

# MvM Newsletter 4 – August 09



Keith Jackson

## And now to the next phase of our task

The recent focus on the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* to coincide with the 1 July anniversary represented a significant milestone in our collective efforts to secure more adequate recognition of this tragic Australian story.

The inauguration of a privately-funded commemorative plaque at the Subic Bay Hellships Memorial, major speeches in Parliament from the responsible Minister and Shadow Minister and substantial media coverage indicated that we had taken an important forward step in our journey.

But all of this will be ephemeral unless we can persuade the Federal Government to ensure some form of permanent and tangible recognition. This is the next phase of our task.

And it will be initiated this coming November, the month in which we mark Remembrance Day and, this year, in which John Schindler's new documentary, *The Tragedy of the Montevideo Maru*, will be screened on Foxtel.

Your Committee is drafting a comprehensive submission to the Government entitled *The Men of Rabaul & the Montevideo Maru: The search for recognition*. It tells the story and, most importantly, proposes to Government how best it can recognise the sacrifices that were associated with the Japanese invasion and occupation of Rabaul and the New Guinea islands from January 1942.

We want the submission to come from all of us, which is where you come in.

In your view, what is the most important initiative the Federal Government can take to honour the men of Rabaul and the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*?

Limit your response to one or two suggestions and give some reasons why you think your ideas should be adopted.

And there are prizes! The three best entries will receive either a CD, *The Music of W Arthur Gullidge*, played by the Melbourne Staff Band of the Salvation Army or a DVD of John Schindler's award winning documentary *The Story of the Krait*. When you submit your entry (there are email and postal addresses in this newsletter), let us know which prize you'd like.

We'll publish all entries (you can find the first tranche on pages 7-9 of this newsletter). But best of all, the Committee will include meritorious suggestions in our submission to the Federal Government in November.

## Purpose

The Montevideo Maru Memorial Committee represents the families of soldiers and civilians captured in Rabaul and the New Guinea Islands after the Japanese invasion in January 1942.

Many of these men perished when the *Montevideo Maru* was sunk off the Philippines on 1 July 1942.

The purpose of the Committee is to gain national recognition and greater understanding of the tragedy and its context.

## Objectives

1. To secure national recognition of the *Montevideo Maru* tragedy.
2. To facilitate comfort and closure in the minds of the victims' relatives.
3. To locate the nominal roll of prisoners aboard the *Montevideo Maru*.
4. To achieve greater public knowledge of the fall of Rabaul in January 1942.
5. To enhance knowledge of the role of Australians in Papua New Guinea.

## Friends

Friends support action to achieve greater national recognition and understanding of the events surrounding the fall of Rabaul and the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*.

If you know someone who wants to be a Friend of *Montevideo Maru* and who would like to receive this newsletter, ask them to register at email [kjackson@jacksonwells.com.au](mailto:kjackson@jacksonwells.com.au)

At the end of July, there were 125 Friends of *Montevideo Maru*.

## New friends

### Håkan Gustafsson

My name is Håkan Gustafsson from Sweden and my uncle Göte Gustafsson was on board the copra loading Norwegian vessel *Herstein* and the *Montevideo Maru*.

[gustaf34@hotmail.com](mailto:gustaf34@hotmail.com)

### John May

I have just seen Newsletter 2 thanks to a brother of one of the 2/22 band, and would like to see it regularly. As Anglican chaplain to Lark Force at Rabaul, I was captured on 23 January 1942 and said goodbye to the men as they were marched out of camp to embark on the *MM*. I had to go with the party on the *Naruto Maru*. Being in Tasmania, I am a bit off the beaten track, as well as being too old to keep in close touch. Best of good wishes to the Committee.

### Suzanne Pascoe

I am interested in becoming a Friend of *Montevideo Maru* as my father was in Lark Force and listed as being on the ship. It is very gratifying that there is a group trying to give this terrible disaster its rightful place in history. I was so pleased to read the article in the *Weekend Australian*, from which I found your website.

