

## OLD DEBTS

This paper deals with unresolved legal questions arising from World War II. We would be happy to hear from people with comments, information, sources etc, so that it can continue to incorporate as much relevant background information as possible, so as to become a useful resource for the East Timorese people in the future.

Between 1941 and 1945 five nations — Australia, Japan, the Netherlands, the USA and Britain — carried out a) the violation of Portuguese neutrality in East Timor, b) crimes against the civilian population of East Timor, and c) a complete failure on the part of these 5 nations to offer official compensation. This paper does not pretend to cover what is a large and complex situation but seeks to draw attention to areas which relate to those legal obligations and areas which deserve further study and elucidation.

a) All these nations were aware that Portugal/Portuguese Timor was neutral territory. If they had overlooked it, Portugal reminded them very clearly. The Portuguese Government made it clear to the British, Japanese and Dutch Embassies in Lisbon that to send troops to East Timor would violate that neutrality. The Portuguese Embassies in London and Tokyo were required to deliver strong protests on that violation. The Governor in East Timor made clear that neutrality to the British, Dutch, and Japanese Consulates in Dili and required them to convey his protests. He wrote directly to the Governor-General of the Netherlands East Indies in Jakarta; he wrote to the Australian Government in Canberra.

Neutrality is vested in a nation, not in individuals within that nation. The differing responses to the occupation of East Timor by Dutch, Australian, and Japanese troops are irrelevant to the question of neutrality. “The rule (of neutrality) applies, however, only to state action. Private citizens remain free to choose sides in a variety of ways, to campaign politically, raise money, even raise volunteers (though they cannot launch forays across the border). What is more important, normal patterns of trade may be maintained with both belligerents.” (1)

b) The statement by the Australian, Col. Bernard Callinan, (2) “The Governor ... protested against the landing, and the Colonels advised him not to oppose the landing as it would only lead to unnecessary bloodshed. He was informed that there were more than sufficient well-armed and equipped soldiers to deal with all the forces he could muster ... the Governor acted as an honourable man in a most difficult position, torn between his efforts to maintain the pride and honour of Portugal, and to protect the colony, the Portuguese citizens and the natives in the face of a total war” misses the point of neutrality; equally importantly it misses the point of “due care”. The Portuguese Administration had a particular form of care required of it as a colonial administration towards the colonised people of East Timor. But the disembarking troops had, under international law, the responsibility not to engage in warfare or in any way involve or endanger the lives of civilians within East Timor. *It was the responsibility of the belligerents to protect the people of East Timor from their actions.* That obligations towards civilian populations during WW2 were not as finely tuned as they have since become under the 1949 Geneva Conventions, UN Declaration of Human Rights, etc, should not blind us to the fact that all belligerents involved in East Timor were aware that they had a responsibility of “due care” towards the people of East Timor. The Nuremberg Trials, for example, were predicated on this obligation and the prior knowledge of the existence of such an obligation. (3)

c) Official reparations were not paid to East Timor by any of the 5 nations implicated

(see mention of Japanese forfeitures). Actions taken individually or collectively by soldiers who were in East Timor to express their regret and sense of sorrow or obligation do not alter the official position; equally, Australian “promissory notes” were simply I.O.U.s and are irrelevant to the question of reparations. Individual soldiers can be charged with war crimes if their behaviour warrants such a charge, but the question of reparations is vested in governments. Portugal was not invited to any post-war discussions on responsibilities and reparations, ostensibly because of its neutrality, but possibly also because the cake was only so large and Portugal might have raised uncomfortable questions about Allied actions in East Timor. (4) The damage done to East Timor was overwhelming. No bridge remained undamaged. Roads, aerodromes, public and private buildings, harbour facilities, telephone and radio communications, plantations, farms, food gardens, warehouses, livestock, personal and public possessions, were stolen, damaged, or destroyed. During the war at least 91 bombing raids were carried out on Dili alone (5) and “Allied bombers, attacking in WWII, leveled every building but one.” (6) The post-war Native War Damage Compensation Committee said of Bougainville “one quarter of the population of Bougainville may have perished ... The invasion and war activities ... have had effects upon the natives so calamitous and so far removed from anything with which their experience and way of life have made them familiar, that it is beyond their power to cope with them.” The same sense of trauma, dislocation, anxiety, loss and misery was inflicted on East Timor yet has gone almost totally unrecognised. That a simple and unsophisticated society was suddenly plunged in to the major war of the 20th century, where three different nations battled for hegemony across an area a quarter the size of Tasmania, then walked away without even a word of apology, has yet to be engaged with.

But the major problem for East Timor dating from WW2 was the death toll. Continuing Australian figures that present it as 40,000 to 60,000 have been acquired, incredibly, by roughly subtracting the 1946 census figures from the 1930 census figures. The loss of the 1940 figures has been glossed over. There may be figures somewhere in Lisbon but it seems more likely that the collection and collation of data to be remitted was not complete by the time the bombing of Dili began in early 1942. Portuguese officials told the Australian Consul, 19/5/1946, that they believed that at least “100,000 deaths of Portuguese Timor natives” had occurred. This was dismissed by Australia. (Of the Portuguese community of about 240 people, professional, commercial, and administrative, 80 were killed or died of disease or starvation between 1942-45.)

All Portuguese census figures are suspect as they were collected inefficiently and are known to be too low, particularly in their recording of male persons. But this does not remove the usefulness of comparisons as the same problems were factored into each census collection. The 1920 figure was 397,875. The 1930 figure was 472,221 or a rise of 74,346. It can therefore be assumed the 1940 figure was at least 546,567. At an average annual increase of around 7,500 by the middle of 1942 when the death toll in East Timor moved beyond an isolated death to regular losses, the population figure would have been at least 561,567. The 1946 figure 403,232 taken from the approximate 1942 figure gives a loss of 158,335. Around 500 people left East Timor during the period 1943-45 but almost all of them had returned by 1946 so are irrelevant to the figures. Even allowing for discrepancies and inaccuracies in these figures, *the death toll in East Timor during WW2 was immense*. Yet this loss and its ongoing impact in terms of family loss, apathy, poor health, low production and a massive impost on survivors to rebuild the country in both public and private terms has gone unnoticed, unrecognised, and unacknowledged. (East Timor’s population did not again reach pre-war levels until well into the 1960s.) (7)

The degree of responsibility obviously varies but we believe all 5 nations undermentioned have unacknowledged and unmet obligations.

## **AUSTRALIA:**

The difficulties felt by many Australians in looking at their obligations clearly and honestly are no doubt difficulties which the other nations have also shied away from. The courage of the soldiers is irrelevant. We are concerned with the legal obligations of Governments. Equally, the sometimes sentimental memories felt by a number of Australian soldiers towards East Timorese who helped them do not in any way remove Australia's responsibility to acknowledge and respect the neutrality of East Timor. This has particularly focussed on sentiments expressed towards young East Timorese boys, some as young as eight, who by their cheerful help and curiosity have had any legal obligation towards them trivialised or lost sight of. It can better be understood by the analogy: if East Timorese soldiers had invaded Australia as a means of keeping East Timor safe from invasion and had 'recruited' Australian boys, some as young as eight, putting their lives in danger, moving them long distances from their families, then abandoning them on beaches far from home, there would be a national outcry. This is not a matter for individual servicemen to resolve; it is a matter for the Government to acknowledge.

On the 8th Dec. 1941, Dutch aircraft bombed and strafed a small Japanese vessel in Portuguese waters; on the 9th and the 11th Australian aircraft 'buzzed' Dili. On the 17th Dec. a combined Dutch and Australian force disembarked in Dili. Although the exact words used towards the Portuguese cannot be confirmed as there were no independent witnesses, all sides suggest that threats of 'bloodshed' and 'bombing' were made to the Portuguese Administration if the disembarkation was opposed in any way. The letter handed to the Portuguese Governor stated that "The instructions issued to us by the Governor General of The Netherlands East Indies, which have been concurred with by the Government of Australia, are to give military assistance to the Government of Portuguese Timor when requested, and also that if the Netherlands East Indies Government considers that danger of hostile action by Japan against Portuguese Timor is imminent, then the Government of Portuguese Timor will be so informed and will then ask for assistance as above mentioned. It is now considered that urgent action by Dutch and Australian troops is required and that these troops land immediately to assist the defence of Portuguese Timor. In accordance with our instructions such troops are to be sent immediately."

