

**A LITTLE KNOWN STORY:  
WORLD WAR TWO WEST PAPUA**

**A FEATURE OF 2017 SAMPARI  
ART EXHIBITION & SALE FOR  
WEST PAPUA**

# The Geo-Strategic Background

1801 – 1941

**Why is this little discussed theatre of operations in the wider drama of WWII important for Australians?**

**First, it proves that the dark side of world affairs can come to Australia, that life is more than, as Donald Horne put it, ‘a street in the suburbs were each house keeps to itself.’<sup>1</sup> The big finance, political and strategic imperatives that ignited war in the Pacific are mirrored in the world situation today.**

**Second, some interest in these campaigns warns of the folly of inattention to current events and ignorance of history. After WWII the alarm of the Japanese occupying much of New Guinea was apparent to Australians and during the 1950s and 60s the exclusion of potentially hostile powers from New Guinea was Australian Government policy. Bernard Callinan who commanded the 2/2 Independent Company, concludes his account of guerrilla war in Timor with the warning that the island ‘has the same strategical importance to Australia, and it is vital that the island should not be occupied by an enemy power.’<sup>2</sup> These views, of course, were relinquished after the war, in accordance with a US policy that supported the Indonesian military occupation of Western New Guinea and East Timor.**

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<sup>1</sup> D. Horne, *The Lucky Country*, Penguin, 2005 (first pub 1964), p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> B . Callinan, *Independent Company*, William Heinemann, Melbourne, 1953, p. 288.

**Third and finally, it is no bad thing – odious jingoism and crocodile tears aside – for Australians to be reminded of our potential for defence. The British Field Marshall Slim, who changed defeat into victory in beating back a determined Japanese invasion of India, stated: ‘Some of us may forget that of all the Allies it was Australian soldiers who first broke the spell of invincibility of the Japanese Army.’<sup>3</sup>**

- **1801-1815: US Naval/marine operations against Barbary pirates, Mediterranean shore.**
- **1823: Monroe Doctrine to bar European encroachment in Western Hemisphere.**
- **1853: Commodore Perry, USN, forces open Japan.**
- **1890s: US annexes Hawaii from the British and conquers Philippines from Spain.**
- **1908: USN Great White Fleet visits Sydney during world tour.**
- **1914-18: Wall Street moves towards world financial domination at expense of City of London.**
- **1920s: US War Plans ORANGE (against Japan), RED (Britain), SCARLET (US and NZ).**

**Now we set the stage for WWII in New Guinea. American assertiveness on the world stage preceded their 1941 entry into WWII. US naval squadrons and marines conducted anti-piracy operations along the southern Mediterranean shore between 1801 and 1815. In 1823 Washington announced the Monroe Doctrine to bar European powers’ influence in the Americas. Commodore Perry forced open Japan in 1853. By the 1890s the Americans had forced the British out of Hawaii and established a global power projection naval base there, Pearl Harbour; and seized the Philippines from Spain. During WWI, Wall Street planned the American usurpation of global financial domination from the City of London.**

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<sup>3</sup> Field Marshal Slim, cited in: G. Long, *The Six Years War*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1973, p. 259.

- **1930s: US CFR proposes linking Western hemisphere with US dominated Pacific.**
- **1933-34: Great Depression. US oil and gold special interests present in US govt advisory bodies.**
- **1936: Discovery of ore deposits at future Freeport Mine. Future CIA chief Allan Dulles involved in exploring company.**
- **1941: Henry Luce proposes ‘the American century’**

The Depression of the 1930s saw fluctuation in the Gold Standard (and hence its price) with 24 nations including the UK taking their currencies off the gold standard. In 1934 Franklin Delano Roosevelt effectively nationalised all American gold and lodged reserves in the US Treasury, then devalued the greenback to \$35 per fine ounce gold – an arrangement that remained until the end of the gold standard under Nixon during the recession of the 1970s.

Before WWII, the future CIA chief, Allan Dulles, focused on the Netherlands East Indies and was instrumental in forming the exploring company that discovered the mountain of ore that would become the Freeport Gold and Copper Mine. In the 1930s, its significance, to those in the know, was that it would ‘utterly change’ the future of the territory.<sup>4</sup>

In 1933 Roosevelt formed the National Recovery Administration (NRA). One of the troika guiding NRA policy was Walter Teagle of Rockefeller’s Standard Oil, who would have been as well informed as the Japanese on the oil potential of what is now Indonesia. In the quest for Wall Street’s ‘Grand Area’ the Council of Foreign Relations in the 1930s proposed linking the entire Western Hemisphere with a US dominated Pacific.<sup>5</sup> Ten months before Pearl Harbour, ‘Henry Luce, publisher of *Time* and *Life* magazines and

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<sup>4</sup> Poulgrain, *Incubus*, pp. 6-7.

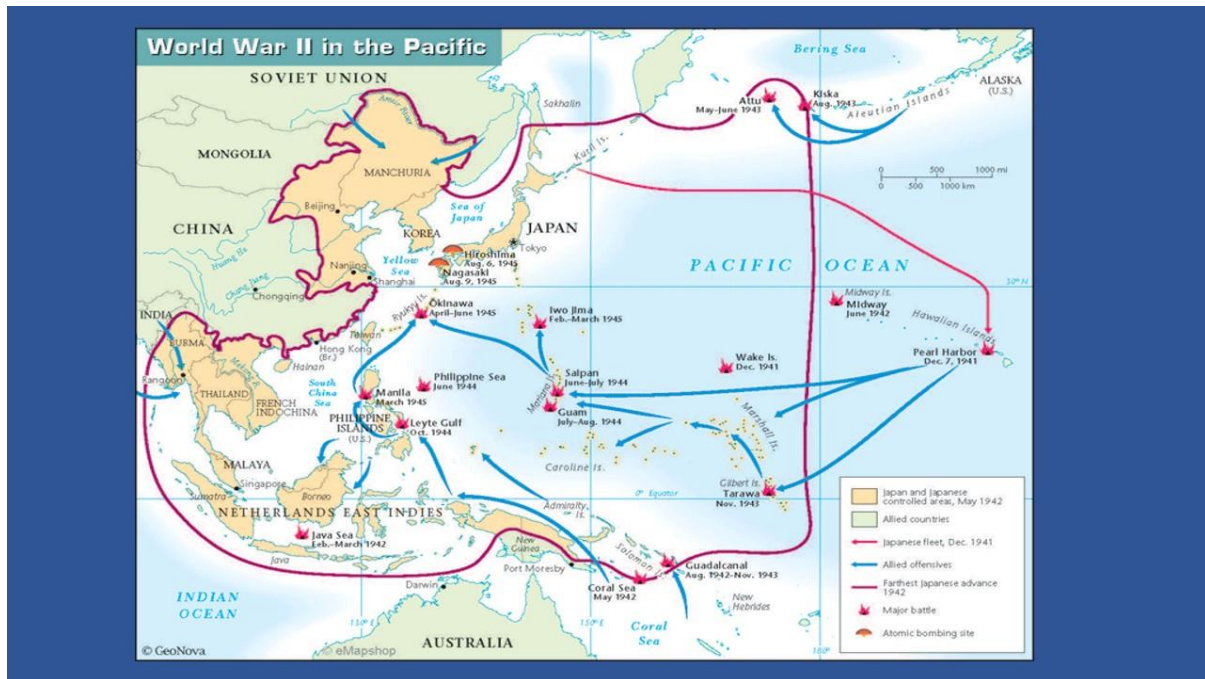
<sup>5</sup> Engdahl, *Gods*, p. 142.

