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**RABAUL 1942:
ARTHUR GULLIDGE
&
THE BAND OF THE 2/22ND BATTALION**

compiled by Diana Figgis



Monograph Number Ten

RUSI-Australia

Diana Figgis

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RABAUL 1942:
ARTHUR GULLIDGE & THE BAND of the 2/22ND BATTALION

On Sunday evening 3rd September, 1939, Australian householders heard the voice of Prime Minister Robert Menzies on every radio station announcing: "Fellow Australians, it is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that, in consequence of the persistence of Germany in her invasion of Poland, Great Britain has declared war upon her, and that, as a result, Australia is also at war."

On Monday 22nd July 1940, seventeen members of the Salvation Army enlisted for service at the Victoria Street Drill Hall in Melbourne. Nine were members of the Salvation Army Brunswick Citadel Band, including its bandmaster Arthur Gullidge. Of these seventeen Salvationists, fifteen were sent to join the Australian garrison being established at Rabaul on the island of New Britain. None of them would return. Their names:

1. Ray F. Cairns of West Coburg, Vic.
2. Ron (R. H.) Cook - of East Brunswick, Vic.
3. Austin (A.B.) Creed - of West Coburg, Vic.
4. Ken [K.R.] Drew - of Northcote, Vic.
5. Arthur [W.A.] Gullidge (Sgt., Bandmaster) - East Coburg, Vic.
6. Bill (Trevor W.G.) Haines - Camberwell, Vic.
7. Harry (H.D.) Harvey - West Preston, Vic.
8. Thomas (T.T.) Henderson - North Williamstown, Vic.
9. Harold (H.J.) Pannell - Camberwell, Vic.
10. Stan (S.R.) Parker - Brunswick, Vic.
11. Jack (J.S.) Robertson - Preston, Vic.
12. Neil (N.S.) Smith - Balwyn, Vic.
13. Jack (J.P.) Stebbings - Coburg, Vic
14. Frank or Morrie (F.M.) Thomas - West Preston, Vic.
15. Reg (R.J.) Watkins - Brunswick, Vic.

Eight more Salvationists were to join the band and go to Rabaul :

1. Stanley (S.A.) French - of Glen Iris, Vic.
2. Albert (Alf) [A.R.] Fry - Portsea, Vic.
3. Fred (F.W.) Kollmorgen - Springvale, Vic.
4. Mervyn (M.A.) McPherson - Hobart, Tas.
5. Frank (F.R.) Meddings - East Geelong, Vic.
6. Peter (Frederick J.) Meyer - Thornbury, Vic.
7. Bert (H.W.) Morgan (Cpl.) - Fairfield, Vic.

8. Wilfred (W.E.) Trigg (Cpl.) - Geelong West, Vic.

Of those eight, only one was to return, Fred Kollmorgen.

There were to be six more band-members apart from the Salvationists listed above ; the names of those six were :

1. Sgt Colin E. Allatt (Drum Major) - Sandringham, Vic.
2. William Eyton Edwards - Alexandra, Vic.
3. Lance Corporal John H. Johnson - Clifton Hill, Vic.
4. John David Maggs - Lilydale, Vic.
5. James ("Jimmy") Riley Thurst - Skene's Creek, Vic.
6. Pte. Lionel G. ("Tommy") Tucker - St. Kilda, Vic.

Of those six men who went with the Band to Rabaul, only one came home, Lionel Tucker.

At a farewell held at the Brunswick Town Hall on 16th November, 1940, the bandsmen assembled by that date gave a concert, led by Bandmaster Arthur Gullidge. Commissioner William Dalziel presented Arthur Gullidge with the Salvation Army flag ; the men would carry it wherever the war led them.



Thus it was that a Salvation Army band came to be embedded in the 2/22nd Battalion of the 8th Division A.I.F. This unit was the main component of the ill-fated Lark Force, formed for the defence of Rabaul on the island of New Britain. The bandsmen joined their battalion at camp at Trawool. From there, on 23rd September, 1940, the 2/22nd Battalion and the 1/22nd Battalion set off on foot to march to a training camp at Bonegilla, near Wodonga. The group arrived at Bonegilla on 3rd October, 1940, having marched two hundred and thirty-five kilometres. People in the towns had come out along the way to cheer them on. In the evenings, the Band had put on musical entertainments for the tired soldiers and any locals who wished to come and listen.

