

Boele Martinus de Haan

"Martin"

by Dorothy de Haan.

15 March 1925 – 18 May 1997

No. 15130019

Martin enlisted in Eindhoven on 19.05.1945 and was transferred to Wolverhampton, England.

He left England on the *Arundel Castle* for Australia on 30.05.1945 and arrived in Sydney on 7.07.1945 from where he was transferred to Victory Camp, Casino, by train.

On the 30th of July1945 he went to Bradfield Park in Sydney and with the end of the war in the Pacific he came back to Casino on 28.08.1945.

Shortly after arriving back in Casino he became an "MP", one of the group of MPs who patrolled both the camp and the streets of Casino.

I met Martin at a dance in the 'Civic Hall'.

He would travel by bus to town and we would meet there to go dancing or to the pictures, now called the movies.

My only transport was by horse.

It wasn't long before Martin bought himself a horse which he left on our farm which bordered the camp and then we went to town together and he could bring me home afterwards.



MPs on patrol, Martin 2nd from left.

Martin didn't say much about life in the camp as we had other things to talk about!

We were married in Casino on the 3rd. of August 1946 and Martin was transferred to Brisbane four days later. I joined him there two weeks later and we had two weeks together before I left for Holland.

Martin left Australia for Batavia on the *Manoora* on the 30th December 1946 and from there he came home to Middelburg, Zeeland on the 'Kota Inten', arriving on 1.2.1947. In September 1947 Martin left Holland for Australia on the 'Maria Kerk'.

He obtained work in Sydney and remained there until I arrived back with our daughter (Anneke) in October 1948.

In March 1949 we moved back to Casino.

After several jobs Martin joined the PMG Department (now Telstra) in 1951 as a telephone technician, where he remained until his retirement.

He was very active in the town and held positions in several organisations; he loved taking part in stage productions and organising balls.

He and Koos Dalmayer were members of Casino's first soccer team.

He remained closely connected with soccer and just loved teaching little kids how to play.



MPs on parade

Martin was one of the original organisers of the 'Casino Boys' reunions. He is fondly remembered by all and his widow Dorothy still attends all reunions. Ed.



Eric van Heeswijck

It is not easy, at an "advanced" age to write about things that happened so long ago. Some are very difficult to remember, some are so clear as if they happened yesterday. However, I will try to make my story as precise as possible.

In 1944 I was a student at the Higher Textile College in Enschede. Because it was a hot-bed of illegal activities it was closed by the German authorities and all students were placed on transport to Germany to work there for the war industry. A friend and I managed to jump off the train before it reached the Dutch border and after a short period of "onderduiken" [hiding] in Enschede, I started a long walk to Raamsdonk in the South, where my uncle was the parish priest. In October 1944 I survived a "liberation" bombardment by German and British forces in the basement of a village house in Waspik which was totally destroyed. After an adventurous period as an interpreter with the RAF 2nd TAF I enlisted as a War volunteer (OVW) at Eindhoven on 5 April 1945 and became AC2 nr.01136405. There they asked me what unit I

wanted to join and I told them I would like to be a pilot with the Dutch Air Force fighting the Japanese. After a short period in a Dutch holding camp Wolverhampton, called KNIL Depot Europa at Wrottesley Park, I was shipped out from Scotland to Australia on the P&O troopship S.S. Orontes. My grandiose



Example of paperwork handed out in Wolverhampton

accommodation was in hammock 101 on F deck, a forward mail deck, way down, without any portholes, little fresh air and hardly any standing room. The hammocks were packed in like sardines in a tin; sleeping on deck was not permitted in wartime. On arrival in Sydney we were informed by Army authorities that they had no knowledge of our coming and we were sent by train to an Italian POW camp in Bacchus Marsh near Melbourne. After some days there it was discovered we had to be in St. Ives near Sydney seconded to the RAAF Jungle Warfare Training Camp.

When the Japanese surrendered in August 1945 the Dutch Government decided there was no more need for new pilots and we became 'fuseliers' [Professional colonial soldier] in the 1st battalion 12th company infantry of the KNIL [Royal Dutch East Indies Army] based in Victory Camp at Casino in NSW. Enough is written about this camp elsewhere, so I will limit myself to adding some personal experiences.

In early 1946 there were some serious disturbances in the camp caused by rebelling Javanese soldiers against the Dutch forces running the camp. At that time I was accommodated in a US Army tent, which was shared with three others. After night



Casino Camp hospital staff

watch duty, I was catching up on sleep on my stretcher as the only occupant of the tent. I vividly remember waking up and seeing an Indonesian face above me attached to a body wielding a knife. I tried to defend myself but finished up with four knife wounds in my left arm and two in my chest, one just touching my heart and the other just penetrating one of my lungs. I will never forget that face and even today, more than 60 years later, I

have the occasional nightmare reliving these moments. I became conscious again finding myself on a stretcher in the camp hospital, surrounded by Dr. van Duyl (alias Dopey), Sgt.Maj. Hamissa (i/c of the hospital) and sister van Gorkum of the VHK. Dopey was panicking, but the others remained calm, applied bandages to stem the blood and shipped me out to Casino Hospital. There they closed the wounds, unfortunately without any anaesthetic in view of the close proximity of one of the wounds to the heart. All a rather painful experience.

After some three weeks in hospital I was granted R&R sick leave away in Sydney. There was a total lack of any aftercare for traumatic or physical disabilities. As I was not yet able to perform any strenuous work on my return to camp, it was decided to reclassify me as a "hospik", an army medical nurse. After one or two days training I was regarded as able to administer penicillin injections, the new wonder drug against syphilis and other creepy venereal diseases. About half the patients in the hospital consisted of Surinam soldiers who had bedded one or more of the local aboriginal ladies of Casino. These ladies roamed the camp at night in a large open vehicle, driven by a pimp.

Finally in August 1946 I was repatriated on the S.S. Volendam and after completing my theoretical aircrew training course at Enschede I was transferred to Woensdrecht Air Base on 1 February 1947 for pilot training on the Tiger Moth.

However, at 21 years of age I no longer felt it wise to sign up in the air force for a further seven years. Especially not as KLM was desperately looking for staff. I filled many positions for that airline in Australia and the Far and Middle East and am now happily retired in Spain.

Some years ago I applied for the Insignia for Wounded in the Armed Forces but it was not granted on the basis that I was wounded on Australian Territory. For me it was a great disappointment. The Dutch flag flew over the camp and the Dutch authorities always claimed it their territory when attacked for running a prison camp. When I tried to do some further research at the Government Archives in The Hague I found that all historical archives and documents relating to Victory Camp Casino had been destroyed in the late forties. All very convenient!



On board the Volendam

Eric's story of the incident with the Indonesian was confirmed by at least one of the 'Casino Boys' who also added that what happened was kept quiet because of the feared reaction by the 'Commies', who were pretty active in those days – see photo of graffiti in Casino. Ed.



Jan (John) Ivits

[This story is based on notes supplied by John.]

I cannot remember much about the recruitment but I was, like the other boys, recruited in Eindhoven in 1945.

After having been accepted for the Dutch Air force, we went to Ostend in Belgium by truck and from there by boat to England.

We docked in Tilbury and from there went by train to Wolverhampton.

In due course we left England – after the war in Europe had finished – for training in Australia.

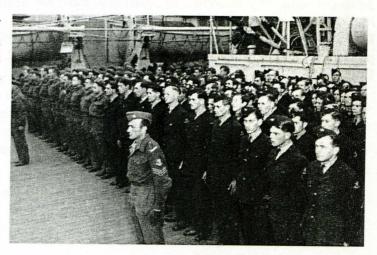
From Wolverhampton we went by train to Glasgow, Scotland, where we boarded the *Orontes*, the third ship carrying Dutch troops to Australia.

The fourth group left on the 'Stirling Castle', but by the time that ship arrived in Sydney harbour, the troubles between Holland and Indonesia had started and the Dutch ships were black-banned by the communist-influenced Seamen's Union.

[The Dutch troops were not allowed off the ship and were transferred to the 'Moreton Bay' on which they were sent to (then) Malacca.]

Our party arrived in Sydney and from there went by train to Darley Camp in Bacchus Marsh in Victoria. After a short period of time we were transferred from there to Melbourne Showground.

Not long after that the war in the Pacific came to an end, which changed the whole situation, because most training courses run by the RAAF were closed.



Troops from Orontes arriving in Sydney

Our boys were all approached to sign a contract for military service for a further three years. [Some say five.]

Jobs were offered in meteorology and administration, with a promise of speedy promotion and quite a few boys accepted and some eventually became 2nd Lieutenants.

I, together with quite a few other boys, refused to sign a contract.

As it turned out later, the signing of the contracts was repudiated by the Dutch Government, but the boys who had signed were allowed to finish their training or obtain demobilisation.

I subsequently went to Casino, where I became one of the 'Casino Boys' who lived in the Victory Camp there. As the war had ended we were never going to get air force training in Australia and the whole group of Dutch Air Force recruits were transferred to infantry. Training as infantry was also minimal, but other work was afoot for us.

Not long after our transfer, a part of Victory Camp became a prison camp for the Indonesians who refused to carry out their duties after Soekarno had declared Indonesia independent.

Now in military circles this is a very grave offence and so those Indonesians who had refused to serve under the Dutch were interned and we had to guard them until we were either sent home or transferred elsewhere in the second half of 1946.

In the meantime we had regular contact with the Casino population who were very good to us.

And most Casino inhabitants would not have had a clue about the goings on in the camp and hence were not worried about it being a prison camp I would think.

After Casino I went to Indonesia for four days and then on to Holland on board, I think, the 'SS. Sibajak' [could have been the 'Kota Inten' on which many boys left for Holland] as a member of the potato peeling crew!

John subsequently returned to Australia, married Monica Reen who he had met in Casino, and settled in Queensland.

He very successfully managed the reunions from 1990 until 2005, when due to personal circumstances he had to hand this job over to the present committee. Ed.



Gerard Kloppenborg

This is not going to be a piece of important literature, but I am going back 90 years, before the Great War 1914 -1918.

Six years before that war my father, Nico Kloppenborg, had gone to his brother John, in Davenport, Iowa, USA. He returned to Holland in the beginning of 1919. During his time in the USA he became a U.S. citizen. Soon afterwards, he returned to his place of birth; Veendam.

He married Elizabeth and a year later my sister was born. I was the next one born and six more babies followed; one every year. They are all now deceased.

I am the only one left of eight children - the eldest boy. I went to a Catholic primary school for six years - during those years I became an altar boy and sang in the choir. My parents were very religious, always morning and evening prayer and attending mass every day. Later I went to high school for three years leaving at the age of 15 to work in my parents' shop - that did not last long. I wanted to be in engineering, so I got an apprentice job in a large boiler works - it was 1936 and the world was in depression. During these years I used to go to night school doing courses in technical drawing and welding. I started to smoke and never stopped - addicted for life. A couple of years later, September 1939 two weeks before my 18th birthday, England declared war on Germany. Holland mobilized the army and reinforced the borders with Germany. I was due for conscription into the army but it never got that far. In May 1940 the Germans overran Holland and we capitulated. I was still doing engineering but in September of 1942 I was picked up by the Germans to work in a shipyard in Wilhelmshaven, very close to Hamburg. The allied air forces bombed those German industries continuously -I ran for it back to Holland. It took me four days but I got home. My father told me to go south which I did and I got a job in a subsidiary of Philips. We were making walkie-talkies for the German army.

The war kept going for me until September 1944 – when we were freed by the Americans, the largest air-born landing in history.

Meanwhile the war continued, it took another 8 months before the rest of Holland was free of the Germans and the war in Europe came to an end. At this time I was already in England in army training camp as I had joined the Dutch Air Force and we were still fighting the Japanese in Indonesia; The Dutch East Indies. They put us in troop ships bound for Australia and on the 23rd July 1945 we landed in Sydney. I was sent to Brisbane — Archerfield Airport — and was attached to the 19th Transport Squadron.

After 2 months they sent me to Melbourne where I worked for 2 years in the A.N.A. workshops repairing engines. It was a pretty good life — my flat in St. Kilda cost me 25 shillings per week. The Dutch Government paid me 14 pounds a week — a fortune at that time. This ended when I was discharged in November 1947 - so here I was in Australia.



Gerard at leisure

I had met a couple of Dutch men who were selling carpets out of their cars so I did the same for the next five years - getting married and buying my first house for \$5000 in 1951. During those years I travelled all over the country, yes I had been in every town and village in all the states.

In 1953 I settled for awhile on the Gold Coast and ran a Manchester shop in Hanlon Street - Surfers Paradise. By then I had the responsibility of a wife and two baby boys. Lucky for me I got the opportunity to open a small carpet shop in Dandenong - Victoria. For a number of years I worked 12 hours a day and the business grew – I became the largest broadloom dealer in Victoria. I was able to build a magnificent home in Mt. Waverly – my sons attended St. Kevins College and we spent our weekends at Flinders on the Mornington Peninsula on our hobby farm.

Several companies wanted to buy my three showrooms. Carpetland was well known and in 1973 I sold Carpetland to Ikea and as my sons wanted to be farmers we bought Old Toonallook, a 1,500 acre grazing property 45 km north of Albury - a prestige homestead – well respected in the Riverina. During the next 10 years we made no money but a lot of good friends in the Albury district. For the next 8 years the four of us were living and working the farm until 1981 when my wife Barbara was diagnosed with breast cancer. She was operated on and had chemotherapy and radiation at the Peter McCallum Institute in Melbourne. I must have done 100,000 km up and down the Hume highway. This lasted 18 months - in March 1983 Barbara passed away - it was the same day Bob Hawke won the election. More than 300 people attended requiem mass at Albury's St. Patrick's Cathedral. I went home to Old Toonallook and six months later I went to Holland after leaving there 38 years earlier. My mother (92) was still alive. After returning from Europe I came to the Gold Coast in January of 1984 and decided that it was the place for me.

