

SANDAKAN

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

Sunday 4 August 2024, 10am
Sandakan Memorial, Burwood Park



The year was 1945, the place Sandakan, then the capital of British North Borneo (Sabah) where 2,428 Prisoners of War (POW) were interned by the Japanese. They numbered 641 British and 1,787 Australian military personnel taken during the fall of Singapore. The POWs were now in their third year of captivity by the Japanese.

They were used as labourers to build a military airstrip in Sandakan. In late 1944 as the allied forces won back much of the Pacific, the airstrip itself was destroyed by repeated air operations.

At the beginning of 1945 the Japanese began moving the POW, 260kms west into the mountains to the small settlement of Ranau. After enduring starvation, overwork and beatings, the prisoners were forced on three marches through the jungle and tracks from Sandakan to Ranau.

The losses were tragically high on these gruelling marches between January and June 1945. During the first march from January to March, of the 455 POW who set out, over 100 were lost to either exhaustion or disease. Others were shot or beaten to death. The second march, a 'more brutal version of the earlier march' (Laden, Fevered, Starved) from May to June saw similar losses. On 29 May about 530 marchers set out to Ranau, yet only 183 reached Ranau on 27 June 1945.

At the war's end, in late August 1945, the only survivors were six Australians who had escaped from the death marches. The two who escaped into

the jungle on the second march in June 1945 were helped by locals before being rescued by allied forces. The other four all escaped from Ranau in July 1945 and were also helped by the locals in the area until they too were rescued by allied forces in early August 1945.

The fallen POW are named on the Honour Roll at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery at Labuan, Malaysia. Six men escaped this most horrific atrocity, just six out of the 2,428 men.

THEY WERE:

Bombardier Richard (Dick) Braithwaite
2/15 Field Regiment

Lance Bombardier William (Bill) Moxham
2/15 Field Regiment

Warrant Officer William (Bill) Hector
Sticpewich AASC

Gunner Owen Campbell
2/10 Field Regiment

Private Nelson Short
2/18 Infantry Battalion

Private Keith Boterill
2/19 Battalion



MESSAGE FROM

The Mayor of Burwood

CR JOHN FAKER

I would like to thank you for attending what is truly a significant occasion and one of the few services of its kind in our country, as we pay tribute to a dark chapter in Australia's military history.

This year marks 31 years since the unveiling of the Sandakan Memorial in Burwood Park, constructed to commemorate the Australian soldiers who lost their lives during the infamous Death Marches in 1945.

Today, we unite to honour the memory and sacrifices of the 23 courageous men from Burwood, who will forever be remembered as dedicated and treasured members of our community. Their lives were among the more than 2,400 Australian and British Prisoners of War who tragically perished in the Borneo jungle.

This service allows us to reflect on our connection to Sandakan, a small Borneo town where unspeakable atrocities happened during the Second World War.

I would like to express my gratitude to Burwood Council and the Sandakan Community Education Committee for hosting this solemn occasion. I also extend my thanks to our local schools, churches, members of our Defence Force and all participants who have made this service possible.

By coming together, we can ensure that the story of sacrifice at Sandakan is never forgotten.



MESSAGE FROM

The Patron of the Sandakan Community Education Committee

MR JASON YAT-SEN LI, MP
MEMBER FOR STRATHFIELD

Today we commemorate the 31st Anniversary of the Burwood Sandakan Remembrance Service. We remember the sacrifice of the soldiers who gave their lives at Sandakan and Ranau in World War II.

As Patron of the Sandakan Community Education Committee and Member for Strathfield, I acknowledge and honour those who died during this campaign. The Sandakan Death Marches remain the greatest single atrocity committed against Australians in war, with 2,400 servicemen losing their lives during this time.

The importance of the Burwood Park Sandakan Memorial cannot be understated. The physical monument and the annual commemoration ensure that we remember the history of Sandakan and Ranau, never forgetting the sacrifice and horrific agonies suffered by the soldiers and their families.

As former Prime Minister Paul Keating noted when opening the memorial in 1993, "... Australians should know the truth about their history. A nation is stronger for knowledge of its shared experience, and the experience of these men should be engraved in the national memory."

