



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Comment on objections 8

John Lyon

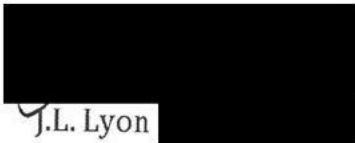
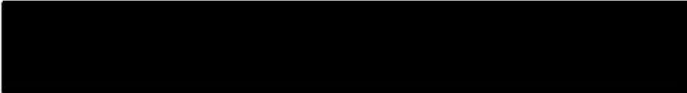
28 pages

**PROPOSED REDISTRIBUTION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA – OBJECTION 10 BY
JOHN LYON
FURTHER COMMENTS SUPPORTING HOLDING OF AN INQUIRY**

1. In paragraphs 90 and 91 of its report the Committee points to the existing instances of recognition of Vivian Bullwinkel. There does not seem to be a need for further recognition.
2. In paragraph 92 of its report the Committee refers to Ms Bullwinkel's "strong connection to Western Australia". With respect I query the strength of that connection.
3. I now provide a copy of a recently published book titled "THESE ARE MY WAR TIME DIARIES – SUMATRA 1942-1945". It contains copies of Marjorie's war diaries. I especially draw to your attention :
 - pages 492. Citation for O.B.E.
 - page 495. Article by Lady Mountbatten.
 - page 497. Report of Marjorie's death.
 - page 545. Item 53. Letter from Sir Albert Coates.
 - page 545. Item 55. Letter from Dr. Elsie Crowe.
 - page 547. Item 58. Letter from Professor Emmy Klieneberger – Nobel of Lister Institute. See Wikipedia.
 - page 549. Item 67. Letter from German (Camp Cook) Salvation Army Officer Captain Krauth whom Marjorie sent money to in Germany from time to time.
 - page 550. Item 73. Letter from Australian Bicentennial Authority.
 - page 552. Item 83. Letter from Marjorie's uncle dated 16 June 1925.
4. I also attach copies of
 - (i) Chart of family relationships.
 - (ii) Email from Professor Bob van Es (a camp inmate) 13.10.23 and my reply.
 - (iii) Emails from camp inmate Dr. Sven Waanaar 24.2.23, 29.5.23 and 19.10.23 re reunion.
 - (iv) Article in West Australian 28.8.23.
 - (v) Undated letter from Professor Bob van Es.
 - (vi) Page from Marjorie's photo album of 1963 with photos of bush near Comet Vale, her Chevrolet car and her nurse Pat Sullivan taken during one of her many school inspection trips to the wheatbelt, goldfields and south west throughout the 1950's and 1960's.
 - (vii) Pages from latest Bangka Island Newsletter of article on Vivian Bullwinkel and page from Marjorie's diaries.

- (viii) Cover, Preface and pages 247 – 251 of book “Unsung Heroes & Heroines of Australia”, Greenhouse Publications 1988. Marjorie’s was one of 200 persons out of 4,020 nominated.
 - (ix) Pages 525 and 526 of The Cyclopedia of Western Australia featuring an article of Marjorie’s father (Patrick) Pearson Lyon.
 - (x) Methodist Ladies College Marjorie Lyon House Recognition Certificate.
 - (xi) Email from well-known writer Lynette Ramsay Silver dated 13 September 2022 revealing that heroine in Tenko series and book was based on Marjorie.
5. I draw attention to the fact that the boat that rescued Marjorie became the Krait. It is renowned as the boat that later was employed in the attack on Singapore Harbour and is now moored in Sydney Harbour.
6. Finally I draw attention to the fact that Marjorie was well known as “the lady doctor” throughout the southern half of the State, in the fifties and sixties for her work in examining school age children for illnesses etc. both minor and serious. Due to her strong personality and insistence on appropriate treatment many Western Australians fared much better in life than otherwise would have been the case. Her brother Ian’s children still live in the proposed electorate.
7. Finally, I point out that I am aware that there is already a federal division with a somewhat similar name to “Lyon”, viz the electorate of “Lyons” in Tasmania. While the guidelines place a bar of duplicating existing state districts they do not apply to federal districts. In my view, in any event, the similarity in names is unlikely in any particular context to cause confusion. It should not serve as a bar to honouring a suitable person. If necessary some tweaking of any new name could overcome any difficulty.

Dated 5 July 2024.


J.L. Lyon


(i)

Patrick Pearson Lyon
1869 - 1938

Mr. Jeannie MacMaster
1868 - 1920

Hugh Jan
(Died
~~1935~~
1935)

Jan Janst

Marjorie
1965
- 1975

John M.
1908 - 1959

Emily Forward
1911 - 1993

Mary Jane
1942 -
Married
James (known
as "Don")
Johnston.

John
1945 -
Married
Jan
Male

Christine
1950 -
Married
Dudley
Scott

(ii)

On 13 Oct 2023, at 5:57 pm, L.A. van Es [REDACTED] wrote:


Dear John and Jan, to ptepare for Sunday's meeting I opened my file and found lots of memories of my visit to Mary-Janes house in Perth. After I had read the diary I was devastated. Mary Jane sent me afterwards a very kind and warm letter, that I never answered. Now that Hans van den Bos is no longer, I can explain what happened. Hans was very resentful of my contact with your family. He considered it his turf. I did not want to upset him, but could not explain that to Mary Jane. Was Mary Jane your mother? I have scribbled a pedigree of your family, showing that Marjorie's brother John married twice, but I see also a Mary Jane married to Don James Johnston. That confused me a little. One last thing. The story that stole my heart was **marjorie's story of the Japanese pharmacist** who refused to give quinine while indicated to her where the bottles were located. She took all three bottles and when she left, "he gave me a wink". I wished I had made a copy of that story. I had trouble finding the story in the book. It shows that people can be human, even when they are enemies. I am happy that the book is catching on and that Dutch readers may contact you. I will let you know if any encounters on the reunion are worth mentioning. We wish you all the best, Bob

Van: John Lyon [REDACTED]

Verzonden: vrijdag 13 oktober 2023 02:51

Aan: L.A. van Es

Onderwerp: Re: Bankinang reunion

From: John Lyon [REDACTED] 
Subject: Re: Bankinang reunion
Date: 15 October 2023 at 8:05 am
To: L.A. van Es [REDACTED]

Dear Bob,

Thank you for your email.

We did not know of Hans' attitude. It clearly made things difficult for you. We will pass on your email to Mary Jane.

Mary Jane is one of Johns' two sisters - the other being Christine. We are sending an attachment showing family relationships. Don's real name is James. "Don" is merely a nickname.

The **Japanese pharmacist** to which you refer is **Mitsusawa**. On page 8 of her account written in Sydney in November 1945 Marjorie tells the story of him leaving the room to enable her to "steal" more medicine. See page 486 of the book. This is in essence the story you mention. There may possibly be something more specific elsewhere in the text of the diaries.

(iii)

Subject: Marjorie Lyon**From: "S.O. Warnaar"** [REDACTED]**To:** [REDACTED]**Fri, 24 Feb 2023 12:20:52 +0100**

Dear John,

Yesterday Bob van Es brought me the diary of Marjorie Lyon . I am a colleague and friend of Bob . As a small boy I was also imprisoned , with my mother and a younger sister, in Bangkinang prison camp. From that period I remember once watching Marjorie perform an operation on a square in the center of the camp. The inmates of the camp had first sprayed water on the ground to reduce dust. A large group, including me, were watching at a distance. Obviously we could not see much but the picture of this special occasion was vividly impressed on my mind. It takes great courage to perform an operation in these circumstances.

