 October 1965, Lieutenant Kennell re-joined No 816 Squadron – in the newly created 'B' Flight (Sea Venom fighters) in response to the deteriorating strategic situation in South East Asia. No 816 Squadron embarked on HMAS *Melbourne* at Jervis Bay on 19 February 1966, sailing for South East Asia on escort duties with HMAS *Sydney*. During flying operations in the Sulu Sea in the southern Philippines, Lieutenant J R Da Costa (Pilot) and Lieutenant Kennell (Observer) were flying de Havilland DH.112 Sea Venom FAW.53, N4-900 number '866'. Of note, Da Costa was an Adelaide High School Old Scholar.

At about 3 pm on 28 April 1966, they touched down on the flight deck of HMAS *Melbourne*. The Sea Venom engaged No 2 arrestor-wire, but the port knuckle broke allowing the aircraft to race unrestrained along the flight deck and over the ship's side into the sea.

Lieutenant Da Costa made a successful low-level ejection and was rescued by helicopter. Kennell ejected just as the aircraft hit the water, but searches by an airborne Wessex air-sea-rescue helicopter and diver were unsuccessful.

Lieutenant Kennell has no known grave – the aircraft and his body were never recovered.

Lieutenant Kennell's name is not listed by the Australian War Memorial, but his death occurred during the prescribed period of the Indonesian Confrontation with Malaysia.

Lest we Forget



*In 2018, the HMAS Sydney & Vietnam Logistical Support Veterans Association held a dedication service at the Naval Association Club to unveil a memorial plaque in memory of Lieutenant Ted Kennell.*



*Da Costa and Kennell's de Havilland DH.112 Sea Venom crashing off the deck during a landing on HMAS Melbourne.*