I thank the Mayor of Burwood, Cr John Faker as well as the Sandakan Community Education Committee for their ongoing commitment to organising this service, and in particular Gladys Barnes, John Fisk, Clyde Livingstone and Colin Hodges who have been long serving members on this committee.

Lest We Forget.

Order of Service

HYMNS

**Burwood Girls High School
Senior Concert Band**

CALL TO ORDER

MOUNTING OF MEMORIAL

Trinity Grammar School Army Cadet Unit, in partnership with Meriden School

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Mr Dennis Quinlan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Mr Tommaso Briscese
General Manager, Burwood Council

WELCOME ADDRESS

Cr John Faker
Mayor of Burwood

CALL TO WORSHIP

We have gathered to remember those who served at Sandakan. We remember those who died there and the death marches. We honour their memory and seek their remembrance by God whom they called Father. We give thanks for them and those mourn them and ask that their dedication will encourage all to seek freedom, peace, and justice.

OPENING PRAYER

O God, our Father, we gather to remember those who were prisoners of war and forced labour at Sandakan, and the death marches to Ranau. We recall with pride their courage, devotion to duty and the sacrifice of life itself so that we might live in peace and freedom.

We thank and praise you for their lives an legacy and pray for consolation for all who mourn and honour them.

In your mercy, hear our prayer.
(All say together)

Surrounded by memorials testifying to the grim reality of war, we pray for all who work for peace, justice, and freedom in our world.

In your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who govern us, may they always strive for peace and justice and dedicate themselves to the welfare of all.

In your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for those serving in the ADF, police, and emergency forces, give them courage in danger, always seek what is good and best, and uphold what is right.

In your mercy hear our prayer.

ABIDE BY ME

**Burwood Girls High School
Senior Concert Band**



READING ONE

Passage from Sandakan POW survivor, Mr Nelson Short

You saw these men every day when you were getting treated for ulcers. The dead were lying there, naked skeletons. They were all ready to be buried. Day after day they were just dying like flies in the camp, malaria, malnutrition; and you thought to yourself, well how could I possibly get out of a place like this?

And even after escaping, you'd say to yourself, well, right, we've escaped, now what are our chances, where are we going? Nowhere. We're in the middle of Borneo, we're in the jungle. How could we ever survive?

Sydney was a long way from there.

POEM ONE

From Sandakan to Ranau; Long Ago

Where jungle canopy blocks
sunlight from the ground
Where towering mountain
peaks lie covered in cloud
Where foul black swamp
and deadliness abound
There; falling leaf and twig
became their shroud.

From Sandakan they came away
Stumbling on until they fell
There along the track they lay
Leaving only six to tell.

That track is silent now
Their voices stilled
Those scars at Ranau
The years have filled.

The signs of massacre
Have all but gone
Leaving those of us
Who mourn; to reflect upon.

READING TWO

Passage from Sandakan POW survivor, Mr Richard Braithwaite

I had nowhere to go because of the gloom, and the surrounding vegetation was all heavy jungle, thorny. I just sat down on a log there and watched those reptiles, insects, crawling past, thinking well, this is where it happens, mate, you're finished.

After about half an hour just sitting, all of a sudden I just thought, no you're not finished. You're not going to die in a place like this; And I became really angry. I just put my head down like a bull and charged that jungle, and I don't know, it just seemed to part.

Maybe someone was looking after me.

POEM TWO

I'm Dreaming of Australia by Mr Nelson Short

I'm dreaming of Australia,
The land we left behind.
Dreaming of the loved ones
We could always bear in mind.
Although its only fancy
Our hearts within us yearn,
But we'll make up for lost moments
When to Aussie we return

There'd be sailing on the harbour,
The showboat our first choice.
Or maybe we'd be dancing
Listening to our sweetheart's voice.
Although it's only fancy
Our hearts within us yearn,
Gee we'll make up for lost moments
When to Aussie we return.

