



How time passes another ANZAC day has gone, with our banner on parade it flies high and proud for all to see. The discussion about allowing the descendants to March with the veterans is still an issue. We however will still be staying with the same routine.

Our banner was again on parade for Victory in the Pacific (VP / VJ) day.



Banner carriers

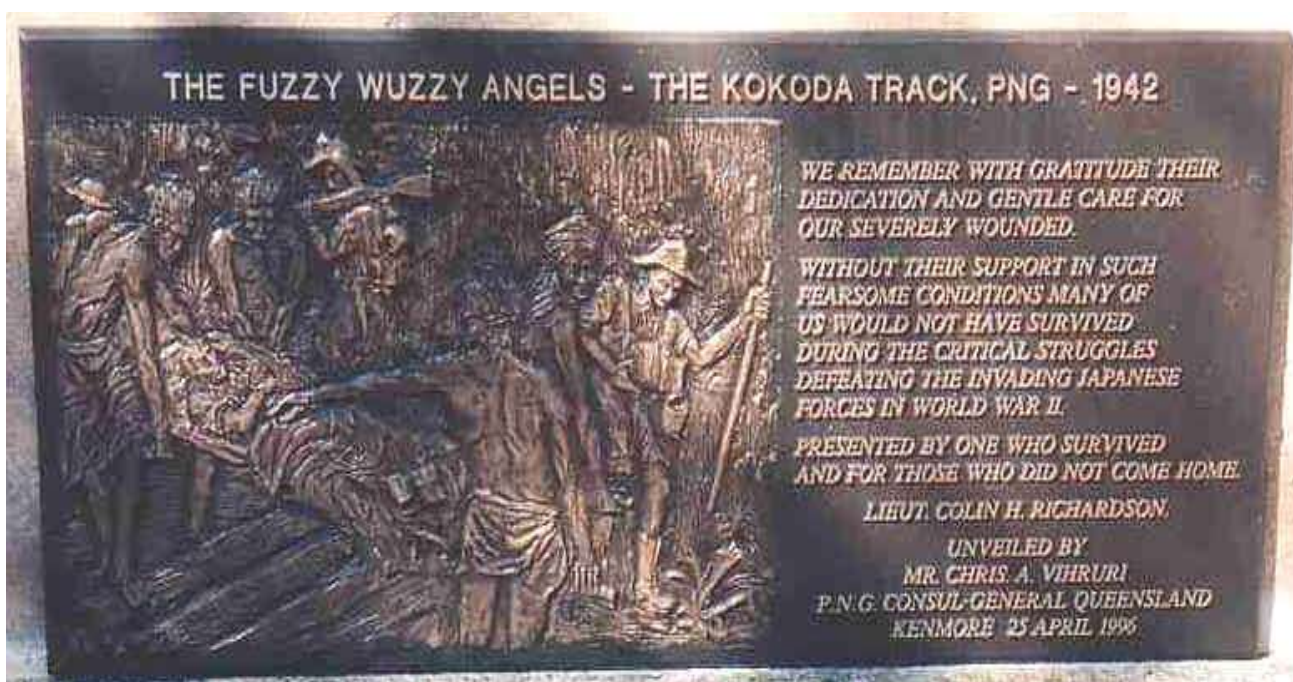
Kevin Dawson \_\_\_\_\_ Arthur Perry

On the 15<sup>th</sup> August our committee attended and participated in the VP Day celebration that was held at Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway that is located in Brays Park Concord NSW.

Along with other dignitaries we had the honour to have in attendance a FUZZY WUZZY Representative with their head-dress in place.



They too are dwindling in numbers and are supported by descendants who are appreciative of their sacrifices and the undying mateship and respect with their “OSSIE” mates.



