

“Sitrep, Over!”



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All Gave Some: Some Gave All.



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EDITORIAL



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Each Anzac Day we remember Gallipoli and we remember the sacrifice of thousands. Rarely do we recall the Battle of Kapyong and those Australians who, for a few days before Anzac Day 1951, stemmed a tide that could have changed the course of history. You can read the story, written in 2012 on Pages 12-15.

And on this sacred day, we will again form up as a body of troops at or near the intersection of Pulteney and Grenfell Streets at around 0930 – 1000 hrs. It is anticipated we will step off around 1000 hrs, so please look for our Banner. (All the pics will be in next month's edition.) See you there.



When I first marched during ANZAC Day it was back in the 1970's with the 10th Battalion RSAR alongside mates like Des Hawkins, Graham Elliott, Peter Salamon and Mick Hudson, amongst others. Some of the "others" are no longer with us, and as the year's progress more of us will fall by the way and others will take our place. Each year that the 10th/27th Battalion doesn't march as a Battalion, a large number of Serving Members march with the RSAR Association, and this is heartening to see. This year the Battalion will march in their own right, so it will just be the "Old and the Bold, the Bald and the Grey" making that long pilgrimage down North Terrace onto King William Street. If you are able, please join us!

The 4th of our New Arrivals Gift Packs has just been presented to a 10/27 Battalion Band Member. See Page 9 for the details.

That's it for this month. See you on ANZAC Day.

Stay well and stay safe.

David

The Voyager Disaster Final



The idea that those aboard *Voyager* incorrectly assessed their position in relation to the carrier was suggested by Robertson during the first commission: he suggested that Stevens and the others aboard the destroyer may have believed that they were on *Melbourne's* port bow. However, in his notes written at the commission, Captain Robertson stated there were no witnesses on either ship claiming to see *Voyager* on *Melbourne's* port bow before the collision. The latest study of the collision sets out the evidence given by both ship's crews in relation to the port bow theory; no witness saw *Voyager* on *Melbourne's* port bow."

With *Voyager* on *Melbourne's* starboard bow, *Voyager's* bridge crew would have seen *Melbourne's* green navigation light. However, *Melbourne* also had on her mast, new red floodlights on, which were there to assist the landing of aircraft on *Melbourne*. The pilot in one of the Gannets doing touchdowns on *Melbourne* stated that the new lights (which faced to port) were lighting up the cockpit. Captain Robertson asked a naval man to go forward and adjust the red light. After this was done, the red lights were facing in a starboard direction and being higher on the mast, overshot *Melbourne's* green navigation light. As *Voyager* was doing her fishtail to get into position to go astern of *Melbourne*, the officer of the watch likely saw this red light and turned *Voyager* to port too early, leading to collision stations. The second Royal Commission felt that this, combined with the ill health of Stevens, was the more likely cause of the collision. Frame states that for this theory to be plausible, the entire bridge crew had to lose the tactical picture at the same time, which he considered to be too improbable. Ferry is also of the opinion that, unless *Melbourne* was both in *Voyager's* radar blind spot and obscured by exhaust from the destroyer, it was unlikely that the bridge crew would think they were not to starboard of the carrier. The recent

The Voyager Disaster



study in 2023 asserts that Captain Stevens on *Voyager* had already instructed *Voyager's* officer of the watch to fishtail *Voyager* into position on *Melbourne's* port quarter. It is therefore likely that *Melbourne's* red light was not seen by all of *Voyager's* bridge crew, as the captain had been in the chart area, and was standing outside that area just before the collision.

Ferry favours the opinion that *Voyager* misjudged the manoeuvring room she had. He claims that the destroyer knew where she was in relation to *Melbourne* and that the turn to starboard then reversal to port was intended to be a "fishtail" manoeuvre. *Voyager* was to swing out wide of the carrier, then turn back towards her, cross the stern and assume her position without having to do a loop. However, insufficient time was allowed for *Voyager* to get clear of *Melbourne* before turning back to port, so instead of passing behind *Melbourne*, the destroyer passed in front. Ferry's theory eliminates the need for a double error in the communications signals, and the need for all on the destroyer's bridge to have such a vastly incorrect assumption of where *Voyager* was in relation to the carrier. In 2014 he wrote a summary of the theories, the suitability of Royal Commissions for this type of investigation and related experience from the later HMAS *Melbourne* - USS *Frank E. Evans* collision. The recent investigation in 2023 agrees with Ferry and devotes one whole chapter to *Voyager's* fishtail manoeuvre that she was doing just before the collision.