My younger sister once broke her leg. I assume that Marjorie must have attended her leg although I have no proof. It is amazing that Bob and I now live within one kilometer from each other sharing the Bangkinang camp experience. It was sheer by accident that we found out, talking at a farewell reception of a fellow professor. Since that time we have shared books on the camp period. Obviously I have not yet read the diary. But reading it will be next on my agenda. I wish to thank you for making this book available to me. And I strongly believe that publishing these diaries is a highly deserved tribute to Marjorie's efforts in very difficult times. Now that Bob and I are old we realize how much this period has affected our lives. Unfortunately there are still many others that continue to suffer from oppression and violence. It is important that we realize what these people have to suffer and to contribute to hindering their sufferings. There is no place in this world for hatred and racism. I wish you and your beloved all the best. And thanks again for making the book available ,

Sven Warnaar

Subject: An end of an era

(iii)

From: "S.O. Warnaar" [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED] **"L.A. van Es"** [REDACTED]

Mon, 29 May 2023 12:21:50 +0200

Dear John and Bob,

Bob's last message on the final break up of the Bangkinang annual reunion gave me some heart pangs. Although I only attended once I used to contribute to the memorial monument and I felt member of the group. But the second world war is fading away like the first one did, of which only vague memories of once brutal battlefields remain. And now apparently **only Bob, Haje Wessels and me are the last survivors** that can remember the Japanese concentration camp (at least the Bangkinang camp). In this respect I was glad to have read Marjorie's camp diaries.

It has been an heroic job to decipher her handwritten notes and I am glad you found the strenght to put these notes into print. It is a pity thar so few survivors are around to read them. **I feel a bit ashamed that the Dutch government did not acknowledge her contributions.** I gave my copy to my nephew, the son of my sister who was with me in the camp, to read as he had expressed an interest. However it may be I think that **Marjorie deserves to be commemorated.** The book you edited will serve as a worthy monument. Being old now I hope you will forgive me my sentimental mood. I wish you all the best,

Sven

(iii)

From: S.O. Warnaar [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: FW: foto Bangkinang reunion
Date: 19 October 2023 at 2:13 am
To: [REDACTED] L.A. van Es [REDACTED]

SW

Dear John,
Last sunday Bob, Pamela and I went to the reunion of the former Bangkinang prisoners. Bob distributed copies of M's wartime diaries. There were 75 people present of which about 40 former camp residents. Except for Bob and Pamela I only knew Haje Wessels, the current chairman of the Bangkinang resident organization. He is the son of my former army colonel who used to live in a neighbouring street. The meeting was very interesting, I spoke for example to a lady whose father had held the same government job (controleur) as my father had just a few years before my father had this position. It struck me that the old camp dwellers all looked very well. There was a high number of former university/technical highschool graduates present. There was a short introduction by Haje and we attended a ceremony for the people who had died in the camp. The main piece was an Indonesian dinner where you could talk about things that had happened in life. All very animated. The last time I had attended was in the 60-ties, Bob had attended once in the 80-ties. I thought it might interest you that memories of B are still very much alive. Pamela took a picture of Bob and me that I am sending together with this short resume. I heard from Bob that there is quite some interest in M's wartime diaries. I hope this confirms that you did an important job. With my best regards,
Sven

----- Doorgestuurd bericht -----

Onderwerp:FW: foto

Datum:Mon, 16 Oct 2023 10:36:56 +0200

Van:L.A. van Es [REDACTED]

Aan:Warnaar, Elly [REDACTED]

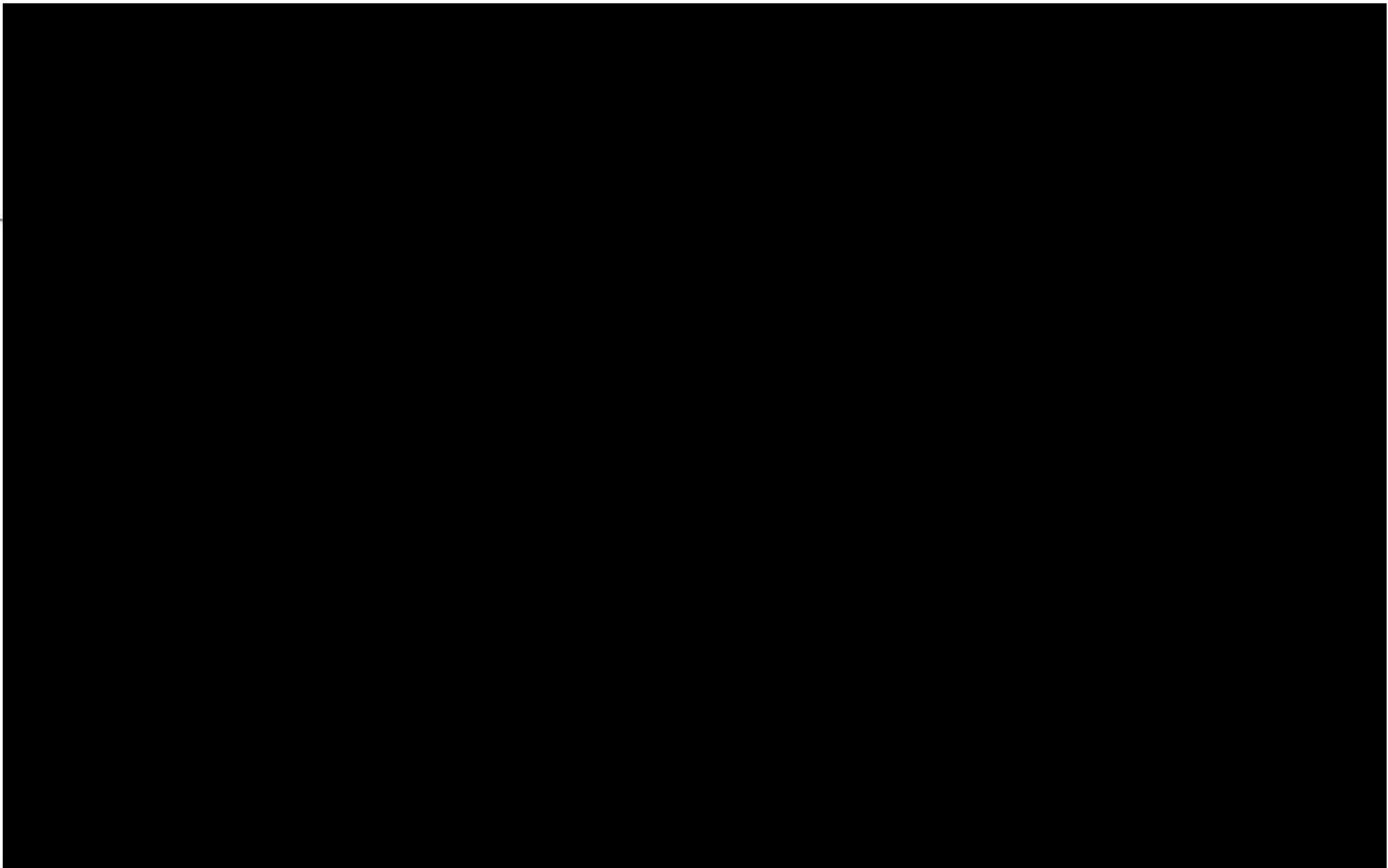
Beste Sven, heb jij gegevens over de vrouw waarmee jij sprak over Sawaluntu? Misschien weet ik naar wie zij zoekt. Pamela heeft nog een tweede foto van ons gemaakt. Hartelijke groet, Bob

Van: Pamela van es [REDACTED]

Verzonden: zondag 15 oktober 2023 16:37

Aan: L. van Es

Onderwerp:



Doctor who cared with

WA surgeon Marjorie Lyon's diaries tell of her dramatic escape from Singapore in WWII and time caring for women and children in Sumatra internment camps

MALCOLM QUEKETT

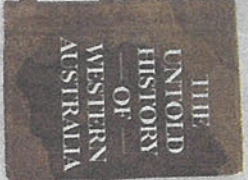


brilliant scholar and surgeon, she fled Japan's advance

into Singapore in World War II.