On 14th February 1941, a parade was held in Melbourne to raise money for the Greek War Victims' Appeal Fund. A crowd estimated at a hundred thousand, many waving colourful flags, lined the city streets. Confetti and streamers spiralled down, thrown from shop and office windows. At the front of the 2/22nd Bn, the Band played Arthur's jaunty arrangements of songs from the film "the Wizard of Oz," released in Australia in 1940.

Shortly after, the Band embarked for New Britain. Two months after the march through the streets of Melbourne, the bandsmen were participating in the Anzac Day service at Rabaul. They were to be mainly employed as medical attendants and stretcher-bearers when the Battalion was in action. Additionally, they would entertain the troops and provide spiritual support. The Band took an active role in the life of the Rabaul community, assisting the local constabulary band and the Methodist Church choir.

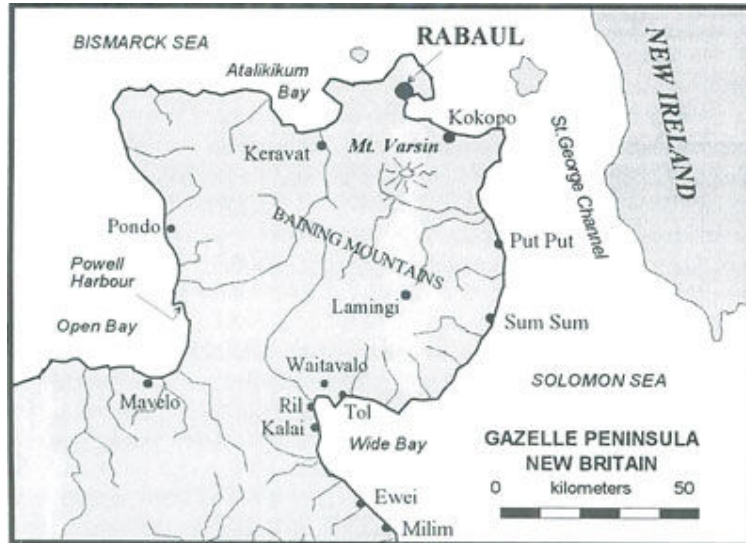


AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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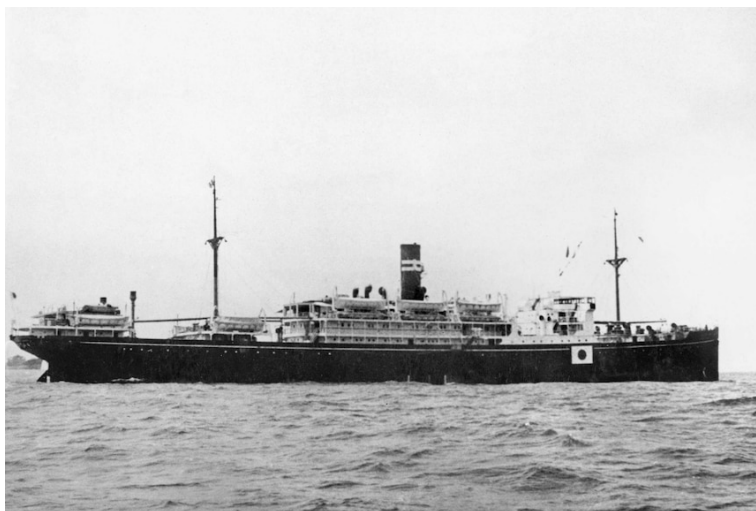
The band of 2/22 Battalion, with the battalion formed up at the rear, about to move off during the Anzac Day Service.

On 23rd January, 1942 the Japanese invaded Rabaul, quickly overcoming the Australian troops and airmen. The garrison was forced to withdraw and split into small groups. While some managed to escape by sea, many were killed or captured. At Tol and Waitavalo Plantations on 4th February, 1942, between one hundred and twenty-three and one hundred and fifty Australian soldiers and civilians who had surrendered were, singly and in groups, bayoneted or shot or both, and died.