### Mike Tobin

I have had a couple of contacts with Sandy McNab, Lex Fraser and Albert Speer about the *Montevideo Maru*. My mother's sister lost her husband (they were married in June 1941) on the ship and naturally I never got to meet him. Colin Jackson QX12940 was a medic with the 1st Independent Company at Kavieng and was amongst those captured on the *Andana Star* attempting to escape after Kavieng was attacked.

## Steinbjørn Mentzoni

### The last voyage of the MS Herstein

**An article in a provincial Norwegian newspaper provides new insights into the men of MS Herstein trapped in the fall of Rabaul in 1942. Translated by Benn Bolt Jr**

When Norway was occupied orders came from the 'new' Norwegian government that all ships were to go to ports under German control. Not many officers followed this order. Most ships went instead to Allied ports, and became part of the fleet which fought against the Germans.

No one knows with certainty what happened to the crew of the Norwegian ship *MS Herstein*. The captain survived and came home to his family in Norway. The relatives of the rest of the ship crew still wonder today what happened to their loved ones.

When *Herstein* left Port Moresby harbour the Japanese forces were on the march, even though no one knew when they would attack. Captain Gotfred M Gundersen guided his ship along the New Guinea coast, navigating as close as possible to reefs to keep any Japanese submarines at bay.

*Herstein* had barely come into harbour in Rabaul before cargo booms were raised so that the loading of copra could begin. A new message from the authorities gave ordered Gundersen to take a full cargo of copra on board: 6,000 tons instead of 2,000 tons. The additional time in Rabaul was to have disastrous consequences for ship and crew.

Captain Gundersen was at naval control for final orders before departure from Rabaul. The crew began to make the ship seaworthy, even though loading was not complete. Rumours had it that the attack on Rabaul was not far off. There was nervousness in the small Australian garrison.

*Herstein* was still in Rabaul when it was attacked by Japanese aircraft on 20 January 1942. Captain Gundersen ran towards the ship to get on board. There was no chance. The ship was far from naval control and there was total chaos in the area. About 100 aircraft approached at low altitude.

Bombs and incendiaries hit the ship, which quickly caught fire. Anti-aircraft artillery fired on land and on the ship. The crew struggled to limit the fire. They connected all available fire hoses.

On deck the first mate Møller tried to extinguish the fire. With him was second mate Benn Bolt. But the heat and flames had become so intense that Møller gave orders to abandon ship.

Left on deck was steward Karl Thorsell from Sweden. He was killed in the battle. Some other crew members were injured, but managed to get ashore.

The crew also got Thorsell's body ashore. It lies in an unknown grave.

## New friends

### Brian Chauncy

I would like to draw your attention to one of the prisoners of war on the *Montevideo Maru*: John Harold McKenzie Edwards, also known as Jack Edwards.

Jack was the wharf manager for Burns Philp at Rabaul and was taken prisoner by the Japanese. I know of him because of a long association of my first wife's family with Jack and his widow, known in the family as Auntie Suzy.

Mrs Edwards passed away in the '70s in her 103rd year and I only met her once. I know that Mr and Mrs Edwards had no children and it would be very unfortunate if the memory of this highly decorated and brave soldier from the World War I was not properly commemorated.

I understand that Jack's war medals were stolen from the Parramatta Leagues Club when they were on loan some time ago.

My father-in-law Jack Mathieson, 92, of Nowra NSW remembers Jack Edwards and his wife and has told me Mrs Edwards always maintained that the *Montevideo Maru* called into an island to disembark some passengers prior to being torpedoed. I have not seen this recorded elsewhere.

I commend you on your good work with the fight for a memorial and wish you continuing success in your quest for proper recognition of these unfortunate and brave people.

### Phyllis Smith

We were Rabaul residents prior to the Japanese invasion. My mother, two siblings and I were evacuated but my father, Eric George MacAdam, remained as a member of the NGVR. He was lost in the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*.

Once the *Herstein* crew gathered on land, Captain Gundersen took command. The crew were accommodated in two nearby hotels and boatswain Gerhard Olsen, engineer Peter Brandal and cook Arthur Landhaug were taken to hospital to get treatment for injuries. Early next morning came the message they feared. Japanese ground forces were on their way to Rabaul.