On the 18th Dec. the Dutch towed the wrecked Japanese vessel to Dili and ransacked it, in defiance of protests made by the Portuguese Customs authorities. In the next couple of days the entire Japanese community in Dili (ie. Consular and business people, 2 women and 2 children, plus 14 crew from the vessel, or 27 people altogether) were placed under 'house arrest' by Dutch soldiers; their houses and business premises were ransacked and personal and business papers and possessions were removed.

It is not clear who made the decisions which created so much bad feeling with the Japanese community as both the Dutch and Australian forces have tended to present themselves as the senior partner in this temporary coalition. Undoubtedly, there was joint discussion before any action was taken. However, the decision to move into the mountains rather than remain in the coastal towns appears to have been predominantly an Australian rather than a Dutch decision. It was the decision which took the war to the villages, hamlets and farms of the interior — causing so much loss of life and property and placing civilians

in the thick of the fighting — rather than keeping it mainly confined to the coast.

Specific Australian responsibilities include:

a) looting — Australian reports take the contemptuous position towards the Dutch that ‘we brought our weapons, the Dutch brought their rations’; the Australians also brought hearty appetites and a belief in the need for a large meat ration in their diet. The following account is exaggerated but food shortages were showing up in the Dili market as early as March 1942. “There was an abundance of tropical fruit everywhere we went, coconuts, bananas, mangoes, etc. were there for the taking and believe me we took them ... When we came to this part of the country it contained about 500,000 goats of which I would estimate 499,000 have been consumed by us during the last few months.” Capt. G. Laidlaw, 2/2nd Ind. Coy. (8) His colleague, Lt. Colin Doig, pointed out, “in Portuguese Timor every square yard of country was owned by someone and every coconut tree and every rice paddy was the property of one or other of the natives. So therefore when we ate rice or maize or coconuts or goat we were eating at the expense of a native or Portuguese.”

b) rape — there have been assertions that Australian commandos were involved in rape but a degree of secrecy continues to surround the names of those responsible. “I heard it from a 2/4th bloke, just that they grabbed the girl and raped her; how many were in it I don’t know ... I heard that one of our blokes raped a native girl at the beginning but it wasn’t the general thing at all.” (9)

c) extrajudicial killings — both Chinese and East Timorese were summarily despatched (including at least one child), the explanations given usually being ‘cheating’ or ‘spying’. Here too a degree of secrecy surrounds the names and actions taken. But that the Australian officers were aware and did take some (limited) action is on record. “Recently the Platoon Commanders of 2 Ind Coy have made a careful survey of all men under their control. As a result, this HQ now has to hand, lists of soldiers who are considered unfit for Ind Coy work. A few are of such bad character that they are useless as soldiers and continually deserving of serious punishment which cannot possibly be applied to them in an area where no troops or facilities are available for detentive duties.” (10) However, many Australian officers were very open about the killing of civilians: “There was no satisfaction at all in killing natives, also it was a fruitless task; what were a few hundred or thousand of them out of the hundred thousand native men in the colony?” (11)

d) destruction of houses, public buildings, bridges, roads, aerodromes, etc. Though the troops on the ground were involved in blowing up various infrastructures, the major destruction was carried out by the RAAF between 1942 and 1945. The Royal Australian Air Force’s Directorate of Public Relations of 1943: “Dili, Bobonaro, Manatuto and Bucau squirmed and smoked under the rain of bombs and machine-gun fire the Hudsons loosed.” And: “Six Beaufighters were to attack the villages of Bobonaro and Moabisse ... After the initial operation, attacks on enemy-occupied villages became commonplace, but interest quickened with the discovery that the Japs were building a new air strip at Fuiloro, on the north coast of Timor. The Beaufighters were given the job of delaying work on the strip. Men, trucks, stores, fuel dumps, and road-making equipment were destroyed in many sorties. Attacks on Fuiloro became so frequent that air crews began to call it the “Milk Run” and every Beaufighter crew made at least five journeys to Fuiloro.”

In 1945 the decision to put Japanese troops on trial for crimes against Australian personnel resulted in 9 Japanese officers going on trial in Darwin. Capt. Kasukane Saiki was given 3 months, Captains Teishu Mori and Arisaku Abe were each given 1 month’s detention. These trials remain the only record of any action taken against any of the belligerents and they provide no record of crimes committed against the people of East Timor. (Both Saiki and Abe were deeply implicated in the recruitment of West Timorese and their transport across the border into East Timor, among other abuses.)

Official correspondence before and during the Australian Occupation tended to stress that Australia wished to protect the people of East Timor from the Japanese. In fact, Australia wished the East Timorese to help protect Australia from the Japanese; in the words of Christopher Wray (12) “For almost twelve months the Australians had harassed the Japanese, killing an estimated 1500 of the enemy for a loss of forty of their own men. Most importantly the guerilla activities on Portuguese Timor had led the Japanese to fear possible Allied attempts to retake the island. As a result, battle-hardened enemy troops from the 48th Division had been diverted to Timor at a time when they could have been used to effect in the New Guinea campaign” and Col. Bernard Callinan, “It was not pleasant to think that these people were being dragged into a war which could not possibly help them at all, but only result in misery and destruction.” (13) The Australian Government and the Australian High Command made the decision to drag them into the war.

## **JAPAN:**

Japanese aircraft bombed and strafed East Timorese towns from the 20th Feb. 1942, onwards. These raids tailed off in late 1942 as Japanese soldiers gradually spread throughout the territory. In February 1942, Japanese troops carried out widespread looting in Dili including the looting of Chinese shops and, “After the invasion most of the property of Portuguese citizens in Dili was looted. Government offices were occupied and papers, materials, tools, cars, and foodstuffs were confiscated or destroyed ... Furniture, household goods, and linen were taken away ... Boots, shoes, watches, pens, clothes, suitcases, and trunks were among the most popular articles of loot. Cars, horses, and saddles were partly requisitioned, partly stolen.” (14) Food remained the most likely ‘possession’ to be stolen throughout the Japanese Occupation.

Japanese records, and Japanese historians, have largely been silent on the question of crimes against the people of East Timor. But on 13/8/1987 a Japanese officer, Iwamuri Shouhachi, in his Petition to the U.N. Decolonization Committee in New York raised a small part of the curtain of secrecy placed over Japan’s war-time record in East Timor: “As you know, the Japanese army occupied East Timor, a neutral country, for three and a half years, from February 1942 until the surrender. I was an army officer in East Timor for two years and four months, and was engaged in transportation, security, punitive operations and road construction. I was an independent platoon commander and a battalion adjutant stationed mainly in Baucau, Baquia, and Arianbata.

“It is painful to speak today of the sacrifices and burdens we forced upon the East Timorese, a people who had nothing to do with the war. We ordered village chiefs to mobilize people en masse for road construction. And the people, obedient to their chiefs, gathered at these construction sites to work without receiving food or compensation. Because of food shortage people died of starvation every day. Food for Japanese soldiers and horses to transport ammunition were confiscated from the people, and some of the troops under my command raped Timorese women. Yet after the war, the Japanese government paid no war reparations to East Timor, because, it said, Portugal was not an Allied country ... The Japanese government has never apologized or paid reparations to East Timor for what it did there in World War II: it should.”