In the 2015 study of the Parliamentary debates on the *Voyager* collision, it is asserted that the crew of HMAS *Voyager* and HMAS *Melbourne* did their jobs correctly and did not make an error on the night of the collision. The crew of the *Voyager* were in fact watching *Melbourne* and did receive and pass on the signals correctly. The accident, re-examined in 2023 sets out in detail the argument that *Melbourne's* new red flying lights, which had been altered to a starboard direction, overshot *Melbourne's* green navigation light, causing *Voyager's* officer of the watch to order the turn too early. Mr Murphy, representing the navy at the second enquiry points out that this was an honest mistake. For the last 60 years the crews of both ships have been blamed unfairly for the tragedy. Looking at the overall picture, one has to acknowledge that those above Captain Robertson and Captain Stevens, in the Admiralty, who had planned the exercise in the first place, had failed to ensure the exercise was safe. *Melbourne's* lights should have been tested before any ship joined the *Melbourne*. The treatment of the naval personnel at the first royal commission was described by John Jess, (MHR 1960-1972) as "The greatest injustice carried out in Australian service history."

Aftermath

Awards and honours

Chief Petty Officer (Coxswain) Jonathan Rogers DSM was posthumously awarded the George Cross for his actions during the sinking. Recognising that he was too large to fit through the escape hatch, he organised the evacuation of those who could escape, then led those stuck in the compartment in prayers and hymns as they died. In 2013, a division at the RAN's Recruit School was renamed "Rogers Division" in his honour.

The Voyager Disaster



Posthumous Albert Medals for Lifesaving were awarded to Midshipman Kerry Marien and Electrical Mechanic (Warfare) William Condon for their actions in saving other *Voyager* personnel, alongside CPO Rogers, at the cost of their own lives. The awards were listed in the 19 March 1965 issue of the London Gazette, along with one George Medal, five British Empire Medals for Gallantry, and three Queen's Commendations for Brave Conduct for *Voyager* personnel.

On 4 December 2015, it was announced that the support centre for the *Canberra*-class amphibious assault ships would be named after Robertson. Robertson's family and the RSL have called for a formal apology from the Australian government instead, but several government figures have stated that the naming of the centre is a "fitting acknowledgement" of Robertson's career.

Changes to RAN procedures

Following the investigation, changes were made within the RAN to prevent a similar occurrence. Procedures were created for challenging another ship that was seen to be manoeuvring dangerously, or which had transmitted an unclear manoeuvring signal, and rules for escort vessels operating with *Melbourne* were compiled. Among other instructions, these rules banned escorts from approaching within 2,000 yards (1,800 m) of the carrier unless specifically instructed to, and stated that any manoeuvre around *Melbourne* was to commence with a turn away from the carrier. The new rules were applied to all ships scheduled to sail in concert with the carrier, including those of foreign navies.

Compensation claims

Families of those killed in the sinking of *Voyager* attempted to claim compensation for their losses, while survivors tried to make claims for post-traumatic stress and similar ailments. A 1965 High Court ruling prevented armed-forces personnel from suing the government for compensation, although the wife of the dockyard worker killed in the collision was able to make a successful claim. The ruling was overturned in 1982. Cases for compensation were lodged by *Voyager* survivors and their families, and during the 1990s, sailors from *Melbourne* began to make similar legal claims.

Both groups were met with heavy legal opposition from the Australian government, with Commonwealth representatives contending that those making claims were opportunistically trying to blame a single incident for a range of life problems and had fabricated or embellished their symptoms, or were otherwise making not credible claims. In 2007 Peter Covington-Thomas was awarded \$2 million in compensation. By May 2008, 35 cases were still ongoing, two from dependants of *Voyager* sailors killed in the collision, the remainder from *Melbourne* sailors. A further 50 cases had been closed in 2007 following mediation. A further group of 214 compensation cases related to the incident was closed in July 2009. Some cases had been open for more than ten years, costing the government millions of dollars a year in legal costs.