REMEMBRANCE ADDRESS

The Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP

Assistant Minister for Immigration

THE PRAYER OF ST FRANCIS

(say together)

Lord, make me an instrument
of your peace
where there is hatred, let me sow love
where there is injury, pardon
where there is discord, union
where there is doubt, faith
where there is despair, hope
where there is darkness, light
where there is sadness, joy
For your mercy and truth's sake

O Divine Master, grant that I may not
so much seek
to be consoled as to console
to be understood as to understand
to be loved as to love
for it is in giving that we receive
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned
it is in dying that we are born to
eternal life
With Augustine We Praise God

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Monsignor Gregory Flynn

Let us pray the prayer by which
Jesus taught us to pray.

(Recite together)

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name,
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass
against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power and the glory,
For ever and ever, Amen.

WREATH LAYING CEREMONY

Accompanied by

**The Lone Piper
Burwood RSL sub-Branch
Pipes and Drums**

Those laying wreaths are asked to drop
their wreaths to the wreath marshals on
arrival and to sit in their allocated seat
in front of the wreath laying tables.

After those people who have indicated
they will be laying wreaths as part of
the Service have done so, an invitation
to lay private tributes will be announced.



ODE OF REMEMBRANCE

Colonel Doug Humphreys CSC OAM

Their glory shall never die,
The whole wide world is their sepulchre
Their epitaphs are written upon the
hearts of mankind
And whenever there is talk of
noble deeds
Their names will be held in grateful
remembrance.

They shall grow not old, as we that
are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the
years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and
in the morning
We will remember them.

We will remember them (say together)

THE LAST POST

Mr Liam McRae

ONE-MINUTE SILENCE

ROUSE

Mr Liam McRae

Lest we forget (say together)

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Burwood Girls High School Senior Concert Band

Australians all let us rejoice,
For we are one and free;
We've golden soil and wealth for toil;
Our home is girt by sea;
Our land abounds in nature's gifts
Of beauty rich and rare;
In history's page, let every stage
Advance Australia Fair.
In joyful strains then let us sing,
Advance Australia Fair.

Beneath our radiant Southern Cross
We'll toil with hearts and hands;
To make this Commonwealth of ours
Renowned of all the lands;
For those who've come across the seas
We've boundless plains to share;
With courage let us all combine
To Advance Australia Fair.
In joyful strains then let us sing,
Advance Australia Fair.

REFLECTION

Dr Roy Beveridge – Grandson of Corporal Barney Allen Fletcher



CLOSING

Mr Jason Yat-Sen Li, MP
Patron of the Sandakan
Community Education Committee

FINAL BLESSING

Monsignor Gregory Flynn

HONOUR GUARD WITHDRAWS

**Trinity Grammar School Army
Cadet Unit, in partnership with
Meriden School**

HYMNS

**Burwood Girls High School
Senior Concert Band**

**Thank you for
attending today's
Remembrance
Service.**

Light refreshments
will now be served.

To ensure you receive
an invitation to attend next
years' service, please
sign the guest book.

*Special thanks to Ashfield RSL sub-Branch for sponsoring the coffee and tea cart.
Also special thanks to Burwood RSL sub-Branch for sponsoring the sausage sizzle.*





Sandakan Community Education Committee

The Sandakan Community Education Committee is a community committee supported and endorsed by Burwood Council. The Committee evolved after the dedication of the Sydney Region Sandakan Memorial in Burwood Park on August 1, 1993.

The inaugural meeting of the Sandakan Community Education Committee was on March 11, 1996. The purpose of the Committee is to encourage public awareness about the Sandakan story and to honour the memory of the people who died during the Second World War at Sandakan, Ranau and in the jungles of British North Borneo, now known as Sabah.

Burwood Council supports and endorses the Committee because of its worthy purpose, relevance due to the location of the Burwood Sandakan Memorial in Burwood Park and to recognise the 23 Burwood residents who died at Sandakan.

CURRENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cr John Faker
Mayor of Burwood – Chairperson

Cr Heather Crichton
Burwood Council

Tommaso Briscese
General Manager Burwood Council

Gladys Barnes
Daughter of Private Ralph Shields

Dennis Quinlan
Secretary Burwood RSL sub-branch

Colin Hodges
Burwood RSL sub-branch

Michael Moroney
Burwood RSL sub-branch

Leonie Jackson
President Ashfield RSL sub-branch

John Fisk
Founding Committee Member

Clyde Livingstone
Founding Committee Member

Acknowledgements

The Sandakan Community Education Committee gives sincere thanks to the following for their involvement in the service:

Cr John Faker, Mayor of Burwood

Mr Jason Yat-Sen Li MP, Patron of the Sandakan Community Education Committee & Member for Strathfield

The Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Assistant Minister for Defence, Veterans' Affairs and for the Republic

Burwood Council

Burwood RSL sub-Branch

Burwood RSL sub-Branch Pipes & Drums

Ashfield RSL sub-Branch

Mr Dennis Quinlan

Monsignor Gregory Flynn

Colonel Doug Humphreys CSC OAM

Dr Roy Beveridge

Mr Liam McCrea, Bugler

Burwood Girls High School

Trinity Grammar School Army Cadet Unit,
in partnership with Meriden School

MLC Army Cadet Unit

Cassandra and Elizabeth Barry



The Sandakan emblem was created by the Burwood Sandakan Education Committee in its foundation years, incorporating the ideas and memories brought forth from the Committee members.

The emblem uses Australia's national colours of green and gold juxtaposed with a darker green foreground to represent the harsh conditions faced in the dense jungles of Sandakan.

To the left of the text 'Sandakan 1945', stands a bamboo cross in honour of the brave Prisoners of War who never returned from the Death Marches and the Christian values for which they fought to defend.

At the top of the emblem is the Slouch Hat, adorned with the Australian Defence Forces' Rising Sun Badge, in recognition of the military campaign and service personnel.

Images from the 30th Anniversary of the Sandakan Remembrance Service

Last year, was a significant milestone as we commemorated the 30th Anniversary of the Burwood Sandakan Memorial.

As former Prime Minister Paul Keating noted when opening the Memorial in 1993 “..so long as we remember the lesson for humanity at Sandakan, we will be better people and Australia a better place”.



GLADYS BARNES

Gladys was born on 20th August 1928 a time of great economic hardship worldwide. She was just eleven years old at the outbreak of WWII. Her father, Ralph Shields, was one of 1,495 prisoners captured during the Fall of Singapore and died in the Sandakan prisoner of war camp on November 21, 1944. Gladys has been an active part of Burwood's Sandakan Community Education Committee since 2006 and lays a wreath each year in memory of her father.

Gladys was 16 when she came home to the news that her father was never coming home. In World War I her father served as Bombardier Ralph Shields in the British Army Royal Artillery, fighting in Belgium, and in France as a dispatch rider. After the war he immigrated to Australia with his family. When World War II started Mr Shields lied about his age because at 52 he was classified as too old to rejoin the army.

He left Sydney for Singapore on board a troop ship on October 29, 1941. But four months later, in February 1942, he was one of 1,495 prisoners captured during the Fall of Singapore and arrived in Sandakan on July 17, 1942. He died in the Sandakan prisoner of war camps on November 21, 1944.

Gladys has been very active in the community and an advocate for

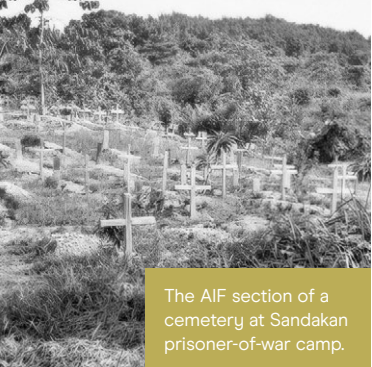
recognising the sacrifice made in Sandakan. She is also an accomplished lawn bowler with numerous pennants and titles and keen golfer.

"My Dad, Ralph Shields, fought in France in the first war and was a POW after the fall of Singapore. My mother did not know that he had passed away in November, 1944, as we expected him to be coming home – I was 16 and working in an office in Redfern when I had the phone call to return home as Mum had received the advice of Dad's death. One of the six survivors, Nelson Short, came to our home and saw Mum, my older brother, Richard, and I and spoke of being with my father and they were good mates."