In the immediate aftermath of the Japanese invasion, the Portuguese administration attempted to set up a small-scale system of prostitution to protect European women and the most vulnerable women in the community; this was rapidly overwhelmed by the sheer

numbers of Japanese troops who (later) brought in a number of Korean women (who left Timor in 1945 but whose eventual fate we do not know) but were also involved in widespread rape and forced prostitution. In the words of one East Timorese refugee, António Maia, “Altogether the Japanese killed 32 members of my family. One of my nieces and two cousins, one of them was only 13 years old, were forcibly taken and sexually abused by the Japanese until they died ... The Japanese kicked and beat my uncle and then forced him at gun point to take the three girls to the Japanese head quarters. They were then made to work as slaves and were repeatedly raped, my uncle saw it. The Japanese then took the girls to Manatuto, two came back but the youngest (13 years old) never came back. She was never heard or seen again ... (the 2 girls were taken back to Manatuto) There they were sexually abused by 30 Japanese and died a few days later. Their graves are in Lacluta.”

Reprisals were a common cause of torture and death where East Timorese, and occasionally Portuguese, were accused of helping Allied troops (equally, reprisals against the civilian population were the usual Japanese response to actions such as ambushes) but the largest cause of death was starvation caused by the massive numbers of people involved in forced work parties. These work details were used to build or reinforce roads from Dili along the north coast through Baucau to Lautem, south from Baucau through Viqueque to the south coast; in the repair and construction of aerodromes in Dili, south of Baucau, and along the north coast at Lautem, Laga, Fuiloro, etc; (eg. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1/1/1943, “Since December 22, Australian-based aircraft have made 10 separate raids on points in this section of Timor, where the enemy has been particularly active in developing aerodromes” is a reminder of the cycle — building, bombing, repairing — which caught up so many East Timorese civilians.) Forced labourers were also required to dig large caves into the hillside near Venilale (15) to store supplies and hide Japanese equipment. East Timorese men were also required to provide food and general repair crews to Japanese barracks and parties throughout East Timor. Between 10,000 and 20,000 civilians are believed to have been involved, at any one time, in such work details. These men died from overwork, beatings, Allied bombings, malnutrition-related diseases, lack of food and medicines, and accidents. The villagers they left behind died from starvation caused by the constant requisitioning of food supplies and livestock and for lack of labour to plough, plant, and harvest.

Two other aspects of the Japanese Occupation have largely gone unnoticed and unchallenged. (1) Japanese troops were responsible for introducing several diseases into East Timor including dengue fever, bilharzia, and another fever which has not been positively identified but may have been bubonic plague (16); they also helped to spread venereal disease, diphteria, cholera, typhoid, encephalitis, and leptospirosis into remote parts of the countryside. (2) The Japanese encouragement of West Timorese to cross the border, in some cases to arm them, and to give them ‘licence to kill’, resulted in a wide range of human rights abuses, theft and property damage, mostly inflicted on East Timorese villagers when this ‘black column’ could not reach Dutch refugees to retaliate for perceived injustices under the Dutch colonial system. It was not until the end of 1945, with the help of 70 African soldiers from Mozambique, that the Portuguese administration ended this illegal occupation. (800 soldiers were brought from Mozambique, mostly to help with reconstruction.)

Even within the ‘neutral zone’, west of Dili, set up so that civilian families could live unimpeded by the war and the Japanese Occupation, there were constant intrusions and abuses by the Kempei Tai; one Timorese refugee told oral historian Michele Turner, “Hidden in his ceiling one Portuguese official had a radio receiver to listen to outside news. The Japanese beat that man and when his wife went to help him they beat her as well. He

was very badly hurt, nearly died then, and he did die later because he became tubercular after the beating."

There was no safe place in East Timor and no one, man, woman or child, was safe from the unremitting and brutal abuses inflicted by the Japanese. The Government of Japan owes more than an apology to the people of East Timor.

### **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:**

Radio-operator, Patricio da Luz, gave an eye-witness account of American bombing of East Timor: "There were Australian and American bombers and they all make mistakes but the Americans make more. The Australian pilots were more careful. The Americans would come and bomb palm trees! In the moonlight they see the palm trees glowing like galvanised iron roofs and bomb them. When they bomb a place they do it with a lot of force, as many bombs as they can and flatten everything and always more planes than necessary."

Officially the United States Air Force carried out 3 bombing missions over Portuguese East Timor in 1942, 18 in 1943, and 9 in 1944. The number of aircraft per mission varied from one to twelve with each able to carry up to a 4,000 lb. bomb load. General George Kenney was in command but received "strategic direction" from General Arnold in Washington. (17)

But the greatest damage done by the Allies to East Timor between 1943 and 1945 was as a result of the 'Z Special' operations. In various parts of the Pacific, such as some of the islands of New Caledonia and the Solomons, where Japanese troops were cut off from re-supply they began vegetable gardens and went fishing, becoming what have been called "self-supporting prisoners of war". (18) This was not possible in East Timor because of the continuing clandestine insertions of the 'Z Specials' and, to a lesser extent, by the decision to bomb all shipping to the north of Timor, making it difficult for the Japanese either to be re-supplied or moved from East Timor. Attempts by Timorese villagers to create some kind of compromise with the occupying Japanese were rendered unsuccessful because of these operations. The arrival or rumoured arrival of secret Australian missions constantly undermined Timorese attempts to develop some form of *modus operandi* and reduce pressures on limited food stocks.

The 'Z Specials' have always been described as an intelligence gathering operation, and they came under the auspices of the Allied Intelligence Bureau, but we think this description should be questioned because:

1. By 1943, regular reconnaissance flights over Timor were monitoring all shipping movements, use of airfields etc. Any intelligence gathered 'on the ground' would be of very limited value.
2. If intelligence on Japanese numbers/movements was of vital importance why were no similar operations mounted into West Timor except for a brief landing on Roti.
3. The second intelligence party landed lost its ciphers which were then used by the Japanese for nearly 2 years thus compromising other parties inserted. The repeated failure of radio operators in Australia to realise anything was wrong suggests these parties, and any intelligence they sent, received very low priority in Australia. (19)
4. Virtually the first American action in East Timor was to bomb the Administrator's residence at Manatuto while it was full of Portuguese women and children, including the

Governor's wife and 3 daughters; fortunately without casualties. At that time (Oct. 1942) regular intelligence reports were being sent back by Australian ground troops, suggesting that communication problems between the services were sufficiently serious to undermine the value of even the most reliable intelligence. (The RAAF reportedly bombed the civilian camp at Liquiça 3 times during 1944, and the civilian camp at Maubara once in the same year, killing or wounding a number of civilians including several Portuguese women; yet the existence of these camps and their civilian nature had been known since late 1942. It is difficult to believe the pilots could've mistaken either place for Dili, so who ordered that the camps be bombed and why?)

We would suggest that their role instead was to provide, and to encourage the East Timorese villagers to provide, low grade harassment of the Japanese, thus helping to keep large numbers of Japanese troops tied down in Timor, in the belief that they were the advance guard of an attempt to 're-take' East Timor. It was this policy which led directly to the widespread starvation experienced in East Timor between 1943 and 1945. However even this does not explain why more 'Z Special' parties were sent into neutral Portuguese Timor than any other territory of comparable size.

The 'Z Specials' have been seen solely as an Australian operation. In fact, this is not so. The Governments of the U.K., U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand and the Netherlands set up the 'South-West Pacific Area' (SWPA) in March 1942, which covered Timor, and nominated General MacArthur as Supreme Commander. John Hetherington in his biography of General Blamey says "He lashed out in December 1942 when he learned that the Advisory War Council had gone far beyond its province by asking the Australian Chiefs of Staff to prepare plans to capture Timor. He pointed out that nobody but MacArthur was empowered to authorise such an operation" and MacArthur made sure that no action was taken in SWPA without his knowledge or approval. His headquarters set up the Allied Intelligence Bureau, under Major-General Willoughby, on the 6th July 1942, which included Special Reconnaissance Department (SRD) which had responsibility for the 'Z Specials', and the Far East Liaison Office (FELO) which prepared propaganda leaflets to be dropped in to Portuguese Timor. (20) Final authorisation for the 'Z Special' operations and target areas came from MacArthur. But MacArthur always intended to move directly to the Philippines, cutting off Japanese supply-lines to Timor and the NEI and leaving Japanese troops to 'wither on the vine'; he saw Timor as largely irrelevant. He may even have authorised the 'Z Specials' to go into Timor to give keen young Australians something to do and keep them out of the way of his main American-led operations; or to influence the Australian Chiefs of Staff to keep their focus close to home.