In 2008, the handling of some *Voyager* survivors' cases was investigated by the Law Institute of Victoria, after they made complaints about the discrepancies between what they were awarded and what was received: for

The Voyager Disaster



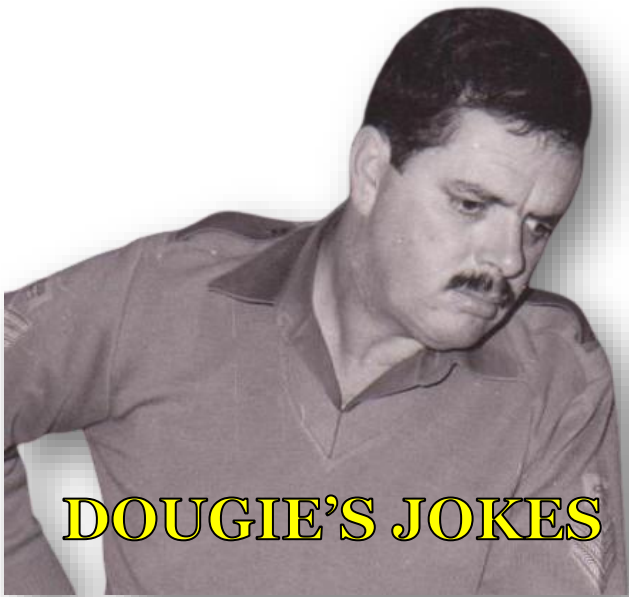
example, one sailor only received \$72,000 from a \$412,000 settlement. All of the complaints were from cases handled by David Forster of Hollows Lawyers, who handled 89 of the 214 total cases; these resulted in a total settlement of \$23 million. Investigations found major accounting issues, including apparent double-charging for work done, and charging full fees after they were discounted or completely written off. In 2010, receivers were called in; this was followed by the cancellation of Forster's law practising certificate in December 2011. In 2014 the High Court dismissed Forster's challenges to the appointment of receivers, and the refusal to issue him with a practising certificate. In 2017 the Supreme Court of Victoria authorised the distribution of \$1.8 million to Forster's former clients.



Editor's Note: April always holds a special place in our hearts, as on ANZAC Day we commemorate those who have paid the supreme sacrifice in the defence of our nation. But our thoughts are also with those who perish in the line of duty during peacetime.

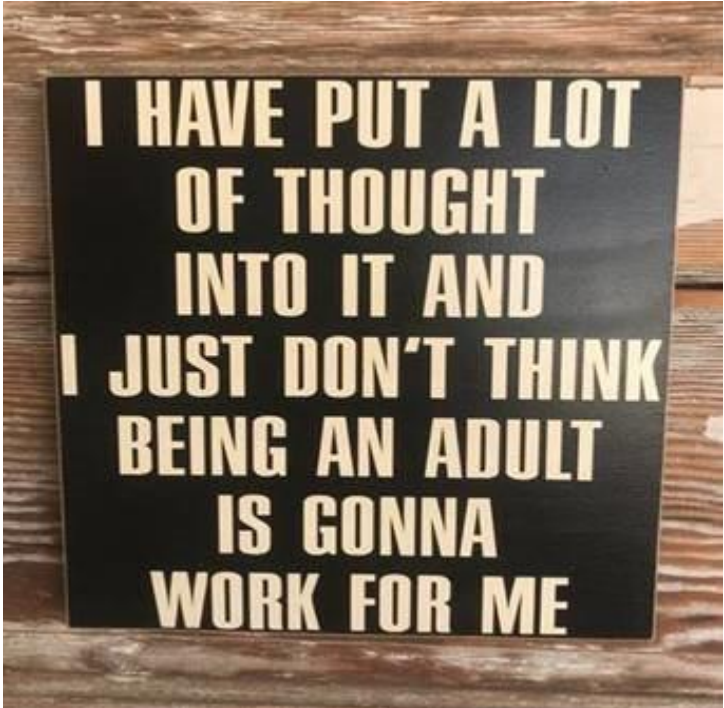
Of the 314 sailors on board the HMAS Voyager 82 were killed. When they play the Last Post on ANZAC Day this year, we will also remember those souls aboard the Voyager who never made it home to their loved ones.