**‘a well-connected member of the policy elite’, proclaimed the American Century.<sup>6</sup> That is not to say Allied operations in New Guinea were driven solely or even mainly by such commercial considerations, but they doubtless formed an undercurrent of US national planning.**

**Militarily the US after WWI considered Japan the most likely adversary in the Pacific. From 1924 War Plan ORANGE was predicated on the US navy fighting its way across the Pacific to relieve beleaguered garrisons in the Philippines. The Gallipoli disaster had persuaded most military planners that contested amphibious lodgements were impossible. Nonetheless the marines developed the landing craft and other amphibious equipment along with the tactics to use them. We see the results in photographs of this splendid exhibition.**

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<sup>6</sup> Engdahl, Gods of Money, p. 141.



The US strategy against Japan was a two-pronged assault underpinned by superior military intelligence. The northern thrust under Admiral Nimitz was a naval operation straight across the Pacific from the US theatre centre of gravity in Hawaii. The armada carried its own floating army, air cover and logistics. The southern prong was McArthur's island hopping from bases in Australia. This was primarily an army-led effort supported by short range amphibious operations under air and naval cover. Despite the multi-dimensional nature of modern war – space, much increased air-power, drones, cyber and globalised economic and financial warfare – these two American terrestrial approaches to Asia remain critical. Thus their bases in Australia, particularly Darwin.

The Japanese strategy was a misjudged one of deterrence. Their plan was to establish an outer perimeter of island air bases to keep the Allies at bay, through the threat of inflicting crippling disproportionate casualties which would have a political cost in Allied states. The bases were too far apart to provide mutual support and Tokyo underestimated the offensive power the Americans were able to concentrate against each in turn after gaining sea control and air superiority. Thus the island air bases and the Allied seizure of them to use against Japan were the decisive points of the Pacific War.

While the Anglosphere ties are symbolically close, their importance should not be overestimated. A common language did not prevent the Boston Tea Party or the

**American Civil War. The Americans are realist and nationalistic. From the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Washington formulated, among others, War Plan RED against the British as the Americans in the 1920s cooperated with the UK to balance Japanese naval forces in the western Pacific. An auxiliary Plan SCARLET was drafted against Australia and New Zealand. By the time the guidelines of War Plan ORANGE were brought to bear on Japan, the US had a dismal view of Australian fighting spirit and capability.<sup>7</sup> Even in the war with Japan, tensions with the British were evident, one of Roosevelt's closest advisers noting: 'To hear people talk...you would think the British were our potential enemies.'<sup>8</sup>**

**Such was the geo-strategic background to the war Ross will now explain.**

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<sup>7</sup> See, Hastings, M. *Nemesis: The Battle for Japan, 1944-45*, Harper Press, 2007, Chapter 14.

<sup>8</sup> Hastings, op. cit., p. 469.

**West Papua  
Nederlands Nieuw Guinea  
(or Dutch New Guinea)  
in World War II**

**The Exhibition**

**Ladies & Gentlemen. Good afternoon.**

**This exhibition is about the war against the Japanese in West Papua, or as it was then, Netherlands Nieuw Guinea, or Dutch New Guinea. It was of course just part of the War in the Pacific. This presentation aims to put the West Papua Exhibition in context.**

**What and where is West Papua? The next four slides are maps showing a very brief history of New Guinea.**



## Papua & New Guinea

**Pre-WW1**



Prior to WW1 the Netherlands, Germany and Britain were the colonial powers in New Guinea. They had been the colonial powers for about 30 years prior to WW1.

At the outbreak of WW1 in 1914 New Zealand captured Samoa from the Germans and German New Guinea fell to Australia.



## Japanese Occupation in WWII

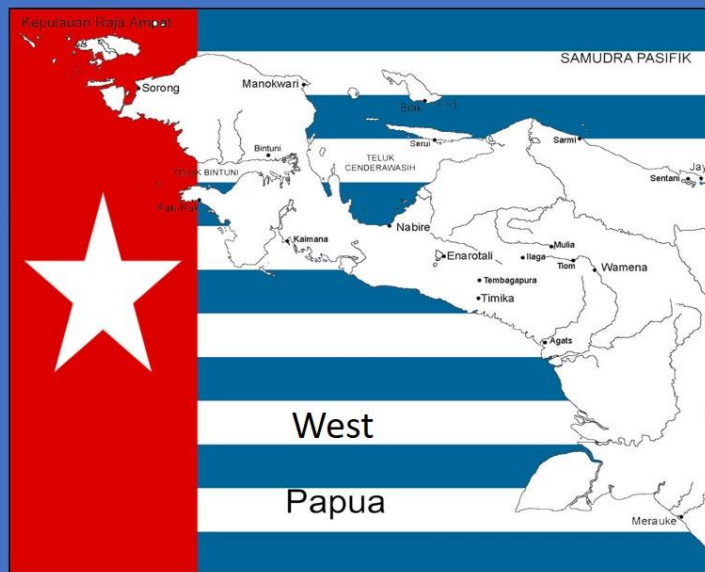
January to March 1942

The New Guinea campaign of the Pacific War lasted from January 1942 until the end of the war in August 1945. Japan had captured most of New Guinea by March 1942, except for the South and two allied bases, at Merauke and Port Moresby.



2017

The situation today, 72 years after WW2, and 54 Years after Indonesia gained possession of Dutch New Guinea, is that the previous Dutch territory now comprises two provinces of Indonesia, PAPUA and WEST PAPUA.



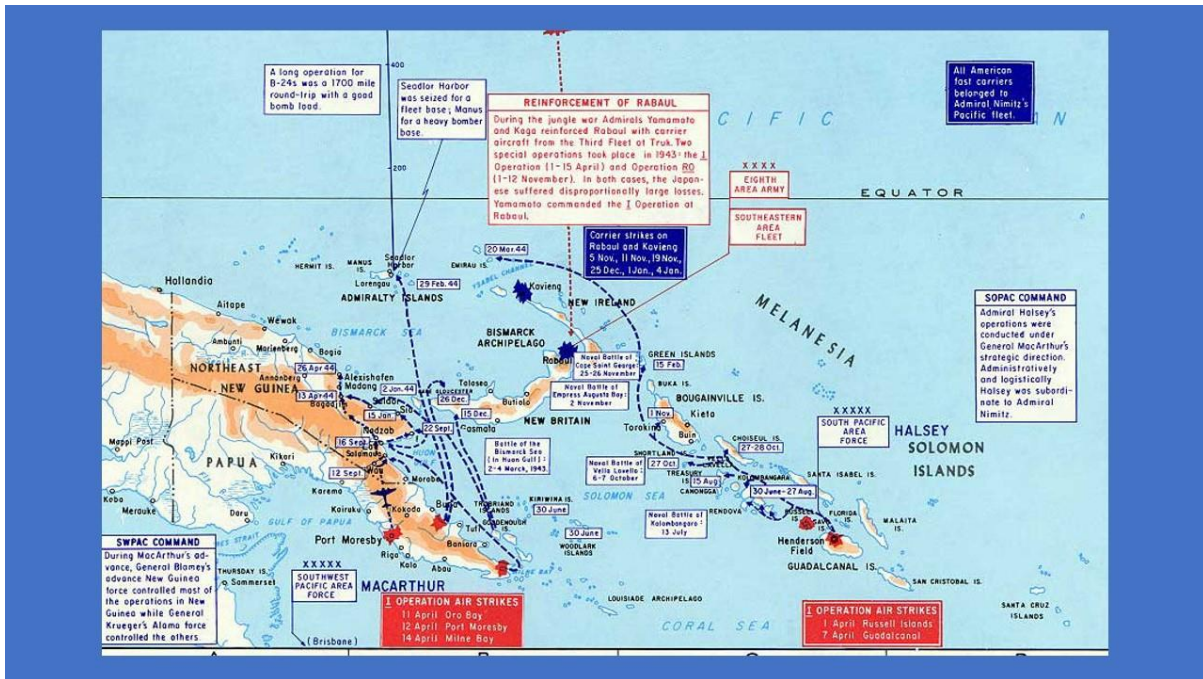
### The Indigenous West Papuan Perspective