The crew came together for a short conference. There was disagreement about what to do. Some thought they should be in the town when Japanese forces arrived. Norway was not at war with Japan and they believed they could be sent home as other Norwegians had been before.

The third mate and third engineer wanted to stay in Rabaul. Gundersen did not trust the Japanese. He thought he could be forced to reveal things that could damage Allied shipping. He argued it was best to escape. The crew, except one of the youngest, wanted to stay in Rabaul. The young man probably died during the flight from Rabaul.

Before the crew split, the captain gave them 60 pounds each in cash. Then he farewelled the crew, urging them to get away from the harbour and the town. With the characteristic Norrathship cap on his head, Captain Gundersen was the only man that came home to their loved ones after the war in 1946.

The crew were taken prisoner by the Japanese, and put under surveillance. They were later used as slave labour. The story of their stay in custody is one of inhuman conditions, torture, starvation and no help or medication for the sick.

Late in June 1942, the prisoners were marched under a strong guard to board the *Montevideo Maru*. Destination was Hainan Island in Japan.

More than 1,000 people disappeared without a single track. Among them was the Norwegian ship's crew. At the end of October 1945 authorities sent a telegram to those who waited: "Your husband was on board the prisoner ship *Montevideo Maru* which was sunk the first July 1942. None of the hostages survived". Several refused to believe this message.

There were no witnesses and there were no traces of the lost ship. There was no one who could explain what had happened. Some speculated that the truth did not come forward because it was deliberately hidden.

Their children hoped their fathers would soon come back. But they never came home. Some fathers from other parts of Japanese occupied areas came home. But no one from Rabaul. Many surviving family members still ask themselves: What happened to my husband and my brother?

Captain Gotfred M Gundersen died on 22 July 1971 and is buried in the cemetery at Tromøy, Arendal. He was the only one from *Herstein* who got a grave.

Source: 'Where is my son, my husband and my brother?' by Steinbojorn Mentzoni, *Helgelands Blad*, 13-14 February 2002. Translated by Benn Bolt Jr, July 2009.

## What we want

### Keith Jackson

I want to erasure readers that the men of Rabaul and the Islands are as much part of our considerations as the men who died on the *Montevideo Maru*. {See George Oakes' contribution on page 8.]

The fate of the ship itself is a focal point, but not the only point, of our activities.

The circumstances surrounding the fall of Rabaul and its aftermath are very much part of the Committee's concern.

At the moment, the Committee's efforts are focussed on two goals:

- (1) gaining formal national recognition from the Commonwealth Government of the enormity of the disaster and the grief of relatives, and
- (2) securing a memorial in Canberra to the dual tragedy of the *Montevideo Maru* and the men (military and civilian) of Rabaul.

The issue of locating the wreck, while important to some people, is, we feel, a secondary matter.

The coordinates of the sinking are known, so the location of the ship is pretty well established.

Also we realise the enormous cost to the Government that such a search would entail, probably to yield few new results other than some vague photographs.

Better, we think, to ask the Government to work towards designating the site as a Commonwealth war grave.

At some point thereafter, a short ceremony aboard a vessel above at the site of the sinking could draw an appropriate valedictory on the tragedy.

## Chris Diercke

### Article reveals more pieces of the story

**The *Herstein* relatives' take on the fall of Rabaul and the *Montevideo Maru* tragedy is appraised by Chris Diercke, who has been pursuing the Norwegian connection on behalf of the *Montevideo Maru* Memorial Committee**

Overall Benn's translation reflects as much as I know about the story, plus bits about which I knew nothing.

It also reflects so many unknowns.

As of 2002, when the article was published, descendants of the *Herstein* crew were still in the dark about what happened to their forebears.

Very little has changed.

In fact, the pursuits and achievements of the *Montevideo Maru* Memorial Committee to date have impressed the Norwegians with whom I'm in contact.

There are a few errors in the article, some probably due to translation.

