The Evacuation of British Women and Children from Hong Kong to Australia in 1940

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACW    Aircraft Woman
AFDA   Australian Funeral Directors Association
AIF    Australian Infantry Force
ANS    Auxiliary Nursing Service
ARP    Air Raid Precautions
BAAG   British Army Aid Group
BEF    British Expeditionary Force
BMH    British Military Hospital
BQMS   Battery Quarter Master Sergeant
CBS    Central British School
CO     Commanding Officer
CORB   Children’s Overseas Reception Board
CS     Colonial Secretary
DEI    Dutch East Indies
FA     Financial Adviser
HE     His Excellency (the Governor of Hong Kong)
HKDDC  Hong Kong Dockyard Defence Corps
HKFB   Hong Kong Fire Brigade
HKPF   Hong Kong Police Force

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1 Which became the Royal Hong Kong Police Force only after the 1967 riots, and reverted to Hong Kong Police Force in 1997.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HKRNVR</td>
<td>Hong Kong Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HKSRA</td>
<td>Hong Kong and Singapore Royal Artillery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HKU</td>
<td>Hong Kong University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HKVDC</td>
<td>Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMG</td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSBC</td>
<td>Hong Kong &amp; Shanghai Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>KCR</td>
<td>Kowloon Canton Railway</td>
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<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Military Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCO</td>
<td>Non-Commissioned Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRMA</td>
<td>National Roads and Motorists’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP</td>
<td>Observation Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POW</td>
<td>Prisoner of War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWD</td>
<td>Public Works Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QAIMNS</td>
<td>Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (also sometimes QA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>QMH</td>
<td>Queen Mary Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>Royal Artillery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF</td>
<td>Royal Australian Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACV</td>
<td>Royal Automobile Club of Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>Royal Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAMC</td>
<td>Royal Army Medical Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAN</td>
<td>Royal Australian Navy</td>
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<tr>
<td>RANR</td>
<td>Royal Australian Naval Reserve</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAOC</td>
<td>Royal Army Ordnance Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>---------</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAPWI</td>
<td>Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees</td>
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<tr>
<td>RASC</td>
<td>Royal Army Service Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>Royal Engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN</td>
<td>Royal Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAD</td>
<td>Voluntary Aid Detachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VE</td>
<td>Victory in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VJ</td>
<td>Victory over Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WANS</td>
<td>Women’s Australian National Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMH</td>
<td>War Memorial Hospital (also sometimes WM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRVS</td>
<td>Women’s Royal Voluntary Service</td>
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</table>
My dear Prime Minister,

I have received a telegram from my Government stating that the Government of Hong Kong, in consultation with the United Kingdom Government, are preparing a scheme for the evacuation of non-combatants from Hong Kong in case of a war emergency. The decision to put the scheme into effect would be taken by the United Kingdom Government in the light of circumstances existing on a threat of war. The evacuation scheme involves 5,000 British women and children and 750 other Europeans, who should be sent outside Asia if possible.

Possible destinations which are being considered are Australia and the United Kingdom. If these are impracticable, the alternatives in Asia appear to be India and the Philippines. The question of what destination would be practicable would depend
on the situation at the time of the emergency.

In these circumstances, my Government have asked me to ascertain whether, if the situation envisaged were to arise, evacuation to a port in Australia, such as Fremantle, would be practicable from the point of view of the Commonwealth Government, and whether arrangements could be made to accommodate the persons evacuated temporarily until their return to Hong Kong were possible or until their permanent distribution to their homes. If the Commonwealth Government were prepared to consider the scheme, details, including the financial aspects, could be discussed later. It would, of course, not be intended that any part of the cost should fall on public funds in Australia.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) GEOFFREY WHISKARD

The Right Honourable R. G. Menzies, K.C., M.P.,

Prime Minister of the Commonwealth

CANBERRA. A.C.T.²

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² Letter from Geoffrey Whiskard to The Right Honourable R. G. Menzies, 16 June 1939. National Archives of Australia, A433, 1941/2/1096 PART 1. Appointed in 1935, Whiskard was the first British High Commissioner to Australia.
Three months later in London, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain addressed the nation: ‘I am speaking to you from the Cabinet Room at 10, Downing Street. This morning the British Ambassador in Berlin handed the German Government a final note stating that unless we heard from them by 11.00 a.m. that they were prepared at once to withdraw their troops from Poland, a state of war would exist between us. I have to tell you that no such undertaking has been received, and that consequently this country is at war with Germany.’³

All over the British Empire, families huddled around radios listening to the declaration of war. None of them could predict how this announcement would shape their future, especially those on the Empire’s periphery in distant locations such as Hong Kong. Alice Briggs – wife of a naval officer stationed there - entered Kowloon Hospital that day with dysentery: ‘We will never forget that day – 3rd September 1939 – and as I stepped into my hospital bed news came over the radio that we were at war with Germany – a most dramatic moment and I did not appreciate being in hospital when everyone was so worried. The hospital staff immediately started talking of “blackout curtains” and one felt one might be bombed at any moment.’⁴

In Hong Kong, which – with Shanghai - had been considered the prime posting for the inter-war soldier, a rude awakening was coming. There, even on a private’s salary, young servicemen had been able to afford beer, female company, and a hundred other things besides. Businessmen had also flocked to British

³ Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain’s broadcast to the nation, 3 September 1939. BBC Archives.
⁴ Alice Briggs, From Peking To Perth, Perth, Artlook Books, 1984, page 87. Uniquely her husband Christopher Briggs wrote of the same events in Farewell Hong Kong. Their mirrored views of the same experiences, told with startling honesty, make for fascinating reading.
possessions in the Far East; for a daring entrepreneur, fortunes were there to be made. And as these distant British colonies flourished, all the infrastructure of Empire had had to be built: hospitals, schools, universities, police forces, customs offices, dockyards, and government. With so many eligible young men flooding east, eligible young women followed; families became established.

As war invaded their lives, those families would be torn apart. It was not just the Germans; the Japanese were coming. As the High Commissioner had told the Prime Minister of Australia: *destinations would need to be considered.*
Introduction

A snapshot of the departure from Hong Kong: I am standing beside my mother, pressed up against the railing on the ship’s dock side, looking down at the crowd on the pier, searching for my father’s face, which I don’t remember finding. The atmosphere was superficially festive, everyone was throwing streamers to the crowd on the pier, but I could feel an underlying tension, something not quite right; otherwise, why wasn’t Daddy coming with us?5

Very suddenly, at the beginning of July 1940, the wives and children of all British families in Hong Kong, both military and civilian, were compulsorily evacuated. The Hong Kong Government, following the lead of Britain (which in mid-1938 had begun to consider general plans for civilian evacuations should war start) had in early 1939 correspondingly put together their own plan entitled ‘Evacuation Scheme for The Colony Of Hong Kong’. The document’s focus was entirely on the process of evacuation itself, covering who would be evacuated, how they would be communicated with, where the necessary ships might be found, and when the evacuees would be conveyed to them – but not on what would happen afterwards. It included only a single topic relating to anything following the evacuees’ departure: their point of disembarkation. Here a handful of ports were considered, with Manila (‘[for the use of which] diplomatic representations appear necessary’) being the preference, and the others covered simply by the note:

5 Email from Margaret Simpson to author, 10 February 2010.
'Doubts exist as to the wisdom of approaching the authorities at the other ports at this juncture. It might in certain circumstances be preferable to present them with a *fait accompli* when ships are *en route.* In this respect, the plan itself seemed somewhat *laissez-faire.* However, a prescient note justifying the recommendation of Manila as the port of disembarkation added: 'In the event of a false alarm evacuees can be brought back readily to the Colony'.