However, the PAPUA MERDEKA or FREE PAPUA movement sees West Papua as a free and independent nation under its own Morning Star Flag. Their struggle for independence continues and this SAMPARI Art Exhibition and associated events are in support of that struggle.

## The Exhibition in Context World War II in the Pacific

- 7/8 December 1941 - Pearl Harbour, Wake Island, Guam, Philippines, Thailand, Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore
- 8 December 1941 - Britain, USA and New Zealand declared war on Japan
- 8 December 1941 - Netherlands declared war on Japan
- 9 December 1941 - Australia declared war on Japan
- 17 December 1941 - Japan invaded Dutch East Indies
- 19 February 1942 - Darwin bombed
- January to March 1942 - New Guinea Occupied
- 1942 to 1945 - The Allied Offensive

**The next slide shows the war on the Australian side of New Guinea. Let's not bother with the detail but look at the big picture in Papua New Guinea and the islands before we move on to the war in Dutch New Guinea.**



This map shows the progression of the campaign in Papua Guinea and adjacent islands:

- 7/8 May 1942 Coral Sea (HMAS Australia, HMAS Hobart)
  - Jul – Nov 1942 Kokoda - Buna
  - Aug – Sep 1942 Milne Bay
  - Aug 1942 – Feb 1943 Guadalcanal
  - 9 Aug 1942 Savo Island (in the Solomon Sea) – (HMAS Australia, HMAS Hobart, HMAS Canberra)
  - 2/4 Mar 1943 Bismark Sea (prevented reinforcement of Huon from Rabaul)
  - Apr – Sep 1943 Huon Peninsula (Nadzab, Salamaua, Lae, Finschafen)
  - Aug 1943 The Bismark Archipelago (New Britain & New Ireland) – Rabaul bombed
- The original plan was to attack the main Japanese HQ and base at Rabaul. But that was discarded and Rabaul was contained, isolated and bypassed. That decision avoided thousands of Allied casualties.
- Nov 1943 – Nov 1944 Bougainville (US troops)
  - Feb 1944 The Admiralty Islands (Los Negros and Manus)
  - Mar – Apr 1944 Wewak: Bombed, isolated and bypassed.
  - Apr 1944 Aitape & Dutch New Guinea – Hollandia, Wakte, Biak, Noemfoor, Sansapor
  - Nov 1944 – Aug 1945 Bougainville (Australian troops)

**THE EXHIBITION**  
**Nederlands Nieuw Guinea**  
**(After Papua New Guinea and on the way to the**  
**Philippines from Papua New Guinea)**

- **1942 to 1945 – MERAUKE Allied Base**
- **1942 to 1945 – Dutch and Indigenous Resistance**
- **22 April to 30 July 1944 – US, Australian & Dutch campaign across the north of Dutch New Guinea.**

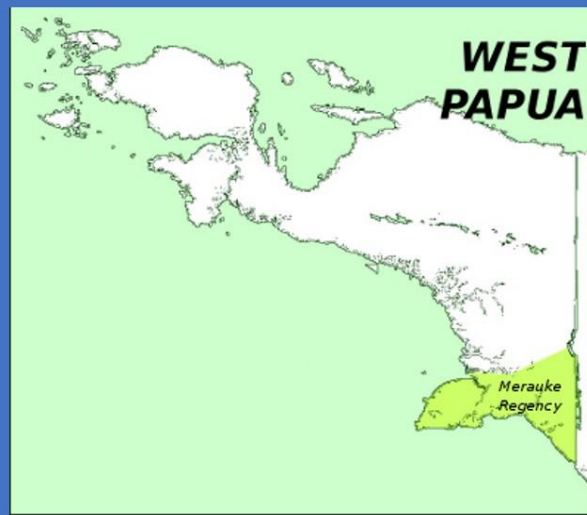
**West Papua in World War 2**

**This Exhibition is about what was happening in the other half, in Dutch New Guinea, from 1942 to 1944, and also about what happened next, in 1944, after those battles in the Solomon Islands and in Papua New Guinea.**

**While there was still fierce fighting (or mopping up) going on in Papua New Guinea and in the islands, in April 1944 the main US invasion forces, supported by Australian naval and air, moved on to Dutch New Guinea.**

**But before we get to that 1944 invasion let's look at what was happening in Dutch New Guinea from 1942 to 1944.**

# MERAUKE



## The Base at Merauke

**Throughout the campaigns in Papua New Guinea & Dutch New Guinea / Dutch, Australian and a few US forces maintained a major base at Merauke on the South coast of Dutch New Guinea, just as a major base was maintained at Port Moresby on the South coast of Papua.**

**There were about 7,000 troops stationed at Merauke, mostly Australian Army and Air Force.**

**The base maintained an allied presence in Dutch New Guinea, it was part of the early warning system for the defence of northern Australia, and it provided a forward airfield from which raids against the Japanese were launched. It provided protection from Japanese invasion of Papua New Guinea from the West.**

**It was also used to support Dutch and West Papuan behind-the-lines groups.**

**In April 1944 Australia began to plan an offensive from Merauke along the South coast of Dutch New Guinea, but the offensive did not eventuate.**

## **The Allied Base at Merauke Some of the Main Combat Units**

- **62nd Australian Infantry Battalion (Merauke Regiment)**
- **1st Nederlands East Indies Fusilier Company**
  
- **Merauke Force (Australian 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade – Militia)**
  - Merauke Force & Area HQ
  - 62<sup>nd</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion
  - 20<sup>th</sup> Motorised Regiment (replaced 62 Bn – Feb 1944)
  - B Company, 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Machine Gun Battalion
  - 31/51<sup>st</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion
  - A Company, 26<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion
  - Airfield Construction Engineers

The importance of Merauke was in its airfield from which air operations would be launched. It required a large defensive force of infantry who also patrolled into no-man's land to give depth to the defence of Merauke.