I sold the farm - my sons Chris and Geoff also came to Queensland and soon they found their future wives - married - and have produced 4 grandchildren.

I made a few more overseas trips; in 1989 I went to Philippines and met Perlita. We were married in 1991.

Life has been good. I wish all readers of this document much happiness.

Gerard Kloppenborg was not part of the 'Casino Boys' at any time. However, he came out with the boys on the *Orontes* and his story is interesting enough to include in our book of memories. Ed.



Cor Koedam

Since most of the way the fellows joined up will be very similar, I will start my recollection from the time we left Eindhoven for Belgium by Air Force truck transport to Ostend on the 24th March 1945, spending two nights there and then boarded a vessel to take us across to Tilbury on 26th March. Here we boarded a train taking us to Air Base Wrottesley Park Camp outside Wolverhampton. We were given our first taste of military discipline: marching, PT exercises, lectures on health, military rules and regulations.

We had a very good time there with picture shows and dance nights with the WAAF girls serving there. After a trip to London to change uniforms from RAF to Aust. RAAF and experiencing what it was like to hear the V1 and V2 flying bombs going over, Han Weller and I managed to get a weekend pass to go to Coventry by train. We spent the night in a hotel and were told not to take girls up. I think we felt rather offended, as this was the last thing on our mind.

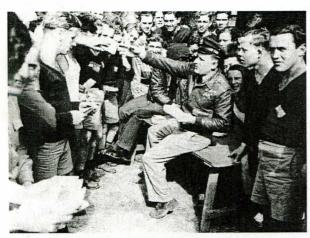
On the 8th May 1945 we were to embark for Australia, just the day that Germany capitulated. We boarded the *Rangitata* in Liverpool and were given a bottle of beer to celebrate, no shore leave granted. The sea voyage went by convoy across the Atlantic when we separated, the convoy to New York and us to the Panama Canal and from there via New Zealand to Sydney Australia, where we arrived on the 19th June



Coventry Cathedral

1945 - from there by train to Casino arriving on 20th June 1945 for the next 6 weeks training. We returned to Sydney for St. Ives, to train a further 6 weeks at the RAAF Jungle Warfare Training Camp. Here we learned something about guerrilla warfare, combat night exercises in the bush opposite the camp and lectures on the handling of arms and PE and health.

I remember some interesting incidents which took place while we were in St. Ives, one of them while receiving instructions on how to throw hand grenades. We were in a few groups with an instructor for each group. After having been shown what to do, each one of us was to go forward about 5 m. from where we were gathered and stand in a dugout hole maybe 1.5 m deep and throw the hand grenade into the valley below. The idea was to pull the pin out with your left hand, if you were right handed, then bring your right arm back like bowlers do and throw the grenade forward. Somehow Piet van Vegchel could not co-ordinate the correct action of when to release the grenade out of his hand. Instead of throwing it forward he released it when his hand was above his head, almost dropping it in the dugout and giving us standing behind the jitters. Any time when it was Piet's turn we would move back a bit further away from him.



Mail call in St. Ives

We had another unexpected experience when we went on a march on the Mona Vale main road. All nicely uniformed and the clickity-clack of our boots on the road sounded great so we started singing some Dutch army songs of which the words were a bit bold. But we sang in harmony with loud voices it sounded great and we all felt terrific.

We passed the Margaret Reed special hospital for children and some of the staff came out to wave to us. The next day we were told by

the Commandant that he had received an invitation for us to visit the hospital and sing for those sick children, which we did.

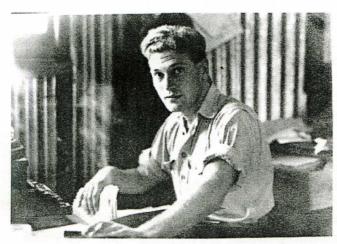
We brought sweets for the kids and sang our usual songs and hoped that the Dutch language was double Dutch to them; it was the singing that was important. Afterwards we spoke to the kids in their beds and then we were invited to an afternoon tea with cakes and biscuits and circulating with the staff asking us all kinds of questions. A very nice afternoon was had by all. It felt good to see the kids happy and for us having been able to do this for them.

Following the surrender of Japan we were allowed to go and celebrate the end of the war in Sydney. So we went there by train and booked into Air Force House in Goulburn Street to spend the night. I think it cost 2 shillings six pence for the night and breakfast was 2 shillings for bacon, eggs and toast, tea, coffee and plenty of milk. We did not have much money, but somehow we had a few drinks and enjoyed the company of the friendly people who wanted to make us feel at home and share in their enjoyment of peace.

We were supposed to leave St. Ives for flying training at Point Cook Flying Training School, but because Japan surrendered on 8th August 1945 all training by RAAF Instructors was cancelled and we were returned to Casino.

This disappointment must have caused me to have an asthma attack. I spent some time in hospital and after receiving some treatment I was only allowed light duties. It turned out that S.M. Oppenheimer needed an assistant in the office of the Camp Commander Capt. Sleeboom. I was asked if I felt that I could do this and since I had

some office experience from my Philips days, I was only too happy to oblige. I had to type the day orders and do a variety of things which included learning to drive a jeep and get a licence to pick up the mail from the PO in Casino. After I had settled in and knew what to do, S.M. Oppenheimer was transferred to Djakarta and I was to take over his job. I asked for an assistant and suggested that Jan van der Waerden be my offsider, which was agreed upon. We had quite a happy time there with Luit. Gus Rappange being our boss. A real nice guy.



Cor at work in the office

At that time Kees van Grinsven and I had met two sisters. Patricia and Shirley and we were often invited to their home to the point that we spent all our free time at weekends there. We them Mum & Dad Blackshaw who were so kind to us. Kees later married Patricia. I did not have much contact with the other boys who were doing the guard duties of Indonesians who were interned.

It all came to an end when we left Victory Camp Casino on

16th August'46 to return to Holland by *Volendam* arriving in Rotterdam on 3rd October 1946. After 4 weeks leave we had to report at Air Base Twente, where we did the ITW (Initial Training Wing) course after which we went to Air Base Woensdrecht with the news that there was a 3 month wait before flying would start. This was too much for some 10 fellows, including me, who requested to be discharged and go back to Australia. We saw Capt Arends in The Hague who arranged for us to go on 9/7/46 by troopship 'Nieuw Holland' to Djakarta and from there by plane to Australia, getting our discharge from the Dutch Consul in Sydney on 19 August 1946.

The only way this could be done was by keeping us in the service without pay to be able to travel on a troopship, as civilians were not allowed to travel this way. We made quite a name for ourselves because we went anywhere on the ship. "A" deck was for the officers, but we went there to the annoyance of the big brass, trying to prevent us from doing this since we had no rank. We were told to do certain jobs in the kitchen or whatever which we refused because we were not on the payroll so why should we have to work. We won our argument and had a very pleasant trip, making friends with the guys that were drafted to do Police action in the various parts of Indonesia.



Jan Koster

During the German occupation of Holland, Jan Koster was an "onderduiker" [in hiding] working on a farm in Drente.

Following the bungled allied offensive attempting to take the bridge at Arnhem, Jan heard through the underground of an opportunity for some Dutch nationals to accompany about 150 British and Canadian paratroopers, who were making a break through the German lines in an attempt to return to England.

Plastered in make-up, dressed in a borrowed nurse's uniform and with the nurse's ID papers in hand, Jan rode a ladies' bike in broad daylight from Alteveer to Bennekom to join 9 other Dutch men in a bid to escape occupied territory with the allied paratroopers. The crossing was successful and the group arrived safely in Nijmegen. Jan immediately enlisted in the army and after two weeks' training was sent back to fight at the front.

During a break from fighting Jan hitchhiked to Nijmegen with Anne Hilbrink (later the owner [also editor] of the Dutch Australian Weekly). On the way back they got a lift in a truck with an air force bloke. He told them about recruitment for pilots which was happening the next day. Flying planes seemed much more appealing than soldiering at the front, and so the men returned to Nijmegen.

Following some very strict testing, Jan was one of only 10 men selected that day to be trained as a pilot [testing done in Eindhoven]. The new recruits were sent to England for training, but Jan was part of a group of about 150 men whose English was not good enough for them to be trained by the English pilots. These men were sent to Wolverhampton to await transport to Australia, where they were to be trained by Dutch speaking Indonesian pilots [actually, the contract for training was with the RAAF]. Whilst waiting they celebrated their new status as pilots in waiting by sending Winston Churchill a birthday card.

Once in Australia the men were stationed at the St. Ives showgrounds right next door to the children's hospital for a few weeks [like the others, Jan went to Casino first and was in St. Ives for jungle warfare training in the vicinity of the St. Ives showground]. With nothing much to do but wait for the promised trainers [??], the men spent many

hours marching in formation through the streets of St. Ives. During these marches some rather crude and bawdy Dutch ditties were sung with much enthusiasm. The matron of the children's hospital was so taken with these uniformed Dutchmen and their beautiful singing she invited them to come and sing their ditties for the children in the hospital.

From St. Ives Jan and his company were sent [back] to Casino, where the Indonesian pilots were to come and train them [by this time all pilot training had been cancelled as the war had ended.] Casino was pretty much just barracks in paddocks, with a rather large and hairy sergeant who yelled at the men non-stop. Despite not understanding a word he bellowed, the men were very well trained within three days.

Most of the time there was very little to do and so the men had to amuse themselves, which Koos De Ruyter did one day by arriving at roll call riding a borrowed horse and smoking a cigar.

When the Indonesians finally arrived [many Indonesians had already been in the camp before the Dutch boys arrived] they fell into two distinct groups. Some were very proallies, whilst the others were violently anti-Dutch, but unfortunately for the Dutchmen none were there to train them as pilots [by this time the Dutch boys had become infantry men and were not to be trained by the RAAF]. The Casino base became a virtual prisoner camp with the Indonesians having to be kept separate and the Dutch air force men became guards. No Indonesians were allowed within 5 metres of the barbed wire and the air force men were instructed to shoot them if they did [this could not be confirmed]. For Jan this guard duty was a far cry from being trained as a pilot for the Dutch Air Force.

One particular night the officers were having a party at the base. Plenty of grog, music and even girls. After finishing his duty at 1am Jan decided what was good for the officers must also be good for the enlisted men.



Jan as driver of the Jeep

Recruiting a couple of his mates he "borrowed" the only jeep on the base, which just happened to be the most prized possession of the partying officers, and he and his mates went on an unauthorized excursion to have their own party in Lismore [there were several jeeps in the camp, such as those of the MPs].

Sadly the planned good time did not eventuate. Jan's driving kept pace with the mounting enthusiasm

of the men and half way to Lismore he spectacularly rolled the jeep into a ditch. The jeep was on its roof, one fellow had a bung leg and Jan had an extremely sore chest where it had met with the steering wheel. After much time, energy and cursing spent getting the jeep back on its wheels any thoughts of partying were overwhelmed by an urgent desire to get the now battered jeep back to its proud and rightful owners.

Back at base the officer's party was still in full swing, so the poor jeep was parked back in its spot as though nothing had happened. Jan's injuries were so serious however that he required immediate medical attention. The dilemma was that this would clearly establish him as the perpetrator of the "Jeep heist" once the damage was discovered.



Jan (front row, third from left) next to Sergeant Driessen

Never being one to just wait and see how things eventuated, Jan hobbled over to the nearest guard tower and lay underneath it, his rifle under him where his chest was most injured. His cries of agony were quickly matched by calls from his co-conspirators for immediate and urgent help. The officers spilled out of the canteen and whilst they easily saw through the concocted story of an accidental fall from the tower, because of the support of three eyewitnesses they were never able to prove anything. In hospital with multiple broken ribs, Jan was further interrogated by an under lieutenant who kept trying to pin the jeep heist on him. He was like a dog with a bone - just wouldn't let it go. Even when they were back in Holland he was still trying to trick Jan into a confession.

The situation in Casino dragged on for quite some time with Jan and the other men receiving no training as pilots but continuing to be used as guards for the Indonesians. Meanwhile, back in Holland Jan's father, Pieter Koster was also a man who couldn't just sit and wait to see what might happen. Becoming increasingly disappointed about the situation his son Jan was in, he took it upon himself to write a strong letter to Prince Bernhard. As a direct result of this letter the orders soon came through for the men to be returned to Holland.

Once back in Holland Jan married his sweetheart he first met whilst on the farm in Drente, and a few years later, when assisted passages to Australia were offered, Jan and his young family migrated and made Australia their home.



Johannes (Jan) Kuypers

MY EX-SERVICENMAN'S HISTORY

I engaged myself as a volunteer with the Dutch Air Force in Eindhoven in Holland on the 24th May 1945.

When in Eindhoven we were dressed in the RAF uniform.

After various medical and other tests, we were sent by truck to Oostende in Belgium, and from there by overnight ship to Tilbury in England.

From there we went by train to Wolverhampton and arrived there on 1st. April 1945. We were put into Wrottesley Park Camp, some small distance from Wolverhampton. When in England we changed from the RAF uniform into the RAAF uniform.

On the 30th May 1945 we left England by motor ship 'Arundle Castle' to Australia via the Panama Canal.

We called in at Wellington in New Zealand and arrived in Sydney on the 7th July 1945. From there we were sent by train to Casino in NSW and after a short period there were sent to St.Ives, Sydney, for jungle warfare training.

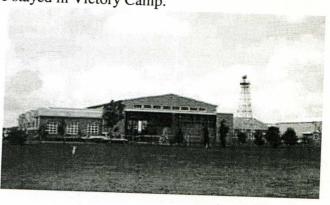
We lived in a camp on the (now) Mona Vale road and on weekends were allowed to go into Sydney, where we were provided with free accommodation and all meals at Air Force House in Goulburn Street.