For those who would leave Hong Kong, the document included just one short paragraph advising on preparations for their future: ‘turn off the gas, water and electricity supply mains. In addition you should latch all windows, lock up all valuables in strongly constructed boxes in one locked room and fasten securely all outside doors’.

Aside from this, no mention was made of what would or might be needed after leaving. Finding homes, money, jobs for the women and schools for the children, parameters governing how and when the evacuees might be returned to Hong Kong, modes of communication with abandoned husbands, procedures to be put in place should war actually come, methods for reuniting families once geopolitical stability returned; none of these issues were considered in the plan. In practice, most of these would never be centrally addressed, none would be addressed comprehensively, and few would even start to be addressed until after the evacuees had left Hong Kong. When evacuation came, 3,500 people would simply be dumped in Manila. The evacuees too would be presented with a *fait accompli,* and everything that followed their departure would be an unplanned, ...

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6 Evacuation Scheme for The Colony Of Hong Kong, National Archives of Australia, 4 May 1939, A433, 1941/2/1096 PART 1.


reactive and largely unstructured response to the prevailing situation, from looking for initial accommodation when they suddenly found themselves in Australia, to disintegrated families feeling their way back together – for those that survived - at the end of the war.

Nor was there any discussion in the plan of the circumstances under which evacuation would be deemed necessary, it noting merely that 'It is presumed that H.E. the Governor will instruct the Director of Evacuation to proceed with evacuation when orders to do so have been received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies.'\(^9\) The plan, such as it was, seemed to have been developed in a vacuum.

To date, the literature on this broad topic can be grouped into three categories: Hong Kong at war, pre-emptive wartime civilian evacuations in general, and Hong Kong's own evacuation. In the first category, Hong Kong's general wartime literature (small compared to other theatres but no longer insubstantial) has little to say about the evacuation. The majority of works are either broad histories of the Japanese invasion and the resulting POW experience (therefore focusing mainly on events from December 1941 to August 1945), or personal accounts. Of the secondary works, Banham (2003, 2009), Carew (1960, 1971), and Lindsay (1978, 1981) each chose two volume formats, whereas Endacott & Birch (1978), Luff (1967), and others, compiled single volumes covering the entire war years.\(^{10}\) The primary works, as personal accounts, naturally vary considerably; the


majority, although important works in their own right, make no mention of the evacuation (primarily because of a lack of personal involvement). Those that do mention it include Barman (2009), Bertram (1947), Briggs, C. (2001), Ebbage (2011), Field (1960), Fisher (1996), Gittins (1982), Gunning (2005), Hahn (1944), Harrop (1943), Hewitt (1993), Mathers (1994), Priestwood (1944), Proulx (1943), Selwyn-Clarke (1975), Stephenson (2004), Weedon (1948), and Wright-Nooth (1994). However, many of these relegate it to just three or four lines – or a paragraph or two at most - of background, the events and experiences of the following five years generally having taken precedence in their memories. Hong Kong in the Second World War has also been a popular topic in Canada, thanks to the late decision to send some two thousand men (and two women) as ‘C Force’ to be reinforcements for the garrison. The resulting literature, however, has no direct coverage of the evacuation as C Force arrived almost eighteen months after it took place.

On the topic of wartime evacuation in general there has been considerable coverage of the British evacuation of children in the United Kingdom from areas

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Years, Hong Kong, South China Morning Post, 1967; Endacott & Birch, Hong Kong Eclipse, Hong Kong, Oxford University Press, 1978.

that the government expected to be threatened by bombing.\textsuperscript{12} British schoolchildren also commonly read a warming fictional account of an evacuee, \textit{Goodnight Mr Tom} by Michelle Magorian; but descriptions of the deaths of more than 80 intercontinental evacuee children in the sinking of the \textit{City of Benares} make for more sober reading.\textsuperscript{13} Little has been published on British evacuations from a global point of view, though Summers (2011) is an exception which includes coverage of the experiences of one Hong Kong evacuee.\textsuperscript{14}

In the third category, Hong Kong's own evacuation, a few of the more scholarly histories of the war years contain more detail. Although a general work, Endacott \& Birch (1978) give a good five-page summary, repeated and built upon by Archer (2004), while Leck (2006), in producing an excellent and comprehensive study of internees in Hong Kong and China, accords the evacuation just two paragraphs.\textsuperscript{15} Archer and Fedorowich (1996) give a useful one and a half page overview.\textsuperscript{16} However, the two most specific works on the topic available to date are Bridget Deane's MPhil thesis, and Kent Fedorowich's chapter in Farrell and Hunter (2002).\textsuperscript{17} Deane's work is an excellent overview of the women's experience

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Such as Janet Menzies, \textit{Children of the Doomed Voyage}, Chichester, John Wiley, 2005. On a personal note, my grandparents in London's East End had been thinking of sending my mother (to be) and uncle to Canada at that time, but changed their minds after this disaster.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Julie Summers, \textit{When the Children Came Home: Stories of Wartime Evacuees}, London, Simon \& Schuster, 2011. The Hong Kong evacuee was Ian McNay, who I introduced to the author in 2009.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Bridget Deane, 'Lady Visitors': \textit{Evacuees from Hong Kong in Australia during World War II}, MPhil thesis Sydney, Macquarie University, 2009, and Kent Fedorowich, \textit{The Evacuation of European
of the evacuation and their wartime existence in Australia (the stated aim, to ‘place the experience of the Hong Kong evacuees back into the narrative of the Second World War’ is achieved), but the research lacks dialogue with the evacuees themselves. Without the deep context of the families or the politics (or the past and present) it is essentially a trawl through four years of Australian newspapers and government files, and the paucity of primary sources has parenthesised the research. This work differs from hers in that it intends to describe the experience (and thus analyse the impact, strengths, and weaknesses of the evacuation plan) in its fullest context: wives, husbands, children, politics, economics, war and peace, past and present.

Fedorowich focuses on a useful and scholarly comparison between Hong Kong’s deliberately planned evacuation and Singapore’s ad hoc and last minute scramble. Observing that Prisoner of War and Internee accounts have appeared in abundance, while evacuation stories have been muted in comparison, he evaluates why so many civilians were captured instead of evacuated. While pointing out the many failings of the Hong Kong evacuation, he rates it a ‘relative success’ in at least reducing the number of civilians who fell into Japanese hands. However, with Singapore being commonly regarded as ‘impregnable’, he notes: ‘unlike Hong Kong, there was no compulsory civilian evacuation scheme for the 31,000-strong European population in Malaya and Singapore’.18

What follows is a clear description of the series of panics and unplanned evacuations as the Japanese moved south, culminating in utter chaos as masses of would-be evacuees crowded into Singapore Island itself, desperate to scramble onto ships that were often sunk

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18 Ibid.
as they attempted escape. However, it is primarily a study in the decision making (or lack of it) of the British and local authorities in these two cases.

In comparison, while also studying the decision making and its impact, this thesis deliberately takes a micro-historical approach, in which archives and secondary sources are primarily used to construct the most accurate and complete account of the event, which is then populated as far as possible with the words of the people who actually experienced it.