Lest We Forget



DOUGIE'S JOKES

Money talks ... but
all mine ever says is
good-bye.



**MOST PEOPLE
DON'T THINK I'M
AS OLD AS I AM
UNTIL THEY HEAR
ME STAND UP**





Don't Take Life
Too Seriously...
Nobody Gets Out
Alive Anyway

YOU ARE ABOUT
TO EXCEED THE
LIMITS OF MY
MEDICATION

EXERCISE
MAKES YOU LOOK
BETTER NAKED.
— ❖ ❖ ❖ —
SO DOES WINE.
YOUR CHOICE.

I LAUGHED
SO HARD
TEARS
RAN DOWN
MY LEG!

New Arrivals Gift Pack No. 4



Last year the RSAR Association instigated a new initiative to recognise the support given to our soldiers by their wives/partners. We decided to provide a New Arrivals Gift Pack to soldiers whose wives had just given birth. The packs contain such goodies as Body Lotion, Lindt Chocolates, Shampoo, Baby Beans, Socks and Bibs, a Teddy Bear and an RSAR Stubby Holder for Dad. The 4th of these packs has been presented to CPL Jonathon Heath by Bandmaster WO1 David Portakiewicz after Johnno and wife Rachel welcomed little daughter Riley Mia into this world in the early hours of 12th March 2026. Well done all!

The Forgotten War - KAPYONG



IN the moonlight, in the cacophony of noise and smoke and dust, Mick Servos had about as long as it took to count to five before he got his shot in. If he missed, it might have been his last.

The first he would see of the on-rushing Chinese would be shadowy heads and shoulders less than 10m away. In as long as it took the charging attackers to get to him; he had to shoot, and shoot to kill.

Every 20 minutes through the night -- once in an unbroken six-hour stretch -- the massed attacks kept coming at the Australians defending the low hills over the Kapyong Valley.

For the young Servos, a rifleman and forward scout for the 3rd Royal Australian Regiment, he had far too close a view of his Chinese attackers. Unlike General Douglas MacArthur who dismissed Mao's army as "Chinese laundrymen" who would flee at the first encounter with the Allies in Korea, Servos knew better.

Servos, now 84 and living in Brisbane, raises a trembling hand and points towards an imagined ridge.

"They were a tough and clever enemy and they just charged in, wave after wave after wave."

Kapyong was Australia's most vicious battle of the Korean War. Servos and other veterans conjure horrific images to describe a battle that pitted 10,000 Chinese against 700 Australians on one hill and a similar number of Canadians on another. Major Ben O'Dowd, the commander of the Australians on Hill 504, recalls: "Some of them did not carry weapons, just buckets of grenades. They had the job of keeping my Diggers' heads down so their rifleman and machine gunners could rush in and get among us."

Rush in, they did. The Battle of Kapyong was a close-in encounter and often at the end of a bayonet. It lasted from April 23, 1951 until Anzac Day and marked the last major Chinese offensive of the Korean War.

Sixty years later it is mulled over by instructors in military academies: described as "the perfect defensive battle", and yet the heroism of Kapyong elicits a blank response from most Australians. Despite this, Kapyong remains an epic story.

The Chinese and the Australians were both seasoned opponents. Many of the Diggers were World War II veterans from North Africa and the jungles of New Guinea.

The Chinese were veterans of their own bloody civil war, accustomed to bitter winters and rugged terrain. They could survive for days with just a bag of boiled rice tied to their belts. Their stealth was legendary, moving vast distances in darkness and by day sleeping in ditches covered only by the bushes or grass. Massed armies could avoid detection for weeks.

The amazing story of the Battle of Kapyong pitted these two groups against each other. The valley where they fought is a traditional invasion route to Seoul.

If Seoul had fallen to the Chinese, we can only imagine what course history might have taken. Could the Chinese have pushed the foreigners off the Korean Peninsula?

Would the Americans have wrought a nuclear holocaust on China?

This was indeed the ambition of MacArthur. He led the UN forces in Korea, until he was sacked two weeks before Kapyong. US president Harry Truman summed it up like this: "I fired him because he wouldn't respect the authority of the president. I didn't fire him because he was a dumb son-of-a-bitch, although he was, but that's not against the law for generals in the US army. If it was, half to three-quarters of them would be in jail."