The ship on which she escaped was bombed and sank. Despite being wounded she managed to swim to a tiny uninhabited island, while also keeping afloat and alive a fellow doctor who was also wounded.

After eventually being captured she showed extraordinary courage and resilience as she cared for women and children imprisoned in a series of camps in Sumatra, in what was then 'Netherlands East Indies'. She did so while enduring



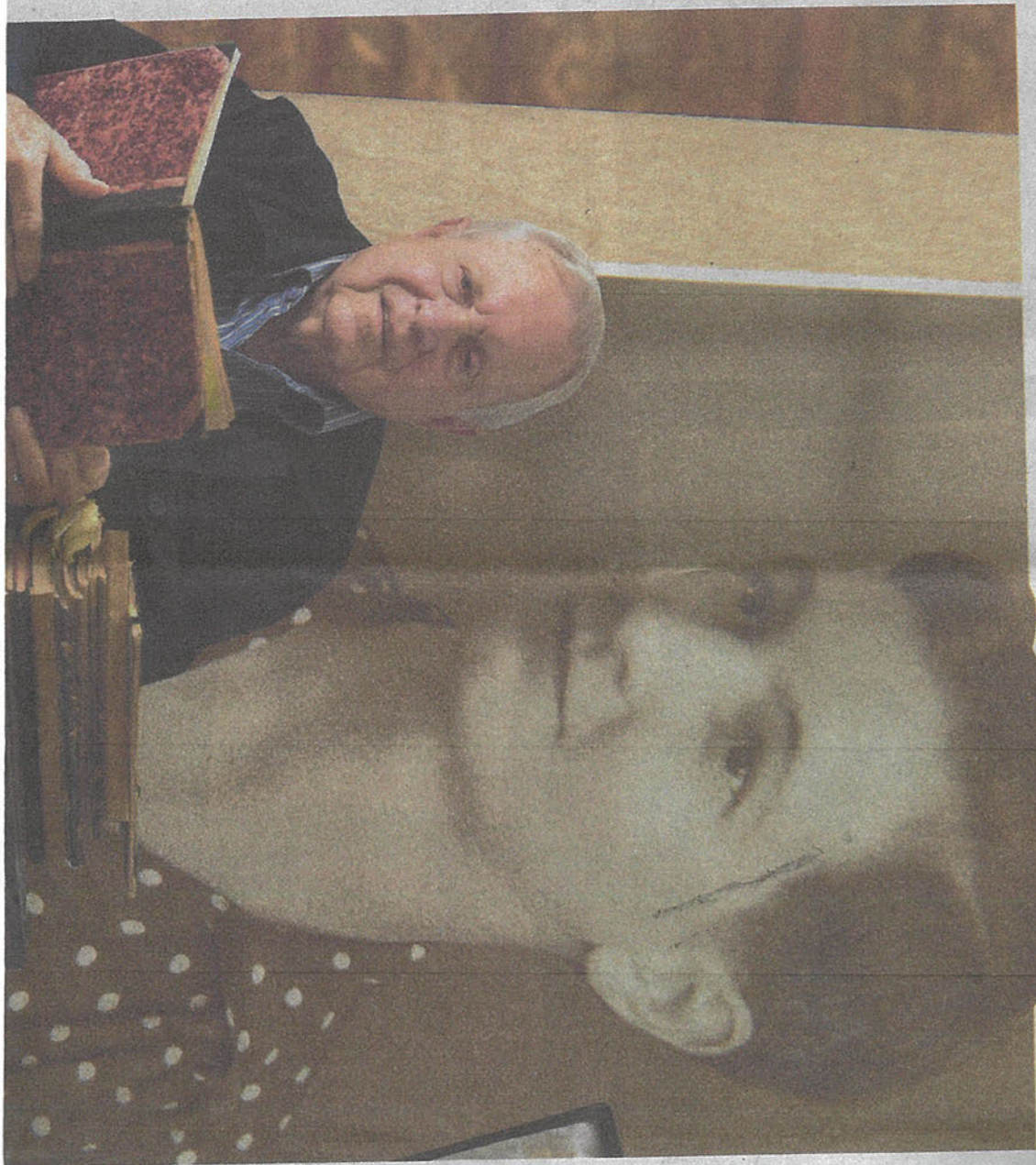
written by John Lyon, records that his aunt was born in 1905 at Northam.

She attended Northam State School and Methodist Ladies' College where she was

twice dux after repeating her final year because she was too young to go to university after graduating the first time.

She won the Dagmar Berne prize in the year that she graduated from the University of Sydney in 1928, then served as a resident medical officer at several city hospitals.

She then went to study in Britain, where she qualified as a member (1934) of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and as a fellow (1936) of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh, the dictionary says.
In 1937 Lyon joined the Malayan Medical Service. She was stationed at Johore Bahru in January 1942 as the Japanese



In Sumatra, in what was then Netherlands East Indies.

She did so while enduring numerous hardships including little food, appalling conditions and scarce equipment or medication.

She documented her time in a series of extensive diaries which were kept for years after her ordeal in an old school case. She was appointed an OBE, immediately after the war and then, like so many of that outstanding generation, she quietly went back to work and, without fanfare, got on with her life.

And yet Marjorie Jean Lyon's extraordinary story has remained largely unknown — until now.

Meticulous work to transcribe her diaries by her sister-in-law Emily, and most recently her nephew John and his wife Jan have brought to fruition a book — These are my war time diaries, Sumatra 1942-1945.

An entry in the Australian Dictionary of Biography,

dictionary says.

In 1937 Lyon joined the Malayan Medical Service. She was stationed at Johore Bahru in January 1942 as the Japanese advanced.

She later wrote in an account included in the book: "The orders to evacuate Johore Bahru came to us on the evening of Monday 27th."

"They were not unexpected as the army hospital, which had occupied the upper floors of our hospital, had been evacuated two days before.

"It was, however, a big shock to realise that we had to walk out and leave our homes."

Lyon wrote that with a few belongings she headed for the causeway to Singapore.

"I had my little revolver strapped on my hip, for show more than for use, and I believe I was the last woman to cross the causeway, which was then being mined for breaching by the Royal Engineers," she wrote.

Arriving in Singapore, she went to the general hospital and took over the shock ward,

"where all casualties too badly hurt to go home, and not dead, came."

The Japanese advance continued and soon the order to evacuate Singapore came and Lyon and a friend and fellow doctor, Elsie Crowe, headed for the wharf.

"At the wharf there was much congestion and bombs were dropping more or less all the time," Lyon wrote.

They clambered aboard a ship, the Kuala and soon afterwards Japanese aircraft dived down and released their bombs.

"The ship was not hit but the wharf was and many of the would-be passengers were killed, whilst on our ship there were about 30 casualties and

two deaths from the shrapnel."

Crowe and Lyon began to tend to wounded all over the ship as it sailed, the two doctors putting to use "a 10cc bottle of morphine solution and a syringe or two" Lyon had managed to grab as they left the hospital.

The next morning the ship was attacked and again hit by bombs, began burning and sinking fast.

Some passengers managed to climb into boats and Lyon and Crowe climbed down a rope ladder and jumped into the ocean to swim for an island.

"Something seemed to strike me on the belly, and I thought I was blown in two but Elsie disappeared in a sort of whirl pool and I was so busy trying to get her up that I forgot all about it."

"Her dress tore at the shoulders and I lost her, but finally got her by the hair.

"She was unconscious for a few moments and her face was black and blue.

"The waves from the bomb were terrific and I had much difficulty in keeping our heads above water . . . at one stage I was sure we could not make it."

The pair eventually struggled to shore on the little island and dragged themselves to where other survivors had gathered. Some members of the group swam out to another damaged vessel and brought ashore whatever provisions they could lay their hands on,

take some of the worst wounded and report the marooned group's position to authorities in Sumatra.