Aside from these secondary works, there are also a small number of primary works with a heavy focus on the evacuation – reminiscences by Hong Kong evacuees that have little to say about the strategies and policies of the time but concentrate instead on individual stories. These are clearly valuable resources for first hand accounts of the experience and impact of the evacuation and its aftermath. Those published to date are Redwood (2001), Briggs, A. (1984), Doery (2010), and Neale (1995).19

None of these existing works have attempted to describe the evacuation holistically, as it cannot be accurately or completely viewed from any single dimension. Conceptually the experience of the evacuees can be viewed as a three act drama: delivery to Australia creates the tension, five years of warfare and uncertainty intensify it, and then resolution comes as war ends. However, that drama, unlike the evacuation plan, did not develop in a vacuum but instead developed embedded in a complex historical, political, and social environment. This thesis studies the evacuation within that environment, evaluating, in the context of the time and place, its legality, justification, purpose, planning,

execution, effectiveness, planned and unplanned consequences, and the short and long-term effects on the families involved. Looking at the outcome of the experience on all who were impacted – and structured around a narrative that bridges the gulf between the evacuation plan’s theory and practice - it develops arguments showing whether the evacuation succeeded or failed in its primary aims, and whether the missing elements of the plan were understandable and justifiable in context. In particular, the conclusion explores whether the evacuation benefitted either the governments concerned or the evacuees themselves, considering the divergence between the plan’s focus on the few days needed to get the evacuees out of Hong Kong and the reality of the five years of separation that generally ensued.
Chapter 1. Planning

On July 7th the Sino-Japanese conflict broke out, bringing many complications. Police concentrated on efforts to prevent any untoward incidents between local residents. They received ready co-operation from Chinese and Japanese residents alike. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the restraint and tact displayed by both communities. The Police Reserve performed voluntary duty at night during November and December in order to release a number of Regular Police for special duties. It is satisfactory to record that only a few very minor incidents occurred.1

Chapter One describes the historical context of the planning of the evacuation. It considers the changes after the Great War that led to a possible future need for evacuation being considered, the legal steps taken to allow for that potential evacuation to be made mandatory, and Hong Kong’s formative experience of itself receiving evacuees from Shanghai. It then looks at the drawing up of the evacuation plan in a time of growing unrest in mainland China and growing certainty of conflict in Europe, and considers the significant differences between Hong Kong’s and other evacuations both locally and in the United Kingdom. It also notes the relative naivety and incompleteness of the plan, with its

1 Report of Hong Kong’s Commissioner of Police for the year 1937, Hong Kong University Library.
insufficient thought on the impact of the location of the chosen final destination, lack of consideration of the racial aspects of the population to be evacuated, and no discussion of contingencies in case of either the Japanese invasion not occurring (and evacuation thus needing to be reversed in an orderly manner), or war starting and ending (necessitating a post-war repatriation). Before exploring the triggers of the final order to evacuate, it establishes the differences in status and attitudes between the military families and civilians (Caucasian British, Eurasian British, Indian, local Chinese) and the pre-evacuation economic and social positions of those to be evacuated: most having servants, family support, social or military status, secure futures, and dependence upon husbands. At the end of this chapter we will understand the potential conflicts inherent between the evacuation plan and the social, geographical, temporal, and racial status of many evacuees.

1.1 Fear and Legislation

Since its 1841 inception, Hong Kong (as a British Colony) had been geographically isolated. The serendipitous circumstances surrounding the Colony’s founding had relied more on an immediate tactical need for a deep-water port in the vicinity than any strategic plan. However, once acquired, a port on the southern extremity of China was a prize to be defended from attack. And attack – as defined in the terms of 1841 and immediately succeeding years – meant assault from sea; large-calibre anti-shipping gun batteries were the order of the day.

As the port and its hegemony became better defined, commerce and its commensurate defences grew side by side; Hong Kong would never be the jewel in
the British Empire’s crown, but it would grow to be valuable enough to warrant continued protection.

But who might attack? At the end of the Victorian period, the Russians seemed the primary threat. Then came the short, sharp war (1904-1905) between Japan and Russia. To the surprise of many, the Japanese were victorious. In the Great War of 1914-1918 that followed, the Japanese were allies of the British and Russia was torn apart by revolution. But despite the euphoria that initially followed armistice, the old world order had been traumatically dismembered; a new balance of power needed to be calculated.

In 1922 that calculation was finally turned into hard numbers, in a ratio of the tonnage of capital ships for the United Kingdom, United States, and Japan as 5:5:3 respectively. The same treaty – the naval Treaty of Washington – also specified that bases and fortifications (excepting those on the homelands) could not be strengthened. This treaty, which also included Italy and France, was signed into being on 6 February 1922.

Following the signing, it seems unlikely that the passing of the fifth Ordinance of 1922 in Hong Kong’s Legislative Council – just three weeks and one day later on 28 February – could be coincidental. Hong Kong’s defences could now, by international law, neither be further strengthened nor modernised; they had been fossilised in what was essentially their 19th century form. Doubts over Hong Kong’s future defensibility had been sown, and as they grew the government realised that in the case of attack it might be necessary to take unusual measures.

The fifth ordinance, or ‘Emergency Regulations Ordinance, 1922’, was entitled: ‘An Ordinance to confer on the Governor in Council power to make
regulations on occasions of emergency or public danger’, and under the heading

*Power to make regulations*, it read:

1.) On any occasion which the Governor in Council may consider to be an
occasion of emergency or public danger he may make any regulations
whatsoever which he may consider desirable in the public interest.

(2.) Without prejudice to the generality of the provisions of sub-section (1) of
this section such regulations may be made with regard to any matters coming
within the classes of subjects hereinafter enumerated, that is to say:-

(a.) Censorship and the control and suppression of publications, writings,
maps, plans, photographs, communications, and means of communication;

(b.) Arrest, detention, exclusion, and deportation;

(c.) Control of the harbours, ports, and territorial waters of the Colony, and
the movements of vessels;

(d.) Transportation by land, air, or water, and the control of the transport
of persons and things;

(e.) Trading, exportation, importation, production, and manufacture;

(f.) Appropriation, control, forfeiture and disposition of property, and of
the use thereof;

(g.) Conferring powers on public officers and others;

(h.) Requiring persons to do work or render services; and

(i.) Providing for compensation, if any, to be paid for work done or services
rendered, or in respect of rights affected, in consequence of the provisions
of any regulations made under this Ordinance, and for the determination of
such compensation.
(3.) Any regulations made under the provisions of this section shall continue in force until repealed by order of the Governor in Council.²

The penalties for contravening any regulation made under this ordinance would be summary conviction, a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars, and imprisonment for a maximum of one year. Under Section 2 the government then immediately published a new five-part regulation demonstrating the depth and breadth of the powers now available to them. These included giving the Government authorisation to censor or stop any and all telegrams and letters coming into or leaving the Colony, and allowing the police to commandeer any premise or vehicle to use for any purpose considered to be a ‘public purpose’.

The stage was set. Draconian powers had been given to the Governor – in Council – to do whatever he believed necessary (censorship, deportation, seizure of vehicles and properties, requiring people to do work, arrests, and empowering government officials in any way he wished) in any times to which he accorded the description ‘emergency’.

The ordinance did not lie dormant after its passing. A variety of new regulations, quoting and building upon it, were passed in the ensuing years. They covered topics ranging from sedition and the control of printing, to dispersing of crowds and seizing of foodstuffs and firewood ‘if in the public interest’. But these regulations remained largely academic until the start of the Sino-Japanese conflict.

On 7 July 1937 when the incident at the Lugou (or Marco Polo) Bridge near Beijing led to open hostility between Japan and China, conflict between those two

²The Hongkong Government Gazette, 28 February 1922. Hong Kong University Library.
nations quickly escalated. On 13 August 1937 the fighting reached Shanghai and the British government felt forced to intercede, offering protection to British nationals.