To understand their impact it is important to put the situation in perspective. The number of Japanese troops in East Timor reached approximately 15,000 in December 1942 and remained at the level for more than 2 years because of the Japanese belief the Allies intended to 're-take' East Timor after the initial withdrawal in early 1943. (21) The 'Z Specials' constantly reinforced this suspicion. The 1942 Allied campaign was fought predominantly in the 3 western provinces of East Timor (East Timor was divided into 6 provinces in the 1940s plus the Oecussi enclave) — Fronteira, Dili, and Suro. The 'Z Specials' were inserted mainly into the 3 eastern provinces of São Domingos, Manatuto, and Lautem. Because the Japanese regarded the people of the western provinces as being 'pro-Australian' they maintained both their own troops and a number of West Timorese in those provinces while sending large 'search and destroy' missions throughout the eastern provinces which had, till the arrival of the 'Z Specials', been relatively untouched by the war except for the bombing of towns along the north coast.

This meant every province in East Timor came under pressure to provide food for the Japanese troops while suffering severe disruption during planting and harvest, the loss of livestock either taken as food by the occupying troops or to deny ‘the other side’ food. Livestock were also lost in bombing raids and when the Japanese carried out ‘scorched earth’ actions. Livestock were needed for milking, meat, ploughing, and transport as well as for cultural reasons. In a society where few people had cash incomes and savings accounts, livestock also were a form of savings and wealth. Each harvest was significantly lower than the previous one. By 1944 people were reduced to eating precious seed stocks in the desperate attempt to keep themselves and their families alive. (22)

The pressure of large numbers of troops needing to be fed in a small country which received no outside food supplies for several years, along with disruptive military operations, is best understood by remembering that East Timor would fit approximately: 6 times into Portugal, 15 times into the U.K., 25 times into Japan, 515 times into Australia and 650 times into the U.S.A.

The United States cannot walk away from its obligations to East Timor.

### **BRITAIN:**

By late 1941 enthusiasm for sending Australian troops to Europe and North Africa was diminishing, partly because of the debacles in Greece and Crete which many Australians blamed on the British High Command, and growing fears of Japanese intentions. Churchill wanted to keep Australian troops under British control; the Labour government which took power in Australia in October 1941 wanted them brought home. Yet Churchill and his generals acquiesced, apparently without a murmur, to the sending of Australia’s elite commandos, the 2/2nd Independent Company and later the 2/4th, into neutral Portuguese Timor rather than to Europe or the key strategic areas in South-East Asia. The Independent companies grew out of a British War Office initiative. A secret British Military Mission was sent to Australia for this purpose and the men received British commando-style training, in some cases using British experts. After expending much organisation and hard work to develop the initiative the British apparently made no attempt to have these elite troops used in the protection of any British territories.

It has become almost an article of faith to present this action as an Australian initiative about which Britain was less than happy. But a survey of the cables sent by U.K. Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Lord Cranbourne, (23) suggests not only a strong commitment to getting Australian troops into Portuguese Timor but also a willingness to put extreme pressure on Portugal, ignoring Portugal’s position of neutrality, and its reminder to the British that any breach of neutrality in Timor could lead to Japanese reprisals against Macau. (24) The three reasons given for supposed British reluctance to support Australia’s Timor campaign are:

1. Britain wanted Portugal to remain neutral because, if Australia breached Portuguese neutrality in Timor, this might encourage Salazar to give support to the Axis powers.
2. Britain hoped to gain facilities in the Azores, the Portuguese islands in the mid-Atlantic, and if Australia breached Portuguese neutrality in Timor, these negotiations could become considerably more difficult.
3. Britain wanted to keep its ‘ancient alliance’ (the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1373) in reserve, should it need to invoke it during a future emergency. Australian actions might be

construed as disrespect for the alliance and therefore a weakening of Britain's bargaining position.

But these reasons do not hold up to close scrutiny. We may even have been looking at them back to front. It may be that Britain *wanted* Australia to take the tough line so it could step in with what seemed a compromise position which would nevertheless weaken Portuguese neutrality; David Day says the troops were sent into Timor "at Britain's instigation" but that "London went cold on the project". (25) In *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937 - 1949* (see under (23) for details) it becomes very clear that it wasn't "cold" feet but a blatant case of blame-shifting that saw Australia become responsible for what was, in effect, an illegal military operation.

1. Britain always knew it was unlikely Portugal would change its stance on neutrality while Spain remained out of the war, and Portugal was under tremendous pressure from Spain to remain neutral. Paul Preston says that in 1939, "Through his brother in Lisbon, Franco put pressure on Portugal to ignore its commitments to Britain and to maintain neutrality" and in 1940, "In Britain and Portugal, it was assumed that non-belligerence meant, as it had for Mussolini, a prelude to a declaration of war. Franco consistently tried to use the Portuguese to deceive the British. For months he had been assuring the Portuguese Ambassador, Pereira, of his commitment to neutrality and of his lack of acquisitive plans. He did so again on 10 June, the same day that he wrote to Mussolini to offer non-belligerence. On the day that non-belligerence was announced, he sent his brother Nicolás, to assure the Portuguese Foreign Ministry that it constituted no divergence from Spain's existing neutral line. The Caudillo saw Lisbon as a useful conduit to the Foreign Office, to be exploited, while the Axis was winning, to mask his own position. In 1943, when the outcome of the war seemed more doubtful, he would use Lisbon to endorse his neutral credentials in the eyes of the Allies. In the summer of 1940, however, he harboured predatory thoughts about Portugal." (26)

This came about partly through the growth of Pan-Iberianism as a popular movement in Spain which promoted the 'absorption' of Portugal into Spain but also through Franco's more secret plans. More than Portugal itself he wanted Portugal's empire; he never forgave the Spanish government for 'losing' Spanish Morocco. It would be remarkable if Salazar, a shrewd observer, was unaware of feelings in Spain. A commitment to Britain, possibly provoking an Axis response, (and vice versa) would have played right into Franco's hands.

2. It has been suggested that Portugal gave Britain air and naval facilities in 1943 because it had been selling wolfram to Germany and wanted to be seen as 'even-handed'. This is a misunderstanding. As a neutral nation it was free to sell its products on the open market (it sold wolfram to Germany from 1942 to 1944 and to Britain throughout the war). The Azores' facilities, however, involved questions of sovereignty and undermined Portuguese neutrality. In 1940 British Intelligence drew up a secret strategy to invade and occupy the Azores, then apparently put the plan 'on ice'. We would like to suggest that Churchill supported the violation of Portugal's neutrality in Asia in the hope that it would make the violation of Portuguese neutrality in Europe much simpler. Portugal agreed to allow the base when Britain invoked the 'ancient alliance' but specified that only Britain should benefit. When Britain opened the facility to the Americans, Salazar protested strongly. In response, Churchill telegraphed Eden, "There is no need for us to be apologetic in dealing with any of these neutrals who hope to get out of Armageddon with no trouble and a good profit". His respect for neutrality was minimal. (27)

3. Britain, in its negotiations over Timor with Portugal, claimed that Australian troops sent to the island to ‘protect’ its people were doing so because of British respect for the ‘ancient alliance’. Portugal responded by saying the only respect it wanted was respect for its neutrality in Timor. Britain clearly interpreted the ‘ancient alliance’ in terms of its own needs; but it could also, by using Australian troops, be said to have covered its back in the event of any later claims for damages done by those troops. (British RAF squadrons based in northern Australia carried out at least one bombing mission into East Timor, in June 1945.)