The story of the Battle of Kapyong begins in the sunlight of a spring day. The 3rd Royal Australian Regiment was camped in a wood after months of savage winter warfare. The Diggers at rest enjoyed unaccustomed luxuries: hot baths, extra rations, sleeping under canvas and a canteen that provided a beer each day. The merriment they enjoyed in the grove where they camped prompted the men to christen the place Sherwood Forest.

By Anzac Day of 1951, the war was 10 months old. UN troops from 16 countries were sent to Korea after the communist North invaded the democratic South. The Chinese entered the war on the side of the North Koreans in late 1950 and after four largely successful campaigns, forced the UN's predominantly US army back down the length of Korea.

Approaching Anzac Day, the Chinese were expected to mount a decisive offensive but South Korean troops held the front line 18km to the north of Sherwood Forest. The Australians in reserve and enjoying the rest, hoarded their beer rations for an Anzac Day barbecue. They had invited not just local New Zealanders but also a nearby brigade of Turks.

But on April 23, the idyll of Sherwood Forest was broken. The Australians were ordered to survey defensive positions should soldiers of the Republic of Korea -- ROKs -- break. They were sent to a narrow point in the Kapyong Valley to assess a hill called 504 as a potential fallback defence.

The Canadians surveyed an adjacent hill. Their task was innocuous. They dug cursory trenches in the hard shale and awaited orders. Hot meals were brought forward in insulated boxes and by late afternoon the men were reading letters from home, and wondering when they might return to make final adjustments for Anzac Day.

Then they saw something horrifying. Hundreds of South Korean soldiers were fleeing not just down the valley but scrambling up and through the Australian and Canadian lines. Canadian lieutenant Hub Gray, now a resident of Calgary, remembers his dilemma.

"Were they really ROKs or were they Chinese? Were they suddenly going to open fire shooting us in the back? How did we differentiate? What an unholy muddle it all was."

When the ROKs were followed by a terrified column of refugees, O'Dowd expected the worst.

"I knew that Chinese soldiers would mix in with the civilians. They would be in civilian clothes or in uniform, in the half-light and be penetrating to the rear in numbers. I rang the commanding officer and requested permission to open fire with the machineguns, to stop all movement on the road. This was refused on the grounds Republic of Korea soldiers could still be coming through.

"The odd shot rang out and I repeated my request. Nevertheless the panic became justified as firing broke out around battalion HQ. The enemy was at our rear."

O'Dowd and his men were surrounded, as were the Canadians of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry on the hill beside them. To move on Seoul, the Chinese needed to wipe them out.

The Australians took the brunt of the fighting that first night. They were attacked viciously but, despite suffering heavy casualties, they held. They had little food and water, limited ammunition and no mines or barbed wire to place between them and their attackers.

O'Dowd summarized it later as a battle that simply pitted "man against man in the dark".

O'Dowd, now 92, lives in Melbourne, and though a little bent and unsteady on his legs, he still has a fierce look in his eyes. His surviving comrades treat him deferentially. They look off at something far away when asked to describe him. "That O'Dowd, he's a savage!" Savage or not, O'Dowd was obviously one hell of a soldier. He's a man who deflects praise while lavishing it on the men he commanded.

"There was absolutely nothing I could do to help my men, beyond walking up and down, watching for the possibility of a break-in, and shouting encouragement while attacks were in progress."

O'Dowd's commander at Kapyong was lieutenant-colonel Bruce Ferguson. He had set up his command caravan further down the valley but when it was attacked and later in the night attacked again, Ferguson was forced to

move back. His command was intact but beset by problems of communication and uncertainty. The battle was to be largely O'Dowd's.

Daylight revealed the Chinese in the floor of the valley, and O'Dowd called in NZ artillery. Amid this devastation the Australians mounted a bloody bayonet charge (one of several at Kapyong). But it was plain they couldn't survive another night in such an exposed position, and planned a staged night withdrawal along a ridge. But as they waited for nightfall, disaster struck. A US Corsair aircraft lined up Hill 504, believing no one could have survived the attacks of the night before, and hit it with napalm.