The decision to evacuate British women and children from Shanghai to Hong Kong was taken two days later and was at once communicated to the Government of Hong Kong by His Majesty’s Consul-General in Shanghai. In time-honoured fashion a committee (the ‘Shanghai Refugees Committee’) was immediately formed in Hong Kong and met for the first time on the Tuesday with the commander of the Hong Kong garrison, Brigadier Hugh Garden Seth-Smith, in the Chair. Joining him were the Hon. Mr Richard McNeil Henderson, Director of Public Works, Mr Gerald Hollingsworth Bond, Architect, Public Works Department, Dr Thomas Walter Ware, Port Health Officer, Mr James Harper Taggart, Managing Director, Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotels Limited, and Mr John Henry Burkill Lee (Secretary).

To effect an evacuation, the Royal Navy requisitioned the Empress of Asia, which had just arrived from Manila. On 16 August 1937 the ship set sail for Shanghai carrying some 700 members of the Royal Ulster Rifles as reinforcement for the Shanghai garrison. On 18 August it anchored six miles from Woosung and three destroyers brought over 1,300 British women and children evacuees on board. The Rajputana took on a similar number. Believing themselves under direct threat, the evacuees needed no encouragement to board.

Within 36 hours of forming, the Shanghai Refugees Committee had arranged accommodation in Hong Kong for 500 people, and The Stand at the Hong

3 Lee would serve as a Gunner in the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps (HKVDC) and become a POW. Ware would be interned but escape to joined the Hong Kong Planning Unit in London. The others named here left Hong Kong before the invasion.
Kong Jockey Club in Happy Valley was selected as being ideal for the purpose of initial receiving. A total of 2,000 camp beds were ordered of which 200 were later taken over by the Peninsula Hotel for the dormitory accommodation arranged there. Blankets, linen and stores were lent by the Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited, and were placed in care of Mrs A. K. Taylor as Matron.

A Hong Kong domiciled Canadian broker by the name of Benny Proulx was placed in charge of the Happy Valley Centre (which could accommodate 780 people, with a further 300 in the stables) and worked continuously there until the Centre closed down on 10 September.4

The first ship, the SS Rajputana, arrived in Hong Kong on the evening of 19 August 1937 – in heavy tropical rain, a forerunner of the experience that the Hong Kong refugees would have three years later in Manila - carrying 679 women, 346 children, and four men. Of this total of 1,029, only 273 sought accommodation at Happy Valley, the majority having found housing with their friends, their companies, or in hotels. Despite the lack of notice, the close relationships (commercial and otherwise) between the expatriate communities in Shanghai and Hong Kong had worked in the refugees’ favour. On Saturday, 21 August, the Empress of Asia brought 1,368 more evacuees. Again, the refugee centres that had been set up saw only a further 296 takers.

The headmaster, David Morgan Richards, and his staff prepared the new Central British School (CBS) for further arrivals.5 Forty-one refugees were transferred from Happy Valley to the CBS on 22 August, leaving 528 behind.

4 As a member of the Hong Kong Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (HKRNVR), Proulx would be captured in 1941 but escape from POW Camp the following year. See his book Underground From Hong Kong.
5 As a civilian, Richards would later be interned in Stanley Camp.
The following day two more vessels, the *Patroclus* and *Maron*, arrived from Shanghai with further evacuees. Fifty-eight of their passengers were sent to Happy Valley, and twenty to the CBS. Another forty of the Happy Valley evacuees were also moved to the CBS, and forty men from the *Maron* were accommodated at the military Hankow Barracks, at Sham Shui Po.

On 28 August 1937, just ten days after the first arrivals, the *Empress of Canada* docked with 910 further refugees (of whom 572 were British subjects). Of these, 115 were transferred to Happy Valley, forty to the CBS and twenty-seven men to Sham Shui Po. That night there were still 528 at Happy Valley, 138 at the CBS, and sixty-six at Sham Shui Po. This was the end of the main evacuation. After this date, a few more refugees simply trickled in individually by ship or by rail from Canton.⁶

When the rush was over, all the refugees in Government accommodation were instead transferred to the commodious sheds at Lai Chi Kok (originally built to serve as a quarantine station and in more recent years used as an overflow prison). It was not a popular location, and of the 477 transferred there, only 367 were still present eight days later – the others having found superior lodgings elsewhere. Meanwhile almost one hundred were still at the new CBS which had intended to return to teaching duties after the school holidays, on 13 September. These people were moved to the old CBS on Nathan Road on 21 September and the new school opened for business just two weeks late on 27 September 1937.

This had been a major evacuation. Over 4,000 refugees had left Shanghai and arrived in Hong Kong during the last ten days of August 1937 – a very similar size to Hong Kong's own coming evacuation. Again, as a foretaste of the Hong Kong

⁶Known as Guangzhou today. This work records Chinese place names as they were known in 1940.
experience, even as early as 19 September (a month or less after arrival) some refugees wanted to return home, and they did so sailing back to Shanghai on board the Chenonceaux. Some thirty more left Hong Kong on 2 October, a further twenty-three just thirteen days later, and thirty-four on top of that on the last day of the month. Sixty-three (mainly Iraqi) returned on the Conte Rosso on 22 November, twenty-eight more followed on the Athos II on 12 December, and 148 on the Conte Verde and D’Artagnan on 25 December and 26 December respectively. A number who had been left behind because of illness left on the Conte Biancamano on 9 January. The Lai Chi Kok Centre was closed on 26 December 1937, as was the old CBS after the last refugees left on 15 January 1938.\(^7\) The police reported that most Shanghai refugees had left the Colony before the end of 1937.\(^8\) The families had in many cases stayed together throughout, and no barriers were placed in the way of the returnees.

Several points characterised this evacuation. It had been sudden and sparked by an immediate and clear danger, it necessitated a relatively short trip to safety (and a short return trip, once the situation allowed), no agreements were required with foreign countries, it comprised entire families in many cases, and it involved two cities whose communities were already closely linked. Spanning just five months it was in every way a success.

A number of the Shanghai evacuees decided to remain in Hong Kong, and of these people, of course, some would find their stay in Hong Kong relatively temporary - being themselves included in the 1940 evacuation to Australia. Andrin Dewar and her mother - her father John Dewar would command 7 Company Hong

\(^7\) Details of the Shanghai evacuation are taken from the Report By The Chairman (Mr W. J. Carrie) of the Shanghai Refugees Committee, No. 7/1938. Hong Kong University Library.

\(^8\) Report of the Commissioner of Police for the year 1937. Hong Kong University Library.
Kong Volunteer Defence Corps (HKVDC) during the fighting - were examples: ‘Japanese hostilities in Shanghai in 1937 resulted in my family escaping in three separate evacuations to Hong Kong: First my mother in August, then myself as I was at Summer School in Tsing Tao and was brought south by HMS Cumberland, first to Shanghai, then onward to Hong Kong as Shanghai was being bombed, and finally my father who was at battle stations in October (1937).’

Interestingly, a number of the Hong Kong ladies who assisted with these refugees would themselves be evacuated in 1940; but the short duration of the Shanghai evacuation may have given them false expectations. Gwen Priestwood was working in Hong Kong at the time: ‘Having lived since 1919 in China, where wars and rumours of wars are so prevalent, and also having seen the bombing of the outskirts of the International Settlement in Shanghai in 1932 – watching the bombs drop across the road from me, yet still living through them – I had somehow become a little disbelieving. Again, in 1937, Shanghai was bombed by the Japanese, and women and children were evacuated from Shanghai to Hong Kong. But once the bombing was over they all returned to their homes. In consequence people who have lived in Shanghai and other Treaty Ports in China seemed to acquire a slightly sophisticated attitude, being inclined to remark, “Oh, it will probably turn out all right”.’