We would go further and suggest that, so far as Britain was concerned, the ‘ancient alliance’ was an irrelevance. Britain and Germany had drawn up a secret agreement in 1896 to divide Mozambique between them and this was enhanced in 1914 when the British government and the German Ambassador to Britain, Prince Lichnowsky, drew up a secret agreement by which the two nations added Angola to their joint carve-up. (28) World War I prevented the implementation of this plan and “Although the Allies won the war, and Portugal’s colonies were safeguarded, the 0.75 percent of the war indemnity paid by Germany to Portugal was scant compensation for the heavy costs incurred, both in the field and at home; the casualties of the African campaigns and the western front; the alienation of a portion of the army officer corps; crippling war debts to Britain; intense inflation; and a scarcity of food and fuel” (29) but neither Britain nor Germany gave up their individual ambitions in regard to Portugal’s empire and “leading far-right-wing members of the Chamberlain government had, in that time of frantic attempts to contain the burgeoning Nazi behemoth, proposed appeasing Germany by giving it economic and settlement rights carved out of Portuguese Angola”. (30) By June 1943 Britain and Australia were discussing a post-war future for East Timor which did not include Portugal. (31)

More civilians died in tiny East Timor in World War Two than died in Britain. (32) Yet Britain’s ‘back room’ role has always allowed it to walk away from any responsibility for events in East Timor.

#### **HOLLAND/NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES:**

The entry of Dutch troops into neutral Portuguese Timor is rarely mentioned, let alone criticised, possibly because it has been seen as an admirable initiative by individual Dutch officers to fight on rather than surrender. This is incorrect. Dutch troops entered East Timor on 17th December 1941, after threatening the Portuguese Governor in Dili with ‘bloodshed’ if they were not allowed to land and well before Japan invaded the NEI.

There were 450 Dutch troops in Dili by the end of December 1941. The Dutch military command was still intact so they violated Portuguese neutrality on orders from their Government, and Commander-in-Chief, General Hein ter Poorten, in Jakarta. Why did Dutch troops violate East Timor’s territory when a) good relations between the two powers sharing the island would seem desirable, b) military needs would suggest these men were better placed elsewhere, and c) Portugal respected Dutch neutrality in WWI so why was this respect not returned in WW2? The Dutch were aware of Portugal’s wishes as they ran a weekly flight between Kupang and Dili and maintained a Dutch Consul in Dili. (The Dutch Consul in Dili was a geologist which is a reminder of an economic element in pre-war Dutch interest in Portuguese Timor. Curiously the Dutch Government now claims it did *not* have a Consul in East Timor during this period; this claim does not hold up.)

The usual explanation given out by both Dutch and Australian sources, (eg. the Dutch

Governor-General's response to the Portuguese Governor's protest, in which he regretted "the measures taken on my orders with the sole purpose of safeguarding the Netherlands Indies from the dangers of a Japanese attack which could have brought about abuse of Portuguese territory" 24/12/1941), that the Dutch wanted to prevent the Japanese from using Portuguese territory for a "backdoor invasion" of Dutch Timor, does not hold up to scrutiny. "The Dutch, in the 20th century, were not a military inspired nation. No attempt had been made by them to strengthen their small force on Timor either before or after our arrival, yet there had been much talk about this" and "(Brigadier) Lind was by now extremely critical of the Dutch failure to complete preparations agreed to much earlier in the year" are two Australian comments on the fact that the "front door" was standing wide open (33). The prize for the Japanese in the NEI was the oilfields of Kalimantan and Sumatra — Japan's desire for oil was a major war aim — yet instead of making the defence of these fields a priority, forces were spread out across the NEI in sufficient size to provoke a Japanese response but in insufficient numbers to either hold the individual islands or draw Japanese troops away from the assaults on the oilfields. Dutch claims of empire always appeared to be in conflict with war strategies. At the same time as the NEI Government was concerned that an Australian force on Dutch Timor (34) could provoke a Japanese invasion, their C-in-C was asking General Wavell to send troops. (Decisions about deployment of Australia's elite commandos, the 2/2nd into neutral Portuguese Timor and a regular army battalion, the 2/40th AIF, into allied Dutch Timor, were apparently made as early as mid-1941. Clearly there are many unanswered questions about Dutch, British, and Australian decision-making in regard to Timor in this crucial period.)

The Dutch made no attempt to garrison the border between East and West Timor, nor to fortify any anchorage except Kupang. Timor, as a whole, has the longest dry season of any area in S.E. Asia; food constraints were always going to undermine any strategic value the island might have. (In 1941 it was still believed, or if not believed publicly maintained, that Singapore was 'impregnable' and that the Japanese would easily be stopped in Malaya.)

East Timor could have very limited value to the Japanese. It could be used to bomb northern Australia; but, equally, northern Australia could be used to bomb Timor and it was far more vulnerable than any part of Australia. All the harbours of East Timor were open to air attack; it had little flat land for the easy building of large air bases; the pattern of habitation, as a dense grid of tiny hamlets unlike northern Australia where towns are surrounded by large areas with a sparse population, meant no airfield would be more than 2 kilometres from civilian settlement; almost all the women and children, except for army nurses, were evacuated from the towns of northern Australia whereas the Portuguese had nowhere to evacuate the more than 300,000 women and children in their territory; Australia did not depend on food grown in northern Australia for its survival.

*The decision by Britain, Australia, and the NEI to 'garrison' Portuguese Timor against its wishes made it strategically important to Japan.*

The assumption that Portuguese neutrality was the 'achilles heel' of Dutch defences is incorrect. That the Dutch surrendered to Japan on the 8th March 1942, only weeks after the Japanese invasion, has to do with military unpreparedness, confusion over objectives, the nature of its military decision-making, and the influence of the Sukarno-led independence movement in Java. It had nothing to do with Portugal. So why did the NEI send several hundred crack infantry troops in to neutral East Timor?

It has been suggested the Dutch could not guarantee the loyalty of their subjects and

Portugal could but this was definitely *not* the pre-war view. A secret report (35) prepared in mid-1941 for the Australian government praises the Dutch administration in West Timor and is very critical of the Portuguese in East Timor. For example — “In the educational field, the Dutch authorities are much more active than the Portuguese ... The natives of Dutch Timor are subjected to very much lighter taxation, both actual and relative, than those of Portuguese Timor ... Generally speaking, the natives appear on the average better nourished, more alert and more active in the Dutch colony than in the Portuguese, certainly they have a much better time.” Portuguese racial tolerance and their willingness to meet socially the small Japanese community in Dili (which numbered 13 people including a woman and two children at that time) was interpreted as being pro-Japanese. The British, Dutch, and Americans were astonished when supposedly humble ‘Chinese’ barbers, cigarette sellers, gardeners etc., were suddenly revealed as high-ranking Japanese officers but the Portuguese knew the military rank of all the Japanese in their territory.

But *no one* could predict how the Timorese tribes would react to the arrival of foreign soldiers in their villages or to the pressures of a little-understood war being fought across their land. The Dutch certainly did not enter Portuguese territory because of a belief that ‘Portugal’s natives’ would be more loyal.

Equally, the behaviour of villagers in Dutch Timor has been attributed to the effectiveness of Japanese propaganda. This does not explain why they were willing to abandon their tribal lands and villages, at the behest of foreigners with whom they could carry on only the most minimal of conversations, and cross the border into East Timor to carry out attacks there. The real reason would appear to be that they knew their Dutch colonial masters were in Portuguese Timor and the Japanese offered them both encouragement and freedom from later Dutch reprisals, (the Dutch surrendered three weeks after the arrival of the Japanese in West Timor, giving weight to Japanese proclamations at a time when the Dutch administration was falling apart; that the Japanese were able to hand out a quantity of abandoned Dutch rifles reinforced their position) to go after them and vent their simmering resentment for forcible relocations carried out in Dutch Timor in the 1920’s. (36) The Dutch decision to violate Portuguese neutrality took the results of Dutch pre-war administrative policies into Portuguese territory and caused great suffering in the areas adjacent to the border.