About 700 men, women and children remained on the island and were evacuated over the next few days whenever a vessel could reach them.

"We had a nightmare journey of 16 hours to the coast of Sumatra, which we reached on Thursday Feb. 19th, at Tembilahan," Lyon wrote.

The survivors then made their way to Padang, on the west coast, those able to travel in buses making it in time to be evacuated by British ships.

Lyon remained with the stretcher cases who could not be moved without an ambulance. Finally reaching Padang, wounded were taken into a local hospital and a fruitless wait for rescue by other British ships began. Japanese soldiers arrived on March 17.

"From that moment we were prisoners," Lyon wrote. She assumed medical responsibility for about 50 British and 2500 Dutch women and children, initially located at a Salvation Army hospital, then later at a jail," the dictionary of biography says.

Finally, the internees were moved to a jungle camp at Bangkhang. "For three and a half years they endured food shortages, overcrowding and poor sanitation which caused



Marjorie Lyon with medical staff in Johore, Malaysia, in 1942.

Dear John,

I was delighted to receive your letter and to hear that you succeeded in publishing your aunt's diary. I cherish to have vivid memories of her. I suspect that she was an important motive for me to become a physician. I do not know whether it was the affection she showed me in a very personal manner or the fact that she played an important role in survival. After reading her diary during my short visit to Perth, I admired her even more for two reasons. She was a good medical strategist. She realized that the very young and the old were the first she was going to lose. She worked very hard to vaccinate the toddlers. The second reason was her meticulous registration of causes of death. I do not remember that she did autopsies. She definitely displayed dedication and self-discipline. She also stole my heart by her empathy towards my mother.

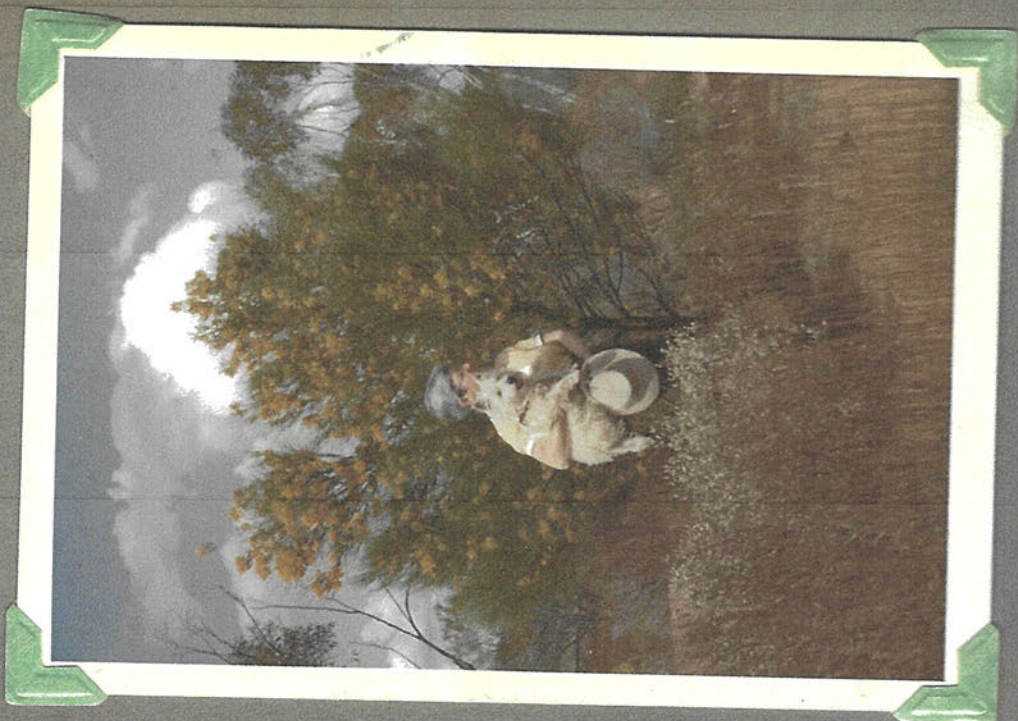
I have lost contact with the people who used to come together for the Bankinang reunions. Hans van den Bos and my sister Ineke in 't Veld van Es died. If you want me to, I can try to reestablish contact with the Bankinang group to spread information about your book. I am looking forward to receive the copy. Our address did not change, neither the telephone or my e-mail is: [redacted]
I am looking forward to hear from you

Best regards Bob van Es

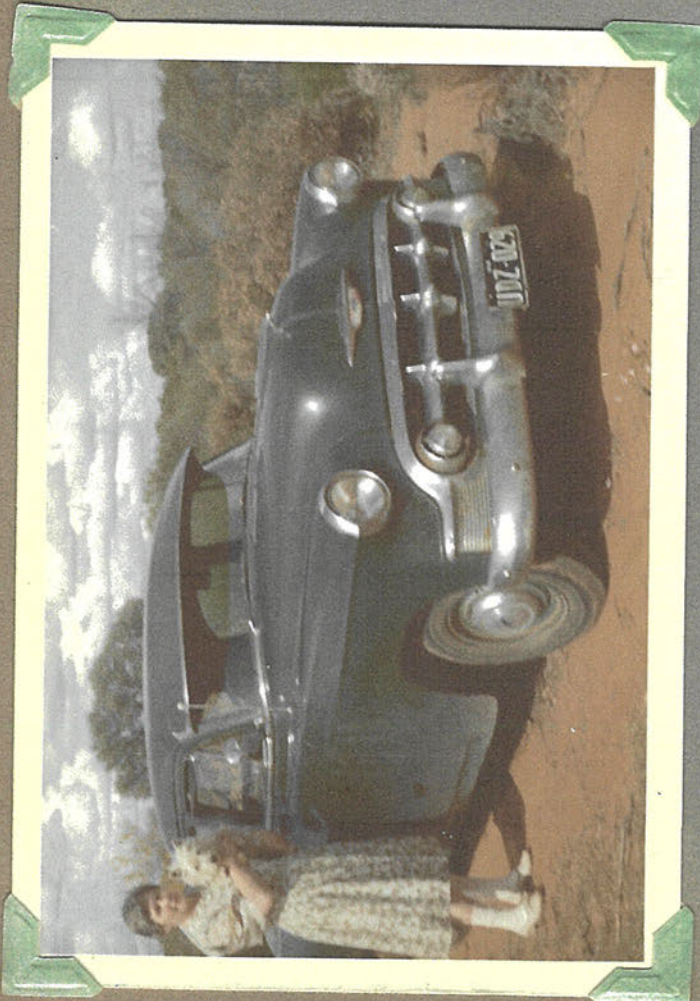
(vi)

PEN

Sept 1963



COMET VALE



COMET VALE



(vii)

SALAMAT PAGI

THE BANGKA-ISLAND NEWSLETTER

<https://muntokpeacemuseum.org>

**EDITION 2
JUNE 2024**



Dawn Service – ANZAC Day 25th April 2024

THE BULLWINKEL PROJECT

By Julijana Trifunovic - ACN Director of Philanthropy
By kind permission of "The Hive" - publication of the Australian College of Nursing
And thanks to the Australian College of Nursing Foundation

The sculpture of Lieutenant Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel AO, MBE, ARRC, ED, FNM, FRCNA was unveiled in the grounds of the Australian War Memorial (AWM) on Wednesday, 2nd August 2023. The statue is the first of an individual nurse or woman. The Dedication Ceremony included speeches from the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd); Chair of Council AWM, The Honourable Kim Bezley AC; ACN former President Emeritus Professor Christine Duffield FACN (DLF); ACN CEO Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN and John Bullwinkel, nephew of Vivian Bullwinkel.

This sculpture will stand as a constant reminder of Lieutenant Colonel Bullwinkel's exceptional military service and importance to the story of Australian nursing.