On 22nd June, 1942, the S.S. *Montevideo Maru*, a Japanese passenger/cargo vessel requisitioned by the Japanese navy as an auxiliary transport, left Rabaul laden with eight hundred and forty-five prisoners of war and two hundred and nine civilian internees. The 7,267 ton freighter was heading for Hainan Island where the prisoners would be compelled to work in the mines. In the early hours of 1st July, 1942, the unmarked, unescorted vessel was torpedoed and sunk off Luzon, Philippines, in the South China Sea by the U.S. navy submarine U.S.S. *Sturgeon*.

Of the twenty-nine members of the Band, twenty died on the *Montevideo Maru*, including Arthur Gullidge, aged thirty-three. The relatives of the Australians on board the vessel had to wait for almost four years before authorities advised them that their missing next-of-kin were, for official purposes, presumed dead.



The Montevideo Maru

The fate of the core group who enlisted at the Victoria Street Drill Hall:

1. Ray F. Cairns – died at sea whilst prisoner of war on the *Montevideo Maru* 1st July, 1942 - aged 23
2. Ron (R. H.) Cook - died in the Tol Plantation massacre, New Britain 4th February, 1942 - aged 21 - he played bass at the concert on 16 November 1940 at Brunswick Town Hall
3. Austin (A.B.) Creed - died 20th February, 1942 - died in New Britain whilst escaping - aged 35
4. Ken [K.R.] Drew - died whilst prisoner of war on the *M. Maru* 1.7.42 - aged 20 - he played tenor horn at the concert on 16 November 1940 at Brunswick Town Hall
5. Arthur Gullidge (Sgt., Bandmaster) - died at sea on the *Montevideo Maru* 1st July, 1942 - aged 33
6. Bill (Trevor W.G.) Haines - died in the Tol Plantation massacre in New Britain 4th February, 1942 aged 23 - he played tenor horn at the concert on 16th November, 1940 at Brunswick Town Hall
7. Harry (H.D.) Harvey - died at sea on the *M. Maru* 1.7.42 aged 32
8. Thomas (T.T.) Henderson - died at sea on the *M. Maru* aged 25 - he played bass at the concert on 16th November, 1940 at Brunswick Town Hall
9. Harold (H.J.) Pannell - died at sea *M. Maru*, aged 38 - he played tenor at the concert on 16th November, 1940 at Brunswick Town Hall
10. Stan (S.R.) Parker - died at sea on the *M. Maru*, aged 22 - he played baritone horn at the concert on 16th November, 1940 at Brunswick Town Hall
11. Jack (J.S.) Robertson - died at sea on the *M. Maru*, aged 25
12. Neil (N.S.) Smith - died at sea on the *M. Maru*, aged 30 - he played cornet at the concert on 16th November, 1940 at Brunswick Town Hall
13. Jack (J.P.) Stebbings – killed in action in New Britain, 23rd January 1942 - aged 22
14. Frank or “Morrie” (F.M.) Thomas - died at sea on the *M. Maru*, aged 28 - he played bass at the concert on 16th November, 1940 at Brunswick Town Hall
15. Reg (R.J.) Watkins - died at sea on the *M. Maru*, aged 24

The fate of the other Salvationist Band members :

16. Stanley (S.A.) French - died in New Britain whilst escaping 15th February 1942 - aged 39 - he played bass at the concert on 16th November 1940 at Brunswick Town Hall
17. Albert (“Alf”) [A.R.] Fry - died whilst POW on the *Montevideo Maru* 1.7.42 - aged 24 - he played cornet at the concert on 16th November, 1940 at Brunswick Town Hall

18. Fred (F.W.) Kollmorgen - escaped when Rabaul was invaded - according to the diary of Mrs. Bert Morgan, he had got back to Melbourne by 6th June, 1942 - aged 23 at the time of his escape, he lived to the age of 94. Frederick William Kollmorgen was born on 10th May, 1915 Oakleigh, Vic. A truck driver and tenor-horn player with the Springvale Salvation Army Band, he enlisted in the A.I.F. at Caulfield on 24th June 1940. He transferred into the 2/22nd Battalion on 6th December, 1940 to be part of the Band. He sailed for Rabaul aboard the S.S. *Zealandia* on 10th April, 1941. He died on 24th July, 2011.
19. Mervyn (M.A.) McPherson - died at sea on the *M. Maru* 1.7.42, aged 22
20. Frank (F.R.) Meddings - died at sea on the *M. Maru* 1st July, 1942 - aged 22 - he played flugelhorn at the concert on 16th November, 1940 at Brunswick Town Hall
21. Peter (Frederick J.) Meyer - Thornbury, Vic. - aged 21 - while escaping, died of illness on New Britain
22. Bert (Herbert William) Morgan (Cpl.) - Fairfield, Vic - died at sea as a POW on the *Montevideo Maru* 1.7.42 - mentioned in despatches - aged 27 - he played tenor horn at the concert on 16th November 1940 at Brunswick Town Hall - his wife's 1943 diary records that in that year, she received a letter from her husband dated 16th April, 1941. She had known since September, 1942 that he had been taken prisoner - of course, by then, he had dead two months - but she did not receive official confirmation of his death till she received a telegram on 5th October, 1945.
23. Wilfred (W.E.) Trigg (Cpl.) - died at sea, on the *M. Maru* 1.7.42, aged 28 - he played euphonium at the concert on 16th November, 1940 at Brunswick Town Hall.