Dutch exiles in northern Australia formed No. 18 Squadron which was regularly in action over East Timor from January 1943 onwards. “Mitchells of No. 18 Squadron continued nightly attacks on Koepang, *Lautem*, *Fuilor* ... ”, (August 1943) “Mitchells of No. 18 Squadron visited Koepang, *Lautem*, *Penfui* and *Dili* ... ”, (April 1944), “In the first week of May Nos. 1, 18 and 31 Squadrons bombed Penfui, *Cape Chater*, *Manatuto*, Koepang and other targets on Timor”, “No. 18 ... heavily attacked *Cape Chater* airfield on 19th June dropping bombs on the runway and dispersal area. It also sank a small vessel and two *prahus* off Timor”, “As a counter-propaganda measure Nos. 2 and 18 Squadrons carried out a series of widespread raids on villages in Timor on 1st January, (1945) a day on which the Japanese usually held festivities in Timor towns. Seven targets were successfully bombed and strafed.” (37)

But was there a secret agenda beneath Dutch willingness to violate Portuguese neutrality and attack the territory thereafter? On October 4th, 1904, the Netherlands and Portugal signed a treaty to delineate their border in Timor but Holland was not satisfied and on the 25th June 1914, the World Court in The Hague (the Permanent Court of Arbitration) ruled in favour of the border that Holland had sought. By actively compromising Portuguese

neutrality, by the possible spilling of Dutch blood on Portuguese soil, even by burying Dutch ‘patriots’ in Portuguese territory, (38) the Netherlands’ legal, moral, and emotional claim to East Timor would be strengthened. If the Portuguese administration broke down (which was expected; it was seen as ramshackle and poverty-stricken and the Portuguese, regarded as ‘dagoes’, were not believed to be courageous or tenacious) then the Dutch were admirably placed to step in with their administrative experience in West Timor and, with the Dutch Government-in-Exile having the ears of the British Government, and the NEI Government-in-Exile having the ears of the Australian Government, (39) they were well placed to press their claim in any post-war distribution of colonial territory.

Whether or not Dutch/NEI actions in East Timor were motivated by a desire to absorb this small colony into the NEI, the Netherlands does have a responsibility towards the people of East Timor which it has never acknowledged.

### **SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The belligerents have tended to posit their actions in terms of what one or more of the other belligerents was doing or was assumed to be planning to do. Yet all 5 belligerents had some degree of ambition towards the possible acquisition of Portuguese East Timor as a colony, regardless of the actions or possible actions of any other nation. Their actions, before, during and after the War, had varying components of expansionism implicit in them and in the various behind-the-scenes discussions and negotiations which did not involve the Portuguese in any way — and knowledge of which appears to have been kept from them. (It is probably more correct to suggest that all 5 belligerents, to varying degrees, saw East Timor as a handy piece of real estate rather than that they desired to acquire the East Timorese as subject peoples; their official policies treated the East Timorese as irrelevant and, worse, as completely expendable.) That none of these ambitions was followed through can be accounted by other priorities — including the push for independence in the NEI (now Indonesia), the needs of post-war reconstruction (and the costs that post-war reconstruction of East Timor would have involved), the ability of the Portuguese administration to re-establish itself with minimal resources (40) in the immediate post-war period, based on a knowledge of shared suffering and loss, (that this goodwill was squandered by the ignorance and insensitivity of the Government in Lisbon in the formulation of post-war policies and the appointment of post-war officials was deeply unfortunate but is not relevant to this paper) — rather than by respect for the territorial integrity of Portuguese East Timor.

Under the Hague Conventions, to maintain the *legal* status of neutrality a nation was expected to deport or intern invading forces, although the 1907 Convention Respecting the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers in Naval War would seem to have put the belligerents in violation of international law before they even disembarked. Portugal’s position was strengthened by both the League of Nations Covenant and the Kellogg-Briand Pact whose signatories pledged to negotiate rather than go to war with fellow-signatories. Japan, Britain, the Netherlands, the USA, Australia and Portugal were all signatories to the Pact and all except the USA were signatories to the Covenant; Japan withdrew from the League in the 1930s though without repudiating the Covenant itself. It could be argued that Portugal’s failure to intern invading Dutch, Australian and Japanese forces (except, temporarily, in the Oecussi enclave and on an individual basis, such as downed pilots etc.) compromised its position (though it is hard to see how any small territory could have satisfactorily dealt with more than 15,000 foreign troops; equally most of the structural damage done to East Timor was as a result of air raids not the actions of ground troops) but

this is offset by: the agreements signed by the parties; the strict upholding of neutrality in all dealings by the Governor and Administration with the belligerents; and the acknowledgement in letters and other documents by the invading parties that they were aware that they were entering a neutral territory. The neutrality of the territory is further upheld by:

a) Although the Allies declared war on neutral Thailand (Australia eg. on 2/3/1942) on the grounds it had been occupied by Japan — neither the Allies nor Japan declared war on Portuguese Timor, at any time, on the grounds that it had been occupied by either Japan or the Allies. b) We have found no indication that Portugal was ever invited or in any way involved in any post-war conferences/discussions on reparations. Both Japan and the Allies appear to have taken the line that Portugal had no place at any such conferences because of its neutrality. Portugal/East Timor is not bound by any of the limitations written into various compensation/reparations agreements.

All discussion of responsibilities towards Portuguese East Timor must begin with the understanding that all 5 belligerents violated that neutrality and acted towards the territory's people and the territorial integrity of East Timor in ways which violated international law.

We believe the contempt for East Timor's legal status and the rights of its people in WW2 infiltrated post-war attitudes towards East Timor in subtle but damaging ways. We believe it is significant that the nations which could have played the most influential role in deterring Indonesian aggression in 1975 but failed to do so are also the five nations with undischarged war-time obligations towards East Timor — i.e. Australia, Japan, Great Britain, Holland, and the United States. Though levels of obligation to East Timor, dating from WW2, vary, we believe a sincere apology by all five nations would be an important first step, to be followed by discussion on a program of graded reparations. We, understandably, would like Australia to show leadership on this issue.

Though we have looked for any mention of official compensation in the immediate post-war period we have been unable to find anything. Instead, Australia benefited greatly from the reconstruction of East Timor, selling several aircraft (an Anson, a DH86 and a Tiger Moth in 1946/47 and 2 more Tiger Moths in the late 1940s), a launch, a tow-boat, and a £16,000 vessel, sawmills, dairy cattle, beef cattle, sheep and goats, 40,000 pickheads, a kapok press, radio and meteorological equipment, a mooring buoy, 2 Bellman hangars, a bulldozer, 4 heavy trucks, cranes, 3 jeeps, several cargo-loads of flour etc. HMAS 'Barcoo' was provisioned without charge with 1,000 lbs of fresh fruit and vegetables. For the building of an Australian consulate, 30 Timorese labourers were provided without cost to Australia for 6 days per week for 3 months. Britain sold Marconi equipment and a specially-commissioned vessel, the 'Timor'. An American oil company (the Superior Oil Co. of America) received concessions in the west of East Timor including Oecussi and Atauro Island, while the Dutch (through Royal Dutch Shell and Bataavse Petroleum Maatschappij) received concessions in the east of East Timor. (Australia also maintained its pre-war concessions.)