Yet simultaneously, as the blasé residents of Shanghai returned home in December 1937, the Japanese continued south. Nanking was attacked, and an air of

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9 Letter from Andrin Dewar to author, 3 November 2010.
10 Through Japanese Barbed Wire, Priestwood, page 8. Priestwood did not evacuate from Hong Kong as she was an Auxiliary Nurse, but she later escaped from Stanley Internment Camp.
unease developed. The Hong Kong Government announced a syllabus of public lectures on air raid precautions starting on 6 December and covering ‘The nature and risk of air attacks’, ‘Effects and characteristics of, and measures for protection against, incendiary bombs and fire’, ‘Effect and characteristics of, and measures for protection against, high explosive bombs’ and so forth. The ensuing battle for Nanking was followed closely in Hong Kong, and on 14 December 1937 Chiang Kai Shek ordered the retreat. Initially the only reports coming out of the city were of large-scale losses to the Chinese army, but suddenly at the end of January 1938 the real story broke. Compiled from reports and letters from American missionaries and trusted staff at the University of Nanking, the first credible descriptions of the Japanese Army’s atrocities at Nanking (soon to be known as The Rape of Nanking) emerged.

A missionary estimates that 20,000 Chinese were slaughtered and that 1,000 women, including young girls, were outraged at Nanking. The Japanese authorities allegedly did nothing to curb the troops’ unspeakable crimes committed in full view of the Embassy staff. A missionary saw bodies in every street while walking with the Japanese Consul-General many weeks after the city was occupied. A boy died in hospital with seven bayonet wounds in the stomach. A woman in the hospital had been raped 20 times, after which soldiers, trying to behead her with a bayonet, inflicted a wound in the throat. A Buddhist nun declared that soldiers rushed into the temple, killed the Mother Superior and a novice of eight, bayoneted a novice of 12, and

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11 In 1949 history would repeat itself; the British, this time fleeing the communists, evacuated again, also to Hong Kong – some having been in the earlier experience.

12 Hongkong Telegraph, 6 December 1937.
outraged four women in the library, where 1,500 refugees were shelters. They also carried off six, of whom three returned. A hundred more cases of rape were reported in other parts of the city. The missionary added that people were afraid to venture abroad for food, as the soldiers were raiding them for food and money. His letter urged the [Japanese Embassy] ‘for the sake of the reputation of the Japanese army and the Empire and the sake of your own wives and daughters, protect the families in Nanking from the violence of the soldiers.’ Despite this appeal the atrocities continued.13

While the scale of the atrocities was difficult to calibrate (between 100,000 and 300,000 civilians and captured Chinese soldiers being massacred), and Hong Kong’s newspapers generally avoided the subject, the grapevine was active and – in contrast to the experience with Shanghai - the Colony was filled with foreboding.

When Hankow was evacuated in turn, special trains arrived in Hong Kong on 13 December 1937, and again on the 25 December, and on 1 January 1938. However, when the Japanese took Canton some ten months later in October 1938 the effect on Hong Kong was more direct. The Annual Report for 1938 of the Kowloon Canton Railway recorded: ‘A Japanese invasion of South China, which commenced on October 12th and resulted in the capture of Canton on October 21st, caused complete disruption of the through service. The majority of the staff of the Chinese Section scattered, some proceeding to Canton, others taking refuge in Hong Kong. On the morning of the invasion, a small masonry bridge between Wang Lik and Sheung Ping, some 37 miles north of the border, was damaged by hostile aircraft. Delays in completing repairs to this bridge resulted in 6 carriages and 29

13 Western Argus, 1 February 1938.
wagons owned by the British Section being detained in Chinese territory, while 15 locomotives, 24 carriages, 242 wagons and a 30-ton crane, belonging to various Chinese railways, were held in British territory. With admirable precision, it noted that 1,490 bombs were dropped on the Chinese section from 718 planes in 167 raids on 103 different days. The Japanese were now on the doorstep, and many of the cities they had already taken had suffered badly.

1.2 Hong Kong’s Evacuation Scheme Plan in Context

The evacuations of all these cities – with Shanghai’s experience obviously having the most direct impact – had given the Colony cause for thought. Of course, the British could simply have decided to abandon Hong Kong in the light of the growing threat. However, although it was deemed indefensible in practice, it would also be too big a loss of face for Britain to simply walk away from it – and any such action would certainly send an unwanted message. As Granatstein has noted, the Colony had long been seen: ‘as impossible to defend adequately and impossible to abandon politically’. There were even some who thought that a hard-fought defence of Hong Kong, even if ultimately unsuccessful, would still be valuable as it would deter further Japanese aggression and confine their ambitions to the China Seas. Hong Kong authorities were therefore under no illusions; the Colony was

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14 Annual Report for 1938 of the Kowloon Canton Railway, Hong Kong University Library.
15 Ibid.
not to be abandoned, and thus evacuation would, most likely, be necessary at some stage or other.

In the United Kingdom between May and July 1938, the Anderson Committee (under Sir John Anderson) developed the Government Evacuation Scheme for Great Britain, which would be implemented by the Ministry of Health. This would be industrial-scale evacuation, aimed at getting as many inessential personnel – perhaps a number as high as four million - out of likely target areas (in the event of war) as quickly as possible. Its development was noted in Hong Kong, with local newspapers reporting that ‘priority classes were school children, young children and mothers of young children.’

The Hong Kong Government followed the UK's lead and, on 4 May 1939, four months before the outbreak of war in Europe, the government printers Noronha and Co. Ltd published a twenty-page paper titled: ‘The Evacuation Scheme for the Colony of Hong Kong’. A neat document, produced under the leadership of Reginald David Walker (Manager and Chief Engineer of the Kowloon-Canton Railway) and Evan Walter Davies (Crown Solicitor) – who between them formed the Executive Sub-Committee of the Local Defence Committee - it was split into twenty-three sections:

I Objects and Reasons

II Numbers to be evacuated

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18 *China Mail*, 8 March 1939.
19 Later, in the fighting for Hong Kong Island, Walker (as an officer in the HKVDC) would be shot in the legs at Wong Nai Chung Gap. Rescued by two Canadians - Lieutenant Blackwood and Private Morris of the Winnipeg Grenadiers – he would eventually help in negotiating the successful surrender of the men captured at their position. Davies, of the Colonial Legal Service, would be an internee in Stanley Camp together with his wife Elizabeth, who did not evacuate.
In full, the first section read:
1. If a siege threatens Hong Kong it will be necessary to evacuate to safer places all women and children other than those of Chinese and enemy races, and those specifically registered for war work with no children living in the Colony.

2. Evacuation is essential for two main reasons:-

(a) To enable the morale of the defenders to be maintained at the highest possible level untrammelled by any considerations not directly affecting defence.

(b) To conserve food supplies.

3. The object of the scheme formulated in the following pages is to provide a simple working arrangement which is sufficiently elastic to cover the wide range of conditions that may exist when evacuation is ordered. Chief among these are the availability of passenger carrying ships in or near the harbour, and the international situation.\(^{20}\)

Importantly, the Evacuation Scheme for The Colony Of Hong Kong estimated number to be evacuated (from the 1931 census) at 11,400. These comprised:

(a) British race 4,700

(b) Indian race 1,500

(c) Miscellaneous race (British) 500

(d) Aliens, other than Chinese, USA, and potential enemies 700

(e) Local-born Portuguese 3,000

\(^{20}\) Evacuation Scheme for The Colony Of Hong Kong, National Archives of Australia, A433, 1941/2/1096 PART 1.
Americans (USA) 1,000

Presumably (c) referred to British Eurasians. The fourth section of the document considered shipping. It was concluded that if time allowed, all evacuations could be direct to Fremantle, Australia (ten to fourteen days steaming from Hong Kong). However, if there was an emergency evacuation then a number of smaller ships could be used to take the evacuees the short 650 miles to Manila instead.