For example, New Britain is rendered as New England and coast watchers are called coast guards.

And the date and time given for POWs boarding the *Montevideo Maru* (1 July at 3am) are both incorrect.

But the article, overall and in its detail, summarises the complexity of the Rabaul and *Montevideo Maru* tragedies.

It also poses the question once more of what really happened to the *Herstein* crew and the rest of the hostages from Rabaul.

The author was correct in asserting that some prisoner lists did not include the *Herstein* crew.

In fact some prisoner lists have only some crew members listed; some have no crew listed and a couple have them all listed.

I believe it's helpful and interesting to have received this article from Benn Bolt.

It tells us a little more about *Herstein* as well as reinforcing some information which we were already aware of.



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The postal address of the *Montevideo Maru* Memorial Committee is c/- Jackson Wells Pty Ltd, PO Box 1743, Neutral Bay NSW 2089.

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## Letters

### Helen Boutell

After my letter in the Bellingen *Courier Sun*, I received a phone call about 8 am from an excited person.

"No one has ever heard of the *Montevideo Maru*. My father was on it."

I met her on Friday. McAdam was her father's name. She was evacuated at age 11 in December 1941.

We will meet every year now on 1 July.

### Phyllis Smith

It was great to receive the *MVM Newsletter*.

My mother Dora MacAdam, siblings Terry and Diana and I were evacuated in December 1941.

Dad, later apparently boarded *Montevideo Maru*.

At the end of the war my mother received a letter enclosing Dad's signet ring and some keys, from Dora Rosa (Roea?) who was left behind at the time of the evacuation and saw Dad just before he was captured.

### Keith Payne

Thanks for sending the newsletter. Interesting that you and I share the same first name. Keith is not a very common name.

My late mother told me I was named after her brother, Keith Gratton, who was presumed lost on the ship, so I have always been interested in his fate, and that of all the others on board.

It is good that this important part of our war history is finally being given some publicity as it appears to have been ignored for many years by authorities and the media.

## Ailsa Nisbet

### Dear Minister: Letter from a bitter heart

**Ailsa Nisbet, 87, lives in Murrumbidgee, a quiet and leafy suburb 13 km south-east of Melbourne GPO. Last month, after making the journey to attend the Montevideo Maru commemoration at Subic Bay, she wrote an impassioned letter to the Veterans' Affairs Minister, Alan Griffin**

I have just recently returned from a Montevideo Maru dedication in Subic Bay in the Philippines. It was a very emotional and long waited for recognition of the worst disaster in Australian history that so few people know.

I lost a precious brother on that boat and know just what, after 67 years, this means to us.

I believe you said you weren't aware of any 'document or cover up'. I can assure you it was a complete cover up from the Government as well as the Japanese and we have waiting too long from some recognition of this disaster.

The boys who escaped, because of no ammunition, guns etc, were treated as deserters when they returned and have been fighting for a Defence Medal all these years.

There have been many promises of being 'looked into' by so many politicians and 'high up' personnel and so far no result, they apparently didn't serve long enough!

These beautiful young boys from the 2/22nd Battalion were sent to Rabaul - all volunteers to save our precious country, young gallant men who wanted to be in the Middle East to finish off the war, as they said.

It was not a picnic for them. There was doubt that they would receive any deferred pay - 5/- a day pay was all they had - they were treated so badly.

I am sure their effort in Rabaul prevented Australia being taken over, as men with a minor resistance, they presented a walk into Australia by the Japs and we would have lost this precious freedom we have here.

The men who are left (14) are nearing the end of their lives - wonderful men who work tirelessly for remaining relatives and have fought for the Defence Medal, are too ill and frail to fight any longer, so I am begging you to do something about it.

Don't put in on a shelf and say you will look into it - do it before it's too late. We all have our freedom and our wonderful country because of what these gallant young men sacrificed for us.

I sometimes wonder why they bothered - they only seem to be remembered on special occasions like Anzac Day and then forgotten.

I am 82 years of age and would like to see this recognition for them before I die too. This letter is written from a bitter heart.