Only Japan paid any form of indemnity at all — through the forfeiture of all furniture and fittings in official Japanese residences, forfeiture of all untenanted buildings, and forfeiture of all quotas and partnerships held in Portuguese businesses, all of which were severely bomb-damaged. (41) Australia took control of much of the abandoned Japanese war materials, including petrol and aviation fuel. Australia suggested (6/11/1946), "In view of the efforts of our own country during the war towards the defeat of Japan generally and

the Japanese occupation of Timor in particular, I think consideration may be worthwhile for Australia to take over the previous Japanese interest of the S.A.P.T. (a Portuguese plantation and trading co.) and thus give Australia a permanent practical interest in Timor.” Although Australia constantly pushed the line in the immediate post-war period that the Portuguese owed something to Australia, both in terms of gratitude and in terms of financial benefits (42), the attempt to gain an interest in S.A.P.T. was allowed to lapse; possibly because, as one Australian Consul to East Timor, James Dunn, said of the immediate post-war period, “Most of the population were close to starvation, there was virtually no commercial activity, the plantations of coffee, cocoa and rubber — the colony’s most prosperous economic sector — had nearly all been abandoned, and most had degenerated into bushland, while Timor’s livestock population had been reduced to less than a third of its prewar level.” (43)

The actions of the five belligerents in WW2 are still surrounded by disinterest, ignorance, secrecy and lack of concern. The various “national interests” that made the people of East Timor expendable 60 years ago remain to hamper a clear, just, and honest appraisal of those unpaid debts.

#### Notes:

- (1) Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*. Penguin 1977.
- (2) Colonel Bernard Callinan, *Independent Company: The Australian Army in Portuguese Timor 1941-43*. William Heinemann Australia. 1953.
- (3) Article 6 of the Nuremberg Charter, which is based on the 1907 Hague Convention and the 1929 Geneva Convention, states that, “The following acts, or any of them, are crimes coming within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal for which there shall be individual responsibility.” These include ‘Crimes Against Peace’, ‘War Crimes’ and ‘Crimes Against Humanity’. Australia developed its War Crimes legislation so as to avoid the issue of any responsibility on the part of individual servicemen. Though questions of individual responsibility should not be forgotten, (and, equally, individual East Timorese would appear to have the right, under the principle of *Jus cogens*, to seek individual compensation) we believe it is the responsibilities vested in Governments which need to be recognised in regard to East Timor before, during, and immediately after WW2.
- (4) The 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty recognised in Chapter 5, Article 14, that “Japan should pay reparations to the Allied Powers” but also that “Nevertheless it is also recognised that the resources of Japan are not presently sufficient, if it is to maintain a viable economy, to make complete reparations for all such damage and suffering and at the same time meet its other obligations.”
- (5) Manuel de Abreu Ferreira da Carvalho, *Relatório dos Acontecimentos de Timor*, Lisbon 1947. P. 434 & p. 607.
- (6) National Geographic, August 1962. Helen and Frank Schreider.
- (7) *Timor. Pequena monografia*. Agência-Geral do Ultramar. 1965 and 1970. (See also sources such as the Britannica Book of the Year.) “The elements of the 1940 census having been lost during the Japanese occupation, it follows that, to give an idea of the quantitative and qualitative evolution of the population of the province, one has to resort to the administrative inquiries of 1930 and 1946, going even as far as 1920”: 1920: 397,875. 1930: 472,221. 1946: 403,232. 1950: 442,378. 1960: 517,079.
- (8) Owen Griffiths, *Darwin Drama*. Bloxham & Chambers.
- (9) Michele Turner, *Telling East Timor: Personal Testimonies 1942-1992*. UNSW Press. 1992.
- (10) Lt. Col. A. Spence. 15/7/1942. (Names are blacked-out in some evacuation lists we

have seen.)

(11) Lt. Colin Doig, *A History of the 2nd Independent Company & 2/2 Commando Squadron*.

(12) Christopher Wray, *Timor 1942*. Hutchinson Australia. 1987.

(13) Col. Bernard Callinan, *Independent Company*.

(14) AWM 54 [571/6/1] (Australian War Memorial)

(15) Margaret King Boyes, *Eden to Paradise*, 1963, republished by Australasian Research Foundation for Pacific, Oriental and Western Studies/Blackwood Press, with supplement, *Paradise Lost*.

(16) Dr. José dos Santos Carvalho, *Vida e Morte em Timor*, Livraria Portugal. 1972.

(17) United States Air Force archives.

(18) See eg. *The Unnecessary War*, Peter Charlton. Macmillan. 1983.

(19) 'Lagarto' party 1/7/1943 lost its codes; it was not until 'Sunlag' party 29/6/1945 that this loss was discovered. Alan Powell in *The Shadow's Edge*, Melbourne University Press, quotes from *Operations of the Allied Intelligence Bureau*, Vol IV: 'When these moves are studied in conjunction with the party's earlier history of being hounded from place to place, with the Japanese learning of its movements by killing and torturing the natives in the areas through which it passed, it is incomprehensible that S.R.D. Headquarters did not deduce that the party had been captured' and he rightly remarks, "Incomprehensible indeed." Given the skilful efforts made by the Australians to signal their loss, as Powell recounts in *War by Stealth: Australians and the Allied Intelligence Bureau 1942-1945* (Melbourne University Press, 1996, p. 135-37), this failure becomes even more astonishing.

(20) The leaflets for Portuguese Timor were prepared predominantly by Australian personnel for the US-administered FELO office, and dropped into the territory on an ad hoc basis by Australian and American aircraft. 26 different leaflets were prepared for this purpose. They were an uneasy blend of promises — "Timorese! Your Friends Do Not Forget You", "For you, Timorese, the day of liberation is drawing nearer. The day is not far off when we shall go back there, counting on your friendship and goodwill to work with us and help us in driving out forever from your country these cruel pygmies"; exhortations — "Prepare with all your strength to be able to fight on this day on the Allied Nations' side"; war news — "Bangkok again attacked by British and American bombers. Fires visible 150 kms. away"; and threats — "HEED OUR WARNING. If you do not stay away from the Japanese you may be killed", "REMEMBER: Keep away from the Japanese or we will be forced to attack you". For the thousands of Timorese doing forced labour on roads, bridges and airfields, though this instruction may have salved consciences in FELO, it was more like rubbing salt into a wound.

(21) The removal of Japanese troops from East Timor in Aug/Sept. 1942 has mistakenly been seen as a permanent removal. In fact it was only temporary. "On 5 Dec it was reported that the enemy strength in Portuguese Timor was 7000. On the 15 Dec this number was reinforced by a further 3000 and on the 22/24 Dec a further 5000 were landed at Laivai making the total in Portuguese Timor 15000." (Secret Situation Report to 11 Jan 1943, Australian War Memorial). It was not until March 1945 that Japan sought to move the bulk of its troops north from Timor and the surrounding islands; this was only partially completed because of Allied bombing and lack of ships. (See eg. *The Shadow's Edge*: "In that month 19th Army headquarters was disbanded and the 46th Division, plus 8,000 men of the 5th Division and 7,000 miscellaneous troops were ordered to Malaya.")

(22) It may be that Australian sources have a vested interest in continuing to pitch East Timor's WW2 death toll as low as possible. What was called a 'defence screen' in the 1940s is still alive and well as 'forward defence'. The assumption that it is always better to fight our wars on someone else's territory, even if that territory is a small island nation, has

never been seriously challenged. We believe it is time we, as Australians, develop sufficient moral integrity and maturity to consign this racist, callous, and unfair attitude to the past.

(23) See article ‘Timor 1941: Unwelcome Visitors’ by Sydney lawyer, Rodney Lewis, which gives a good overview of the cable traffic. He also touches on Australian attempts to get Britain to take responsibility for the Australian participation in the landing. Among the points made by Prime Minister Curtin to the British Government, 26/12/1941:

7. Your view was that because of the change of attitude by Portugal United Kingdom’s association with operation should not be mentioned by us although the plan was primarily yours. You suggested further that Netherlands and Commonwealth Governments might make joint statement. Before we could agree to that course, Dutch made a public statement in accordance with draft approved by you.

8. Commonwealth Prime Minister received a protest direct from the Governor and in difficult circumstances and solely in order to meet your position we confined ourselves to a reply to the Governor making no reference whatsoever to your part in the enterprise and we made no public statement whatever.

9. Subsequently you expressed to Portugal deep regret that action was taken by Allied military authorities on the spot, the suggestion being that you were not a party to the plan.