"My father played football in England for Huddersfield and his name is on their Honour Roll. My love of sport is due to his teachings as he used to take me to a lot of sports events. I played basketball and hockey at school, then was a golfer before moving on to lawn bowls. My two brothers were in the forces, Richard – Navy, and Dennis, Airforce and Mum had my younger sister and I at home."

Gladys Barnes

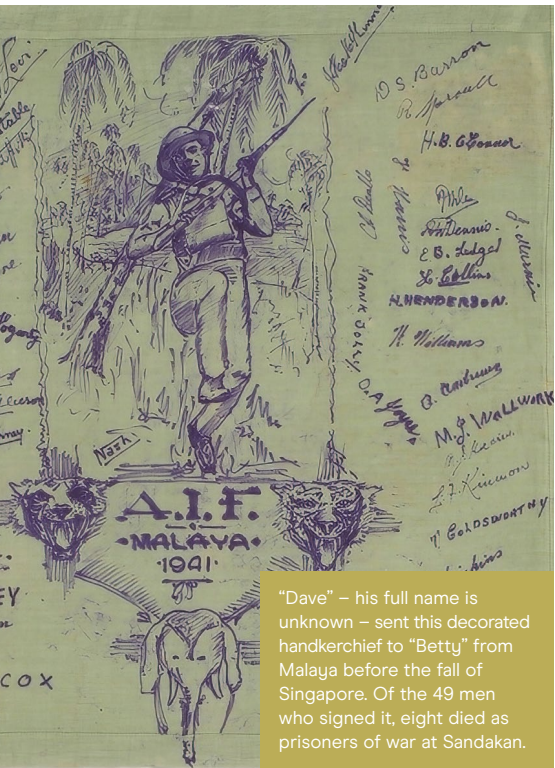




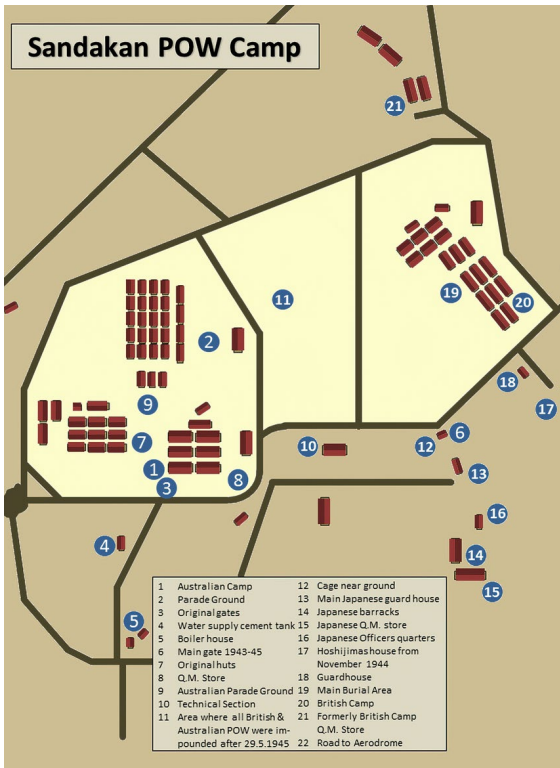
The AIF section of a cemetery at Sandakan prisoner-of-war camp.



The remains of men who died or were killed in the ruins of the Sandakan camp were identified by members of war graves units sifting through hundreds of named personal items.



"Dave" - his full name is unknown - sent this decorated handkerchief to "Betty" from Malaya before the fall of Singapore. Of the 49 men who signed it, eight died as prisoners of war at Sandakan.



Sandakan 1945-10-27. North-East Borneo force. The AIF section in No. 1 Cemetery at the prisoner of war camp. 38 Graves in the foreground are marked and identifiable.





Cover Image:
The Sandakan-Ranau Death Marches 1945.
Painted by Non Meston in honour of her father Sapper Alwyn Cadwgan WX7472
2/6 Field Park Coy. RAE, died on
2nd March 1945, aged 43.

For more information: call Burwood Council
on 9911 9911 or visit burwood.nsw.gov.au