Thank you for reading it.

## New friends

### Judy Ireland

My mother's eldest brother Gunner Keith Morden (Jim) Smith went down with the *Montevideo Maru* and although he died two years before I was born I have always had a interest in the ship and its occupants.

My uncle was part of Lark Force, initially in 17<sup>th</sup> Anti-Tank then part of the 2/22.

My poor grandfather, when many years later, he heard the news of what happened, had a heart attack - but luckily he lived till 1960.

When visiting my mother in 1978 in Tamworth, we were going through some photos and I found one of a handsome soldier.

I remarked that he looked like a man we knew in Port Macquarie, where we lived at the time.

To cut a long story short, it turned out to be a man that we knew, an officer by the name of Alf Clark.

My husband rang Alf and asked him if he remembered Jim Smith and to that he replied that Jim had scrounged food for Alf when he, Jim, was sent out in a working party.

### Cheryl Rajamae

I am the niece of Francis Meddings who was on the *Montevideo Maru* when it was torpedoed by the Americans.

He and his best mate Wilfred Trigg were both bandsman from the Geelong Salvation Army.

I am the only relative who is interested in Uncle Frank and would like to know more about the ship that was their watery grave on.

The disaster left my grandmother very distressed.

## Gordon Thomas

### Extracts from a letter to Mrs Brawn

**Gordon Thomas, editor of the Rabaul Times, was one of only four men of Rabaul who survived the Japanese occupation. Abbreviation of a letter of 24 February 1965**

My dear Mrs Brawn,

I received your letter of 21st with enquiries about that sad, old question: Was the Montevideo Maru tragedy a reality or just a war-time rumour?

I am quite convinced that the sinking did occur, also that our people were on board, with the exception of the officers and nurses who embarked in another vessel.

Much confusion has been caused because several white people were seen in Rabaul after the Montevideo Maru sailed. It must be remembered that, besides myself and three companions stationed in the Rabaul Freezer, there was a party captured after the sailing who were housed in the old army camp along the Malagunan Road, all of whom were liquidated near the end of war.

Inui could have been one of the natives to whom I shouted in the language as we passed in the lorry on that night we travelled from Jap headquarters to Ramale mission camp. It was my custom when I saw a native to address him in the language, because many knew of my knowledge of the Talk and would be able to spread the news that a whiteman, knowing the language, had passed that way. Afterwards I learned it had the desired result.

It was late when we left Kempei HQ, we had remained for supper and the police put on quite a spread. I was fearful this was our Last Supper and that we would be taken out and had our nappers lopped off. This was the custom of the Japs: to have a feast, followed by an execution, for some reason they made an exception this time.

You say I can clear up "something many of the friends and relatives would be pleased to know." I very much doubt whether anything I say will clear up the question. I have done my best with many relatives but they shrug me off and remark: "Well, I just feel he is still somewhere and that he did not go on that boat." Whether it is any more comfort for these poor relatives to know their loved ones were liquidated and not drowned at sea, I do not know.

Some of the older Chinese in Rabaul at the time would be able to give information as to seeing the Europeans embark on the MM and would perhaps be able to tell they had heard of the sinking later on. Our informants were the Japanese (they didn't mind telling us because it was not their fault but our own allies).

If there is further information you think I may be able to supply, please write and ask me. It is the least I can do in return for having been saved from the same fate as those who were lost.

## New friends

### Kate Snow-Reyes

I read about the Montevideo Maru Memorial Committee in the 5 June edition of the *North Shore Times*.

I would be greatly interested in hearing any news about the search for the nominal roll and the ship as my great uncle, Fred Mansley, was a member of Lark Force and it is believed he perished aboard the *Montevideo Maru*.

I know what heartache the uncertainty surrounding his supposed death caused my grandmother and her family, so for all their sakes I would like the mystery solved.

### Alison Meldrum

Our family records say that Mum's cousin, Edwin Malcolm Abbott (known as Malcolm or Mac) was one of the civilians on the *Montevideo Maru*.

He was a Seventh Day Adventist Missionary working in Rabaul.