For the non-British civilians the plan noted that the evacuation of Portuguese would be simpler, as these citizens could be ferried over to Macau. Equally, it was suggested that the Indians and ‘miscellaneous’ could be shipped to Port Swettenham, Malaya, and from there to India – though later this was modified to Colombo and a second city. Presciently it suggested that as there might be a shortage of suitable liners for distant ports: ‘negotiations be conducted as early as possible to investigate the possibility of sending evacuees to Manila.’ Unfortunately the planners – while being diligent in estimating the numbers of each race that warranted evacuation – had not considered the fact that their final destination might preclude certain races from landing.

Six weeks after the publication of this plan, the British High Commissioner in Australia: ‘received a telegram from my Government stating that the Government of Hong Kong, in consultation with the United Kingdom Government, are preparing a scheme for the evacuation of non-combatants from Hong Kong in case of a war emergency’, as he stated to the Prime Minister of Australia in the letter of 16 June 1939, suggesting Fremantle in Western Australia as a possible

21 Unfortunately the second city’s name (possibly Madras) is all but illegible in the single known surviving copy of the plan.
port of disembarkation. While this letter also mentioned that: ‘Possible destinations which are being considered are Australia and the United Kingdom’, it seems that in Hong Kong itself the UK had never been considered as a likely terminus.

Less than a month later, on 6 July 1939, there was yet another evacuation in mainland China: Foochow. British and American subjects were taken aboard HMS Duchess and USS Asheville. From these warships, passengers were transferred to the Douglas steamer Haiching which then departed for Amoy and Hong Kong, arriving at the latter on Saturday, 8 July. Nine further people had evacuated two days earlier, on the B & S steamer Yunnan, though a number of missionaries under Bishop Hind were not evacuated. However, on docking at Hong Kong, only two British refugees were aboard the Haiching - Mrs Pratt and her son, who had come from Hinghwa. On the day of their arrival, the SS Seistan also docked with a further three European women passengers from Foochow.

Still ten weeks short of Britain’s entry into the Second World War, the situation at the British Concession at Tientsin, where some 1,500 British civilians and servicemen were based, was also fraught. The Japanese had accused a number of Chinese nationalists living in the British concession of assassinating (on 9 April 1939) the manager of the Japanese owned Federal Reserve Bank of North China. As the dispute grew through May and June, the Japanese blockaded. Volunteers were mobilized as the escort vessel Sandwich arrived and the planned departure of the Lowestoft was cancelled. Before June ended, the Associated Press reported that

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23 Hongkong Telegraph for Thursday, 6 July 1939, China Mail 8 July 1939.
120 British women and children were being evacuated on a British gunboat to Tangku.24

John Hearn, whose father was in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC), was one of those affected by the growing tension: ‘In 1937 my father was informed that he would be posted to either the West Indies or Hong Kong. He let my mother make the decision. She was often heard to remark in later years that “it was the worst decision of my life when I chose Hong Kong”. We arrived in Hong Kong in mid 1937… The Army posted us to Tianjin (Tientsin in those days) on 7th June 1939.’25 Hearn and his family would be back in Hong Kong in plenty of time for its evacuation.

In the UK, the Government Evacuation Scheme was instigated on 31 August 1939 and movements began on 1 September – involving, in practice, some 3.5 million people. When war was declared in Europe two days later on 3 September 1939, Hong Kong families had to come to terms with their changed situation wherever they found themselves.

Michael Stewart was the son of a Hong Kong head master, and on that day was staying with his family on ‘local leave’ at Dalat, a hill station in the south of French Indochina: ‘My father was shipped back to Hong Kong immediately, (because he was in the HKVDC) but it was some weeks before my mother and I could get a ship to take us there. Most ships had been commandeered by the French Colonial Government to take men back to France to fight the Germans. The last thing that most Frenchmen in Indochina wanted to do was to be made to fight

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24 *The Canberra Times*, 22 June 1939.
25 Email from John Hearn to author, 6 January 2009.
in Europe so they “fled to the hills”. I attended a French school in Saigon while we waited for a ship to take us back to Hong Kong.”26

Although no one could do more than speculate about how war would affect the Colony, the experiences of the last few years on the Chinese mainland had been unsettling. Some Hong Kong residents had already taken action by early 1939 and even, in the case of a handful of families (in the light of Shanghai’s experience), as early as the start of 1938. Desmond Inglis and his brother, whose father would leave Hong Kong before it was attacked, were examples: ‘With the Japanese sitting on the border the family was sent off to Australia and were on board the Neptuna in [Saigon] when the 2nd World War broke out in Europe. The Inglis lads created panic on sighting a periscope of a submarine as the vessel slipped out to sea. Fortunately it turned out to be French.’27

For others in Hong Kong the declaration of war was itself the trigger to move their families back to the UK, or to places perceived safer – such as Canada, Australia, or even Singapore. Many young men of military age returned to Britain to join the forces there.

The United Kingdom’s own evacuation of children (and in some cases expectant mothers and mothers of young children) generally had popular support in theory, though many did not evacuate in practice even though the intended moves were purely domestic. Most were simply evacuated from cities that were expected to be bombed (Liverpool, London, and Manchester, for example) to more rural areas and county towns. However, at this early stage the idea of shipping

26 From Chapter 1 of the unpublished Notes on the History of Robert Michael Stewart sent by Stewart to the author 22 February 2011. Stewart would be ADC to HM Queen Elizabeth II from 1975 to 1980. His father, Evan Stewart, was the wartime commander of 3 Company, HKVDC.
27 Email from Desmond Inglis to author, 14 November 2011.
British evacuee children outside the UK was rejected as sending a defeatist message to the Axis.

But in Hong Kong the commencement of hostilities had catalysed planning. On 27 September 1939 with the war in Europe not yet a month old, the Prime Minister of Australia wrote to the Premier of Western Australia advising him of the UK and Hong Kong governments’ scheme and noting that Fremantle had been proposed as a possible destination of up to 5,000 British women and children evacuees and 750 other Europeans. Noting that it was not intended that any costs should be borne by public funds, he asked specifically whether accommodation in Perth or the surrounding area could be found for such people ‘on the understanding that the admission of these people would be subject to the provisions of the Immigration Act of the Commonwealth’. He clarified: ‘The reference to the Immigration Act of the Commonwealth does not mean that any formalities would be allowed to stand in the way of the landing and temporary accommodation of the evacuees in Australia in an emergency, but that, if any of the evacuees should desire to remain permanently in Australia, they would be subject to the tests normally applied to British and other European stock respectively.’