A collaborative project with ACN and the Australian War Memorial, the sculpture recognises not only Lieutenant Colonel Bullwinkel, but all Australian nurses who have lost their lives, survived atrocities, or made sacrifices while serving their country.

"I'm inspired by the thought that generations of children to come will see a figure in bronze of a nurse and midwife at the Australian War Memorial," Australian College of Nursing CEO, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward, FACN, said.

"The sculpture will be a powerful and long-lasting symbol of nurses' selfless service to Australia and its citizens whether in war or in peace.

Dr. Charles Robb, a Brisbane-based artist, was chosen to create the work through an invitation design submission. Robb's work tells more than just Bullwinkel's personal story but has captured the challenges and accomplishments of all Australian nurses.

"I've had the joy of spending the last few years spending time with and obviously working on the sculpture but also researching Vivian's awe-inspiring life," Dr. Robb said.

"The key thing that I wanted to achieve was to capture a likeness and a sense of the way she carried herself in the world. This quiet, strong, and self-contained individual while reflecting the perseverance that drove her."

The sculpture includes 22 inlaid stainless steel discs reflecting the 22 victims of the Bangka Island Massacre. The discs are arranged at the base of the sculpture as a reflection of the stars that would have been visible in the night sky on 16th February 1942.

Australian War Memorial Director, Matt Anderson said, "We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to commemorate Vivian Bullwinkel.

Vivian's name should be renowned in every Australian household, as should the story of her inspirational life as a courageous leader, a proud nurse and the first woman to serve on the Council of the Australian War Memorial."

Thank you to the Founding Partners of The Bullwinkel Project - Aspen Medical, Boeing, Bupa, Leidos Australia, Serco and to the many donors for their generous support of The Bullwinkel Project and the ACN Foundation. The ACN Foundation would also like to thank the families of the nurses who openly shared their stories and memories of them. Without their support, this project would not have been possible.

Together with the unveiling, the announcement of 22 new scholarships was made. The applications for these scholarships will open in September 2023.

The scholarships will be in the names of the 21 nurses who were massacred beside Vivian on that grave day on Radji beach in 1942, with another dedicated to Vivian, the sole survivor.

Vivian dedicated her life to ensuring the nurses would not be forgotten, and the ACN Foundation intends to carry on her work and legacy.

We must remember their courage and selflessness.

It is important we link the past, present and future for us to remember their sacrifice, service and leadership.

These new scholarships, funded by The Bullwinkel Project, will provide future generations of nurses with the opportunity to lead their own contemporary journey in providing exceptional skilled healthcare for all Australians.



These are **My War Time Diaries - Sumatra 1942-1945**

By Dr. [Miss] **Marjorie Lyon**

By kind permission of her brother **John Lyon**

Extract from Journal 1

Singapore General Hospital shock ward - Dr. Elsie Crowe - Directions to leave Singapore - Boards S.S. Kuala with Elsie - Kuala bombed in port - Kuala sails - Kuala moors near Pom Pong Island - Bombed - Swims to island, saving an injured Elsie - Tien Kuang sinks - Treatment of wounded - Behaviour of ship's crew and military and medical personnel - Rescue by fishing boat (Krait) - Indragiri River - Prigi Radja - Tembilahan

Friday Feb. 13th 1942

Got up at about 8 a.m. after 3½ hours in bed, sleepless naturally because of the noise of raids and guns. Yesterday's casualties were terrific and I was hardly out of the shock ward from before noon until 4.30 a.m. today when I went to bed leaving **Dr. Benjamin Chew** in charge of the few patients left in the ward.

Had some breakfast. **Elsie** and I went down to the ward about 9 a.m. to find it was not yet cleared. A few minor wounds had come back from the theatre or were awaiting it. One other, an English soldier lad of about 20, whom I had given plasma and saline to in the early hours, was still there - shattered thigh. I thought he could be saved so started him on saline and plasma whilst I went over to the School of Medicine to persuade them to give me some whole blood. I ran into **Dr. Gray** there and he startled me by greeting me with the words, "Thank god you are still safe." On the way back with the blood I ran into **Patterson**, the Matron of Johore, who told me the women were to leave by ship at 3 p.m. **Elsie** came down to the ward whilst I was still transfusing the soldier lad and told me **Bowyer** had come to the flat and told her we were to leave at 3 p.m. and asked her to tell me. The orders were to the effect that all the women of the service i.e. Sisters and Doctors, were to be at the wharf at 3 p.m. to take a ship for ?? We were to take only what we could carry as luggage. I finished my transfusion and the lad's condition improved. It being now about 2.15 p.m. I dashed up to the flat meeting the departing sisters on the way. I snatched a bite of lunch, slung a few clothes into a suitcase and went off with **Elsie** to the hall where I ran into **Mr. Tyrell** and his wife. The former said he would send his wife if I was going too. We went in **Dr. Thomson's** car, leaving mine outside the hospital. The city looked doomed - a heavy pall of black smoke hung over it and there were more or less constant air raids. We were rather late at the wharf and had to leave the car and carry our suitcases along the wharf about ¼ - ½ mile. I did not see who was directing the proceedings as there were so many of us but word was passed along. Finally we reached the waterside and after a short wait got into a launch which acted as tender to the vessel. Next to me was a woman with a 5 day old baby and behind me a man to whom I remarked, "I wonder what our chances of a torpedo are." He retorted, "Much smaller than our chances of a bomb if we stay in Singapore." **Elsie** was busy talking to friends **Brigadier Stringer's** wife and her sister and a man from the Naval Base. The latter was insisting that we should not go into the "Kuala" to which the launch was headed, but to another ship he could arrange for. He was nearly weeping at our refusal to leave the rest of our service (personnel). The "Kuala" was one of the Straits Steamships Company's boats that ply between Singapore and Penang and was only a small coaster with perhaps a dozen cabins. I suppose the Naval Base man knew what we did not - that she was loaded with some radio location apparatus and was to carry soldiers too.

We, poor fools, were relieved to see that she was flying the Red Ensign and was armed aft with one small gun! We reached her side and climbed up to find hundreds of women and some children and quite a lot of soldiers in uniform on board. The Army Sisters who had not left during the week were there and lots of strange women whom I did not know. The decks, cabins and holds were already crowded. We went round to the other side of the deck from where we embarked and I was talking to **Jean Milne** who was nervous and **Elsie** was talking, I think, to the **Stringers** when a soldier shouted, "Take cover! The bombers are coming over." There was nowhere to take cover but we left the rails and crouched near the cabin walls and I crouched over **Milne** who was piteously terrified.

UNSUNG HEROES & HEROINES

of Australia

EDITED BY SUZY BALDWIN

This is a genuine people's history of Australia. When Australians were asked to name our unsung heroes and heroines, these are some of the people we chose. Their lives cover the last 200 years of Australia's history, a history that they shaped in the living of it. Their names do not appear in conventional histories — they did not direct what are usually regarded as 'great events' and are not history's traditional 'great men'. They are 'the people'.

They are convicts and inner-city welfare workers, war heroes and mothers of twelve, children and old-age pensioners. They are bush nurses and fire-fighters, suffragettes and explorers, circus performers and poets.

Some perform single acts of great bravery; others reveal different kinds of courage, enduring and surviving through years of hardship. Some of their stories are amusing, many are deeply moving.

These are the stories of women, children, Aborigines, immigrants from many other countries, 'ordinary' people.

These are our stories.

(Virij)



UNSUNG
HEROES &
HEROINES
of Australia
EDITED BY SUZY BALDWIN



Preface

Late in 1986, the Australian Bicentennial Authority invited us to form an assessment panel for the *200 Unsung Heroes and Heroines* programme. This became better known as the *200 Greatest Stories Never Told*, a title coined by John Singleton.