After a short stay at the St. Ives camp the war in the Pacific ended and we were transferred back to Casino, where we stayed in Victory Camp.

I only stayed a short time in Casino and was, together with a few other servicemen, transferred to an Air Base at Bundaberg, Queensland.

When at Bundaberg, we changed from the RAAF uniform to an American Air Force uniform.

Most of the time at the Air Base I was engaged to service and overhaul the engines on the 'Mitchell' (B25) aircraft.



Bundaberg airfield, wartime hangar

One Friday evening my friends and I were wandering the streets of Bundaberg to see what sort of entertainment was available.

When crossing the street, we heard some music and looking down the street we saw a big hall. We walked towards the hall and when we were close, we noticed a bloke standing in front. We approached the man and asked him what the music was all about; with an Irish lilt his answer was: 'boys, I am the Parish Priest of Bundaberg and we have a dance evening every Friday night. It looks like you boys be looking for some entertainment, so I suggest go inside and have a dance with the girls.'

After a short time dancing with the girls, a bloke who I presumed to be one of the organisers approached me and said: 'John, somebody has told me that you have a very nice tenor voice and therefore I would like you to give us a song'. I said to him: 'who on earth told you about my tenor voice?' His answer was that it was a secret. I said: 'seeing you invited us to be here I will give you a song, but I need a pianist to accompany me.' He said 'that will be taken care of and I will introduce you to her and you tell her what you are going to sing and she will take care of the rest'.

Later in the evening I sang a few more songs and as a result I became a very popular guy!

I had quite a few dances with a girl who introduced herself to me as Thea Rattray and towards the end of the evening she came over to me and asked would I and maybe a few other boys from the air force base like to spend an evening at her place.

The invitation extended to a meal and maybe a sing-song as her mother was a good pianist. We made a date and she told me where she lived.

When we arrived at Thea's house, we were introduced to her mother, sisters and brothers.

There was one of the sisters I was introduced to and her name was Gwynne. Well, the very minute I met her I said to myself: 'boy, I would like to get to know her a bit closer because she is beautiful'.

We eventually became very friendly and after a short period of time, we became engaged.

Gwynne was working in the office of Bundaberg's Gas Company and would you believe the wife of the manager used to take some boys from the airbase over the weekend to the beach near Bundaberg. We used to spend the whole of the day at the beach and she took us all the way back to the airbase in the back of her utility.

I had a wonderful experience of my Air Force service in Bundaberg. I met a lot of very nice people and of course a very nice girl named Gwynne.

However, there is always an end to everything and one morning on parade, the officer in charge told us 'boys, you better get yourselves organised and finish whatever you still have to do, because we are going back to Holland in a very short time'. After I heard the announcement, I said to myself: I am not going back to Holland without my dear girlfriend Gwynne.

I went to see the Officer in charge of the Air Base and told him that I was engaged to a girl in Bundaberg and could I take her with me to Holland. His answer was that this was going to be a troopship and there were no women allowed on this ship except those who were married. My next question was 'If I marry my girlfriend, would she then be allowed on the ship and come with me to Holland?' His answer was that she would be allowed to come with me.

At my next meeting with Gwynne I told her that I was very much in love with her and that I would like to marry her. However, I was going to be transferred back to Holland shortly and I would like her to come with me. After some consideration, she said she would be only too pleased to marry me and accompany me to Holland.



Holy rosary RC Church, Bundaberg

We got married on 2nd. Of July 1946 and this was celebrated at the Holy Rosary Church in Bundaberg. The reception was held at one of the leading hotels in Bundaberg.

We left Australia by steamship *Volendam* in August 1946 and arrived in Holland on 3rd. October that same year.

When back in Holland I was still attached to the Air Force Service in various locations, but waiting to be discharged from the forces.

We expected to be discharged in Holland but we found out that we were entitled to be discharged in whatever area we had served. We then made application with the appropriate Government Department and told them that we wanted to be discharged in Australia.

After a lot of negotiations with the appropriate departments, they finally agreed to us to be demobilised in Australia.

I was issued with a movement order and ordered to proceed from Amsterdam to Batavia (Jakarta) on the troopship 'Nieuw Holland' leaving on 9th July 1947 and Gwynne was allowed to come with me on the same ship.

After arriving in Jakarta we were put on a plane to Brisbane. From there I went by train to Sydney and was demobilised at the Netherlands Consulate on 19th August 1947.

I have made a lot of important decisions during my life, but the most important was to engage myself as a volunteer with the Dutch Air Force, because by doing so I became married to the most beautiful woman in the world and we managed to raise a wonderful family of seven children and on the 2nd. July 2006 we celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary.

So much for my servicemen's and family history.



Ton (Tony) Minderhout

This is the story of Tony (Ton) Minderhout alias Lord Lesswood G.O.V. (Genaaid Oorlogs Vrijwilliger)

We were liberated in Middelburg, my hometown, in Nov.1944.

In Dec. posters appeared in the office of the "Militair Gezag", calling for volunteers to join the armed forces. I then decided to enlist in Middelburg for the Air force (after many problems and talks at home!). We left by army truck for Eindhoven recruitment centre on 12-3-45.

As far as I can remember, v.d.Klooster, Boele de Haan, Minnaard, de Rijcke, Kampman, v.d.Hulst and Blaauwkamer were also on board this army-truck.

In Eindhoven tests, medicals, receiving uniforms and the final selection for the PNB training. Cannot remember the kind of weather we had in that period and also not on the further transport to Wolverhampton.

Departed from Eindhoven on 31-3-45 in trucks to Blankenberge and on to England on 3-4-45 on the 'Ulster Monarch', arriving in Tilbury and from there by train to Wolverhampton.

Till 30-5-45 stationed at Wrottesley Park with various activities, infantry training, flight testing in Torquay and Bridge North with night vision and aircraft recognition tests and my 'luchtdoop' (first flight) in a Tiger Moth and an Airspeed Oxford.

I was selected for the Australia group and went to London to collect a RAAF uniform. Celebrated VE-Day in Wolverhampton, parades, big party in the Civic Hall with plenty of nice girls etc.

Left on 30-5-45 for Liverpool and embarked on the *Arundel Castle* for our transfer to Australia in a small convoy with the *Volendam* and a few destroyers.

Volendam and destroyers left us at the Caribbean and from there onwards we were on our own. We had a stop in Colon with mechanical problems (?) and having wild days and nights in the American Zone of the Panama Canal.

Further to New Zealand, Wellington, after a nice 'little' storm and a few alarms (all went well and I did not see any U-boats), arriving 3-7-45 and departing to Sydney on 4-7-45.

For me the boat-voyage was special, with all the gambling (two-up, card games) by the Australian and New Zealand P.O.W.s with a lot of money involved!

Arrival Sydney 2-7-45, disembarked after 20 hours' delay due to striking wharfies and then on to Casino by train arriving 8-7-45, where we were put up at the Victory Camp. On 29-7-45 I went to Sydney, RAAF camp in Bradfield and later a trainings camp in St. Ives. A nice experience was a trip to Katoomba and the Three Sisters which we made with our Australian Drill-Sgt-major. Return to Casino was on 28-08-45.



Group of guards

The story of the prisoners at the camp did not interest me much and I cannot recall any dates or details, I was one of "De hele hap op wacht". [Jokingly: the whole group as guards. An untranslatable term coined by NCO Stroy.] There were many discussions and incidents but I was more interested to start my flying training.

Life outside the camp was my favourite business, I had a girlfriend, Barbara Green, whose parents and further family made me also 'one of the family'. I never did a stitch of mending or ironing or washing myself, and the weekend happenings and BBQs and trips to the coast, Evans Head, Byron Bay etc., were fabulous.

The story of the prisoners at the camp never changed their attitude to me and I stayed with girlfriend and family until our final departure from Casino.

I loved to go to the soccer, hockey and athletics meetings. The outings to Lismore with Ko de Rijcke, Kees Prins, Joop Moll, Jef v.Rooy, Nico Oldenburger and Perry Perdaems I will not likely forget. I made several trips to for instance Bundaberg, Coolangatta, Brisbane, were Bep.v.Klaveren (the Dutch Prof. Boxer) threw me out of the Dutch Club because I tried to enter with a girl who looked like 18 but was in fact only 14.

Later I watched a training session from Nic. Verwey and Jan v.d.Dungen given by the same v.Klaveren. Due to changing accommodations from tents to huts and v.v. special groups stayed more or less together; I was in hut D 13 with Wim de Graaf, Johnny v.d.Linden, Vrolijks and Kersten and others, and in another hut (cannot remember the number) with Perdaems, Ben Ruys, Kees Prins, Ko de Rijcke, Ton v.d.Tang, Cees de Jong and v.d.Wiel. Tent 65 was a happy one with Ton v.d.Tang, Gerard Verhoeven, Johny v.d.Linden, myself and Johny de Faria. I do not know what section the latter came from, he was from Suriname and he was teaching us for weeks Haki Taki, the language of Suriname.

I also spent a few days in the hospital with Erik v. Heeswijk and v.d.Waerden as a patient, where we received good care from Doctor "Dopey"van Duyl, sisters v.Gorkum and Marie Banaan and Maj.Hamissie.

Further camp happenings were the listening together to the soccer games in Holland at the radio belonging to Kpl. Mommerts (!); Berkhoff who always smuggled in wallabies, our dog Bruno (who was the owner?) etc, etc.

I made trips to Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra etc. with Ben Ruys, Flip Batenberg, Gerard Blaauwkamer, Tony v.d.Tang, Arie v.d.Wetering and Johny v.d.Linden.

On one of our last trips to Sydney, while we were staying at Air force House in Goulburn Street, the latter surprised me by saying "good-bye I will probably never see you again" and indeed he disappeared and I never heard from him again.

Later I found out that he went "underground" and married one of our Parramatta girlfriends.

I was not chosen to take part in the VP-Victory Parade in Sydney but v.d.Linden and I went there and had a whale of a time. For the first time in my life I became, after all the free drinks in various places and finally after visiting the Russian Club where I drunk vodka, completely washed-out. I woke up the next day in a Hostel of the Australian Womens' Land Army, where some girls put me to bed to sleep "mijn roes" out (sleep it off). Via the M.P. and after a short interrogation o/b the Dutch destroyer Tromp I was allowed to return to Casino by train, with a free ticket.



Tony (left) and Gerard Blaauwkamer

I finally left Casino on 16-8-46 for Brisbane and departed for Holland on the *Volendam* via Sydney (arr.19-8, dep.24-8), Melbourne (arr.26-8, dep 28-8), Fremantle (arr.2-9, dep.4-9), Aden 18-9, Port Said 23-9.

Arrival in Rotterdam was on 3-10-46 and we went with a bus to Ypenburg and the same day by train to Middelburg (home).

I was back at Ypenburg on 4-11 for medicals, tests and talks which resulted in a reassignment for a Meteorological course instead of a flying course. That made me resign from the Air force together with Lam v.d. Burg, Ger Carpay, Lou Baltussen and Jo Smits. I was allowed to go on leave on 3-12-46 and spent this terrific cold December month at home. Was recalled to Ypenburg in Jan.'47 and was officially discharged on 11-1-47.

I joined KLM in Apr.47, working in the Passengers and Cargo Handling Departments. In this period I worked with Jo Plomp, Berkhoff and Erik v. Heeswijk.

Berkhoff and myself were considering to return to Australia, but as my fiancée Bep (an old love from my school days) was not keen to meet all my girlfriends in Australia, I decided to stay and marry in Holland. I believe that on the ship that was supposed to take us back to Australia, Berkhoff, Ivits, Dado, Fincken and Goedhart actually travelled.

From 1953 I was assigned by KLM to the "buitendienst" and I worked as a Station Manager/Flight Operations Officer in various places: Brussels, Kano (Nigeria), Aruba, Las Palmas, Entebbe (Uganda), Manila, Johannesburg, Zürich, Curacao and finally at Sydney, where I retired on 1-1-1989.

During those years I had regular contacts with Kees Prins (Captain B747) and Ben v.Egteren (Navigator/Wireless Operator).

Due to my living abroad for so long, the first Reunion I attended was the one in Utrecht in Sept.1985 and as a result of my stationing in Sydney we were just in time to join our first reunion in Australia in 1985.



Jan Muys

I do not remember how I came to hear about the possibility to enlist with the air force after our part of Holland had been liberated, but I remember I volunteered at a recruitment facility at the 'Gemeentehuis' (town hall) at Asten (NB), the village where I lived, on 18th October 1944, one day before my 18th birthday. I forged my mother's signature on a consent form for enlistment.

Eventually on 24.2.1945 I was asked to present myself at the 'opkomst centrum' in Eindhoven and spent a fortnight there, prior to being flown to England on 10.3.1945. I have no idea why I was chosen to go by air, whilst most of the others seem to have gone by road. We were in a small group and flew in an unarmed Dakota, over Belgium and northern France to London.

From there we went by surface transport to Wolverhampton, where we spent two months until, on VE-day (8.5.1945) we boarded the liner *Rangitata* from the NZ. Shipping Company, at Liverpool.

We travelled through the Panama Canal to Sydney, where we arrived after a six week journey.

By train we were transported to Casino in northern NSW, where we spent approx. four weeks, waiting for further developments.

And that development was our return to Sydney, where we were housed in Bradfield Park and trained for jungle warfare at St. Ives.

About four weeks later Japan was atom-bombed into surrendering and the war came to an end.