Slowly the preparations for evacuation were falling into place. On 30 November 1939, Frederick G. Shedden of the Australian Department of Defence Coordination penned another secret note to the Secretary of the Prime Minister’s Department, focusing on the issue of the Australian port (or ports) that would accept the evacuees. Previously the question of the acceptance of evacuees had been considered something to be discussed by the War Cabinet - a proposal that

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28 Letter of 27 September 1939, Prime Minister of Australia to the Premier of Western Australia. National Archives of Australia, A433, 1941/2/1096 PART 1.
had been made by the Treasury when there had still been questions about who would foot the bill. However, the discussion had always been postponed as a series of higher priority issues intervened. Now that the financial responsibilities had been settled, the question could be taken off the War Cabinet’s agenda. The new point to resolve was the determination of which departments of government should be responsible for administering the reception of the evacuees. Shedden proposed that it should be ‘the branches of the Department of the Interior dealing with works and immigration laws, with the necessary consultation with the Treasury in regard to any financial aspects’. Further to this he suggested that although the original request had been for accommodation in the Fremantle/Perth area, the Prime Minister’s department, in consultation with the Department of Interior, should consider whether any other States should also be asked to look into housing the evacuees.29

This was followed on 16 December 1939 by a letter, referring to that above, noting that although the Hong Kong evacuation scheme was still retained in being, it was not considered that any action towards the reception of evacuees was called for at that time.

It was not surprising that no immediate action was being considered. While the essential triggers of evacuation had never been defined, no one was under the illusion that they had been met; the Phoney War (the seven months of relative inactivity in the west that followed the declaration of war) dominated the international situation. Germany was busy with its invasion of Poland, and initial

29 Shedden to Prime Minister’s Department, 30 November 1939. National Archives of Australia, A433, 1941/2/1096 PART 1.
French attacks eastward captured just eight kilometres of German territory before their government decided that a defensive war would be a better option.

In May 1940, everything changed. On the tenth of that month, Germany invaded Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, and Churchill replaced Chamberlain as prime minister of Great Britain. From a British perspective, the Second World War had finally begun.

The British Expeditionary Force that had been in France since September the previous year was forced south, eventually famously evacuating from Dunkirk. By 4 June 1940, all those who could be taken off the beaches had been brought back to England. On 25 June 1940, the armistice that had been signed between France and Germany three days earlier went into effect. France had fallen.

French overseas territories entered an uncertain phase. With the homeland now under German sway, areas such as French Indo China had clearly become vulnerable to foreign powers. On 14 May 1940 a similar fate had befallen Holland and the Dutch possessions. Now, on the southern coasts of Asia, Britain - as an unoccupied European colonial power - was (aside from neutral Portugal) unique and alone. In London on 15 June 1940 the Chiefs of Staff Committee produced a report entitled 'Plans to meet a Certain Eventuality: French Colonial Empire and Mandated Territories'.

Analysing each French overseas possession in the light of France’s capitulation, it noted: ‘A Japanese occupation of Indo-China would enable her to control Siam; would bring a Japanese base at Saigon within 640 seas miles of Singapore, and would provide air bases for operations against Malaya’.

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30 Plans to meet a Certain Eventuality: French Colonial Empire and Mandated Territories. The National Archives (TNA): CAB 66/8/37. The esteemed authors were Air Vice Marshall Cyril Louis Norton Newall, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Alfred Dudley Pickman Rogers Pound, and General Sir John Greer Dill.
300 miles from Indo-China to Malaya at the nearest point).\textsuperscript{31} The global impact of French capitulation weighed heavily on British strategic thinking.

At the same time, Japan had issued demands that Britain close the Burma Road, through which supplies were being sent to the Chinese forces that they were battling. The Japanese demanded in fact the complete ‘stoppage of the transport of military supplies to China via Burma, including arms, ammunition, fuel, gasoline, lorries and railway material’.\textsuperscript{32} Initially Britain declined to acquiesce to this request, despite the fact that the British Military Attaché in Tokyo felt that ‘non or partial compliance with these demands might force the Imperial Japanese Army to adopt its “usual policy of provoking incidents” and presenting the Japanese government with a fait accompli’.\textsuperscript{33} In other words, Britain’s non-compliance might lead directly to war.

On 17 June 1940 the United Kingdom established the Children’s Overseas Reception Board (CORB) to send child evacuees to Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States. At the same time, because of the threat of invasion, some 200,000 children were evacuated from the south of England to safer areas. Many of these had taken part in the original evacuation of 1939 but had since crept back.

Two days later, with Churchill, Chamberlain, Halifax, Attlee, Greenwood, Eden, Duff Cooper, and others present, the War Cabinet meeting at 10 Downing Street in London noted that: ‘\textit{The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs} informed the

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\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 29 June 1940. The National Archives (TNA): CAB 66/9/14.
\textsuperscript{33} Fedorowich, Kent, "Cocked Hats and Swords and Small, Little Garrisons": Britain, Canada and the Fall of Hong Kong, 1941, \textit{Modern Asian Studies}, vol. 37, no. 1, 2003, 111-58. In fact later, on 18 July 1940, Britain would agree to close the Burma Road to military supplies for three months.
War Cabinet that telegram No. 1032 had just been received from His Majesty’s Ambassador at Tokyo to the effect that the British Military Attaché had been sent for by a Japanese Military Representative and had been informed that unless we took immediate action to comply with certain Japanese demands, e.g. the closing of the Hong Kong and Burma-Chinese frontiers, and the withdrawal of British troops from Shanghai, the Japanese Military would declare war. He wished to defer his comments on this telegram until he had had time to consider it.\textsuperscript{34} The War Cabinet minutes for that day, 19 June, included the sentence: ‘Any evacuation which the Government intends to carry out in emergency should be carried out now.’\textsuperscript{35}

However, the next day they added: ‘The matter was put in rather a different light in telegram No. 1037 from Tokyo reporting a conversation between Sir Robert Craigie and the Japanese Foreign Minister after the signature of the Tientsin Agreement. The latter had said that the General Staff’s message should not be taken too seriously. Any communications which the Japanese Government had to make to His Majesty’s Government would come through himself, and not through any other channel. While he intended to discuss with the Ambassador the points which the Japanese Military Representative had mentioned, the form and substance of his communication would be entirely different from the message from the General Staff. The Foreign Secretary said that it looked as if we would have trouble with the Japanese later on but not immediately.’\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{34} War Cabinet minutes, 19 June 1940. The National Archives (TNA): CAB 66/8/43.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} The National Archives (TNA): CAB 65/7/67; CAB 65/7/68. Sir Robert Craigie was British Ambassador to Japan from 1937 to 1941.
So at this crucial time London was hearing a mixed message on Japan’s readiness to go to war, which made it difficult to accurately assess the seriousness of the current threat.

On 21 June 1940 the subject was not discussed, but when the War Cabinet met again the following day they reported: ‘The Vice-Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that when, on the 19th June, instructions had been issued for precautionary measures to be taken in Hong Kong, the General Officer Commanding had recommended that the maximum number of white women and children should be evacuated forthwith to Manila. The numbers involved were considerable, and it had been thought better that no action should be taken until the Foreign Office had been consulted. Meanwhile the Governor of Hong Kong had himself taken the view that all the necessary preparations should be made short of actual evacuations. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that the view of our Ambassador in China had been that all defence measures should be taken, but that evacuation should not be ordered.’  

The Secretary of State for War therefore instructed the General Officer Commanding, Hong Kong to make the necessary preparations, including the provision of shipping for the evacuation to Manila of the wives and children of Service personnel, in the event of evacuation being ordered at a later date.  