## **The Allied Base at Merauke Some of the Main Combat Units (Continued)**

- **52<sup>nd</sup> Composite Anti-Aircraft Regiment**
- **2/9<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment**
- **Communications Units**
- **Engineer Units**
- **No 72 Wing RAAF**
  - No 12 Squadron RAAF (Maritime Patrols, Anti-Submarine & Convoy Escort)
  - No 84 Fighter Squadron RAAF
  - No 86 Fighter Squadron RAAF
  - RAAF Radar Stations
- **No 120 Squadron, Dutch East Indies Air Force**
- **Torres Strait Force (Indigenous)**

Field artillery and anti-aircraft artillery, Radar stations, and air squadrons. Additionally there were engineers, communications units, logistics, hospitals. Some US Naval, Army and Air units.

A small Dutch police and administrative presence, in addition to their infantry and air force.

And notably a small detachment of Torres Strait Islanders from the Torres Strait Battalion of the Torres Strait Force – the only indigenous unit raised by Australia.

## **(2) The Resistance and Behind-the-Lines Forces in Nederlands Nieuw Guinea**

- **Dutch stay behind groups and indigenous Papuan resistance**
- **Operation WHITING - Dutch/Australian Coastwatchers landed at BENA BENA in PNG, heading for HOLLANDIA (captured before they got there). February to October 1943.**
- **New Guinea Air Warning Wireless Company (Australian) Spotter Station behind enemy lines at HOLLANDIA. 1944.**

There were a number of SECRET units operating in Dutch New Guinea throughout the War.

### **Resistance**

I will cover the Dutch, Indonesian and Papuan resistance in more detail later.

**Operation WHITING** – An operation by M Special Unit (Coastwatchers) in 1943, mounted by the Netherlands East Indies Forces Intelligence Service to insert a group near Hollandia.

**2 x Dutch, 2 x Indonesians & 1 x Dutch Australian**

They inserted at Bena Bena on the north coast of Papua New Guinea to make their way 100's of miles by sea and land to Hollandia. They made it to Aitape in PNG (near the border with Dutch New Guinea) before they were captured and killed.

### **New Guinea Air Warning Wireless Company**

Was an independent TOP SECRET Australian Army signals unit. Established in 1942, partly to fill in the gaps in the Coastwatcher network. It performed the same functions at the Coastwatcher network including rescuing downed Allied aircrew.

By the end of the war it had established 150 stations operating behind enemy lines, including in Dutch New Guinea in 1944 to support Allied operations.

### **Unsuccessful Coastwatcher Landing at Hollandia**

In March 1944 about a month before the Aitape / Hollandia battles there was an unsuccessful attempt to insert a Coastwatcher group behind enemy lines at Hollandia. More details towards the end of the presentation [2<sup>nd</sup> to last photograph].



## **(2) Dutch & Indigenous Papuan Resistance**

- A total of ten Dutch resistance groups were dropped behind Japanese lines to organise indigenous resistance and espionage.
- 1942 - 1944. "Oaktree" Party of Dutch, Indonesian and Papuans led by Captain Jean Victor de Bruijen operated in the central highlands and was supplied from Merauke.
- Operation CRAYFISH (26<sup>th</sup> February 1944)
- 1942 - 1944. Another group (initially 62 Dutch and 17 Papuans) operated in Vogelkop under Willemsz Geerom (who was captured and executed 1<sup>st</sup> April 1943), then under Sergeant Mauritz Christiaan Kokkelink.

### **Dutch and Indigenous Resistance**

I have found evidence that up to ten Dutch-led groups either stayed behind after the Japanese invasion, or were later inserted behind the lines. For this exhibition we have information about three of them.

There may well be more information available in archives in the Netherlands.

### **Oaktree**

The Oaktree Party is well documented in a 1947 book about its leader, Captain Jan Victor de Bruijn / Jungle Pimpernel. This group did not engage in armed operations against the Japanese although the Japanese were aware of its existence and tried to track it down. The Oaktree Party very successfully used some of its Papuan members to collect intelligence about Japanese locations and movements. It reported by radio to the Dutch HQ in Australia. It was supplied from Merauke.

### **Crayfish**

This was a successful operation to insert by parachute another Dutch officer and Radio operator to join the Oaktree Party.

### **Geerom Group**

This group was actively hunted by the Japanese and fought a number of battles. It suffered significant casualties. It included a number of indigenous Moluccan people (Maluku) including a teenage girl.

## **(2) Dutch & Indigenous Papuan Resistance (continued)**

- 1944 - Mandochan Brothers led by Jan van Eechoud operated in the mountains behind Manokwari (Vogelkop). Jacob Rumbiak's uncle was a fighter in this group. He was wounded and captured but escaped.
- PVK (Papuan Battalion) of 400 Papuans, formed in 1944 under Dutch command, claimed it killed 2,119 Japanese and took 249 prisoners during mopping up operations in August – October 1944. PVK included members of the Oaktree and Mandochan groups.

### **Jan van Eechoud**

Van Eechoud was Commissioner of Police at Manokwari in Dutch New Guinea. After the Japanese invasion in March/April 1942 he escaped into the interior to the Idenburg River Post.

He was evacuated on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1942 to Australia where he worked with the Dutch intelligence services.

After the successful US attacks in 1944 he returned to New Guinea and led a group operating against the remaining Japanese.

### **The Papuan Battalion**

The exhibition contains quite a bit of interesting information about this Dutch-led indigenous battalion, raised after the Allied landings in Dutch New Guinea. The exhibition describes its activities against the Japanese, and its history after the war.

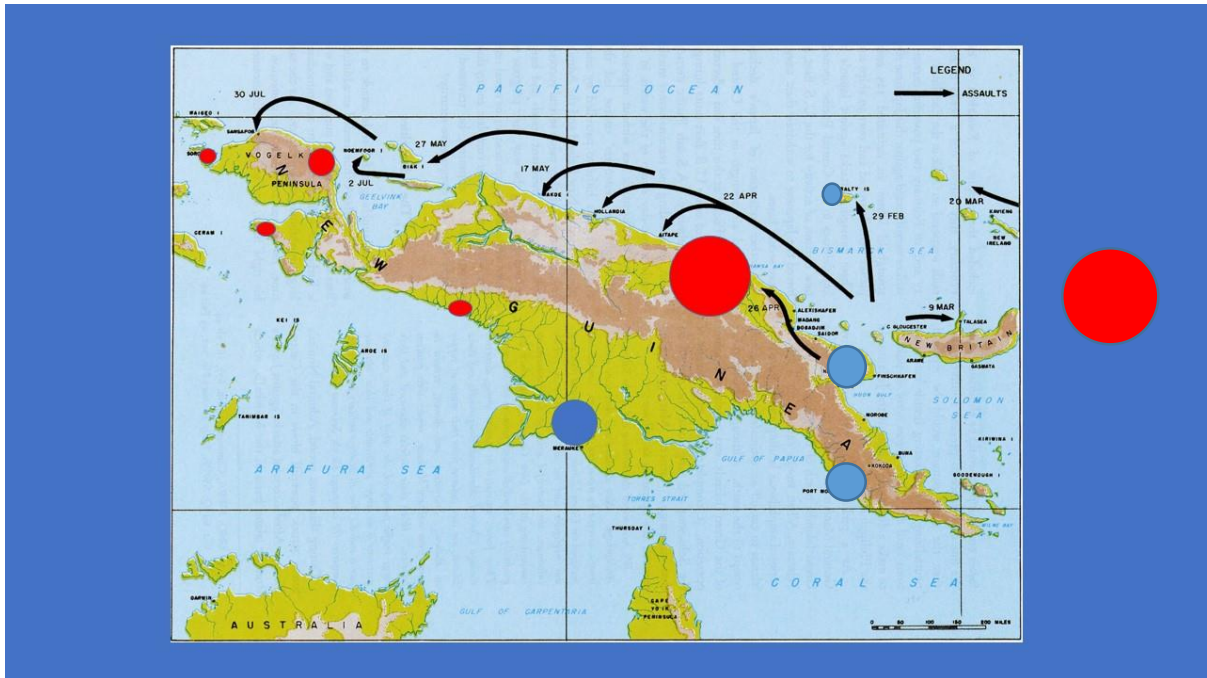
### **(3) The Campaign Across the North of Dutch New Guinea - 1944**