Two Australians were killed immediately, and several were seriously burned. Despite this, the Australians gathered up their wounded and began their withdrawal. They engaged the enemy as they went.

The Chinese were so close that as the last of 3RAR crossed the Kapyong River to safety, the Canadians above opened fire with heavy machineguns. O'Dowd ordered the firing stopped, assuming the Canadians were killing his men, but the dead were Chinese (about 80 of them), who "spread-eagled like little water beetles" floated past in the night.

The night-time battle faced by the Canadians was no less savage. Gray is still haunted by it.

"The nauseating smell of death, comrades falling like flies and yet the Chinese did not fail to charge forward into the hell of battle. How did they persuade their troops to commit mass suicide, wave after wave, until their bodies littered the battlefield?"

The Canadians fought through the night as the Australians had done. They, too, fought man-to-man with bayonets fixed. The assaults mounted in ferocity and in the early hours of Anzac Day, one company was almost overrun.

Platoon commander Mike Levy called in NZ artillery on his own men. In their shallow trenches they had a better chance of survival than the Chinese. The Kiwis accurately delivered thousands of shells and the attackers were wiped from the battlefield. Levy claimed the final victory. The Australians, the New Zealanders and the Canadians had triumphed.

As the sun rose, Anzac Day had another set of heroes. The US government awarded the first US Presidential Citation to the 3rd Royal Australian Regiment and the 2nd Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

Remarkably, the heroes of Kapyong returned to an Australia disinterested in their struggle. Australia after World War II already had its heroes and war stories. The Korean conflict was largely brushed aside.

The heroes of Kapyong received little public recognition and found it difficult to gain repatriation benefits. More than one veteran remembers being turned away from RSL clubs because "that wasn't a proper war".

Their fight, their stolid determination and discipline earned them survival but little else.

Sourced from [The Australian 2012](#). Article by Dennis K. Smith.





Yokoi Lived Underground in a Cave He Dug Himself

When illness overtook them there was little they could do. There were no doctors and no medications available. They could only take to their beds, fast, and pray. Countless numbers of them died of dysentery, malaria, and other diseases. The long years of privation told on these men. Hunger, cold, loneliness, and fear were constant companions.

On Guam, Masashi and Minakawa went without speaking to each other for days on end. When they did speak, it was always in whispers so as not to be overheard. They rarely allowed themselves the opportunity to bathe, as the luxury of wading in an open stream or pool might needlessly expose them to an enemy patrol.

Yokoi, on the other hand, lived underground in a cave he had dug himself. The surrounding brush concealed a 20-inch-wide entrance. The opening dropped straight down about eight feet to a 12-foot-long cavern supported by bamboo timbers. At the back of the cave, a small hole led to the surface to allow cooking smoke to escape into the dense jungle. His secluded cave near a year-round stream allowed him to do his laundry regularly. However, he had no access to the sea and its precious salt. He became anemic from lack of this important mineral.

On Lubang, fires were necessarily small and lit only at night or in fog in secluded canyons and under shelter where neither smoke nor flame could be seen. Onoda learned to cure meat from the domestic cattle he was able to shoot.

Valuables such as guns and ammunition were hidden in caves away from the frequently changing camps, so that if an enemy raided the holdouts' shelters or caught them unaware they could still retrieve their important gear.

Changing locations was a frequent chore for the stragglers in the Pacific. On Lubang, Onoda and his men kept moving from place to place to elude enemy patrols and to find fresh supplies of food. They learned to quickly set up shelters. Migration around the mountainous island became seasonal as the survivors harvested local flora. Only during the rainy



season would they stay in one place for any length of time.

The hunted, haunted men dared not travel in the open or during the day for fear of discovery. Every unidentified sound was potential danger. Like animals, their senses sharpened.

Through all their daily privations, these lonely men waited. They waited year after year for the victorious return of the Japanese Army. This belief was part of the Bushido code. The knowledge of Japan's inevitable victory either sustained the survivors or was their desperate hope.

As if they needed reminding that their lives were in constant danger, they were often pursued by armed patrols. One of Onoda's companions, Corporal Shoichi Shimada, was shot to death by a patrol in 1954. His only other companion, Private Kinshichi Kozuka, was killed in 1972. They died violently because during all of the time on the island they were busy engaging in guerrilla warfare.