A national advertising campaign was set up to involve Australians in all walks of life, getting them talking, comparing notes, and submitting stories of heroic people they knew or knew about. The 4020 stories submitted by the people of Australia demonstrate the success of that campaign.

The assessment panel's task, when first explained, seemed challenging but straightforward enough. We were to read all the stories and select the best two hundred for publication in a commemorative book. Some aspects of the assessment, however, proved tantalising and at times frustrating.

What was heroism, and how would we identify its presence in an individual or an action? What was meant by unsung? Was someone whose deeds were well known in one state, but not elsewhere, an unsung hero or heroine? Did a military decoration or a civilian award mean that the recipient could still be called unsung?

The panel was concerned about these issues. From the outset, we agreed not to be too rigid on the definition of heroism, or on the notion of being Unsung. Such an exercise had not been attempted before, either in Australia or elsewhere, so we had to develop our own criteria through regular discussion.

We recognised that stories of outstanding people would often have improved in the telling. So part of the challenge was to identify those stories which were not only impressive and inspiring, but also factual. In this we were assisted by the dedicated and professional work of a small team of researchers. Some six hundred of the four thousand and twenty stories were progressively identified as a long short list and handed to the research team. With the benefit of the researchers' reports, the panel was then able to reduce the list to the two hundred reproduced in this book.

We accepted that, even after careful research, some of the chosen stories might retain an element of myth or embellishment. Nevertheless we believe that all the stories finally selected fulfil the spirit of the concept.

We did not attempt to select the stories according to occupation, gender, geographical distribution or state of origin. The final selection reflects the pattern of groups and eras in the stories submitted.

The most exciting and inspiring aspect of this whole exercise has

been that we have been able to participate in the gathering and recording of a unique set of documents of Australian social history. The stories in this book, and the others which have not been reproduced here, are truly a people's history of Australia.

The panel is pleased that the 3820 stories not included in this book will not be lost to the future. The National Library of Australia has accepted them for permanent preservation in the Library's Australian collections. There they will be available for researchers to read about that great band of people whose lives have been shown to us.

The stories in this book reveal the soul of Australia. We are grateful for the opportunity the project has given us to help Australians speak to one another about outstanding men and women who have done noble deeds and endured great hardship with fortitude and often with great humour. We believe that their stories will inspire and encourage Australians to face courageously the challenges of our time.

Brian Sweeney, CMG (Chairman)
Quentin Bryce
Frank Dunn
John Hartigan
Sir Richard Kingsland
Dr William Oats
Justine Saunders
Sophia Turkiewicz

Introduction

This is perhaps the most democratic Australian history yet written. It is not only of and for the people, but by the people. When Australians were asked who they considered to be the country's unsung heroes and heroines, these are the people they — we — chose. Both the content and the form of this book have been determined by many people — the 4020 who wrote and telephoned from all over the country, the 4020 whom they nominated, and hundreds of others who added their comments to the stories. Those included here speak for all of them: they have made it a genuine people's history.

This collection makes no claim to be comprehensive or to give a general overview of Australian history. On the contrary, it gives a very personal and idiosyncratic view of the 200 years since the arrival of the Europeans by telling the stories of some of the people who have lived during that time. The view that biography is history is as old as Plutarch, but the people whose fragmentary biographies are collected here are not the 'great men' whose lives and deeds have long been considered the proper subject of history. These stories belong to those usually excluded from conventional Australian histories — women, children, Aborigines, immigrants other than Anglo-Celts, 'ordinary' people. In the telling of their stories we see how extraordinary so many of these ordinary people prove themselves to be.

The first advertisements inviting nominations for this project appeared in December 1986, the last in May 1987. Through national press, television and radio; local and ethnic newspapers, and letters to special interest groups, minority organisations and isolated communities in remote parts of the country, the Bicentennial Authority attempted to reach as many people as possible.

People were asked to write between 250 and 500 words or to send a tape. Translation was offered for those who did not speak English. Later, there was a national toll-free phone-in. Neither literacy nor English was, therefore, a prerequisite for participation.

Nonetheless, most people chose to write. The submissions varied from chapters of unpublished manuscripts to two or three painfully written sentences. For a number of people it had clearly been a great effort to express themselves on paper. Some submissions — particularly the many family histories — were accompanied by detailed and often copious research; others were reminiscences with barely a hard fact in sight. But each of the 4020 had a story to tell.

Each submission was read by two members of the panel and the

research co-ordinator. A researcher then interviewed each of those whose nominations had been selected for the shortlist, together with any living nominees, their families, friends, and anyone else who could help fill out the details of the story. Library research was done where necessary and a detailed research report written. The purpose of this stage of research was, first, to determine whether this was a tall tale or true and, second, to locate and gather additional material that would add flesh to the bones of the hero or heroine and provide a starting point for writing the final stories. As it turned out, very few were tall tales and we gathered some remarkable oral and written material.

The final selection of the heroes and heroines proceeded by a combination of debate and gut reaction. Some nominations were immediately agreed upon, others were discussed and argued about at length. Some were passionately defended and equally passionately opposed. Not all decisions were unanimous. Many of those left out could equally well have been included. When the selection panel had chosen the final 200, the project left the ABA and went to the publisher.

The shape of the book was determined by the lives of the people whose stories it tells. Although factual detail was necessary, alone it was not sufficient: this was not to be a dictionary of biography or a collection of encyclopaedia entries. These were true *stories* and, although it was impracticable to publish them in their submitted form, I wanted the published version to retain the sense of individual drama of so many of the submissions and interviews and for the reader to hear, wherever possible, the voice of the person whose story this was. It seemed to me more important to use the limited space available to capture a glimpse of the spirit of these men and women and reveal something of the nature of their experience than to give all the facts from cradle to grave. Some, it must be confessed, remained enigmas on all counts.

The stories are arranged chronologically. Read this way, the diversity of individual experience at any one period becomes apparent and the stories provide an interesting perspective on the 'great events' which structure traditional Australian histories. Some of these events — the wars in particular — touched everyone alive at the time, a fact reflected in the large number of war stories in the collection. Federation, on the other hand, is referred to in only one story, and then it is not central but one of a number of elements in the fight for women's rights.

The stories in this collection are not always comforting. It cannot be said that they endorse an uncritical view of either the past or the future. While all provide considerable grounds for admiration of individuals, few offer any cause for national self-congratulation. This is particularly true of the stories in the last section, which covers the years from 1968 to the present. Many of these stories are about welfare workers — those who help others to survive. While we are indebted to their achievements, it is sobering to contemplate the conditions that make such work necessary in an affluent society in 1988.

Yet, as these stories show, contemplation is not, in itself, enough. Whether through isolated acts of great bravery or through a different kind of courage that endures in circumstances that seem determined

to break the heart and the spirit, most of these lives demonstrate Rosemary Taylor's belief that, even in the darkest days, 'We must continue to create the world; we can change things.' We are all responsible for history.



Sydney
July 1988

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of recovery. After surviving three and a half years of semi-starvation in Changi prison camp, he was selected to be one of the ex-POWs to give evidence at the Far East International War Crimes Tribunal in 1946, where he was the first Australian witness.

Colin Brien committed no crime; he faced no trial; his execution was the chance result of a driver taking a wrong turn. And he lived. An accountant and company director in Papua New Guinea in the postwar period, Brien now suffers from poor health. He does not complain about his physical disabilities but admits to looking back on his experiences with some bitterness.

'I am an average Australian male and I have my likes and dislikes. But as far as I'm concerned, what happened during the war I will never forgive and I will never forget.'

Marjorie Jean Lyon

1905-1975

Lion by name and by nature

Written by: Suzy Baldwin

Nominated by: John Lyon

'I abandoned my home on Wednesday, January 29th, 1942. The orders to evacuate Johore Bahru came on the evening of Monday the 27th whilst I was busy in the Blood Bank. They were not unexpected, as the Army Hospital... had been evacuated two days before and we had been handling both civil and military casualties. It was, however, a great shock to realise that we had to walk out and leave our homes.'