- **22 April - Aitape / Hollandia**
- **17 May - Wakde Island / Sarmi / Lone Tree Hill / Maffin Bay**
- **27 May - Biak Island**
- **2 July - Noemfoor Island**
- **30 July - Cape Sansapor / Vogelkop**

**In 1944 General MacArthur turned his attention to Dutch New Guinea. We should remember that his immediate aim was to liberate the Philippines from the Japanese. He was the Commander of US Forces in the Philippines when it fell to the Japanese. He famously vowed ‘I shall return’.**

**This campaign across the North of Dutch New Guinea was a stepping stone to the Philippines. It consisted of the five main battles listed in the slide.**

**NOTE that Aitape is actually part of Papua New Guinea but it was part of the campaign across the North.**



### Port Moresby & Merauke, Huon Peninsula & Manus Island

The Allied bases at Port Moresby, Merauke, Huon Peninsula & Manus Island are marked by the blue circles.

### The Operations

Aitape/Hollandia, Maffin Bay Area, Biak, Noemfoor, Sansapor.

These operations from April to July 1944, rolling or cartwheeling along the north coast of Dutch New Guinea, are presented in some detail in the Exhibition.

### Rabaul

The red circle off to the right of the map marks the large Japanese HQ and base of over 100,000 troops at Rabaul. It was contained, isolated and bypassed.

### Wewak / Hansa Bay / Madang

The large red circle on the map marks the main Japanese base in the Wewak / Hansa Bay / Madang area contained, isolated and bypassed.

### Bypassing Wewak

“The decision to jump eight hundred and fifty miles to Hollandia was one of the great strategic decisions of the Pacific War. It did indeed advance our progress by many months. The base became invaluable to future operations”.

“There were other cogent arguments for this leap into the unknown. It would by-pass and isolate the reinforced Jap strongholds at Madang, Hansa Bay, and Wewak. It would cut across their supply lines, since Hollandia was a depot from which a great enemy army lower down the coast was fed and munitioned. It would place all north-eastern New Guinea under Allied domination and provide us with excellent naval and air bases for future operations”.

Eichelberger, General Robert L.. Our Jungle Road To Tokyo.

### Manokwari

The base at Manokwari was contained, isolated and bypassed.

### Sorong, Fak Fak & Kokonao

Other bases were left in place.

# War History

- The commanders write their personal recollections, often based on their official records and diaries.
  - Journalists write popular accounts.
  - The dry, factual official histories are written.
  - A trickle or a flood of personal memoirs (and websites today).
  - War historians write their books, often to coincide with the anniversary of a battle or campaign. Journalists write more popular histories.
  - Film makers create heroic war history.
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- Then 30 to 50 years after the event SECRET and TOP SECRET Intelligence archives are declassified and we discover the actual history, or as much as we are able.

## Breaking the Codes

Beginning in WW1 and continuing into the period before WW2 British and American Signals Intelligence organisations developed a new TOP SECRET source of intelligence, based on the interception of the new technology, widely used – the radio or wireless.

This included radio direction finding, traffic analysis, and the breaking of codes and ciphers.

British codebreakers were working on German codes and ciphers, and others in Europe: Italy; Hungary; Romania; Bulgaria; and the Soviet Union, as well as those of neutral countries such as Sweden, Spain and Portugal. The codes and ciphers of a number of non-European countries were also under the scrutiny of the British codebreakers, and the most important by far of these was Japan.

In fact the British and US codebreakers had been intercepting and reading Japanese communications from the 1920's, long before the outbreak of the war against Japan.

## The Secret War in the Pacific

Signals Intelligence made a vital contribution to the Allied success in the War in the Pacific. However this aspect of history was a closely kept secret for at least 30 years after the War. Some details have only recently been released.

This was the contribution of British, American, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand men and women who used radio direction finding to locate Japanese forces, who intercepted and analysed Japanese wireless traffic to help forecast their intentions, and who applied their sheer brilliance to the task of breaking Japanese codes and ciphers.

Based on what we now know / the history of the War in the Pacific / and the history of the war in Dutch New Guinea / is still being re-written.

## **A Campaign Shaped by Signals Intelligence (SIGINT)**

- **Central Bureau** – Joint US, Australian, New Zealand & Dutch Army & Air Force TOP SECRET radio direction finding, radio intercept and codebreaking organisation. Reported to General MacArthur.
- **Fleet Radio Unit Melbourne (FRUMEL)** – Joint US & Australian Naval TOP SECRET radio direction finding, radio intercept and codebreaking organisation. Reported to Admiral Nimitz.
- **Wireless Intercept (Y) Units** in Australia (16) and with forward troops

Throughout WW2 against the Japanese some of their codes and ciphers continued to be broken.

After General MacArthur established his HQ in Australia two new joint US/Australian/New Zealand codebreaking organisations were set up – Central Bureau comprising Army and Air Force and reporting to MacArthur, and Fleet Radio Unit Melbourne (FRUMEL) reporting to USN Admiral Nimitz. An extensive network of intercept stations, including in New Zealand.

One of the most famous and most accomplished of the codebreakers at FRUMEL was Eric Nave, an Australian naval officer who transferred to the British Navy in the 1920's when they discovered his excellent facility in the Japanese language and his extraordinary codebreaking skill. He served with the Royal Navy in London, Hong Kong and Singapore, before he returned to Australia to recover from a tropical illness. / Australia contrived to keep him, and his expertise, here in Melbourne / then Brisbane / for the duration of the war.

Nave was breaking Japanese naval codes from 1925 onwards.

This whole organisation was classified TOP SECRET and very few ever knew about its existence or its work. It remained highly classified until at least 30 years after the war. This UK, US, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Signals Intelligence network was formalised after the war in the UKUSA Agreement / and became what we know today as the "Five Eyes" Network.

## **The Impact of Signals Intelligence (SIGINT)**

- Japanese codes and ciphers were broken and messages read
- MacArthur knew Japanese locations, strengths & intentions
- He also knew what the Japanese thought his plans were
- Knowing that, he decided to bypass the major Japanese base area at Madang /Wewak and to capture the lightly defended bases at Aitape and Hollandia
- Signals Intelligence allowed him to deceive Japanese commanders about his intentions and to cripple Japanese naval and air assets before launching Operation RECKLESS at AITAPE and HOLLANDIA

The successes in breaking Japanese naval and air codes resulted in several victories by Admiral Nimitz and the joint US/Australian forces under General MacArthur. For example.

### **MO/Port Moresby**

A Japanese seaborne invasion of Port Moresby was disrupted on 7/8 May 1942 in the Battle of the Coral Sea, due mostly to signals intelligence.