Every year, the islanders would harvest their rice and leave it in piles to dry. Onoda and his men would then come along and burn the various piles, both as a warning to the islanders not to mess with them and to send a beacon out to sea to let any passing Japanese vessel see that they were waiting and ready for action.

Occasionally they would take terrified farmers or herdsman prisoner and interrogate them. Onoda would fire warning shots at civilians who came too close. The islanders were always keenly aware of the enemy in their presence. When he finally surrendered, Onoda's rifle was in perfect working order. He still had a supply of ammunition that he had meticulously stored in airtight containers and buried in hidden locations.

The local authorities on Lubang became more vigilant and lay in wait for the yearly raids. Kozuka had been living with Onoda for 27 years when he was killed by an island patrol. After Kozuka's death, Onoda was alone. At first he thought he could get by more easily on his own, but he found that the work of survival is much more difficult for one than for two. Yet, he had his orders.

Masashi and Minakawa Both Fully Expected to be Executed

Slowly, the Japanese holdouts in the Pacific either died in their misery or came out of hiding to surrender. One day in May 1960, Masashi and his friend were hunting wild boar when they became separated. Minakawa did not return. After a while, Masashi was frantic with concern.

Two days later, Minakawa showed up. He had changed. He was clean, shaved, and had on new clothing. American soldiers and a Japanese interpreter accompanied him. At that point, Masashi gave up too. He was taken to an American military facility where he enjoyed his first hot shower in 16 years. Layers of caked-on dirt sloughed off him as he luxuriated in the steam.

Both men still expected to be executed, perhaps after a show trial. However, they were soon returned to Japan where they were greeted with cheers of "*Banzai!*" by thousands of their countrymen who met them at the airport. They were reluctant and bewildered heroes. Masashi found it difficult to adjust to Japan after so many years of solitude. Every unidentified noise gnawed at his awareness, keeping him awake and vigilant at night.

Women were an utter mystery to him. For years, he had dreamed and fantasized about them. He had saved castoff American magazines for their pictures of perfect women. He memorized their features and carved their figures out of wood. Back home, however, when a real woman let her intentions be known, Masashi would not oblige her. He could not abide her endless prattle after so much time in solitude speaking rarely and then only in whispers. He had no understanding of women because he had no experience. Adjustment to civilization would take a long time.

After 1960, no new holdouts came out of hiding for over a decade. The world knew they were still out there, and the Japanese government and family members made the trek to former wartime possessions to plead for the survivors to surrender.

Onoda was saturated with leaflets, newspapers, letters, and pictures from family and friends and personal appeals from his own brother over loudspeakers, but he could not let himself believe that all of it was not some sort of elaborate American ruse. In his wartime mind-set, each new appeal for surrender only proved that the enemy was growing more desperate and that ultimate victory was at hand.

In the United States there was an aura of fascination about these mysterious jungle phantoms still holding out against time. On American television, an actor playing a Japanese survivor turned up in a 1965 episode of *Gilligan's Island*. Comedian Bob Newhart developed a parody sketch about a fictitious pair of German soldiers holding out in the Black Forest. Yet, the real survivors kept on living day to day, hoping against hope that they would be rescued instead of captured.

In January 1972, Yokoi came out of his cramped cave at dusk to fish for shrimp in a local stream. He was surprised by two Guam islanders who had also come to fish. In desperation, he lunged at them but was quickly subdued. He gave up quietly, expecting to die. Instead, he too was returned to Japan as a bewildered hero.

His first words upon landing in his homeland were, "I am greatly embarrassed to return." The sentiment echoed the Bushido code, discarded as an anachronism in modern Japan, but remembered with pride. The saying became popular in the rapidly industrializing country.

In his obligatory apology to the Japanese people, he would say, "I am sorry I did not serve his majesty to my satisfaction.... We Japanese soldiers were told to prefer death to the disgrace of getting captured alive."

In 1974, a young Japanese adventurer named Suzuki determined that he would go to Lubang Island and find Onoda after everyone else had failed. He camped out in an area that Onoda was known to frequent and waited. It was not long before the missing soldier came to investigate the intruder, rifle in hand.

"Japan has thrown away its pride as a nation..."