Dr Marjorie Lyon was one of the most highly qualified women doctors of her time. A surgeon specialising in obstetrics and gynaecology with additional qualifications in tropical medicine, she had been in Johore Baharu since she joined the Malayan Medical Service in 1937.

But by the early days of 1942, the Japanese were closing in. It was time to leave. As always, Dr Lyon's primary concern was for her patients. Only after the last one had been safely loaded and the lorries had driven away did she pack her car and follow. She was the last woman to cross the Causeway into Singapore, where her staff and patients were incorporated into the General Hospital.

On the morning of 13 February, all women members of the Malayan Medical Service were ordered to be on the quay at 2.30 pm with such luggage as they could carry. As there was now a surplus of under-employed male doctors at the hospital, Dr Lyon and her English friend and fellow-surgeon, Dr Elsie Crowe, decided to comply.

At the wharf there was chaos with bombs dropping almost continually. The two doctors had just been loaded onto a small, grossly overcrowded boat when twenty-seven Japanese bombers attacked the harbour, killing many passengers still on the wharf and causing two deaths and thirty casualties on board. While the two surgeons attended the wounded, their boat, still under fire, sailed out of Singapore Harbour.

The next day, near tiny Pom Pom Island, their boat was bombed.

With the vessel burning fiercely and sinking fast, Marjorie and Elsie jumped into the water 'with not a life belt between us'. As they swam for the island the bombers came back for another round. 'A terrific concussion and an almighty blow to my belly seemed to come instantaneously and I thought "Well, I'm done for." Then Elsie disappeared in a sort of whirlpool. I dived after her and grasped her dress and began to drag her up. Her dress tore at the shoulders and I lost her, but finally got her by the hair. She was unconscious for a few moments, and there were huge black bruises round both her eyes. Blood was trickling from her right nostril and I thought for a moment she was dead. The waves from the bomb were terrific and I had much difficulty in keeping our heads above water... at one stage I was sure we could not make it. However we managed somehow and finally grated on the shore.'

Although in great pain and bleeding from her stomach wound, Marjorie's attention was on Elsie Crowe who, it was now apparent, had suffered a fractured skull. Over the next few days, Elsie became desperately ill and 'looked like dying'. As Sir Albert Coates, who was to work with Marjorie some weeks later, wrote: 'But for the constant attention of Dr Lyon, she would never have survived.'

Pom Pom Island had no edible vegetation, virtually no water and no inhabitants apart from the 700 or so shipwrecked men, women and children who had managed to reach shore. Of these, about 100 were seriously wounded. With the help of some British nurses, Marjorie took charge of casualties, trudging painfully between the groups scattered around the island and always returning to Elsie Crowe.

Over the next few days, the survivors were rescued by an odd assortment of vessels. By the fourth night, all the women had gone except for Dr Lyon, the nurses, and sixty wounded, many of them, like Elsie Crowe, stretcher cases. On the fifth day, five British RNR appeared with a small captured Japanese fishing boat and picked them up. After 'a nightmare journey' of sixteen hours in which no one could move and most of the passengers were constantly seasick, the party reached the east coast of Sumatra.

Singapore had fallen on 15 February, the day after the bombing near the island. If the Pom Pom survivors could reach Padang on the west coast in time, they would be picked up by British ships sent to rescue the refugees who had escaped from Singapore. Those survivors who could travel on local buses made it in time and were safely conveyed to India. But stretcher cases could not be moved across Sumatra so quickly. Although warned that she was almost certain to be taken as a POW, Marjorie Lyon, refused to leave her patients.

The bedraggled group that landed on Sumatra was destitute, emaciated after five days of thirst and starvation, and scarcely clothed. Some of the women had torn up their dresses for bandages and now wore only their underwear. They had no medical supplies, no food, and no money, but in the two weeks in which they made their way across Sumatra with their casualties, only one person offered help — Mrs Hawthorne, an American missionary, who proved to be a practical Christian of extraordinary generosity and kindness.

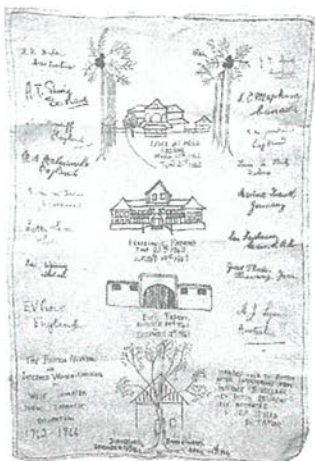
Dr Lyon's party arrived in Padang two days after the British ships had left. When the Dutch refused to take the wounded into their hospital, the Canadian matron of the Salvation Army Hospital came to



Dr. Marjorie Lyon (centre) with a graduating midwifery class, Malaya 1947

the rescue. Dr Lyon and Dr Crowe were at this hospital with the female wounded when the Japanese arrived on 17 March.

For the next three and a half years, Marjorie Lyon was **Camp Medical Officer**. Assisted by Dr Crowe and seven British nurses, she was responsible for the health of about fifty British and 2500 Dutch interned women and children. The internees were **moved from camp to camp, and finally to Bangkinang, 350 kilometres away in the middle of the jungle**, where they slept fifty to a hut. The camps were all appallingly overcrowded and revoltingly insanitary, food was usually starvation rations (except for those with something to trade on the black market) and there was never enough water. Under these conditions, there were epidemics of diphtheria among the children, and tropical diseases — especially dysentery and malaria — flourished.



A cloth embroidered by Dr Lyon's medical team, showing their succession of internment camps and revealing old hostilities. Completed after release. Photograph by R. G. Hann

By the time they reached Bangkinang there were never fewer than 400 people at a time suffering malarial attacks.

Another feature of the camps, particularly in the first eighteen months, was the hostility between the British and the Dutch, some of whom objected to **Dr Lyon's uncompromising attitude towards patient welfare.** Marjorie organised the distribution of rations so that children and the sick were given priority, upsetting women who wanted to hoard precious milk powder; she insisted on quiet in the vicinity of diphtheria patients; and in an attempt to stop the spread of infection, she wrote sternly to the Director of one of the campsites — the Fraterhuis (monastery) — demanding the removal of the fraters and 'their attendant women and children, cats, dogs and parrots' from the hospital buildings. When one faction, claiming to represent the Dutch Camp Committee, complained about her and her British staff, Marjorie wrote an acerbic letter which she made public. The response to her offer to leave for the British Camp was an avalanche of letters from other Dutch women begging her to stay.

Marjorie wrote a **daily diary** — now transcribed onto 1000 typewritten pages — and kept all her correspondence from the camp. From this it seems, at times, as if she kept the Dutch alive in spite of themselves. But keep them alive she did. In the three and a half years in which she was responsible for their lives, there were only 160 deaths, mostly among the very young and the very old. This outstanding record was a tribute not only to Dr Lyon's great skill and her absolute dedication to her patients, but also to her extraordinary courage.

Although tiny and birdlike, Marjorie was a lion by nature as well as name. **She stood up to the Japanese** with the same unyielding toughness that she showed to anyone who attempted to impede her care of the sick. At great risk to her own safety, she would imperiously **order her captors to provide medicine and dressings** and, more often than not, the Japanese would eventually provide at least part of what she had asked for. One of the **Dutch internees recalls:** 'Dr Lyon was only small but she gave the Japanese hell. **She was always demanding medicine and getting slapped for asking.**' Dr Lyon, in an account written in 1945, describes these exchanges with characteristic matter-of-factness: 'I had a reputation for being able to handle the Japanese, but sometimes it didn't work and then I got knocked about a bit, though I never had a formal beating up.'