Unlike some of the people mentioned in the article, Mac hasn't any direct descendants.

He was married but hadn't any children.

He was also an only child so there aren't any nieces or nephews either.

He was about 32 at the time of his death; born in 1910 but I don't have the exact date.

### James Lloyd

My uncle, John Morell, was one of those on the *Montevideo Maru*. I would be interested in becoming a Friend of *Montevideo Maru* and receiving your newsletters.

## Readers

### How our men should be recognised 1

#### Bob Scott

There should be plaques at the Australian War Memorial and Bitapaka denoting that the events that took place.

*I have a suspicion there is a memorial at Bitapaka. Ed.*

#### Mike Tobin

The Federal Government should support a search to locate the wreck of the *Montevideo Maru* because this will permanently record the location.

The Australian War Memorial should feature the fate of 1<sup>st</sup> Ind Coy/Lark Force and POWs in a special display.

#### Elaine Hay Campbell

I am a former Rabaul resident and I am so glad someone has at last come out fighting for the recognition of the *Mondevideo* tragedy. My suggestion is that a similar memorial as for HMAS Sydney be raised in Canberra on a significant date, ie, 1 July. Not only civilians were on board that ship but also members of the AIF - therefore it is a national tragedy not only for New Guinea.

#### Betty Muller [nee Gascoigne]

My strong feeling is that the names of those lost should be commemorated on a bronze panel or similar. This should be located in Canberra in the environs of the War Memorial. I believe it is important the men should be remembered by name. The rock at Ballarat, fine as it is, did not include names due of lack of funds.

#### Jude Sullivan

I have spoken about your question to my mum Nancy Wade and her brother Evan Roberts whose brother Richard (Dick) was on the *Montevideo Maru*,

They feel after 67 years the only thing that is important is that the ship is located and declared a war grave. They feel there are enough memorials but the final closure would be finding the ship.

My mum had four brothers who went to war and Dick was the only one who didn't come back - and his death remains a mystery. It would be wonderful to at least have a final resting place.

Thankyou for emailing the newsletters to me. My mum and Evan are very interested in all that is happening and has brought back many memories of their brother.

#### Phyllis Smith (nee MacAdam)

Establish a significant memorial at Canberra's War Memorial where we can go and place flowers and remember our loved ones. Locate the *Montevideo Maru* and declare it a war grave site; so we know exactly where it happened.

## New friends

### Kirsten Ottesen

My father, Reidar Thorbjørn Myhre, was a prisoner from MS Herstein on *Montevideo Maru* and unfortunately one of the 31 Norwegians on board. Reidar was born in Oslo in 1904 and was married to Borghild and they had one child, me. After the ceremony, I will be pleased if you could send me some words about it.

### Edward Cooper

My uncle Arthur Cecil Cooper NX191469 enlisted on 2 May 1941 in Bega NSW. He served with AA & MIL LCFT Depot as a Gunner. He was my youngest uncle of a large family. Three brothers also served and returned.

I was born on 2/5/1942, on his birthday. Between the time of his capture and subsequent loss on the *Montevideo Maru*, I was given the second name of Arthur as the family had not heard any news at the time.

### Don Horsey

My wife's family have always said that their relation, a Rabaul plantation owner, was on board the *Montevideo Maru* when it was sunk.

I did not realise that so many people were involved with this incident.

Where do I go now and what can I do to help them to solve their mystery? An article in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* set me off on this quest.

We are Victorians, working with the Charleville School of the Air in Bollon, and have no mailing address but we can be contacted by email. I hope that you can help me help them.

## Readers

### How our men should be recognised 2

#### George Oakes

I do not think the subject of *Montevideo Maru* is broad enough - true, it is a good catch phrase. We should cover all civilians lost in the New Guinea Islands. There is no memorial listing the names of those who died.

We should not cover defence people who were lost on the *Montevideo Maru* - they are already well remembered at Bitapaka and elsewhere. The reason for a broader approach is that there people who now say their father was not on the *Montevideo Maru* but killed elsewhere although their names are listed.