This led to a return to Casino Victory Camp and since I no longer saw any point in my being in the forces – after all I joined to liberate Netherlands East Indies - I made a start in trying to get my discharge in Australia as soon as possible, especially as I was not interested in fighting the Indonesian people, who shortly after declared their independence of the Netherlands

After a while a prison camp section was set up in Victory camp for those Indonesians who no longer wished to serve in the Dutch forces and we were supposed to guard the prisoners, many of whom had first been our colleagues.

We had quite a good rapport with the prisoners and a good example of this is the fact that, during guard duty at night, they often saved us from being found dozing instead of guarding. One of them would creep up to under the watch tower and call 'psssst', your Captain is coming!' After which we quickly woke up and were at our job when one of our superiors arrived.

Our relationship with the Casino people was quite good, though some of them were clearly puzzled about what was going on in our camp. They never took it out on us though.

Most boys had a girlfriend in town and mine was Laura (Laurie) Patch, whom I married, a marriage which lasted more than 28 years.

During my service in camp I spent some time in the 'klink' or 'petoet' as a result of a minor misdemeanour, as was usual.



Jan (John) in uniform (not kahki this time)

Once I had just picked up my nicely dry-cleaned khaki uniform and was wearing it when we had to go for a run.

We had to run and the sergeant called to me: run Muys – after which I carefully trod through the bush – this was not enough of course, so the sergeant called: faster Muys, faster and let me run through the swamp, thus undoing the drycleaner's beautiful job. My protests and uncooperative behaviour earned me two weeks in the klink.

At another occasion we had a weekend in which we had to stay in Casino – no permission to go away. Since I was keen to go sightseeing I decided to ignore these orders and hitched a ride to Brisbane, where I spent the weekend.

On return I was called in to my superior who asked: 'What were you doing this weekend Muys?'

It turned out that he had been driving to Brisbane and had seen me stand along the road hitching a

ride. This was not appreciated of course and resulted in another two weeks arrest.

After a group of 90 boys who were still in the camp at the middle of 1946 had left for home or were transferred elsewhere, I stayed in Australia as I had wanted to and spent most of my time loading cargo, because the unions had placed a black ban on Dutch ships. I worked in Brisbane, Sydney and Geelong and we loaded all sorts of goods, once a load of quite heavy metal anvils. What those anvils were needed for so urgently in NEI I don't know.

In the meantime I kept indicating that I wanted OUT and at the same time wanted to stay in Australia and finally this insistence had success – I was granted discharge on 31.12.1947 and started 1948 as a free man.



Lam Vandenburg 'What's in a Name'

As an aftermath of looking at the ANZAC march this year and every year, it makes me gooey and teary and think of years gone by, when I used to march – which all started in a smart reply: 'For Queen and Country' to lieutenant Louis van Liechtenstein's question: 'why do you want to die in a war?'

This was 24.3.1945 in Eindhoven and I probably had the address out of these little propaganda booklets the English planes used to throw out in the night.

Was probably the right answer and I finished up in Wolverhampton.

A lot of carrying on and hard work and wait for it: marched in the VE march in Birmingham, where an invitation to a Rotary celebration lunch finished up in a splash in a fountain in the middle of the town and, being assisted by my first English-speaking girlfriend, giving me a bible and singing for me nr. 1 on the top forty: 'Show me the way to go home'.

So, since we had won the war in Europe there was no rest for the wicked and I got a nice address: 12e Compagnie MD Victory Camp at Casino and RNIA box 1386R Brisbane and we found ourselves on board the *Arundel Castle*, to go win the war with Japan.

We left Liverpool on the 30th of May 1945 onwards to the Panama Canal and were kept very busy looking after our own Dutch girls and with rehearsals for our musicals at night.

Who can ever forget 'The Zuiderzee Singers': Jan Kuypers, Les Dittmar, Do Blauw, Lam Vandenburg, Crooki Ingram and Tilly Pladet on our raft, gnawing on the biggest, bloodiest bones from the butcher out the kitchen, gambling on who was going to be the next due to be eaten!

Now and then, although miles and miles away, a nightly rendezvous with the 'Oranje', all lit up and the big red cross on the side, on her way with her wounded soldiers, home to New Zealand, where we met up with her again, before we got welcomed in Sydney with open arms by Lt.Col Fiedeldy and the welcoming words: be careful of the prostitutes here and dare to say 'sedikit' which, we found out later, was meant for the sambal in the kitchen in Casino or for both.

Enjoyed the trip to Casino, started to march a bit again and finished in St. Ives (Bradfield Park) for jungle training.

So now you're talking: after all, we had already two uniforms, English and Australian air force, so the jungle was the right spot for them.

And we jungled, but we felt in our bones the end of the war was near and we had to be right for it. And the night we were going to have our first and real night exercise it

happened and the war was over.

Of course we had to have night exercise and us heroes were told we had to march in the Victory march in Sydney in a couple of days.

So boys, do your best.

Darkness all around.

No moon and we all lay out between the rocks and trees and so dark I didn't even see my 'wapenbroeder' (I think it was 'dikke' Verwey) who had his rifle



'Jungle Training' by day

on the right side of the same tree I had mine on the left side of.

And then the dreaded yell: 'attack!' and as they say: all hell broke loose, with a lot of noise and smell and rubbish out of *Dick's* rifle in my eye.

Peace declared. Ambulance (jeep, driver and me) to Bradfield Park hospital.

I could not see a thing.

In reception: name, number etc. so: L.v.d.Burg (in Dutch) etc.

After a while I was called in and going by sound, not one but two doctors and both female.

I had to undress totally, which I thought a bit unusual, seeing I had trouble with my eyes, but then: this was Australia...and everything was new for me and then: when in Rome...

Anyway, after a bit of prodding and fiddling with my Glockenspiel I got a bed in a ward and questions and answers started (I wonder what my poor old Mum would have thought about all this).

My first question was of course what all the fiddling was about with the answer: lack of communication and the receptionist put my name down as Burg (capital B) and v.d. as the problem!

And that is why I finished up in the VD ward and I write my name in one word now: Vandenburg instead of v.d.Burg.

One of the doctors would love to go to the Dutch Club, so we made a pact: if she let me out of hospital in time for the march, I would take her to the Dutch Club.

They must have had some good cleaning fluid, because I marched in the second 'end of war march' in one year -1945 VE and VP

And so after winning two wars back in August 1946 we went back to Holland in the good old ship *Volendam*.

PS

'En mussen zijn geen kuikens' was the last march and song, on request from Margaret Reed's Children's Hospital in St. Ives...

I was discharged in Ypenburg, Holland on 11 January 1947.



Piet van Vegchel

Following your request I have written down what I can still remember of my time with the Dutch Air Force.

I enlisted in Eindhoven at the Van Hout-Vergegaard building. Medical examination was at the St. Josef hospital in Eindhoven.

My brother was selected for air gunner; he only had technical college (ambachtsschool) education.

I was selected for pilot-navigator since I completed the Sint Joris College.

Initially I was rejected because my equilibrium was not what it should be.

You had to sit in a quickly-revolving chair, which was then stopped abruptly and then you had to walk on a white line without losing your balance!

I protested and asked to be allowed to walk in my socks. That was allowed and I passed the test.

Why? I was wearing shoes that had soles patched up with rags – few people still had good shoes without holes in the soles at that time during the war.

In an open truck along bomb damaged roads to the Belgian coast.

In a classy hotel in Oostende we were received with nice, yellow slices of cake – one slice each.

When we said that we had not seen real cake for four years we were allowed to eat as much as we wanted.

We later sailed to London on the 'SS. Duke of York'.

Another hotel.

I decided to have a bath – never had an opportunity to do that properly during the war, because I had been in hiding from the Germans.

I was just having a lovely soak when the air raid alarm sounded.

I just stayed in the tub, thinking that, if the hotel was hit I would at least be clean going to heaven.

By train to Wolverhampton where we received some military training – marching, rifle drill etc. Since I had been a member of the Dutch underground resistance, I did not have to take part.

From Liverpool by ship – the *Rangitata*, (New Zealand) towards America in a large convoy. Constantly changing position and life belts were worn 24 hours a day.

While underway a German U-boat tried to catch up with us, but fortunately he didn't make it. We were just a little bit faster.

On approaching New York we turned left and under cover from American Coastal Command aircraft travelled along the American coast in the direction of the Panama Canal.

In Panama, a short shore leave.



Piet in uniform

We were alphabetically sorted into small groups. The bus driver opened the rear door through which we entered the bus, but the front door was also open and that is where we went straight out again.

Eventually we took a taxi and the driver didn't even ask us where we wanted to go, he took us straight away to the red light district, for that is what he was used to do.

Fortunately we met an American MP and he took us back to a decent neighbourhood and that is where we met a polish shopkeeper.

We only had a few dollars and tried to buy some souvenirs but when he heard that we were from Holland he said to his wife 'you look after the shop, I am going to join these boys'.

He happened to be a former sailor and had been in Amsterdam, the Zeedijk.

He showed us around in Panama City in a decent manner.

Our ship then left unaccompanied for Wellington NZ.

While underway we had a show - who does not remember the song 'In Pipa Panama' by a Spanish beauty, married to a Dutch officer?

During the show there was a sudden storm and the artists had to hang on to whatever they could grab in order not to be blown off the stage!

Between Wellington and Sydney we saw one Japanese submarine, but it could not catch up with us.

While at the wharf in Sydney we threw cigarettes at the members of the brass band and in no time they were all picking up cigarettes rather than performing the musical welcome. [This welcome was organised for the returning Australians, not the arriving Dutch.]

We were sent to Casino and after a while went from there to St. Ives for jungle warfare training.

They took us to St. Ives in double-decker buses, but at one overhead railway bridge crossing we got stuck. The tunnel was too low (for a double-decker) and they let the tyres down and after that we could continue.

We returned to Casino in a wooden train. There was a toilet in every second carriage and if you had to go you had to go outside via the timber running boards. Along the way there were farmers asking for newspapers.

In the camp we had meals at a long table without chairs and there we stood with our food bowls.

One of the kitchen hands had already given us some rice and now came with a dish containing something green. He asked 'banjak toean?' which means 'would you like a lot, sir?'

It looked OK to us, so we said 'yes please.'

We had never before heard about sambal and this was REALLY hot, pure sambal.

We decided not to be beaten and really sweated water and cocoa powder.

And the Javanese laughed their heads off.

We also often hired some horses and went out playing cowboys. We fired at the porcelain insulators along the railway line Sydney/Brisbane. Colonel Breemhouwer, our camp commander, then told the local people 'if you meet a Dutchman with a rifle, then it's OK to shoot back.'

In the beginning we were not very popular. Whenever we went to the pictures and happened to be seated next to a girl, that girl got up and found herself another seat.

We did not like that at all.

The reason was that there was some local gossip about foreign troops, especially black Americans in Sydney and as a result people were overly cautious.

Most volunteers came from the southern regions of Holland, because that part had been liberated first



Lining up for food

and most of them were Catholics and it used to be the custom that during the primary school years boys were either choir boys or altar boys.

Casino also had a large Catholic community under the guidance of Irish priests.

We discussed this amongst ourselves and asked for an interview with the parish priest. When we told him that we were Catholics and would like to sing the H.Mass on Sunday, he agreed immediately. We sang a Gregorian Mass (which was not known there) and some multi-voiced songs. After the service the people applauded.

The Priest wanted a repeat performance in the afternoon and promised to arrange a dance in the church hall.

And did we sing! Some of our boys even had a conservatorium education.

The dance turned out to be an old time dance: the ladies in long dresses and an elderly lady at a honky tonk piano.

We took a taxi back to the camp to pick up a few guitars and some pots and pans from the kitchen to make a drum set.

The boogie-woogie era was just behind us and the ladies found this rather interesting. Not so the local boys; they found us 'polite' since we returned the girls to their seats after a dance and that is what the Australian boys never even thought of.

The local people accepted us as decent Catholic boys, but the local boys used to regularly try to pick a fight. But we knew how to deal with that too!

Our commanding officer used to drive back to the camp after the last bus and then used to give a lift to those who were returning late.

That seemed nice, but then he would drop you off at the guardhouse, where you were locked up for the night.

My worst experience was the drowning of Simon Snepvangers in the Richmond River in Casino on the 23rd. September 1945.

We went there for a swim with a large group of our boys and Casino girls. We never noticed anything until we were ready to return to the camp and saw that there was a bundle of clothes left behind.

He was buried with military honours.

We formed a cordon and members of a local funeral directors in nice black suits were standing around the grave.

We were not allowed to use live ammunition but had made 'bullets' from potatoes.

Every shot resulted in a white powder which made those men in black suits look as though they had been standing in a snowstorm.



Capt. Sleeboom at funeral Snepvangers

I have donated large amounts of photos of Casino and the forward and return journey to 'Het Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie' – Dutch Ministry of Defence. Including photos of the Panama Canal, the Suez Canal, Wolverhampton, Tettenhall, St. Ives, Casino, Richmond River (23.9.45) and also a number of diaries.



Piet made it onto a plane at least

Many of our boys never realised their intended air force training for which they enlisted.

I was tested and passed to be trained as pilot/navigator and eventually I finished up with the infantry at Tjillitan, and there I did more flying than with the air force.

In Piper Cups and Japanese aircraft with Japanese crew.

Also Dakotas and B25s. P.O.W. transport Bandoeng -Batavia.

Later on I completed a course in Bandoeng to become a tower

operator (i.e. air traffic controller) and I have been working in the control towers at Andir (Bandoeng) and Kemajoran (Batavia).

When the Australian wharf labourers went on strike following a black ban of the Dutch ships, our boys had to do their work.

And that's my story as I remember it after so many years.

Piet van Vegchel passed away on 23 April 2007, not long after sending us his story via Ton Minderhout. Ed.



Jan v.d. Waerden

Jan van der Waerden (1 April 1922. – 3 October 2001) enlisted in Eindhoven in 1945 and shared most of the experiences the other 'boys' have reported.