The memorial track is worth the visit whenever you make a trip to town. You may even find a friend or two as some of our mob can be seen telling of their experiences (yarns) along the track. There are 22 stations in all to visit some with voices telling their stories of the action that took place at that site. The growing interest about KOKODA is heart warming as many group are coming from near and far to visit the site. School groups are now adding it to their excursion agendas. About time for our history has long been forgotten. A lot of work has been invested in creating this living memorial in honour for all those who served , lived the experience and died for o freedom.



It has been remiss of me in the past to have not mentioned the contribution that our women made during the conflict as there were many conflicts both in war theatres and at home.

The women took on the war effort, contributing to industry, running rural properties and not to forget raising the family in time of great need and hardship. Therefore I will endeavour to make amends in recognising some courageous Australian women out of many when all should be saluted.

### Centaur (Hospital ship)



Sydney, NSW. 1943. Starboard bow view of the Hospital Ship Centaur. Prominent red crosses and green lines are painted on her hull. Red crosses are also attached to her funnel and stern with another lying horizontally on the after deckhouse. [302800](#)

### Sinking of the Centaur

The *Centaur*, 2/3rd Australian Hospital Ship, was a motor passenger ship converted in early 1943 for use as a hospital ship. In November 1941 it had rescued survivors of the German auxiliary cruiser *Kormoran* after it had sunk and been sunk by HMAS *Sydney*.

On 12 May 1943 the *Centaur* sailed unescorted from Sydney at 0945 hours carrying her crew and normal staff, as well as stores and equipment of the 2/12th Field Ambulance but no patients. It was sunk without warning by a torpedo from a Japanese submarine on 14 May 1943 at approximately 0400 hours, its position being approximately 27°17' S, 153°58' E about 50 miles east north-east of Brisbane.

Of the 332 persons on board, only 64 survived. These survivors spent 35 hours on rafts before being rescued. Sister Ellen Savage, the only one of twelve nursing sisters on board to survive, though injured herself, gave great help to the other survivors and was awarded the George Medal for this work.

The ship had been appropriately lit and marked to indicate that it was a hospital ship and its sinking was regarded as an atrocity. The Australian Government delivered an official protest to Japan over the incident. The Japanese did not acknowledge responsibility for the incident for many years and the War Crimes Tribunal could not identify the responsible submarine. However, the Japanese official war history makes clear that it was submarine I-177, under the command of Lt Commander Nakagawa who had sunk the *Centaur*. Lt Commander Nakagawa was convicted as a war criminal for firing on survivors of the *British Chivalry* which his ship had sunk in the Indian Ocean.

### ***Centaur* found**

Since the end of the war, many people have pushed to locate *Centaur* as a way of providing some solace to those family and friends who had lost loved ones, and to possibly answer some the unresolved questions surrounding its sinking.

A search led by David Mearns, who had previously lead the team that found the wrecks of HMAS *Sydney* and HSK *Kormoran*, discovered *Centaur*'s wreck on 20 December 2009. *Centaur* was located about 30 nautical miles off the southern tip of Moreton Island, off Queensland's south-east coast.

The wreck was in one piece although it appears as though the hull broke in at least one, and maybe two, places. *Centaur*'s approximate position is 27° 16.98'S, 153° 59.22'E at a depth of over 2,000 metres. The ship's location is less than 1 nautical mile (1.85 kilometres) from that calculated by the navigator, 2nd Mate Gordon Rippon, who was on the bridge taking regular bearings the night *Centaur* was torpedoed.

Now that the wreck is found, it will be protected by the Australian government's Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976. The site will therefore become a memorial to the lives that were lost.

### **Captain Vivian Bullwinkel, AO, MBE, ARRC**



Vivian Bullwinkel

**Date of birth:** 18 December 1915

**Place of birth:** Kapunda, SA

**Date of death:** 03 July 2000

**Place of death:** Perth, WA

Vivian Bullwinkel, sole survivor of the 1942 Banka Island massacre, was born on 18 December 1915 at Kapunda, South Australia. She trained as a nurse and midwife at Broken Hill, New South Wales, and began her nursing career in Hamilton, Victoria, before moving to the Jessie McPherson Hospital in Melbourne in 1940.