The traffic analysts and codebreakers gave early warning of the Japanese plan for an amphibious attack of Port Moresby a month before it was to be launched. Two weeks before the attack they provided full details of the plan to General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz.

Nine days later on 2 May 1942 the first Coastwatcher report was received. Another was received a day later.

On 5 May 1942 a reconnaissance plane was sent to fly over the invasion fleet to deceive the Japanese that they had been found by air recon rather than by other means. That was a deception often employed to hide the fact that Japanese communications were being read.

On 7/8<sup>th</sup> May the attack was repulsed in the Battle of the Coral Sea.

### **MI/Midway**

Port Moresby was the first leg of the grand Japanese plan to complete their control of the Pacific. The destruction of the US Fleet at Midway Island was the second leg. The Battle of Midway on 4-7<sup>th</sup> June 1942 enabled the US Fleet to inflict serious damage on the Japanese Fleet and was a turning point in the campaign for supremacy on the sea. That US victory was also made possible by early warning by the codebreakers as much as two months before the battle.

### The Third Leg

Port Moresby was the first leg of the plan, hatched months before the simultaneous invasions of 7/8 December 1941. Midway was the second.

The third leg was to capture Fiji, Samoa and New Caledonia. As a result of the Japanese failures to capture Port Moresby and to destroy the US Fleet at Midway, the plan to capture Fiji, Samoa and New Caledonia was abandoned.

The defeat of that three-pronged plan was enabled by the early warning provided by the codebreakers.

### Bismarck Sea March 1943

The destruction of a Japanese convoy off New Guinea in the March 1943 battle of the Bismarck Sea had its origin in the interception of Japanese messages.

Two months earlier, FRUMEL and Central Bureau picked up the first signs of a major Japanese attempt to reinforce the garrison at Lae as a prelude to striking south towards Port Moresby. The details were confirmed from intercepts a month before the battle.

### The Buildup at Wewak

The Japanese Water Transport Code was broken in April 1943 by a British and US collaboration in New Delhi, enabling the codebreakers to monitor from May through to August 1943 a massive buildup of combat power at WEWAK, including air assets at its four airfields.

The Japanese Naval Air codes were also being read at Melbourne and Brisbane.

From August 1943 air strikes began to erode the combat potential of Wewak. Aircraft had been massing at Wewak in preparation for massive airstrikes on allied positions. In a short period 150 aircraft were destroyed on the ground, and shipping prevented from reaching Wewak. Fuel shortages were reported by the Japanese, their reports monitored by the codebreakers.

### Japanese Army Codes

The naval codes were read throughout the War but the Japanese Army codes were not broken until January/February 1944 after a buried metal trunk containing code books was found after a Japanese defeat and withdrawal from Sio in New Guinea.

The books were flown to Central Bureau in Brisbane where the pages were very carefully dried and photographed.

That breakthrough gave General MacArthur an enormous advantage in the planning of his CARTWHEEL operations across the north coast of New Guinea two months later.

### Reinforcement of Hollandia prior to Operation RECKLESS Prevented

In April 1944 the codebreakers warned of a major Japanese resupply convoy of 9 merchant vessels and 12 escorts moving from Chinese ports to Hollandia bases with



over 20,000 troops and supplies. American naval submarines sank at least 4 of these vessels with a loss of over 4,000 troops. The remainder retreated.

**1944 – Japanese Counter Attack on Aitape and Hollandia Prevented**

Using the newly captured codes, Central Bureau decoded detailed messages about enemy intentions. A Japanese army was marching through the jungle from Madang towards Aitape, intent on recapturing it. The codebreakers read operational orders giving full details of the Japanese plans. The attack was repelled and the remnants of the Japanese forces were pushed back into the jungle with neither supplies nor reinforcements.

**Those are just a selection of the many instances where TOP SECRET Signals Intelligence had a major influence on the planning and conduct of operations.**

It was such a closely guarded source of information that only a few senior commanders were privy to its existence.

## **Australian Signals Intelligence at Hollandia & The Philippines**

- **Large part of Central Bureau (US/Australian) moved from BRISBANE to HOLLANDIA in November 1944**
- **No 53 Wireless Section (Army)**
- **No 55 Wireless Section (Army)**
- **No 6 Wireless Unit RAAF of about 120 men then went with the US forces to the PHILIPPINES**
- **Central Bureau including 1,000 Australians moved from HOLLANDIA to the PHILLIPINES by August 1945. Australians sailed home in October 1945.**

### **Signals Intelligence in the North**

**A large contingent of Central Bureau moved to Hollandia from Brisbane after General MacArthur went there with his General HQ. US servicewomen went too, but the Australian Government refused to allow Australian servicewomen to serve in an operational theatre with Central Bureau. Consequently hundreds of valuable intelligence personnel were left behind in Brisbane.**

**The Australian intercept operators and code-breakers were held in such high regard by the US command that No 6 Wireless Unit was taken with the US invasion force to the Philippines. Some of them were in the landing craft with the invading forces. Their job was to give early warning of Japanese air attacks against the landing, especially by KAMIKAZE aircraft.**

**They forgot to ask the Australian hierarchy to authorise their deployment so they arrived in the Philippines in US uniforms carrying US weapons. Perhaps it was easier to seek forgiveness than to ask for permission.**

**The New Guinea Air Warning Wireless Company did seek permission to deploy to the Philippines. The Australian government refused to allow them to move beyond the Australian area of operations.**

**However when Central Bureau moved on from Hollandia to the Philippines there were about 1,000 Australians with the organisation in the Philippines.**

## **Main Australian Combat Units at Hollandia, Wakde, Biak, Noemfoor & Sansapor**

- HMAS Australia
- HMAS Shropshire
- HMAS Arunta
- HMAS Warramunga
- No 4 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron RAAF
- No 11 Bomber Squadron RAAF
- No 22 Bomber Squadron RAAF
- No 75 Fighter Squadron RAAF
- No 76 Fighter Squadron RAAF
- No 77 Fighter Squadron RAAF (**John Gorton**)
- No 78 Fighter Squadron RAAF (**Len Waters**)
- No 80 Fighter Squadron RAAF
- No 82 Fighter Squadron RAAF
- No 20 Minelaying Squadron RAAF (out of Darwin)
- No 43 Minelaying Squadron RAAF (out of Darwin)

### **Back to the Combat Units**

Incidentally, because of the proven reliability of Coastwatcher communications a Coastwatcher Signal Unit went with the combat troops across the North of Dutch New Guinea to receive and transmit messages from other intelligence organisations.

The main Australian combat units at Hollandia were ships and aircraft.

Among them, a pilot in No 77 Sqn, was a future Australian Prime Minister, **John Gorton**. He got his twisted grin from a crash during the war.

In No 78 Sqn was the only Aboriginal person to serve as a pilot in WW2 – **Len Waters**.

## **Where was the Australian Army? 6<sup>th</sup> Australian Division was nearby in Papua New Guinea**

- **1940-41 – Nth Africa, Greece, Crete, Syria**
- **1942 – Australia**
- **1942-43 – KOKODA, BUNA, SALAMAUA-LAE**
- **1943 - Australia**
- **October 1944 - Took over from US forces at AITAPE in Papua New Guinea (near HOLLANDIA)**
- **10 May 1945 – Mopping up, captured WEWAK in Papua New Guinea**
- **November 1945 – Returned to Australia**

As we have seen, the main Australian combat units in this part of the campaign were ships and aircraft.