He went to Wolverhampton and left England on the *Rangitata* on 8th May 1945, destined for Australia and air crew training.

Like the others he spent most of his time in Casino where he too, had some unexpected experiences.

His widow Truus, together with Cor Koedam, was able to put the following anecdote together based on what they remember being told.

The story deals with how Jan was almost blinded in both eyes as the result of another 'silly' move by one of the boys he shared a tent with.

'This whole incident was a result of annoying mosquitoes buzzing around in the tent. Mosquito nets were supplied for the night to go over the stretchers, but there was no fly spray to get rid of the mozzies while spending time in the tent during the day or evening.

So, some smart (or not so smart) fellow (unknown), hit upon the idea of spraying lighter fluid at the beasts, hoping that this would chase them away. The fluid was accidentally ignited by a cigarette and in panic thrown away, straight into Jan's face.'

The result was, of course, that Jan got burns on his face and his eyebrows and eyelashes were singed and his eyes injured and his eyes



Tent accommodation in the camp

were singed and his eyes injured and as a result he was unable to do normal duties.

He was transferred to hospital duties after his burns and eyes were treated and later moved into the office where Cor Koedam was one of the administration staff.

Eventually his eyes improved sufficiently to make him eligible again for training as air crew. In August 1946 he left Casino to return to Holland with the rest of the original air force trainees. From October that year they received their training in various places including Twente, but in the end not many of the boys finished the training and became air force pilots.

Jan returned to civil life and stayed in Holland after his demobilisation. He met and married Truus and immigrated to Australia in the late 1940s.

Jan and Truus were faithful attendants of the reunions of the 'Casino Boys'.

Unfortunately Jan died after a long battle with heart problems in 2001.

Truus keeps in touch but is no longer able to attend reunions.

However, she supplied the formal photo plus some documents, one of which is shown below.

We were happy to be able to include Jan in our collection of stories, as he was very much part of the Casino boys.

Ministry of Defence

Record Office 6440 AZ Brunssum, Postbox 975 Telex 56276 BRIOP NL

STATEMENT

This is to certify that:

--- van der W A E R D E N , Johannes Ambrosius Norbertus --- born on the 1st April 1922 at Tilburg (the Netherlands), armynumber 22.04.01.501, was on active service as a volunteer with the Royal Netherlands Army - Aviation-troops - from the 2nd March 1945 till the 29th November 1947.

He actually served at the theatre of war, from the 2nd March 1945 till the 5th May 1945.

Mr. van der Waerden remained for primary training in England from the 10th March 1945 till the 9th May 1945 and for military operations in Australia from the 19th June 1945 till the 18th August 1946.

He served under Allied Command from the 2nd March 1945 till the 18th August 1946.

Mr. van der Waerden was enlisted as an extraordinary conscript of the 1942 class ex the municipality of Tilburg, number 871, on the 1st August 1953.

With entrance from the 1st October 1957, he was discharged because of ending his compulsory military service.

14 SEP. 1983

Chief Record Office of the Department

Requested by: himself.
By letter dated: August 23, 1983.

RECOMMENT OF WINST

82-4-03689



Han(s) Weller

My contribution is likely to be focussed on certain events, funny or otherwise, that happened in and around the various camps rather than our travels to and from those camps.

Our first real army camp was situated in Tettenhall near Wolverhampton in the middle of England and it is there that we got our first military training.

We were living in proper huts (barracks) and it so happened that the amenities building was situated across the road from our hut and at one stage there were complaints about the exceptional amount of water we used. So it was decided to post a watch at the door and make sure all taps were turned off and no water was wasted.

This watch was a day and night affair and was called the 'pis wacht' (pee watch). Now the day watch was one thing, but keeping awake during the night was something else, somebody worked out that we could have a snooze by sitting on a chair inside the entrance door, so that nobody could 'sneak' in while we dozed. Anybody who wanted to get in had to bang on the door and



Finding the water leak

wake us up and so we could do our duty and rest at the same time!

Eventually it was found that the excess water used was the result of a leak in the water mains.

In our time off we went to Wolverhampton proper quite regularly and there were dances and picture shows, where we were able to meet local girls with the result that most of us had a regular girlfriend.

At that stage I was friends with Henk van der Hulst, who was a very tall chap.

At one stage Henk and I decided that we would like to see a bit more of the English countryside and we asked our girls to lend us their pushbikes for that purpose.

They were only too happy to oblige and on a Sunday morning we set off into the country, Henk with his knees almost touching his chin, but we had a great time - the weather was beautiful.

After a while we decided to stop for a drink at a pub we passed, got off our bikes and ordered a lemon squash. Now the publican looked rather taken aback: two (Dutch) air force men on girl's bikes ordering lemon squash. Must have been a sight to behold and something to talk about - no idea whether the Dutch Air Force made a good impression here...

Then there was the time when Cor Koedam and I decided to have a weekend away to see yet a bit more than the camp's environment.

It so happened that I knew that a girl I was friends with in Eindhoven, volunteered for some army auxiliary and was presently living in a camp near Coventry.

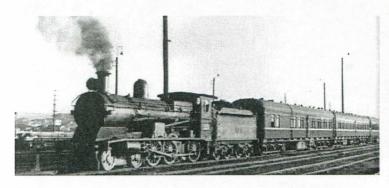
I don't remember the exact details, but I know Cor and I travelled to Coventry by train and then by bus to that camp, where we indeed found that girl.

Cor and I had booked into a hotel nearby and when the girl was given leave to join us to go to town, the three of us went out to do just that. First we went back to the hotel to clean up a bit and the girl came with us. Presently the manageress of the hotel came up and told us we were not allowed to have ladies in our room.

We, young and 'innocent' as we were, were rather taken aback!

The girl afterwards showed us the sights of Coventry and we got back safe and sound to Wolverhampton after a pleasant weekend.

Much later, after arriving in Australia, we travelled from Sydney to Casino by train, which was an older type steam train with separate compartments (North Coast Mail?) There was a meal break on this trip of one hour, where everybody got off the train to eat in a large mess hall beside the station (Coffs Harbour?).



Steam train similar to the one we took to Casino

There were four of us in the compartment, which we shared with Australian soldiers, who had a bottle of sherry (trust them though beer would sound more natural) and after the meal this bottle was handed round for each to have a 'sip' and when, after a while, we all

decided on a rest (for which both seats and luggage racks served as beds) we slept like

There are a few things about life in the camp in Casino that I remember rather clearly.

babies...

On the whole conditions were very relaxed and casual and we seemed to have quite a lot of spare time.

Yes, we had to be present every morning for roll call, but after that things were very easy – there were certain chores to do such as washing and cleaning and of course we had our regular rifle drill and marching and exercise and later on we had guard duties.

These duties were not only at the prison camp, but we also had to guard the munitions store, which was located somewhere opposite the guardhouse cum petoet.

There was a sergeant in charge of this store, which was locked with a hasp and staple plus padlock business – the whole set up was very simple indeed.

I do not remember whether the store was guarded round the clock, but I know that we were rostered to do guard duty during the night.

One man was walking around the store for two hours while the other sat in the watch house reading or playing cards with the guard sergeant and the prisoners until it was his turn to guard the place for two hours – quite a cosy arrangement.

Apparently one day someone forgot to lock the munitions store door and someone somehow got hold of a quantity of gelignite and fuses and other requirements and a select group of boys, of which I was one, decided to put our jungle warfare training in St. Ives into practice.

There were about six of us, but I don't remember who the others were. However, it was decided that we would try to blow up a tree and one night our little group went into the bush behind the camp and found a suitable specimen. I must mention here that in the camp and in the countryside around it, there were plenty of dead, old, ringbarked trees and this was most likely one of them.

We made a plan as to how to go about it and dug a hole under one of the main roots of the tree. Several sticks of gelignite went into that hole, the fuse was connected and the hole filled up.

We knew that the effect of gelignite is greatly improved if the charge is wet and to get that effect we all had a good pee into the hole and firmly stamped the earth around the charge.

The fuse was lit and we made sure to be far enough away before the big bang. And a BIG bang it was, the result was quite spectacular: the whole tree was lifted about two feet and then fell over.



Of course the explosion was heard in the camp and the next day an investigation was begun as to what had happened.

Suffice to say that eventually the culprits were found and I am sorry to say that we got away with a severe reprimand only but the sergeant in charge of the store was demoted for failing to keep the door locked!

I have already mentioned the watch house cum petoet, where several boys spent one or more days as prisoners.

I spent one day there and the reason was a problem that arose while I was on kitchen duty.

I worked for the much appreciated cook Dikke Willem – probably peeling potatoes or doing some other chore. Willem had cooked a nice roast of beef which he was slicing on a cutting board. The meat looked really nice and I asked whether I could have a slice for a snack. His answer was: 'no, because this is for the officers' dinner'.

I was rather taken aback, but since he was a corporal and thus my superior, I had to leave it at that.

But when Willem had finished slicing the roast there was a small end piece left, which he cut up in tiny pieces, which I thought were for the cats.

Instead he offered them to me! I was really offended and told him I wasn't going to eat the cats' meat and tipped the meat on the floor.

This time it was Willem who was offended and he ordered me to pick it up, which I refused.

He then reported me for 'wasting food and disobedience' and that is how I finished up in the petoet.

There are of course many more stories to tell, but these few show that life in Casino made for pleasant memories.



Arie van de Wetering

In February 1945 I escaped from the German occupation through the 'Biesbos' [large area of wetlands in SW Holland] to the liberated South and, after considerable wandering around, I joined the L.S.K. (Dutch air force) as a war volunteer in Eindhoven on 23.3.1945.



We were the 'angry young men' and wanted to play our part in the final victory worldwide.

From Eindhoven we were transported in army trucks via Blankenberge in Belgium to be shipped to England to be ultimately housed in Wrottesley Park army camp near Wolverhampton.

There we received aircraft theory, some military training and inoculations!

Until the armistice was signed in Europe.

For us that meant transfer to the theatre of war in the Pacific.

Towards the end of May we boarded the *Arundel Castle*, a 2200 ton troopship, in Liverpool and that took us to Sydney via Panama and New Zealand.

On board there were, apart from our group of about 80 LSK personnel, a number of 'Military Police' and V.H.K. (Vrouwelijk Hulp Korps) i.e. Women's' Auxiliary – the remainder were mainly repatriating Australians and New Zealanders.

After arriving in Sydney on 7.7.1945 we made a very long train journey to Casino, where we were taken to the 'Victory Camp'.



On board the Arundel Castle

Here we were put up in tents in the lower camp.

When we had time off we met the local people, who were generally very friendly towards us. On Sundays we went to church, in my case that was the Presbyterian Church of the Reverend North and we were also invited to join local people in their homes.

Swimming in the Richmond river and going to Lismore pool were also a favourable pastime as was going to the pictures in one of the two (!) cinemas in this small town. And having a meal in the 'Marble Arch' or the 'Princess Café' or going to the library to be able to learn a bit more about Australia.

After a few weeks we were transferred again, this time to St. Ives, a Sydney suburb, for jungle warfare training by the RAAF. One of the instructors was Sergeant-Major Johnson, the 'desert rat', who had been fighting in North Africa.

From 7 o'clock (0700 hours) on Monday morning until 4 o'clock (1600 hours) on Friday afternoon the training was as realistic as possible and that meant that sometimes we had to do 'battle' during the night.

We learned how to handle a variety of weapons in theory and practice. In the weekend we were free to go and do as we pleased and we could have bed & breakfast in Air Force House in Sydney for 2 shillings. We explored the city with the Harbour Bridge, took a ferry boat to Manly Beach and generally enjoyed our freedom.

Then they dropped the A-bomb, Japan capitulated and WWII was history. For us the consequences were considerable. In my opinion the Australians had delivered a more than average contribution to the fighting during WWII and they were really ready for peace. They immediately closed down all training centres and we were left empty handed. Literally! Because we still had our accommodation in St. Ives and some training was continued, but without much enthusiasm. And we did not get any pay, so we used our last shillings to pay for a few more nights of B&B in Air Force House – but that came to an end too.

We also managed to spend a few nights in some English establishment in Central Park [Hyde Park?] with the help of a few English boys who smuggled us in there.

In the meantime we were getting free rides on trams and ferries, since the conductor/tress used to look the other way.

Back in Casino, for lack of anything better, we were transferred to the KNIL – that was called being 'detached'. As infantry soldiers we were supplied with a Lee-Enfold rifle or an Australia

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Enfield rifle or an Austen gun.

We had to hand in our RAAF uniforms and we were dressed in what was in those days the KNIL tropical uniform – mostly American stock.

This way detached and dressed we were ready on a few occasions to be shipped to Macassar or some such place, but that was made impossible by communist inspired waterfront workers, who refused to load and supply Dutch ships. In spite of that a few KPM ships managed to break the blockade and that was much admired by the majority of the Australians.

Early in the morning one day we were loaded onto trucks, armed with our rifle complete with bayonets, supposedly to form a guard of honour for some or other high official. But what happened was the imprisonment of all pro-Soekarno Indonesian personnel in the camp. Our commanding officer apparently beat them to it, otherwise we would have been the prisoners.

As it happened we had to do the guard duties: three days on guard, one day off, two days normal duties, followed by another three days on guard duties and so on.

Early in 1946 we, i.e. Wim van Die, Jan Dietvorst and myself got a few weeks' leave. We planned a week in Brisbane, where we were to stay in camp Perry Pack and to go on to Bundaberg where our previous camp commander was now in charge. In the train on the way up we met a liberated sergeant-pilot of the KNIL and it turned

out that he also came from my home town Sliedrecht, had been friends with my eldest brother and had joined the Dutch colonial military forces before the war (WWII).

He was presently being trained to fly the Mitchell B25 bomber.