In 1941, wanting to enlist, Bullwinkel volunteered as a nurse with the RAAF but was rejected for having flat feet. She was, however, able to join the Australian Army Nursing Service; assigned to the 2/13th Australian General Hospital (2/13th AGH), in September 1941 she sailed for Singapore. After a few weeks with the 2/10th AGH, Bullwinkel rejoined the 13th AGH in Johor Baharu.

Japanese troops invaded Malaya in December 1941 and began to advance southwards, winning a series of victories and, in late January 1942, forcing the 13th AGH to evacuate to Singapore. But the short-lived defence of the island ended in defeat, and, on 12 February, Bullwinkel and 65 other nurses boarded the SS *Vyner Brooke* to escape the island.

Two days later, the ship was sunk by Japanese aircraft. Bullwinkel, 21 other nurses and a large group of men, women, and children made it ashore at Radji Beach on Banka Island; they were joined the next day by about 100 British soldiers. The group elected to surrender to the Japanese, and while the civilian women and children left in search of someone to whom they might surrender, the nurses, soldiers, and wounded waited.

Some Japanese soldiers came and killed the men, then motioned the nurses to wade into the sea. They then machine-gunned the nurses from behind. Bullwinkel was struck by a bullet and pretended to be dead until the Japanese left. She hid with a wounded British private for 12 days before deciding once again to surrender. They were taken into captivity, but the private died soon after. Bullwinkel was reunited with survivors of the *Vyner Brooke*. She told them of the massacre, but none spoke of it again until after the war lest it put Bullwinkel, as witness to the massacre, in danger. Bullwinkel spent three and half years in captivity; she was one of just 24 of the 65 nurses who had been on the *Vyner Brooke* to survive the war.

Bullwinkel retired from the army in 1947 and became Director of Nursing at Melbourne's Fairfield Hospital. She devoted herself to the nursing profession and to honouring those killed on Banka Island, raising funds for a nurses' memorial and serving on numerous committees, including a period as a member of the Council of the Australian War Memorial, and later president of the Australian College of Nursing.

In the decades following the war, Bullwinkel received many honours and awards, including the Florence Nightingale Medal, an MBE and the AM. She married in 1977 and returned to Banka Island in 1992 to unveil a shrine to the nurses who had not survived the war. Vivian Bullwinkel died on 3 July 2000.

## **Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS) and Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC)**

The formation of the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS) was authorised by the government on 13 August 1941 to "release men from certain military duties for employment

in fighting units." The AWAS was the only non-medical women's service to send personnel overseas during the war; in 1944 and 1945 AWAS served in both Dutch and Australian New Guinea. By 30 June 1947 all members of the AWAS had been demobilised. Facing a severe manpower shortage due to the demands of the Korean War and national service in a time of full employment, enlistment for the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC) began in April 1951. In the late 1970s female soldiers began to be integrated into the Army at large and in early 1984, the WRAAC was disbanded.



AWAS who arrived in Lae from Australia wait for the trucks to transport them to the AWAS barracks at Butibum Road, New Guinea, 1945

### **Nursing Sisters**

Two Australian Army nursing sisters have been posted to Papua New Guinea - the first since 1946. At Taurama Barracks, near Port Moresby, home of the 1st Battalion, Pacific Islands Regiment, Captain Cecily Smith, of Claremont, WA and Lieutenant Nancy Tilly of Port MacDonnell, SA are looking after sick soldiers in the battalion's modern medical centre. They also help train Army medical orderlies in the centre's 24 bed ward. And Captain Smith, with the aid of several orderlies, has established a new department at the medical centre - a family aid post to cater for the soldiers' wives and children. Papua New Guinea is new to Lieutenant Tilly but not Captain Smith, who served in Rabaul with the Australian Army Medical Women's Service during World War II and after the war worked for two years with the Territory Administration. How do they feel about their new jobs? "We both feel rather proud that we were chosen" said Captain Smith.