On 19 August 1945, the Japanese told the internees that the war was over. **Marjorie immediately wrote to the Japanese commandant and demanded repatriation.** On 1 September, Dr Lyon, Dr Crowe and the fifty British women left Sumatra for Padang. Although no-one had been tortured or executed in this camp, it was officially graded at the end of the war as the second worst in Sumatra.

Marjorie Lyon's sense of responsibility towards her patients continued after her return to Australia. **She wrote personal letters to the families of those who had died, and sent on last letters and personal possessions.** One woman's **watch and ring** she had carried with her for three years, from camp to camp. It was, as the grateful recipient wrote to Marjorie, 'a labour of loving kindness'. It also revealed a kind of fierce honour that was characteristic of this uncompromising woman. In the last months, the British women were so desperate for food that they were trading their cherished wedding rings — their last possessions — on

the black market. Marjorie, however, would have starved to death rather than betray a trust by trading the small treasures of the dead.

Marjorie was forced to abandon her surgical work after the war as the malnutrition of the camps had ruined her eyesight. However, she remained with the Malayan Medical Service until 1950, then worked with the Western Australia Health Department until her death in 1975.

Dr Elsie Crowe survived her fractured skull, dengue, and near-fatal dysentery. Now ninety-three, she has just moved into a nursing home in England. In a recent letter to Marjorie's family she speaks of the brave, brilliant and prickly Dr Lyon. 'She was a completely dedicated doctor. She pretended to dislike people en masse, but each and every patient was sacrosanct. I have never met anyone of such integrity and I am proud to have been her friend.'

Joyce Tweddell

1916-

Forgotten prisoners of war

Written by: Suzy Baldwin

Nominated by: Margaret Taylor

Sister Joyce Tweddell was a nurse with 2/10th Australian General Hospital (AGH), sent to Malaya at the beginning of 1941. A year later, on 10 January 1942, the unit had to flee from its hospital in Malacca to a former boys' school three kilometres north of Singapore. Through at least four air raids a day, the operating theatres of this temporary hospital worked round the clock and patients flowed over into neighbouring houses.

On 31 January the causeway between Singapore Island and the mainland was blown up. On 10 February the order for the evacuation of all nurses was approved. Since none would volunteer to leave as requested, evacuation lists were drawn up and the nurses were sent off in two groups on 12 January. The first group left in the morning. The remaining sixty-five nurses, including Joyce Tweddell, continued to work until ordered onto the *Vyner Brooke* in the afternoon. Equipped to carry twelve passengers, the ship left Singapore Harbour carrying over 300, mostly civilian women and children.

The *Vyner Brooke* was sunk two days later. After making sure that every civilian was off the burning ship, the nurses swam for Banka Island — and capture by the Japanese. Joyce Tweddell and four other staff nurses were in the water for sixteen hours.

One group of twenty-three nurses, some of them injured, all of them in uniform with armbands, landed on the island during the night of 14 February. They put up a large red cross to show that they were non-combatants and began to take care of the wounded. However, the nurses discovered that Red Cross armbands had no effect on Japanese treatment of them when about twenty Japanese soldiers appeared, ordered the women into the sea and shot them. The sole survivor, Vivian Bullwinkel, was left for dead. She eventually rejoined the other nurses

his studies in South Australia at Prince Alfred College and the University of Adelaide. Entering upon the profession of a teacher, Mr. Duence received his first appointment at Camden Grammar School, in New South Wales, and subsequently held positions in the Newcastle Grammar School and in the Geelong Grammar School, Victoria. He relinquished teaching in order to accept a post in the office of Messrs. Chaffey Brothers, of Mildura, where he remained for over six years, in 1896 disposing of his interests in the latter place and coming to Western Australia, where he took charge of the counting-house of Messrs. Bickford & Sons, wholesale druggists, of Perth. At the termination of four years he resigned from this service and established himself in

music, and promotes this art both publicly and privately in every possible way. He married in 1904 Leila, daughter of Mr. James Hartley, of Woollahra, Sydney, New South Wales, and has one daughter.

"THE NORTHAM ADVERTISER," the leading provincial newspaper in Western Australia, is now in its twentieth year, having been established in 1893. Its founder, Mr. J. T. Reilly, is one of the most interesting figures in Australian journalism. His "Fifty Years' Reminiscences of Western Australia," published about ten years ago, is a work of great value. Until eight years ago he retained the editorship and management of *The Northam Advertiser*, and now, well past the allotted three score years and ten, is enjoying a well-deserved rest. His successor, the Hon. H. P. Colebatch, took charge of the paper in June, 1905, and is still managing editor. He is a member of the Legislative Council, and a brief sketch of his career appears in the portion of this work devoted to Parliament. Before entering the Legislature, however, Mr. Colebatch was a very active public man. For three years he occupied the position of Mayor of Northam, and for some time represented

vice-president, or committeeman of practically every local public institution. His pastimes are bowls and chess. He was at one time president of the Perth Bowling Club, and was the founder and has been for seven years president of the Northam Bowling Club. He won the chess championship of the State in 1898, and the championship of Perth again in 1901.

PEARSON LYON, B.A. (Syd. Univ.), barrister and solicitor, Northam, was born at Melbourne, Victoria, on March 23, 1869, and is a son of Mr. John Lamb Lyon, a well-known artist and designer, of Sydney, New South Wales. He attended the Sydney Grammar School



C. M. Nixon, Northam.
MR. RICHARD HOOPER DUENCE.

business on his own account as hay and corn merchant at Victoria Park. He afterwards retired from this concern and devoted his attention to various investments for about three years, early in 1906 accepting a municipal post at Northam. Two years later he was appointed acting town clerk, and less than twelve months subsequently received the permanent appointment, which he has since retained. Mr. Duence is a member and Past Master of the Masonic craft, of which he has been an adherent for over a decade. He gives ready support to the charitable movements of the neighbourhood, and frequently acts in the capacity of honorary secretary to such organizations. Being a vocalist of some merit, he makes a hobby of



Bartletto, Perth.
HON. H. P. COLEBATCH, M.L.C.

the Government on the Western Australian Fire Brigades' Board, as well as occupying a seat on the Licensing Bench. He has been a member of the District Board of Education for many years, and is either president,



C. M. Nixon, Northam.
MR. PEARSON LYON.

before entering the University of Sydney, where he obtained his B.A. degree from St. Andrew's College in 1890. Subsequently he was articled to Mr. Gilbert Murdock, solicitor, for three years, and at the end of that period opened in practice in Sydney, where he continued until the end of 1896. Mr. Lyon left for Western Australia in the last-mentioned year, and having qualified for practice by residence in this State for six months, purchased the connection of Mr. A. S. Roe at Roebourne. Finding the health of his family suffering on account of the climate, Mr. Lyon left that district towards the end of 1900, and, some time afterwards, joined the late F. A. Meeres in practice at Northam, which

(X)



MARJORIE LYON HOUSE

IN RECOGNITION OF THE
OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS AND
SERVICE OF DR LYON 1922.



PER ARDUA AD ALTA


Rebecca Cody
Principal


Date

(xi)

Subject: Re: Marjorie Lyon - Diaries

From: lynette silver

To:

Tue, 13 Sep 2022 04:08:53 +0000

Hi John

Book just arrived and in perfect condition.

Thank you so much. It is impressive!

I surmise that its main value will be as a rich research source, rather than as a general read.

However, why don't you use it to write a commercially viable book? Marjorie Lyon was an amazing lady, and her story deserves to be told to a wider audience. Great characters as well - Reynolds, Coates, Dr Crowe etc.

The book **Tenko** was loosely based on your grandmother's experiences, so writer Ian Skidmore told me. His wife Celia was involved in some way. The book Tenko was written from the TV series, not the other way round.

I'll get back to you.

The FEPOW people (with whom I correspond in the UK) and Jonathan Moffat and others who collect every scrap of information on internees and others who were in Malaya, should be very interested in the diaries.

Thank you for your generosity.

Lynette