Suzuki told Onoda what he had heard so many times before. The war was over, and he should surrender. Onoda refused. When asked why, he stated his long-held conviction that he had been given orders to remain on the island, harassing the enemy and gathering intelligence. He would not surrender unless he had specific orders from his old chain of command to do so.

Suzuki returned to Japan with pictures of Onoda to prove that he had found him. Then, he went looking for Onoda's superior officers. Remarkably, he was able to locate retired Major Yoshimi Taniguchi, who had given Onoda his original orders. He persuaded Taniguchi to accompany him to Lubang and give Onoda new orders to lay down his arms and surrender.

It worked. On March 5, 1974, Lieutenant Hiro Onoda of the Imperial Japanese Army was ordered to surrender by his commanding officer. In a ceremony on the island, he officially handed over his officer's sword to Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos (who graciously gave it back) and returned to Japan and the status of cult hero. Onoda, too, had trouble adjusting to a modern Japan and accepted his brother's offer to live on his cattle ranch in Brazil.

In 1996, Onoda returned to Lubang to revisit his old haunts, apologize to islanders (he and his fellow holdouts had killed some of the locals over the years), and donate a scholarship of \$10,000 to island children. He would never be able to reconcile himself to modern Japan. In a 1997 speech he said, "At the time of the war, we were all dedicating our lives to the state of Japan, believing we would be enshrined and honored at Yasukuni Shrine (Japan's war memorial) after our deaths. But now Japan has thrown away its pride as a nation...."

Remarkably, Onoda was not the last Japanese soldier to come in from World War II. In December 1974, a holdout named Nakamura Teruo was captured on the Indonesian island of Morotai. He was not Japanese, but a Taiwanese conscript more afraid of his Japanese masters than he was of the Indonesians. Consequently, he did not receive a hero's welcome in Japan, but returned quietly to Taiwan where his arrival highlighted the wartime activities of the so-called Takasago Volunteers.



Glenn Barnett is a historian and the author of two historical novels. He is currently a member of the adjunct faculty at Cerritos College in Norwalk, California.



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PADRES PONDERINGS

There is something profoundly moving about a person's willingness to lay down their life for others. It reflects a hope that reaches beyond self and a belief that the sacrifice of today can help secure a better tomorrow.

As we reflect on the legacy of the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli, we are reminded of the courage and sacrifice of those who stepped onto unfamiliar shores, facing uncertainty, hardship, and the very real prospect of death. They did not fully know what lay ahead, yet they went forward with a deep sense of duty, loyalty, and commitment to something greater than themselves. Their sacrifice has helped shape the freedoms we enjoy today and continues to define the spirit of service within our nation.

The ANZAC story is one of mateship, endurance, and selflessness. It stands as a powerful example of individuals willing to give everything in the hope of a better world, for their families, their nation, and generations to come. Their legacy calls us not only to remember, but to live with the same sense of purpose and care for one another.

At this time of year, we are also drawn to reflect on the sacrifice on that first Easter. It is here that the meaning of sacrifice is revealed in the life of Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of John, we read, "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). These are not simply words to be remembered; they are a truth lived out in Jesus' journey to the cross.

I feel it is important that we honour both sacrifices rightly. The sacrifice of the ANZACs deserves our deepest respect, gratitude, and remembrance. At the same time, the sacrifice of Jesus stands uniquely as the foundation of Christian hope. One reminds us of the cost of freedom in this world; the other reveals the depth of God's love for this world.

As we take time to remember those who have served, we are invited to consider how we should respond. Sacrifice calls not only for gratitude, but for action. It challenges us to live beyond ourselves, to pursue peace, to show compassion and to contribute to a better world within our own spheres of influence.

As a chaplain, I have the privilege of walking alongside those who serve and their families celebrating their moments of success and standing together through times of loss. I am continually reminded that sacrifice is not only something remembered in history, but something lived out each day in our resilience, in our commitment, and in our willingness to stand together.

"There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends." For some, this is seen in the ultimate sacrifice and for others it is expressed through a lifetime of service, loyalty, and devotion.

So let's honour those who have given much, and to the One whose hope strengthens us in service and reminds us that no act of love is ever wasted.

Padre *Stephen Albrecht*

Chaplain 10th/27th Battalion RSAR

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