Many of those in the Kavieng Massacre are also on the *Montevideo Maru* list. I do not believe we will ever find an accurate roll. The actual number could be much less.

I believe we should agree these civilians are missing, presumed dead and not attribute their death to a particular place. If we try, there will be many unhappy people.

I believe the Australian Government should spend several million dollars if necessary on a Civilian Memorial constructed at Bitapaka near Kokopo. At Bitapaka War Cemetery, all the defence people who lost their lives on the *Montevideo Maru* and in the New Guinea Islands have their names listed or are buried there. Those lost on the *Montevideo Maru*, I believe, are shown as missing, presumed dead.

The Civilian Memorial should list all Europeans and Chinese who lost their lives in the New Guinea Islands war and mention generally mixed race and local people who lost their lives. I believe there could be up to 500 names which should be listed alphabetically without saying where they died.

There could also be marble stands describing in broad terms that they died on the *Montevideo Maru*, on small ships, in the POW camp, in villages, in the bush, etc. There could also be individual descriptive marble stands detailing the loss of the *Montevideo Maru*, the Kavieng Massacre, loss of administration staff, loss of missionaries, loss of plantation people, etc.

If this was built, it could be dedicated and unveiled on 1 July 2012 - 70 years after the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*. I think hundreds of people would attend. Perhaps a tourist ship could be organised to be in Rabaul.

Such a memorial could be one way for the Australian Government to express regret for what happened in 1941-42 without actually saying 'sorry'! I believe this could bring closure for a lot of people - they know their relatives died but often they do not know where.

Bitapaka War Cemetery is a beautiful place. We first visited it in 1959 and our last visit was in 2002 when we went to the Kavieng Memorial unveiling. I think it is a most suitable place for a memorial.

## New friends

### Jude Sullivan

My name is Judith Sullivan and I would like to register my mum Nancy Wade as a Friend.

Her brother was on the *Montevideo Maru*.

She would really like to keep up with what is happening and if any new information comes to light.

Richard Stanford Roberts was his name and he was part of the 1st Independent Company that was with Lark Force and one of four brothers who went to war.

If you have any information or you are able to direct us to different areas it would be very much appreciated.

### Knut W Edvardsen

My uncle Hans Teien, born in Sandefjord, Norway on 3 November 1915, was one of the crew members on MS *Herstein* and later perished in the catastrophic attack on *Montevideo Maru*.

Hans was one of four brothers and one sister (my mother).

One of my other uncles, Lars Teien, a brother of Hans, perished in 1944 as a crew member on MS *Braganza*.

I was born in Sandefjord in 1937 and am married to Anne Lise with three children and six grandchildren.

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### MvM Newsletter Contacts

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## Readers

### How our men should be recognised 3

#### Knut Walter

First of all, thanks for all information you send through regarding the loss of *Montevideo Maru*. I would very much like to be part of the Friends of *Montevideo Maru* community and would appreciate receiving newsletters in the future.

I have a suggestion regarding the initiative to the Federal Government.

The Government should describe specifically the story of Rabaul and the *Montevideo Maru* in school books at elementary school level.

This description can be incorporated into existing texts covering the World War II, where Australian men and women gave their lives for the freedom of coming generations.

The text covering Rabaul and *Montevideo M* should be open-hearted and honest and have a central place in the World War II chapters, as this was Australia's worst maritime loss.

The abovementioned will ensure that generations to come will know the full story and not forget how dreadful the war was. Our generation has few years left. The above suggestion is also important for Norwegians.

#### Helen Boutell

One idea for commemoration, and in keeping with the idea of reconciliation, is the creation of a scholarship fund with an award being alternately given to a descendant of a Japanese serviceman and a resident of New Britain.

Details about the terms of the scholarship can be dealt with after this idea is considered, but perhaps the announcement of each award (say bi-annually) could be the occasion of an address by an eminent person (in the manner of the Boyer Lectures on civilians in wars).

#### Neville Threlfall

I have two suggestions, actually linked, about bringing and keeping the men who perished in the *Montevideo Maru* before the attention of the Australian community.