**Where was the Army?**

After fighting at Kokoda, Buna and Salamaua-Lae, 6<sup>th</sup> Division regrouped in Australia before taking on the formidable task of defeating the Japanese in Northern Papua New Guinea, and the large Japanese base at Wewak.

## Where was the Australian Army? (continued)

### **8<sup>th</sup> Australian Division**

- 1941 – MALAYA, SINGAPORE, RABAUL, TIMOR (**Tom Uren**), AMBON

### **3<sup>RD</sup> Australian Division**

- 1943 to 1944 – PAPUA NEW GUINEA

### **5<sup>th</sup> Australian Division**

- 1943 to 1945 – PAPUA NEW GUINEA

### **7<sup>th</sup> Australian Division**

- 1942 to 1944 – PAPUA NEW GUINEA
- 1945 to 1946 – BORNEO

### **9<sup>th</sup> Australian Division**

- 1943 – PAPUA NEW GUINEA
- 1945 – BORNEO

### **11<sup>TH</sup> Australian Division**

- 1943 to 1945 – PAPUA NEW GUINEA

### **8<sup>th</sup> Division**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Division was formed for service in the Middle East but was instead divided into four separate forces to defend MALAYA/SINGAPORE, RABAUL (Lark Force), TIMOR (Sparrow Force) and AMBON (Gull Force). They were all destroyed as fighting forces by the end of February 1942. Most of them became POW and one in three died in captivity.

### **After MacArthur**

The war didn't end after General MacArthur passed by. There were still huge Japanese bases isolated, bypassed and left in place. They were still there up to and beyond the Japanese surrender.

Over 60,000 were left in place at Wewak. Over 100,000 remained at Rabaul.

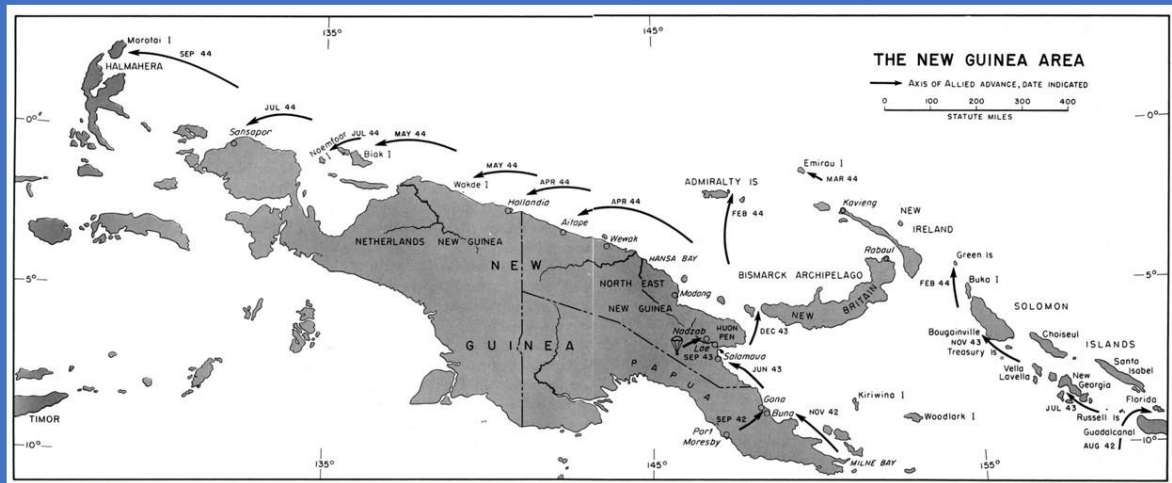
In Dutch New Guinea the Japanese bases at Manokwari, Sorong and Fak Fak were left in place. Many Japanese troops moved South into the hinterland after the attacks on Hollandia and the rest of the North Coast. They all had to be winkled out.

The 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> Divisions fought on in Papua New Guinea into 1945.

### **Borneo**

After regrouping in Australia the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Divisions went to Borneo to fight.

## Across New Guinea to Morotai



### After Dutch New Guinea

#### Operation TRADEWIND

After Dutch New Guinea the next step was Morotai in the Moluccas (now Maluku). Operation TRADEWIND. Again the location of the Operation TRADEWIND was based on TOP SECRET Signals Intelligence information about the location and strength of Japanese forces.

#### No 13 Sqn - Whitlam

No 13 Bomber Squadron RAAF spent most of the War based in the Northern Territory and carried out bombing raids across the Dutch East Indies, including anti-shipping raids.

In June and July 1945 it relocated to Morotai, before then moving to Labuan in Borneo.

Future Prime Minister Flt Lt Gough Whitlam was a navigator / bomb-aimer with No 13 Sqn and was at Morotai.

#### To Borneo

From April 1945 Morotai was used by the Australian I Corps (7 Div and 9 Div) to mount the Borneo Campaign.

#### Jacob Rumbiak at Morotai

Years later freedom fighter Jacob Rumbiak was imprisoned for a time by the Indonesians on Morotai Island.

### **MacArthur**

**After taking Cape Sansapor, General MacArthur and his forces took Morotai Island, bypassing more Japanese troops to the south of Morotai, then invaded Leyte Island and Luzon Island in the Philippines. He by-passed significant Japanese forces on Leyte and Mindanao Islands and left his 8<sup>th</sup> Army under General Eichelberger to deal with them.**

### **Borneo**

**Australian forces went West to Labuan and Balikpapan / in Borneo.**

### **Nimitz**

**Admiral Nimitz and John Wayne continued their campaign through the Central Pacific taking Guam, Saipan, Iwo Jima and Okinawa.**

### **Japan**

**General MacArthur, Admiral Nimitz and strategic bombing proponent General Curtis Lemay debated who would invade Japan, and how, but President Truman settled the matter with Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.**

**In between the two bombs Russia invaded Japanese held Manchuria.**

## **The Exhibition**

- **Merauke**
- **Dutch & Indigenous Resistance**
- **Hollandia**
- **Wakde Island, Sarmi, Lone Tree Hill, Maffin Bay**
- **Biak Island**
- **Noemfoor Island**
- **Cape Sansapor / Vogelkop**

**Louise Byrne has done a magnificent job putting together this exhibition of photographs and stories. Some are displayed on the wall, and there are a great many more in the slide displays.**

**To finish my part of this exhibition launch I will comment on just two photographs out of the exhibition.**





**Coastwatcher Party in a submarine off Hollandia  
24<sup>th</sup> March 1944 before a disastrous landing and  
ambush in which 6 were KIA and 5 survived.**

**Note that the Party includes Australians and Papuans. After disembarking from the submarine its small landing boats capsized in the surf and they lost most of their food, weapons and equipment. Several were captured by the Japanese.**

**Coastwatcher Sgt James Burrowes OAM, who served mainly in New Britain at Rabaul, and in Papua New Guinea, relates the incident and tells the story of his own good fortune in his website “The Last Coastwatcher”. He writes:**

**“The Americans had called for a party to infiltrate Hollandia to check out Japanese presence, prior to their planned invasion to retake it.**

**I was selected as the Signaller to go on that Hollandia (now Jayapura, the capital of West Papua) venture, led by Captain ‘Blue’ Harris (who had played a major role in repatriating hundreds of escapees from Rabaul to safety) but, at the last minute, the Signaller Jack Bunning replaced me after recovering from sickness”.**