The fate of the remaining Band members :

24. Sgt. Colin E. Allatt (Drum Major) - died at sea on the *M. Maru* 1.7.42, aged 29 - he played at the concert on 16th November 1940 at Brunswick Town Hall
25. William ("Bill") Eyton Edwards - he played drums at the concert on 16th November, 1940 at Brunswick Town Hall - he travelled from Victoria to Sydney by train on 10th March, 1941, and on 12th March, 1941, embarked from Sydney on H.M.T. *Katoomba* for Rabaul ; he disembarked there on 28th March, 1941 - after the Japanese invasion, he was captured weeks later at Gasmata on the south coast of New Britain - he died at sea on the *Montevideo Maru* 1.7.42, aged 25
26. Lance Corporal John H. Johnson - died at sea on the *M. Maru* - aged 37
27. John David Maggs - killed in the Tol Plantation massacre 4th February, 1942 - aged 21

28. James ("Jimmy") Riley Thurst - lost at sea on the *M. Maru* 1.7.42, aged 29
29. Pte. Lionel ("Tommy") Golding Tucker - escaped Rabaul on H.M.A.S. *Laurabada* - aged 28 at the time of his escape - according to the diary of Mrs. Bert Morgan, he had got back to Melbourne by 30th April, 1942 - he played drums at the concert on 16th November, 1940 at Brunswick Town Hall.

On the afternoon of Tuesday 18th April, 2023, eighty-one years after the S.S. *Montevideo Maru* was sunk, it was discovered, using underwater technology, at a depth of over 4,000 metres/13,000 feet on the floor of the South China Sea, off Cape Bojeador at the north-west tip of Luzon Island, Philippines: 18-37N; 119-29E. As a war grave, the final resting place of the *Montevideo Maru* will remain undisturbed.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Group portrait of 25 members of 2/22nd Battalion Regimental Band

William Arthur Gullidge

(b. 9th April, 1909 Broken Hill - d. 1st July, 1942 on the *Montevideo Maru*)

Arthur Gullidge's parents were both members of the Salvation Army. In August 1911, his father was killed in a mine accident; Arthur was two. The widow Emily and her son returned to her mother's people in Tasmania. Emily was accepted to work at a Salvation Army hospital in Launceston. Then she and Arthur moved to Perth when she became sub-matron at the Army's People's Palace. From there they moved to

Victoria when she became matron at the Box Hill Boys' Home, sixteen kilometres east of Melbourne. Arthur fitted in there, attending the school and participating in sports. Emily's next appointment was at the Anchorage, a Salvation Army rehabilitation centre at Abbotsford in Melbourne, and after that, the Army People's Palace No. 2, then in Exhibition Street.

Arthur began attending the young people's meetings at the Melbourne City Temple corps building right near the Palace. Bandmaster Alf James gave Arthur one of the old brass instruments stored there to take home, and he made rapid progress. The deputy bandmaster, Allen Sharp tutored him, and soon Arthur was able to take a place in the corps band as a competent euphonium player.

When his schooling finished, Arthur became an apprentice in the printing trade and worked in the machine room at the Salvation Army printing works in East Melbourne. He met Divisional Bandmaster Arthur Stevens, who had been a foundation member of the Army's printing staff ; at the time Arthur Stevens was also the bandmaster of the world-famous Hawthorn Citadel Band.