### **Australian Women's Land Army**

The Australian Women's Land Army (AWLA) was formed during the Second World War to combat rising labour shortages in the farming sector. From December 1941, when Japan entered the war, the nation's need to build up its armed forces was placed above the needs of other industries. And so agricultural labour was steadily recruited into the armed services as well as transferred in large numbers to munitions and other war factories.

To meet the shortfall in rural labour, state and private women's land organisations, modelled on those established in Great Britain during the First and Second World Wars, were organised. Under the jurisdiction of the Director General of Manpower a national body was formed on 27 July 1942. While policy was devised by the Commonwealth Government, the organisation of the AWLA continued to remain state-based. An extensive recruiting campaign was undertaken for new members and most members of the existing land armies were also later incorporated into the AWLA.

The AWLA was planned to function in two divisions:

- Full-time members: These enrolled for continuous service for 12 months (with the option of renewal); such members were to receive appropriate badges, distinctive dress uniform, working clothes, and equipment.
- Auxiliary members: These were available for periods of not less than four weeks at nominated times of the year; such members were to be used for seasonal rural operations, and to receive a badge, working clothes, and essential equipment on loan.

Recruits were required to be between 18 and 50 years of age and to be British subjects or immigrants from Allied nations. Women on the land who were farmers, employees, or relatives of land holders were not eligible to enlist. AWLA women were generally drawn from city areas and were often unskilled in rural work. This new form of labour had to be heavily promoted to rural employees, who were initially resistant to female labour. Sceptical attitudes, however, generally came to be characterised by praise and respect after farmers gained experience in working with AWLA women.

Enrolment numbers peaked in December 1943, with 2,382 permanent members and 1,039 auxiliary members. The average working week for an AWLA member was 48 hours, with pay starting at the AWLA minimum wage of 30 shillings a week. Permanent members were also entitled to sick pay. Women were paid much less than their male counterparts for the same work, which covered a variety of agricultural labours, such as vegetable and fruit growing, pig and poultry raising, and sheep and wool work.

In October 1942 the Minister for Labour and National Service, aware of the need to compete with the three women's services, recommended improving the status of the AWLA through instituting it as a fourth service. In January 1943 Cabinet endorsed the status of both divisions of the AWLA as an "official fourth service". The organisation was to be formally constituted under the National Security Regulations. A final draft of these regulations, however, was not completed until 1945, and was not acted upon before the end of the war and the demobilisation of the AWLA. As a result of this, members of the AWLA were not accorded the same benefits as members of the other women's services.

The AWLA disbanded on 31 December 1945. In 1997, many members became eligible for the Civilian Service Medal, after a Committee of Enquiry recommendation in 1994.

**Let us not forget the women that are now serving home and away along side our men.**

## KOOKAS CORNER



## THE LAUGHS ON ME



### Hearing Loss

Three retirees, each with a hearing loss, were playing golf one fine March day. One remarked to the other, "Windy, isn't it?" "No," the second man replied, "it's Thursday." And the third man chimed in, "So am I. Let's have a beer."



### Lager Prayer

Our lager,  
Which art in barrels,  
Hallowed be thy drink.  
Thy will be drunk,  
I will be drunk,  
At home as it is in the tavern.  
Give us this day our foamy head,  
And forgive us our spillages,  
As we forgive those who spill against us.  
And lead us not to incarceration,  
But deliver us from hangovers.  
For thine is the beer, The bitter, The lager.

### Enemies to the West

A knight and his men return to their castle after a long hard day of fighting.  
"How are we faring?" asks the king.  
"Sire," replies the knight, "I have been robbing and pillaging on your behalf all day, burning the towns of your enemies in the west."  
"What?!" shrieks the king. "I don't have any enemies to the west!"



"Oh," says the knight. "Well, you do now."