Of course this meant that we were flying every day as passengers and at the end of the holiday we were delivered to an airfield in Brisbane.

In July 1946 we received a movement order to return to Holland on the *Volendam*, a voyage we shared with a few thousand evacuees from the NEI, now Indonesia. We arrived in Rotterdam on 3.10.1946.

There is a lot more to tell, but space limits me to this story. Suffice to say that it has been an enriching period in my life, that I have been able to share with so many equal minded and motivated people.

I made a lot of friends, both Dutch and Australian.

(and remember: I was also the corrector of the 'AFLOS' magazine!).



Jan de Wit

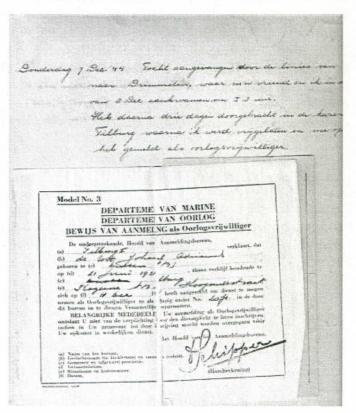
I want to tell you about my husband, Johannes Adrianus de Wit, born 21 June 1924 in Dussen, NB. Holland and his connection with Victory Camp Casino, Australia.

Victory Camp Casino. Turn right, past the meatworks. And then?

John and I got married on 14 June 1948 and for the record we had 11 beautiful children. We lost John in 1999 after a long illness.

I have never been in this camp. Us Casino girls wouldn't dream of going there for any reason. You would be talked about in town. Therefore I cannot tell you anything about it except that I know that there was a "klink" where John spent some time because he came back to camp late or went out without a leave pass. John refers to it as the "petout".

John kept a sort of Diary; he called it "Aantekeningen vanaf 7 December 1944" It covers the period 7-12-44 till 14-6-48, our wedding day. Apart from his line entries there are lots of paper cuttings, some of which I will refer to as I am rationed to about 800 words. As my Dutch is very limited I have called on one of John's friends to help me in putting this story together.



A page from John's diary

John joined the resistance on 11 Dec '44 in Tilburg. He applied to be an Airforce OVW'er on 25 April '45, was no. 3605. He reported to the depot in Eindhoven on 14 May '45 and was transported to Blankenberge in Belgium, sailed to London then on to Wolverhampton, Wrottesley Park and then on 18 June '45 to Glasgow where he, together with another 192 men, embarked on the *Orontes* which sailed to Australia via the Suez Canal. Sea sick for three days!

96. NED. BINNENLANDSCHE STRUDKRACHTEN Interior military forces of the Netherlands Bij dezen wordt verklaard dat This is to certify that de Witt. Surname Christian name Johannes Adrianus Persoonsbewijs No. D 41 / 001907 Identity-card Adres Address Raamsdonkaveer Behoort tot Belongs to be wakingsdiens t Stempel Seal Onderdeel Army-unit Functie - Rang Function - Grade De Gewestelijke Cdt. Delta W.-N.-Brabant The Regional Commander Op last By order 1944 Datum van afgifte

Resistance identification document

Date of issue

This ship reached Sydney on 23 July from where the troop was transported to Darly Camp in Bacchus Marsh to be moved on to Ascot Vale on 13 Aug '45 for training. By the way, and this information does not come from John's Diary, the Casino boys came in 4 ships, the *Rangitata*, 61, *Arundel Castle*, 83, *Orontes*, 193, Sterling Castle, 319. Not all these boys went to Casino.

On 8 Sept '45, together with 27 others, he left Ascot Vale for Casino where they arrived two days later on 10 Sept. Here John met "Overste" Breemhouwer while walking along the Kyogle Road rather late at night well outside the time limit for being back in camp. John thumbed a lift from the oncoming car and this is how the two met. He (Breemhouwer) took him straight to the klink where he spent 8 days.

It was on 23 Sept '45 that Snepvangers drowned in the Richmond River. He was buried with military honours the next day in Casino Cemetery.

It was on 18 Oct '45 that 392 Javanese members of the KNIL were put behind barbed wire and housed in American Army tents. All this time I didn't know John. We met in June '46 so I am only able to tell you all these things because of John's Diary.

The shooting of one of the prisoners happened on 17 April '46. The Communists had a field day. Some headlines of the Newspaper cuttings: Inquiry held into Camp shooting, Communist resents charges, Richmond River Express readers state their viewpoint, Pelted and hosed by Dutch troops on the wharf at Woolloomooloo, Dutch ships in bay: Coal from South, 3 Dutch ships break waterside blockade, etc.

The hanging of one of the prisoners, a Soendanese named Enod happened on 11 Sept '46. The paper cutting reads: "Enod's body was found swinging from the pole of an open lecture tent in the middle of the lines of the compound. Sgt Batenburg was told by his informant and one of the posted guards that there had been a slight disturbance

at the camp at 3.00 am". John writes: 9 Sept '46: One of the prisoners with knife wounds transported to hospital. 11 Sept '46: The attacker hung by his mates. The 12 camp leaders removed from the compound and locked up elsewhere.

After all this, and as written in his Diary by John: 12 Sept '46: One of the Javanese shot dead and two wounded during the removal of one of the prisoners from the compound. And on the same day John did his driving test and got his driving licence.

In the meantime, on 16 July '46 Kees van Esch was killed by the propeller of a small plane at Casino Airport and laid to rest with Military Honours at the Casino Cemetery the next day. Also on 25 August '46 50 of the boys left for Holland for their air force training for which they had joined in the first place.

As a local girl I can say that the attitude of the Casino people to the Dutch presence in town was reasonable. When the Dutch boys started to arrive mid '45 friendships were soon formed. After all, most of the Aussie boys had enlisted including my own brothers. The business people were pleased to get the business from the camp generally and the cafes, picture theatres and lots of other shops benefited financially. Some people were anti and some parents forbade their daughters to associate with the boys but they were in the minority. They certainly gave us a good time on the dance floor and knew how to treat a girl. The local lads would always hang out together near the exit and when the band started to play the Foxtrot or whatever rush over to ask you for the dance. Unfortunately for them, the Dutch boys stayed with you and beat the locals every time. Yes, there was some friction between the local boys and the Dutch boys which I believe they took out on one another on the hockey field.



Jan de Wit as guard, front, with big gun

In Oct and Nov '46 most of the Javanese prisoners were repatriated and John and others were transported to Batavia on the *Manoora*. On 30 Dec '46 another group arrived and together they sailed on the *Kota Inten* for Holland on 4 Jan '47 arriving in Rotterdam on 1 Feb '47. John sent me a telegram from Batavia on 19 Dec '46 telling me that my engagement ring was on its way. We were engaged with me in Casino and John in Batavia on Christmas day '46.

John was back in Australia on 14 Aug'47. He got his discharge from the Dutch Air force in Australia. He sailed on the "Nieuw Holland" on 9 July '47, arrived in Batavia on 7 Aug'47 from where he and others flew to Brisbane arriving on 14 Aug'47. His diary records that he bought another engagement ring on 9 Sept 47. Anyway, being a hairdresser he started work as such on 23 Sept '47 and some 12 months later we got married and were together until death did us part after 51 years.

As I said before, I have never been near Victory Camp but I think back with great affection about the boys who came there in 1945 and with particular mention of my dear husband John. Without his Diary which I treasure even if it is written in Dutch I could not have made my contribution to the history of Victory Camp Casino.

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The Dutch in Wolverhampton

The Second World War brought a wave of migration to Britain, particularly following the surrender of France in 1940, when Britain remained the only country free of German occupation. Soldiers, sailors and air force personnel from all over the world came to Britain to continue to fight to push the German forces back and free Europe. Wolverhampton saw its share of these troops with Dutch, Polish, South African and, in 1944, Americans stationed in the area.

As with troops all over the world there was a certain amount of 'friendship' between the troops and the civilian population of the town.

Dutch troops first arrived in the spring of 1941, following their escape from France the previous summer The troops were stationed at Wrottesley Park, located a few miles to the west of the town. While at the camp the troops were formed into the Princess Irene* Brigade which was later to fight with distinction as part of the 8th Army in mainland Europe.

The camp was the main training establishment for Dutch troops during the war and as such received visits from both Queen Wilhelmina and Prince Bernhard. The troops even had their own newspaper, *De Bromtol* [The Spinning Top], which was printed in Wolverhampton.

A little-known anecdote is the story that the Town Hall in Wolverhampton held the Dutch Crown Jewels for safekeeping until hostilities ended.

Following the end of the war a number of Dutch troops remained and settled in Wolverhampton and many Dutch names can still be found in the local telephone directory.

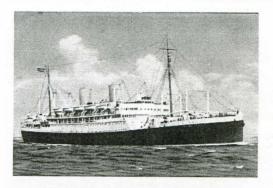
[Information from the Wolverhampton Historical Society via Internet]

^{*} Queen Wilhemina's second granddaughter

Our 'Casino Boys' sailed to Australia on the following ships

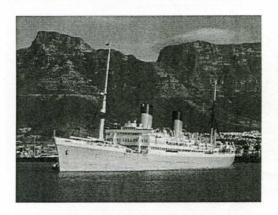
8th May 1945 Rangitata, ex Liverpool arriving Sydney 20th June 1945

Wim Driessen † Gerard Ebeli Kees van Grinsven Boele de Haan † Lou Kampman † Cor Koedam Jan Muys Simon Pels Piet. van Vegchel † Jan van der Waerden †



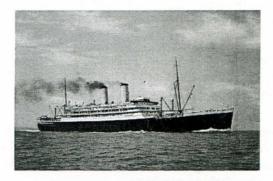
29th May 1945 Arundel Castle, ex Liverpoolarriving Sydney 7th July 1945

Theo Blauw Lam v.d. Burg H. Dado Koos Dalmayer Jo van Dyk Peter Faessen Hans van Gyen Bep van Heesbeen † Jan Koster Jan Kuypers Ton Minderhout Jan Verhagen Han Weller Arie v.d. Wetering



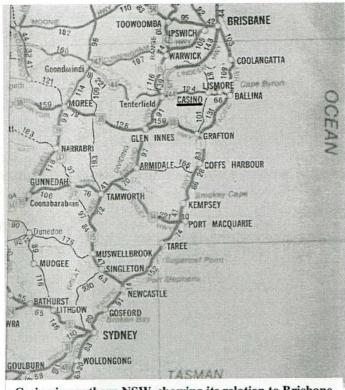
18th June 1945 *Orontes*, ex Glasgow arriving Sydney 23rd July 1945

Teun van Arkel Jan Avegaart Gijs Eikelenboom Eric van Heeswijck Jan Ivits Piet Kersten † Gerard Kloppenborg Simon de Vries Bill Vroliiks Tom van Wees † Jan de Wit †



A Short History of Casino.

Casino is a small country town in the North of NSW (population in 2005 was 11,000). It is situated on the Richmond river near a spot that was known by the Aborigines as a suitable river crossing for thousands of years.



Casino in northern NSW, showing its relation to Brisbane and Sydney

It was first settled by white men in 1840, when two cattlemen named Henry Clay and George Stapleton – who were droving their cattle in the area – came upon this spot and decided it was ideal for establishing a cattle station, which they did.

They named the place *Cassino*, after the ancient town in Italy – apparently one of the men had some connection with Italy, though neither of them was known to be of Italian descent.

Due to droughts, well known in this area, they ran into difficulties and only stayed a few years. The station was passed on to Clark Irving who later named it Tomki.

Tomki is still there, on the

road from Casino to Lismore, but is much reduced in size over the years. The Shire in which Casino is situated was named the Tomki Shire, thus keeping the history of the early settlers alive.

The river was very important for the settlement, as it was used for most transport and getting supplies in and products out, even though boats could not quite reach the town, so that they had to stay on the Eastern side at a place later called Irvington.

When the town was eventually planned by a government surveyor, Frederick Peppercorne, he left out the second 's' in the name and so the name of the town became *Casino*.

Casino's main industry is beef cattle. The meatworks started in 1933 and is the town's main employer, with more than 1,000 employees. The industry also exports hides, which are cured locally and sent to places like Italy (nice coincidence) where the leather is used for fashion products.

Casino was proclaimed a town in 1855 and the town flourished after it became a railhead. After Casino was connected with Lismore by rail in 1903, the town became the important rail fork in the line from Sydney to Brisbane.

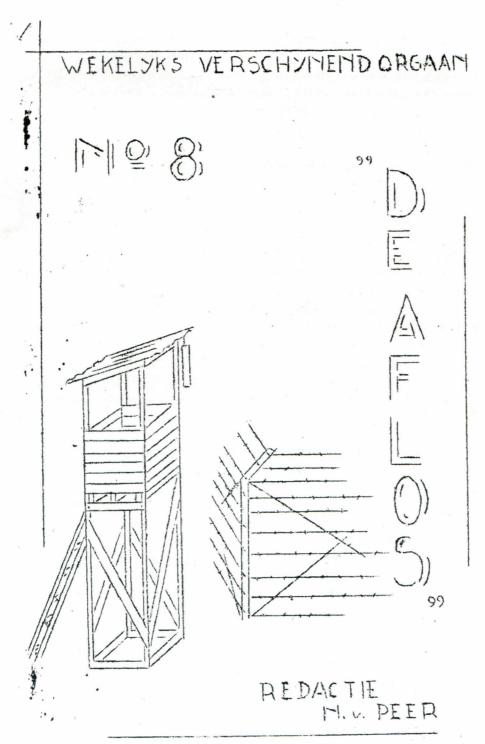
Casino has a strong Dutch connection which was started in WW2, when Dutch-Indonesians were quartered in an existing army camp, 3 km. outside the town on the road to Kyogle. This camp was named *Victory Camp* and in 1945 the Dutch Indonesians were joined there by a group of Dutch air force volunteers, who were to be trained by the RAAF for the war in the Pacific.