**Jack Bunning was one of those KIA.**

**The very fortunate James Burrowes, THE LAST COASTWATCHER, is with us today. He and his son Robert Burrowes are staunch supporters of the PAPUA MERDEKA / FREE PAPUA Movement.**

**A warm Welcome to you both.**

**Oaktree Group & Villagers at Bilarai  
31<sup>st</sup> August 1943 – Queen Wilhelmina’s Birthday**



**Remembering Indigenous West Papuans  
and their part in the war to save Australia**

**This final photograph comes from the book “Jungle Pimpnel, the story of a District Officer in Central Netherlands New Guinea (Lloyd Rhys, Hodder & Stoughton, 1947) about Captain Jan Victor de Brujin and his Oaktree Group.**

**In the village of Bilarai / on the occasion of the birthday of Queen Wilhelmina / on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1943 / the Netherlands flag was raised / and de Brujin addressed the assembled people in Dutch, Malay, Ekari & Migani. They then celebrated by feasting and dancing. It is not known whether the people came for the flag raising and speeches / or for the feasting and dancing. What do you think? Well, we do know that de Brujin made sure they came for the Queen’s Birthday by organising the feast.**

**We don’t know either how many Papuans were killed and wounded in Dutch New Guinea during the Japanese invasion in 1942 / during the Japanese occupation from 1942 – 45 / or during the Allied attacks in 1944. But there were many.**

**In East Timor it is estimated that 30,000 died during the same time.**

**In popular culture we remember the War in the Pacific through the exploits and bravery of our own soldiers, sailors and airmen. And so we should.**

**But it was the indigenous people of Dutch New Guinea / and the many other indigenous peoples / who actually bore the brunt of the War / in our neighbourhood, / and for that they should all, / including the West Papuans, / be thanked, / honoured by Australia, / and afforded the gratitude of the Nation.**

**West Papuans are still fighting to free their homeland.**

# POST WORLD WAR 2

- **1949: Indonesian nationalists gain independence from Dutch.**
- **1961: After Australian federal election, Menzies changes policy to supporting Indonesian control of West Papua.**
- **1962: Indonesian military destabilisation of Netherlands New Guinea.**
- **1962: New York Agreement between US and Dutch, proposing UN acceptance of Indonesian occupation of West Papua .**
- **1963: Indonesian occupation of West Papua with UN agreement.**
- **1967: Suharto putsch and mass killings.**
- **1969: 'Act of Free Choice' legalistically supporting Indonesian control.**

After the fighting, the captains departed and the Dutch administration returned. There is no need here to recount the Indonesian military destabilisation operations, New York Agreement and the cynical Act of Free Choice.

Greg Poulgrain in his book, *Incubus of Intervention*, describes how the 'unfailingly duplicitous [CIA Director, Allan] Dulles', kept the centre of gravity of the West Papua issue, natural resources, off the negotiating table where Canberra seems to have been largely unaware of the mineral potential.<sup>9</sup> Polgrain mounts a persuasive case that Dulles, for personal gain, overemphasized the communist strength in Indonesia in order to control of and empower the Indonesian Army. Dulles inflamed, then deserted, the 1959 Sumatran rebellion against Sukarno; and working (in conjunction with British intelligence) 'arranged a series of events that would ensure the start of the Malaysian Confrontation in 1963.'<sup>10</sup> This undermined President Kennedy's emerging understanding with Sukarno. Dulles' Indonesia strategy required the expulsion of the Dutch and the ousting of Sukarno who would probably have nationalized Freeport.<sup>11</sup>

As with Korea and Vietnam, the Dulles plan included the delay of elections.<sup>12</sup> Lacking British skepticism about American intentions, Australia was an increasingly partisan

<sup>9</sup> Poulgrain, *Incubus*, p. 215. For Dulles character and interests, see p. 181.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> Poulgrain, *op cit.*, p. 243.

<sup>12</sup> See: Hayden, B., *Hayden: An autobiography*, Angus and Robertson, 1996, citing C.E. Abrose's biography of Eisenhower, supports this view, noting the election was 'junked' when the CIA (Dulles) warned the President

player in Allan Dulles' strategy.<sup>13</sup> Professor Peter Dale Scott mentions the 'redirection' of US corporate contracts in Indonesia before the Suharto putsch.<sup>14</sup> In the lead-up to the close-run 1961 Australian Federal election, Liberal Foreign Minister Barwick was briefed by Dulles.<sup>15</sup> Before polling day, Menzies changed his electoral platform from Papuan integration into Indonesia, to mirror the popularly supported ALP policy of Papuan self-determination. After the election victory, by 100 votes in one seat, Menzies switched back to supporting Dulles' policy of backing Jakarta's conquest of Papua.<sup>16</sup>

Canberra's switch from reliance on the UK to dependence on the US began with the fall of Singapore (1941) and was clenched when Allen Dulles' grasp on the Indonesian military culminated in the UN recognised annexation of West Papua. Yeadon *et al*, provide supporting evidence of the Dulles brothers' *modus operandi*.

Recently, seven judges in The Hague criticised the 'complicity' of the US, UK and Australia in the mass killings of Indonesians after Suharto's putsch.<sup>17</sup> Through the prisms of Indonesia and Papua this period, rather than 1942, marks the decisive if not initial strategic and cultural Australian shift from the British to the American camp.

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that the northern communist, Ho Chi Minh would win 80 percent of the total vote; and, I.F. Stone, *The Hidden History of the Korean War: 1950–1951*, (1952), Hidden Bookshelf.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190

<sup>14</sup> Scott, *American War Machine*, Rowman and Littlefield, NY, 2014, p. 323, [War Machine], notes 20, 21.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 216-219.

<sup>16</sup> Polgrain recalls (note, p. 218) Barwick being 'aware of the absolute brutality that had taken place. Full of regret, he put his hands over his face and leaned forward in his chair for several, long seconds, saying, "I didn't know they were going to kill so many people."'

<sup>17</sup> M. Palatino, *International Court Revisits Indonesia's 1965 Mass Killings*, *The Diplomat*, 19 November 2015.

**PAPUA MERDEKA**

### A Maori Lament for the Fallen

A tatau korero hoki ra, e aue i,  
I nui o rangi ra,  
He mea kia mahue, e aue i.  
Ka kitea rikiriki,  
Ka ngaro hoki ra, e aue i,  
Nga waha ki, nga hautu o te waka,  
I hoea ai te moana;  
Hei whakapuru atu ra, e aue i,  
Mo nga tai kino, mo nga tai marangai,  
Ka puta ki waho ra.  
Taua mai ra tatau e, e aue i,  
Ki tau nei ki a Marewa-i-te-ata,  
I maunu atu ai e, e aue i,  
Te taniwha i tona rua , i.

Ah me, the speeches we made  
In those honourable days of yore,  
Now comes it I am all alone.  
Looking about me in vain,  
Gone forever are the  
Orators, and the fogle-men of the canoe,  
Who voyaged across the ocean;  
Ye who did plug securely against  
The flood tides of stormy weather,  
When they threatened from without.  
Let us now all foregather (and)  
Chant the lay of Marewa-i-te-ata,  
Which was the accompaniment of the exit  
Of the dreaded dragon from its lair.