Arthur became a skilled printer and compositor, but the Depression hit, and on the day he finished his apprenticeship, he found himself out of work. Through his links with music firms and musicians, he became aware that, despite hard times, brass bands were still keen to receive new compositions. He set up a monthly brass band journal of his own compositions, and orders came from all parts of Australia. His success benefited the Army printing works, where his works were published. His growing reputation, and his finances, were assisted when he won an Australian Broadcasting Commission prize for the best brass band composition.

At seventeen, he was commissioned deputy bandsman at Melbourne City Temple. At twenty, he transferred to Collingwood Corps, where he was bandmaster. This was at the time he and his mother were stationed at the Anchorage, the Army's industrial centre at Abbotsford. Emily kept an organ in the staff dining room, and Arthur was able to test his compositions. Some of his compositions were published under the name W. Arthur Greendale.

Through the family of one of the band musicians at Collingwood, Arthur met his wife, Mavis Ellen Anderson (b. 27th October, 1912) and they married in 1935 at the Church of Christ at Northcote. Their daughter Judith Ann was born in 1936. Mavis was a talented vocal soloist and pianist; she helped Arthur with his composing by playing the pieces as they were evolving. As a member of the Brunswick Corps Songster Brigade, she was a soloist at concerts performed by the band.

Following what was a short appointment as bandmaster at Collingwood Corps, Arthur took up a position as Bandmaster of the Brunswick Citadel Band. He selected a block of land nearby and drew up the plans for the home in which the family settled.

The Brunswick Corps band was renowned for its hymn tune playing on the march. Among the instruments which formed the band were cornets, flugelhorn, bass, drums, tenor horns, euphonium, triangle and trombones.

In the Christmas-New Year period 1938-1939 - that is at the height of summer and with temperatures reaching 38 degrees celsius - the Band travelled 2,440 kilometres across Victoria and New South Wales on a music trail that lasted twelve days. At Echuca, Junee, Goulburn, Nowra, Bega, Bairndale, Petersham and Katoomba, crowds assembled to hear them play. At the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, the audience heard what was termed "A Symphony in Brass."

During the Sunday evening meeting of the Brunswick Corps at the Citadel on 3rd September, 1939, an announcement was made about the Prime Minister's radio broadcast: Australia was at war.

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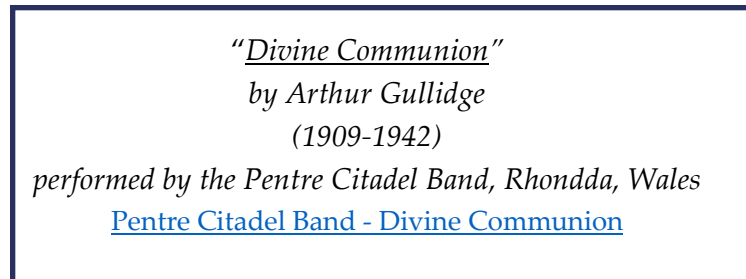
The last time that Mavis and Judith, aged four, saw Arthur was as he stood at one of the side entrances of a tram near their home, waving goodbye to them after a period of leave.

Once installed at Rabaul, the Bandsmen joined with members of the local Methodist church outside the camp to inspire the community with music, song and prayer. Mavis received letters from Arthur describing the country, the climate and the people, and giving details of the musical pieces on which he was working. Then she received a telegram dated 19th January, 1942 from the Minister for the Army stating that Arthur was seriously ill in hospital at Rabaul. Three days after that, the invasion began. Four months later, Mavis received a letter from Arthur, saying he was "sound in wind and limb." The letter had been included in a bag of mail dropped from a Japanese plane over Port Moresby in April 1942; it confirmed that he and other bandsmen were prisoners of war. That letter was the last link with his family.

Arthur died on 1st July, 1942, but it was only late in 1945 that next-of-kin received official confirmation of the fate of the Australian prisoners-of-war on the *Montevideo Maru*.

During his time in New Britain, fellow bandsman Wilf Trigg wrote a letter home in which he mentioned some hymns he used to play on the accordion while the bandsmen were living in tents at Bonegilla: "All there is of me," "Sweet Will of God"

and "Holy Spirit, Faithful Guide." From that simple selection, Arthur wrote "Divine Communion," one of the greatest pieces of music in the Salvation Army's repertoire. The selection is still played around the world, though Arthur was never to see a printed manuscript.



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