Firstly, a suitable display featuring the story should be placed at the Australian War Memorial, either indoors or down the avenue where a number of special memorial features now stand.

Second, when it is completed, it should be opened with a big commemoration service, to be publicised as widely as possible.

## Websites

Rod Miller

[www.montevideomaru.info](http://www.montevideomaru.info)

Hell Ships Memorial

[www.hellshipsmemorial](http://www.hellshipsmemorial)

John Schindler

[www.montevideomarafilm.com](http://www.montevideomarafilm.com)

Montevideo Maru Foundation

[www.montevideomaru.org](http://www.montevideomaru.org)

Salvation Army Museum

<http://www.salvationarmy.org.au/museum/>

Lost Lives

[www.jje.info/lostlives/places/montevideomaru.html](http://www.jje.info/lostlives/places/montevideomaru.html)

Rabaul Nurses

[www.rabaulnurses.com.au/Montevideo%20Maru.html](http://www.rabaulnurses.com.au/Montevideo%20Maru.html)

POWs - Lark Force & Civilians

[www.australian-pow-ww2.com/montevideo\\_maru\\_11.html](http://www.australian-pow-ww2.com/montevideo_maru_11.html)

Australian War Memorial

[www.awm.gov.au/atwar/remembling1942/montevideo/transcript.asp](http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/remembling1942/montevideo/transcript.asp)

Ballarat Memorial

[www.ballaratgenealogy.org.au/ex\\_pow\\_memorial.htm](http://www.ballaratgenealogy.org.au/ex_pow_memorial.htm)

Pacific Wrecks

<http://www.pacificwrecks.com/ships/maru/montevideo.html>

PNG Attitude

<http://asopa.typepad.com/>

Hellships Memorial

[www.hellshipsmemorial.org](http://www.hellshipsmemorial.org)

## Committee

Prof Kim Beazley AC, Patron

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Phil Ainsworth

Gerald Borthwick

John Cleary

Lindsay Cox

Chris Diercke

Rod Miller

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Albert Speer MBE

Aage Henning Stavenes

Hooky (Philip) Street

Liz Thurston

Clive Troy

Max Uechritz

Andrea Williams

Historical Adviser -

Prof Hank Nelson

## THE LAST WORD

### Donations

While the Committee does not solicit donations, some generous people have sent cheques for various purposes including covering the expenses of producing and posting the newsletter for people who have no email.

We have now opened a MMMC bank account where this money has been deposited.

It will be held in trust for a purpose related to furthering the memories of the men of Rabaul and the Montevideo Maru.

Our thanks to the following Friends who have made donations:

AR Pattison

Rev BM and JL May

HB Wakelin

### Andrea Williams: Subic Bay

The Philippines trip was terrific. It was a great group of people and we were all so glad we went.

The Montevideo Maru plaque is prominent within the beautiful and impressive Hellships Memorial. It's made of Italian granite and overlooks Subic Bay, with similarities to Rabaul.

I think, in time, the Memorial will attract international visitors. There were so many allied prisoners transported on the hellships. The memorial will become a focal point for people wishing to reflect on what happened to their men.

It is such a beautiful and peaceful setting and will help assuage the feelings that fathers/brothers simply disappeared. In the case of the men of Rabaul, it is a very appropriate place to mark their final resting place.

The attention to detail was phenomenal. A band played before the ceremony, there was a police guard at the memorial and the Mayor attended, as did members of local RSL clubs.

There were stunning floral tributes and Australian Ambassador Rod Smith delivered a poignant speech. Several members of the Salvation Army and two Norwegians attended. It was lovely to have their support on the day.

It was a truly magnificent tribute. Clive Troy deserves our huge congratulations for pulling it all together.

### MvM documentary

*The Tragedy of the Montevideo Maru*, a two-part documentary produced by John Schindler, will be screened on Foxtel's History Channel in November this year.

You can find out more about the production at this website:

[www.montevideomarafilm.com](http://www.montevideomarafilm.com)