Things changed when that war ended and Indonesia declared its independence: most of the Indonesian soldiers became conscientious objectors and part of Victory Camp was temporarily turned into a prison camp. Both Indonesians and Dutch left the camp in late 1946, but quite a few Dutch air force men had met their future wives in Casino and returned there to marry their sweethearts and several settled in the district.

[Information from the Casino Historical Society and other references]

Aflos - the Casino Camp publication

This section contains some stories and 'general information' that appeared in the various issues of Aflos magazine, published in Victory Camp, Casino during the first half of 1946.



Victory Camp paper, published during 1946

A tribute to the camp atmosphere and hard working Aflos people.

Het Buurtje door Peer (translation of a 'mood' story):

In our camp we can, from time to time, still experience a real old-fashioned atmosphere.

If one does arrive for some reason or other in B Camp, one can be pleasantly entertained there by visiting the drivers' barracks.

The welcome is heightened by a comfortable temperature, emitted by a small heater which is glowing a pleasant red.

On the table one finds, apart from the unavoidable ashtrays with cigarette butts and matches (the ashes are usually tipped on the floor), a few glasses of lemonade and a deck of cards, used to play a life and death game of solitaire.

The more homely types are lying 'dressed' in their singlets on one of the beds and are reading a book or a paper. Some even try to write a letter, which usually is not very successful. Many issues are being discussed during the evening and this sometimes leads to heated debates about a relatively innocent subject.

On the floor a couple of 'Kees' dogs are playing together, are being petted and pushed aside when they become too bothersome.

From time to time one of the boys disappears to either return after a few moments or to disappear altogether, not to return that evening.

This comfy situation lasts until about ten o'clock by which time all present have left and the two who own the dogs are doing their final rounds with their charges.

Then a noisy bunch of boys arrives from the 'city' but by that time the more homely types are asleep, tired from working all day but content about the well-spent evening.

Only 'Aflos' is still at work



Boys in the bush

These contributions to Aflos may bring back memories...

This is the additional report that Major Field Chaplain Goudkamp sent to Lt.Col.H.E. Moquette, who at the time was the highest authority in charge of the Victory Camp in Casino.

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The situation of these boys is possibly even worse than that of those in Bundaberg.

- 1) They are no longer part of the air force, but have been transferred to be part of the infantry.
- 2) They have not been given any guarantee that they will ever again be air force personnel for which they had been accepted in the first place.
- 3) Literally nothing has been realised of the originally made promises.

Allow me then to bring the following to your attention:

The disappointment and bitter feelings are greater than a first impression would indicate.

The early enthusiasm has disappeared, albeit that a number of these boys would still be sufficiently motivated to complete their flying training if such a training would commence without further delay.

The situation is in fact such that I would not be surprised if they would no longer accept their present conditions and would, one way or another, try to end these conditions, even if that involved doing things that would be punishable under military regulations.

The High Command has not been concerned about their wellbeing and has not fulfilled any promises and/or contracts, so why would these boys feel obliged to go by the rules?

The fact that their national Dutch pride is too strong to do anything disrespectful from an Australian point of view is, in my opinion, the strongest argument that prevents them from taking any actions to secure their 'rights'.

These boys have been accepted by and for the air force and were, after several tests and medicals, destined for training in and by the air force, for which they were transported to Australia.

They did, however, realise that, as a result of the unexpected end of the war against Japan, there were difficulties for the government, but not that this would result in an unceremonial transfer to the infantry without any ado and without even mentioning anything further about the promised air force training!

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As it is possible for them to take private flying lessons at 3 pounds per hour, it is hard to believe that those in charge were not able to, somehow, provide a proper training for them.

For these boys the reality is that they cannot see any future prospects if there is no radical change forthcoming soon!

By next October/November two years will be totally lost.

Those who intend to further their studies can see their prospects getting slimmer, while at the same time their chances to eventually get a flying training are also getting less.

As they are growing older they will find, as is already happening in Holland, that a younger generation is given first preference.

It is high time that those in high command will take decisive action and have consideration for all these facts.

Nice promises are, quite understandably, not taken seriously and if nothing is done by their leadership they might, at any given moment, do whatever they deem to be of most importance for their country.

I am convinced that these boys are becoming demoralised by the situation they find themselves in or, if they want to avoid this, may take certain actions by which they would most likely hurt themselves and at the same time would be a disgrace for the Services and their Country.

My advise in this matter is:

Give these boys as soon as possible what is rightfully theirs.

Allow those who wish to complete their study to do just that.

Allow those who are no longer interested in any further training to demobilise and return to civil life.

And don't keep those who do wish to complete their training waiting any longer. I sincerely hope that a suitable solution can be found soon.

Advertisement, placed by a desperate Eric van Heeswijck

'Door een misverstand ben ik niet in staat geweest een hutkoffer te bestellen. Wie heeft zo'n apparaat te koop? Bij voorbaat dank. Eric van Heeswijck.

As the result of a misunderstanding I have been unable to order a cabin trunk. Is there anybody who has such a thing for sale? Thanks in advance, Eric

[yes, he did get his cabin trunk]

Engagement notices that appeared in various issues

June:

- Jan v.d.Klooster and Florence Horstman

13th - Gerard Carpay and Peggy Tapley

28th - Jo Moll and Dorothy Rankin

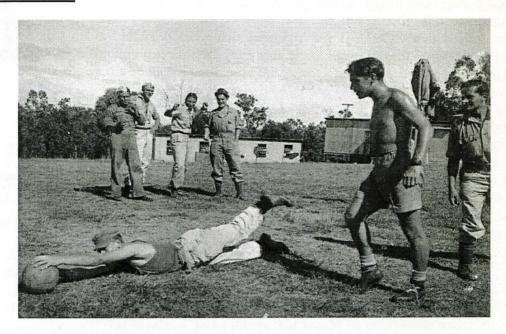
30th - Gerard Blaauwkamer and Audry Knight

July

- Gerard Verhoeven and Pat Tyrell

[We wonder how many of these engagements led to permanent relationships?]

Soccer Teams



An unofficial soccer match

And an example of one of the official teams:

v.d.Waerden

van Geelen (capt) v.d. Tang

van Heesbeen

Dekkers

Doomen

v. Asseldonk

Vrolijks

Kersten

Schrover

Baeten

The 'Prison Camp' in the press

DUTCH GESTAPO MURDER INDONESIAN IN CASINO CAMP!

- 6 The "BLACK HOLE OF CASINO" has yielded up its second murdered victimal
- The Dutch Gestapo have done to death on our soil yet another Indonesian whose only "orime" was that he was an Indonesian!
- 6 Their mirderous rifles hurled a rain of lead into a prowd of unarmed defenceless men.

DID AUSSIE SOLDIERS DIE FOR THIS?

- ? How much longer must we stand these killings in our midst?
- 7 Must commentration camps disgrace our land?
- 7 Must the Atlantic Charter be so betrayed?
- ? Must innocent human blood be spilt and stain our native soil?

WIPE OUT THIS STAIN

AVENGE HIS DEATH

DEMAND WITH US -

- 6 1. Immediate investigation by the Australian Government into this killing.
- 2. Full punishment to the fascist ages responsible for this crime.

TABABBBBBB

- 6 3. Complete disbandonment of the concentration camp.
- Freeing of all therein and immediate transfer to an Australian camp pending repatriation to their homeland.

DEMAND IT NOW MADE TO THE RESERVE CHARGE CHARGE TO THE REAL PROPERTY OF THE REAL PROPERTY OF

- BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE 2 2 0 C DIES DIE SOY LYIES
- BEFORE THE FASCIST CUMS AGAIN SPIT DEATH INTO THESE DEFENCELESS MEN

THE MURDERERS MET BE PUNISHED TO OUR WAY THE SUPPLIES SAN TO SEE SUPPLIES OF SUPPLIES SAN TO SEE SUPPLIES OF SUPPLIES SAN TO SEE SUPPLIES SAN TO S

THE STREET HOLE THE STRONGSTARS WIST, BE FREED ! GOODS AS TOWN

evinae gyati

Issued by Ken O'Hara, for North Coast and Tablelands District Ctec..
Australian Communist Party.

Communist comment on the happenings in Victory 'Prison' Camp

INOURY HELD INTO CAMP SHOOTING

CASINO, Thursday. — Questioned about the position following the recent fatal shooting at the Dutch Military Camp near Casino of one of the Indohesians in the compound, the officer in charge, Capt. Sleeboom, stated that Major La Ribiera had come to Casino, from Brisbane, and an inquiry had been conducted. Evidence was given by Indonesians in the compound, by the armed guard and by some Australian tradesmen employed at the camp who witnessed the occurrence. A report will be submitted by Major La Ribiera to his superior officers at Erisbane, who will decide what further action, if any, will be taken by the Dutch authorities.

The Casino Coroner (Mr. Elsmer Jones) has submitted the report he received from Sergt. W. F. Mills, of Casino Police, to the Under Sections for further directions. No reply to this communication has yet been received by the Coroner.

this communication has yet been received by the Coroner.

COMMUNIST RESENTS CHARGES

(TO THE EDITOR)

Sir,-In your editorial of 23rd inst., you blame the communists for publicly exposing the existence of, and the happenings at, the Dutch

well it is a fact that Casino has gained a certain notoriety attributable directly to this camp. But who is

to blame for that? We Communists did not build that: camp; we do not keep over 300 In-donesians in that camp under tommy-gumer guards; we did not kill the Indonesian on the Wednesday before. Easter.

It is the Dutch imperialists who are to blame for the existence of this camp, and for the recent killing therein.

You claim that we have distorted be facts. Well the existence of the the facts. compound is unquestioned. And if a compound is surrounded by barbed wire, fitted with searchlights, manned by tin-hatted guards, stationed in watch towers, and armed with tommy guns: if this is all used to deprive guns, if this is an used to hepfryle hindreds of innocent people of their freedom: Now it that is not a con-centration camp—then we would like to know what it is. Any "Ex-press" reader can verify this description by a visit to the camp itself. (But they will only be allowed within 200 yards of it!)

Further, on the charge of distor-tion of facts: Was an Indonesian killed at this camp or not? Your own paper reported this killing. And if a killing resulting from firing into a defenceless body of men in a concentration camp is not murder, then what is it?

You infer that we blame Casino people for this whole unsavory husiness. No, we blame the Dutch imperialists. Casino citizens, however, by expressing demands for the removal of the camp, can materially assist in achieving this. When that happens the cause of complaint in your editorial, namely, that Casino's reputation is being blackened, will disappear. But while that camp remains people throughout Australia You infer that we blame Casino mains people throughout Australia-will speak with sname of "Casino's Belsen" and of "The Black Hole of Casino," It is in the interests of the citizens of this town and district. to support the demands contained in our leaflet—for a full investigation into the whole circumstances of the camp by the Australian Government for the freeing of all therein and their immediate transfer the formal in the first that the state of the therefore. fer to an Australian camp pending repatriation to their homeland. Yours etc., KEN O'HARA, North Coast and Tablelands District Committee, Australian Communist Party.

[It is highly significant that Mr. O'Hara snidely avoids reference to more than one fatality, yet the venomous pamphlet over his name, widely distributed in Casino recently, con-tained this passage: "The Dutch Gestape have done to ceath on our soil yet another Indonesian . . ." And that is one phase-not unimportantof his charges that the "Express" had no hesitation in branding as a distortion of the facts, particularly as the previous death in the camp, after full investigation by the district coroner, was found to be due to natural causes. In his pamphlet Mr. O'Hara, referring to the Dutch, also had this to say: "Their murderous rifles hurled a rain of lead into a crowd of unarmed defenceless man, a charge that does not ring very true considering that out of this alleged sunplay there was only one easualty.

R.R. EXPRESS READERS STATE VIEWPOINT THEIR

(To the Editor)

-Re the "Indonesian Problem." We all know a man died, and was buried with the ceremony from this town. The real cause of his death actually none of us knew; but a shooting of any person within this town, other than the camp, would indubtably be quickly enquired into, and the culprit dealt with in the propar man-

We also are not aware as to whother "That Culprit" may have been dealt with; but it seems to me poor policy on the part of this democratic community to give the much detested Communist Party the privilege of experimental party them. rosing these conditions, which do exist within our midst.

Not so very long ago the men that ere now in the con entration camp were "free men." They then enjoyed all the security and peace of this town, giving immense sums to charity Any executive will verify this fact. Every business house profited in no small manner from their custom; now they are prisoners; even the weist criminal within our law gets a fair go, decent conditions (after a trial).

why should we tolerate this un-savory affair? Even if the ferm: "Belsen" is exaggerated, the nucleus is there; maybe a proper stand by the is there; maybe a proper stand by the right authorities will give a happy release for many fine young Dutch-men who also have to abide in un-pleasant places, to suit the "Dutch Imperialist".

The young Communist admits this is not a communist district, but I wish him all the luck in the world if through his efforts these men will be repatriated, and then some of the homeless folk may make good use of the camp.-Yours etc.,

"FREEDOM LOVER."

The media get involved, via the "letters to the editor" pages

3 Dutch Ships Break Waterside "Blockade"

Three Dutch ships broke through the 10-months-old union "blockade" in Brisbane today, getting to sea with boilers fired by wood secretly gathered in and around Brisbane.

largely Australian-manned - left dent. Sydney Harbor this morning with

ners" have a secret rendezvous at sea, where they will take on enough coal to get to Java.

It was revealed this afternoon that Dutch authorities
loaded their collier, Stagnet,
in Sydney. It left today to
meet and coal the three
steamers on Friday.

The coal was loaded on to the
Stagnet after an application for
it had been approved by the Coal
Commissioner.