10. When the New Zealand Government protested, you repeated this explanation to them although at their request we were compelled to inform them as to how it was we came to take part in the expedition.

(24) See eg. L. Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, in the series *History of the Second World War*. 1962. Portugal and its colonies including East Timor (which sent a company of Timorese soldiers to Macau in Sept. 1940) provided moral and material support to Macau in the belief, in the wake of the Nanking massacre, it was the most vulnerable to Japanese attack. Despite its strategic position at the mouth of the Pearl River and its predominantly Chinese population its neutrality was largely respected by all belligerents.

(25) See David Day, *The Great Betrayal*. Angus & Robertson. 1988.

(26) Paul Preston, *Franco*. Harper/Collins. 1993. Brian Toohey and William Pinwill say of Allied Intelligence Bureau chief, Major-General Charles Willoughby, “Born in Germany as Karl Widenbach, he still spoke in a thick German accent and was a noted admirer of the fascist Spanish dictator General Franco”. (*Oyster*, Mandarin Australia, 1990.) He became an adviser to General Franco in the early 1950s so at what stage did he become aware of Franco’s ambitions to ‘incorporate’ Portugal and its empire? Were any of his decisions in regard to East Timor taken with knowledge of these ambitions in mind? “(Japanese) war crimes investigations were continuing until abruptly halted in 1950 and at the express orders of General Charles Andrew Willoughby, Chief of Allied Intelligence” (*Betrayal in High Places*, James MacKay, Tasman Archives NZ, 1996.) Willoughby also played a major role in determining the terms of reference for the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty.

(27) Churchill to Eden. 12/1/1944.

(28) See *World War I*. Vol. 4. Marshall Cavendish, 1984. “The English think they can ‘treat us like Portugal’, complained Admiral Tirpitz.” (*August 1914*, Barbara Tuchman. 1962.) The 1896 agreement appears to have been promoted by Britain as a means of gaining German support for its position in regard to South Africa.

(29) Encyclopaedia Britannica. Attitudes had not changed much in a century. H.V. Livermore in *A New History of Portugal* points out that “The Napoleonic wars ... had devastated the Iberian Peninsula and dislocated its traditional commerce” yet Portugal received only 0.286% of French reparations.

(30) Jerrold M. Packard, *Neither Friend Nor Foe*. Macmillan. 1992.

(31) Australia’s Minister for External Affairs, Dr Herb Evatt, discussed with his British counterpart, Eden, June 1943, possible British help in Australia gaining East Timor as a

colony. See e.g. *The Unnecessary War* by Peter Charlton. This appears to have been raised again in 1944 when Britain thought the war in Europe would be over by the end of the year and a British expeditionary force might then be available for use in S. E. Asia. Eden also discussed the post-war future of Portuguese Timor with the US President in March 1943.

(32) Civilian deaths in Britain have been put at 60,595 so the combined total for civilian deaths in Britain, Australia, and the USA is less than the civilian death toll in East Timor.

(33) Quotes are from *Samurais and Circumcisions*, Leslie Poidevin, self-published 1985, and *Doomed Battalion*, Peter Henning, Allen & Unwin. 1995.

(34) Australian Archives. 14/6/41. CRS A2671 109/1941.

(35) The Archer Report. April 1941. He goes on to say, “The Timor natives, from whom the levies are drawn, are a race with no martial traditions at all. With obsolete arms, no gas-equipment, and bare feet, it is difficult to believe that even the mildest dose of frightfulness would fail to break their fighting spirit.”

(36) See eg. Andrew Gray, IWGIA Document 50, ed. Torben Retbøll. 1984. “They forced mountain dwellers in West Timor to move into more accessible places for purely administrative convenience” and “These *kampung* settlements were set up in the 1920s, initially near military supply roads and later along trunk roads. They were artificially large villages” ... By contrast, the Portuguese in the 1930s began a program to survey all tribal lands and acknowledge traditional land ownership in East Timor.

(37) Quotes from *Air War Against Japan 1943-1945*, George Odgers, Australian War Memorial. 1957. (Places in East Timor put into italics.) He also notes that American Catalinas based in Perth WA flew at least one sortie over Timor.

(38) This kind of emotional focus on foreign battlefields, war cemeteries etc, is not specifically Dutch; (see eg. Rupert Brooke’s ‘The Soldier’ or Thomas Hardy’s ‘Drummer Hodge’, or recent Indonesian statements). Dutch tardiness in resolving their war graves situation in Portuguese Timor in the post-war period can possibly be explained by reference to other priorities or that many ‘Dutch’ soldiers were in fact Javanese, but it reportedly required a firm request from the Portuguese Administration before the situation was finally resolved. (The Japanese also imported a number of Javanese labourers into East Timor; 250 were repatriated in late 1945; their death toll is unknown.)

(39) See eg. Rupert Lockwood, *Black Armada*, Australasian Book Society. 1975. The NEI Government-in-Exile retained the close support of the Australian Government throughout the war and into the post-war period — “In this South Seas diaspora the bread of banishment was seldom bitter to Dutch taste. Australia provided the Wacol establishment with military camps, housing, armaments, officers to train its armed forces, hospitals, shipyard berths, airfields, workshops, clothing, food and drink, some of the latter in the comfort of beer gardens” — although the arrival of political prisoners from the infamous Bovun Digul camp in Dutch New Guinea helped alienate the sympathy of ordinary Australians and led directly to the boycott on the stevedoring of Dutch ships in Australian ports in the immediate post-war period. Compare the Dutch treatment with the miserly and carping treatment given to the small number of Portuguese exiles including former Administrators, Sousa Santos and Manuel Pires, who had risked their lives and their careers to provide help to Australian and Dutch troops.

(40) When the Japanese commander, the Japanese Acting Consul, and the Portuguese Governor met on 5/9/1945 to officially recognise the end of the war, Japan offered its troops still in East Timor to support the re-establishment of Portuguese authority (Japanese troops carried out a major policing role in the NEI in support of the re-establishment of Dutch authority); this offer was categorically rejected by Portugal even though the Governor had only 163 Portuguese and 33 Timorese, most of them in extremely poor health (79 cases of beri-beri had been diagnosed at the Liquiça camp alone), qualified to fill all administrative, military, public works, communication and health posts. The offer was

undoubtedly refused so as not to compromise Portuguese neutrality but it also suggests a level of genuine and mutual trust between Portuguese and Timorese which needs to be taken into account.

(41) Paul J. Bailey in *Postwar Japan* notes that “By 1964 Japan had paid out \$477 million as reparations to six South-east Asian countries” and “The first such agreement was reached with Burma in 1954; over the next 20 years Japan paid out \$1,012 million in reparations and \$490 million in economic aid to Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia and South Korea.” Not a penny was paid to East Timor.

(42) On the 23/9/1945 the Royal Australian Navy sent 6 warships to Dili (H.M.A.S. *Moresby*, *Warnambool*, *Gladstone*, *Parkes*, *Katoomba* and *Gympie*) to take part in a wreath-laying. The ships brought no food supplies despite the massive food shortages throughout the territory; instead they conducted a brief assessment of the damage to Dili, moved some Japanese troops to Kupang, loaded some Japanese war supplies, and made preliminary arrangements to remove the bodies of Australian soldiers from known graves. (The Australian War Graves Commission removed the few remaining bodies to the cemetery on Ambon in 1970; several bodies have never been found.) This remarkable ‘show of force’ is hard to justify on the grounds of what was removed from East Timor, mainly on the *Moresby*, nor by the status of the official ceremony. “It was a short and simple affair, held in front of the flagstaff at the landing stage, from which the Portuguese ensign flew. Speeches were made in English and replied to in Portuguese by the Governor, wreaths were laid at the base of the flagstaff, bugles rang out and the ceremony was over.” (Norman K. Wallis, *Walkabout*. 1946.)

(43) James Dunn, *Timor: A People Betrayed*. The Jacaranda Press. 1983.