Three other Dutch ships — one smple supplies and without inclurgely Australian-manned — left dent.

The Brisbane "blockade runydney Harbor this morning with "The Brisbane "blockade runreft" have a secret rendezvous atway down river.

The plan to run the blockway down river.

The ships are the Var horn, Both, and Bontekoe.

They are the first Dutch vessels to break the Australian-wide ban imposed by the Communist - controlled Waterside Workers' Federation last September.

The "break" completely tricked the Trades Hall in Brisbane.

had been approved by the Coal Only a few friends were at the ommissioner.

Stanley-street wharf when the The three snips slipped their Van Outhorn triumphantly

ade" was a closely kept waterside secret.

Several times during their en-forced stay in Brisbane, the ships moved from berth to berth and today's move initially attracted little attention.

Master of the Van Outhor (Capt. Stokker), said before leav

"Since last September have sometimes been short of food and water."

Union Inspection Of Bunkers

"The greatest indignity of all be advised of the port by wireless was when the paltry issue of 10 tons of coal was made occasionally 'by kind permission of the unions'.

There was no shortage of fuel. They had no cargo, but, unions'.

"A union official would come aboard when the coal was de-livered, and make an inspection of the bunkers.

"He would satisfy himself that we had no coal saved up from he last issue, and then signal permission to the lighter to pro-bed with the delivery of our atest ration."

Captain Stokker said he was leaving Brisbane without one ounce of cosl in the bunkers. The boilers were being fired with wood.

"We are heading for Java and we shall get coal at sea," he added.

added,

Asked how he proposed to do
this, he said it was a secret
The Dutch ships which left
Sydney today were the Van
Swoll and Merak (manned by
Dutch officers and Lascars), and
the Stagen, manned almost entirely by Australians, mostly exservicemen.
They are heading direct for
the Dutch East Indies, and will

There was no shortage of fuel. They had no cargo, but, with coal and water ballast, were well down on their marks.

Each ship was freshly painted the peacetime colors of the

Men on the Stagen said the only semblance of a demon-stration occurred when they were at the bunkering depot at Ball's Head some days ago.

A party with a motor car and loud speakers drew up alongside the ship, and tried to address them.

At that moment, coal started to pour down the chutes and drowned the voices.
"We came from the RAN, the AIF, and RAAF," said one of the men of the Stagen just before sailing.

"We were signed on secretly about a week ago."
The Australians declined to give their names. They said they had signed on for six months and did not care where they sailed.

They did it!

Courier-Mail

Our Liberty depends on the Freedom of the Press, and that cannot be limited without being lost.—Jefferson.

The Dutch Win

They have got their ships away, breaking through a blockade of communist nonsense and official inertia. They have beaten the communist bosses of Australia's waterfront, who for 10 months tied up ships vitally needed by a friendly neighbour trading with this country.

All Australians, except a few revolutionaries and their misguided waterfront followers, will admire the patience and ingenuity of these Dutchmen. They came in their ships to an Allied country where they had every right to expect friendship and courtesy. Instead, they were received with insult and indignity. Their ships were refused both labour to load them and coal to move them. To all intents and purposes they were interned.

Some of these ships had braved Japanese air raids and submarines to carry Austra-lian troops to New Guinea. But the Dutch were patient. They expected early action by the Commonwealth Government to release their ships. They had desperate need of them to get relief supplies to Java. They could not believe that the Commonwealth Government would permit the boycott to continue; that it would allow a few communists to blockade in Australian ports the ships of an Allied nation, from which Australia herself

the ships of an Allied nation, from which Australia herself had received so much aid.

But this is just what Mr. Chifley and his fellow Ministers did. Not a finger was moved by them to help the Dutch to get back use of their own ships. Without even putting up a fight the Commonwealth Government confessed itself beaten by communist dictators of the waterfront,

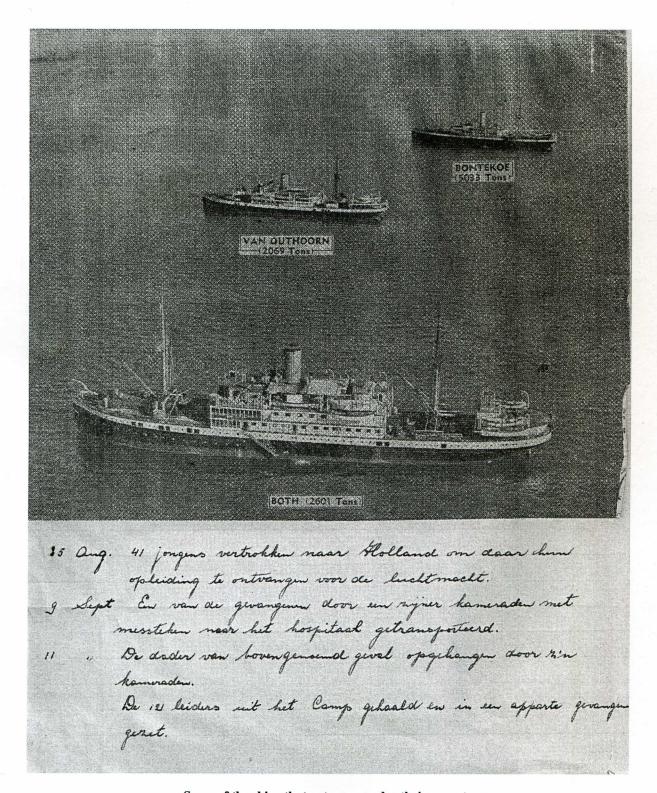
The way in which the Dutch finally broke the blockade gives Australians a good laugh against the communists. But this does not cancel out the shame that the Chifley Gov-ernment put upon Australia. The Dutch have generously recognised that the sympathy of a majority of Australians has been with them all the time. That makes more contemptible the conduct of Federal Ministers. They made Australia look like a nation guilty of the blackest ingratitude. When the Allied shipping pool was doing everything possible in a tight jam to meet Australian requests for more ships, over 20,000 tons of Allied shipping was being kept idle in Australian ports. Dr. Evatt came back from Europe a few months ago full of assurances that he was not going to have Australia's foreign policy dictated from the waterfront. But Mr. Chifley went on smoking the pipe of complacency, and other Ministers refused to answer any questions about Dutch ships.

At last the Dutch ships have put to sea again, with no help from the Commonwealth Government, and with no cargoes. That is Australia's loss. But much greater is the loss of national honour and prestige. Perhaps the Government thought last September that it was saving trouble by letting the communists have their own way on the waterfront, and that the only sufferers would be the Dutch. Instead of sparing Australia industrial turmoil it encouraged the communists to strike harder.

The men who were allowed to tie up Dutch ships ten months ago were tying up New South Wales heavy industries a few months later. They are the same men who have given Queensland a bitter taste of industrial anarchy.

Good luck to the Dutch who seized this chance to break out. They have made Australians look silly, but we hope, despite the official stupidity that caused this incident, that eventually the friendly relations Australia used to enjoy with the Netherlands and our northern neighbours, the Netherland Indies, will be restored.

'Good luck to them' say Aussies

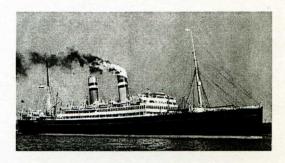


Some of the ships that got away under their own steam

[This page and the previous newspaper cuttings were taken from the diary of Jan de Wit]

The different ways home

The 50 men who returned to Holland in August 1946, sailed on the Volendam



And of those who went to Indonesia, several sailed on the old Manoora to 'Batavia'



From Batavia (Jakarta) the Kota Inten took many of the boys home.



DONDERDAG



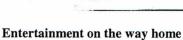
26 SEPTEMBER

VOLENDAM REVUE

SEPTEMBER 1946

Programma

OPENINGSWOORD 1. 't Ontbijt 2. Het A. B. C. Quartet 3. Boogie—Woogie 4. Café, in de Kakelende Kip 5. The Sailor Girl PAUZE 6. Oom Tjo en Si Boeng 7. De Stomme Beklaagde 8. Honolulu 9. Het Kerkhof (3 bedrijven) ;-: EINDE :-:





Een aantal zieke, gewonde en herstellende militairen is Zaterdagmorgen met het motorschip "Kota Inten" uit Indië in Rotterdam aangekomen. Een zieke wordt per brancard aan wal gebracht.

Arriving home on the Kota Inten - from diary Jan de Wit

[A number of sick, wounded, and recovering soldiers arrived in Rotterdam on Saturday morning from Indonesia on the steamship Kota Inten. A patient is being carried from board on a stretcher.]

Casino reunion history

The History of the Dutch Air force Reunion

We commenced having this reunion at these convivial surroundings in 1990 and it has been held annually ever since, this year being the 12th occasion.

The gathering consists of Dutch Air Force boys who volunteered their services after the liberation of the south of Holland, i.e. Brabant, Limburg, Zeeland and Nijmegen/Arnhem Region to free the Dutch East Indies from the Japanese occupation.

They finished up in Australia in a variety of functions from May 1945 until the end of December 1946, they returned to Holland for demobilisation.

During 1948 some 50 boys returned to Australia to be reunited with sweethearts left behind and to establish a future in this country of opportunities.

The concept of the reunion was the brainchild of Messrs. Martin De Haan and Jack Dalmayer. Jack obtained the names, addresses and telephone numbers out of the numerous telephone books and Martin doing the contacting at night, to ensure they had the right persons. After an earlier unsuccessful attempt, the first reunion was held in Casino, N.S.W. in 1982 and ten boys with their wives attended. Casino was selected as this was the camp at which we were stationed before returning to Holland. Further reunions were held in 1985 and 1987 respectively in Casino and Sydney.

The undersigned took over the organisation of the event in 1990. Coffs Harbour was selected as it is situated approximately halfway between Sydney and Brisbane and has pleasant surroundings varying from beaches to rain forests.

The Big Windmill Motor Lodge was made the reunion venue as it represents a piece of Holland in Australia with its life size Dutch Windmill, cordial atmosphere and quality of service in all aspects. The popularity of the event increases from ten boys and wives in 1982 to twenty four boys and wives in 1992. Since then the numbers have declined through sickness and unfortunately nine have passed away. Special mention has to be made of Messrs. Minderhout and Kersten who with their wives have made the trip from Holland four times to attend the Reunion.

The Reunion is held over three days in the last weekend of October, with (a) the arrival of the attendees on Friday, (b) Lunch together on Saturday to renew acquaintances and the official Reunion Dinner Saturday night. (c) Barbecue on Sunday, (d) Return to home bases on Monday.

Photographs show Reunionists in 1991.

We have been very happy to be associated with the Management and Staff of the Big Windmill and Special mention should be made of Brian McGrath for his wholehearted cooperation and service with a smile. Unfortunately Brian passed away after suffering a heart attack.

Signed

J. Ivits 24/10/2001

Dutch reunion

About 30 former members of the Royal Netherlands Air Force who were based at the Victory Camp in Casino during World War II will hold a reunion in Casino this weekend.

A number of activities have been organied by two former members, Martin de Haan and John de Wit, who returned to Casino after the war.

Visitors from overseas will include John Van Dyk, of Holland, and Tony Minderhout, who was working in the West Indies with KLM. Other former members of the unit now are living in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Brisbane and Kingscliffe.

The Victory Camp was located north of the Casino Meatworks. The barracks was in the area now occupied by the Casino lawn cemetery. The camp held about 1500 Indonesian and Dutch military people, mainly army members. The air crew numbered 121.

Most of the men returned to Holland after the war and about 50 found their wy back to Australia. Many of them have kept in contract through letter writing.

Jack Dalmeyer, formerly with the Forestry Commission in Casino, now lives at Kingscliffe.

Camaraderie at Dutch Air Force Reunion

by Jon Ivits

COFFS HARBOUR NSW - Once again this vear former members of the Dutch Air Force stationed in Australia in 1944/1945 held their Reunion the 'Big at Hotel/Restau-Windmill rant at Coffs Harbour.

As usual the Reunion extended over the last three days in October and was attended by some twenty members and their wives. The occasion was given special significance by the presence of the mother of one of the original instigators of this annual function. This lady hopes to celebrate her 91st birthday next February and was the life of the party.

Due to the inclement weather two get-togethers, normally held poolside, were held indoors in the bar and the restaurant thanks to the assistance and co-operation of the new owners. On Monday the attendees returned to their homes in other Australian States, no doubt cherishing pleasant memories of a very happy gathering.

Hopefully we will meet again in 1994, samen place, same time and in good health.

The reunions in the press: the *Richmond River Express*Examiner 9 October 1985 (left) and the *Dutch Weekly* 1993

(right)

Service insignia earned by 'Casino Boys'



Mobilisatie-oorlogskruis.

Mobilisation-war cross.

Reverse: den vaderlant ghetrouwe.

Reverse: true to my country.



Ereteken voor orde en vrede. Decoration for order and peace.



Draaginsigne Veteranen. Veteran's Badge.



Service to Australia medal, 60th anniversary of WWII.

The reason for the search for volunteers was the need to assemble a large group of air and ground crew to help in the liberation of the Netherlands East Indies.......

In January 1945 the aim of the Dutch Air force had been to recruit 1500 men from the liberated South of the Netherlands - in actual fact the total number recruited was 1559.

These 'boys' were sent to England via Belgium for training by either the RAF or RAAF.

Those to be trained by the RAAF sailed to Australia in May/June 1945.

They were all keen to go and help end the war in the Pacific, but most of all they were looking forward to getting their air force training, be it as air crew (pilots!) or ground crew.

When they sailed to Australia they were not to know that, for most of them, little would come of their dreams and aspirations.

The story of how they experienced this important and often frustrating period in their young lives makes fascinating reading.



'Casino Boys' Reunion in Coffs Harbour, 1992