However, at a similar meeting four days later on 26 June 1940, the War Cabinet considered a report by the Chiefs of Staff on ‘Immediate Measures required in the Far East’, which began ‘In the light of recent developments in Tokyo, and pending the completion of a full appreciation, we submit the following

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37 War Cabinet minutes, 22 June 1940. The National Archives (TNA): CAB 65/7/70.  
38 Ibid.
conclusions and recommendations which are based on preliminary work we have already carried out in an examination of our strategy in the Far East in the new situation.\textsuperscript{39} That report concluded: ‘We should retain our present garrison at Hong Kong to fight it out if war comes. The presence of large numbers of British women and children at Hong Kong would be a serious embarrassment and since evacuation might not be possible in the event of a sudden Japanese attack we recommend that they should be moved now, either to the Philippine Islands or to Australia. We do not think that the Japanese would interpret this step as a sign of weakness, rather the reverse.’\textsuperscript{40} The War Cabinet thus mandated that: ‘steps should now be taken to evacuate British women and children from Hong Kong’.\textsuperscript{41}

But this decision was for a very different evacuation from the earlier ones involving cities and concessions on the Chinese mainland. Firstly, in Hong Kong there was no firm evidence of immediate danger; the Japanese might attack sooner or later, or they might not attack at all. Secondly, the Philippines and Australia were a considerable distance from Hong Kong; returning, should the danger pass, would not be simple. Thirdly (as there was no consideration of evacuating the men) families would naturally be split. It was different too when compared to the evacuations in Great Britain; for evacuees in British cities there had been immediate danger, evacuating to a different location in the same country seemed eminently manageable (and could easily be reversed), and generally speaking only children were evacuated.

\textsuperscript{39} Immediate Measures required in the Far East. The National Archives (TNA): CAB 66/9/2.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} The National Archives (TNA): CAB 65/7/78. On the 29\textsuperscript{th} they noted that ‘The American Under-Secretary of State had agreed to receive British refugees from Hong Kong en route for British Possessions’. The National Archives (TNA): CAB 65/7/82.
Hong Kong’s evacuation had thus been ordered, but in terms of distance, pre-emptiveness, and disruption of families, it was to pioneer new ground.

### 1.3 The Colony Before Evacuation

But the British inhabitants of the Colony did not necessarily want to be evacuated. Hong Kong in the twenties and thirties was the most desired posting for the British forces. There, a young man who might count for little at home found his pay packet could stretch to a very comfortable life of beer, sport, and local young ladies. The Adjutant of the 1st Battalion the Middlesex Regiment noted: ‘Hong Kong was a festive place, a refuge for enjoyment. The top hotels and restaurants were the best anywhere, the nightlife exciting. “The Grips”, a nickname for the Hong Kong Hotel’s restaurant, was a social centre point where dinner jackets were mandatory for dinner and dancing. Overlooking an exquisite coastline, the Repulse Bay Hotel with its old-fashioned style was the epitome of colonial living. In Kowloon, the Peninsula Hotel, another centre of social activity, was our nearest haven, only three miles from barracks at Shamshuipo. And everywhere restaurants served all types of delicious Chinese food.’\(^{42}\)

Entrepreneurs also arrived in numbers to seek, and often make, their fortunes; it was a period when good jobs could often be found by simply turning up and being British. British girls arrived in turn in search of husbands, and competition increased as thousands of ‘white’ Russian girls fled to safety after the Civil War that was sparked by the revolution, many marrying British men.

\(^{42}\) *Children Of The Empire*, Anthony Hewitt, page 59. He would later marry an evacuee (Elizabeth Weedon).
Independent professional women though, were very much in the minority; in this place and at that time, the majority of resident British women were wives and mothers, or older daughters. Then there were the families: families arriving on contracts to work at the Admiralty Dockyards and other concerns, families of the more senior military men, or trading families long established in Hong Kong. All found a lively social life, pampered by servants and eased by wealth and Hong Kong’s naturally compact design. Everyone knew each other; it was a very intimate expatriate ecology based on a foundation of permanent Colonists and an exciting and constantly refreshed stream of transient adventurers.

There were hotels and restaurants, clubs and games. Weekends were spent relaxing at the beaches and swimming in warm clean seas, or dining, dancing, and drinking in the evenings. For the sportsmen there were Football Clubs and Cricket Clubs both in Kowloon and on Hong Kong Island, and for the nautically inclined the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club. For businessmen the Hong Kong Club provided a London-like environment for both governmental and private negotiations.

The arrival of war in Europe initially had little initial impact on the Colony. A number of senior army NCOs and officers of the garrison were posted back to the UK to make up the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) losses of Dunkirk and start building what would eventually become the D Day armies, and a number of local young men continued to volunteer for the RAF and other services. While those few prescient civilian families realising that Hong Kong might not be permanently spared quietly left, most just continued enjoying the good life.

Richard Neve was one of those who stayed. As a military child – his father was Major George Neve serving in the garrison’s headquarters – he adapted easily to the comfortable existence in Hong Kong: ‘It was now time to get accustomed to
Chinese domestic staff of which only the No. 1 Boy spoke English. In addition to him there was a No. 2 Boy, a cook, a coolie and a wash amah. For a short period we had a chauffeur who came along with a large second hand beige American Packard my father bought on arrival from the previous occupant of the flat... To organise a day's sailing all my mother had to do was tell Ah Cheng the numbers and menu for lunch. This would be ready loaded in the car in a selection of wicker 'Hong Kong' baskets. My father would telephone the Yacht Club to say what time the boat was to be ready.'

The 1931 census had shown a local population of just under 850,000 people, but ten years later continued immigration bolstered by refugees fleeing the fighting on the mainland had all but doubled the number: the 1941 census showed 1,444,725 in Hong Kong and Kowloon, and an estimated (but uncounted) 120-150,000 more in the New Territories; labour continued to be cheap. The great majority of these people were of course ethnically Chinese, but there was also a minority Indian population (both in business and in the police force). The British civilians comprised both settled and transient families and – as they totalled (excluding the garrison) at most half of one percent of the population at large – were in every way the social elite. They were the tip of the pyramid, with the majority living rich and pampered lives supported by the labours of the masses; a gently waved hand or a lightly rung bell would bring servants running. However, by 1940 a considerable number of the settled families were Eurasian. In a Colony just one year short of its centenary there were many established British civilian families who had flourished for as many as four generations (from 1840 to 1940),

43 From A Wartime Childhood, Richard Neve, unpublished, via email from Simon Jones to author, 7 February 2011.
and in four generations there had been plenty of opportunity for interracial marriages.

Elizabeth Gittins, for example, was the daughter of Eurasian parents (her mother was born Ho Tung). Hers was one of many wealthy families who were just as much part of the Hong Kong establishment – or more - as the purely Caucasian: 'Life in Hong Kong was easy for mothers compared to Australia. As we had four live-in servants and a gardener who came daily, there were never any domestic chores.'

While the Ho Tungs were the most famous Eurasian family in Hong Kong society there were many others – and also many Chinese and Indians – who were equally part of the ‘British’ establishment. Clearly the government would not consider evacuating all the purely Chinese families; Hong Kong was simply their home and the numbers were obviously impractical. But for those who actively supported British rule, whether Chinese, Indian, Eurasian, or Caucasian, the government felt an obligation to provide protection.

There were also the Government workers themselves to consider, many from the UK but also some recruited locally. Margaret Simpson’s father William Simpson, on the staff of the Public Works Department (PWD), was in this category. Her mother Anna was typical of the many young Russian ladies who had come to the Colony: ‘Mother was born on February 2, 1902, in a small village near Khabarovsk, Russia, into a family that had migrated to Siberia from the Ukraine...

During the Russian Civil War that followed the revolution, control of the region

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44 Golden Peaches, Long Life, Elizabeth Doery, page 20. Note that the text of this thesis uses maiden names throughout, for women and girls who were evacuated before marriage and resulting name changes (the original names of any men who changed surnames are also preserved). This is intended to both aid the reader in following family groups, and to match contemporary documentation.
changed hands several times, as first one party and then another swept through the area, leaving chaos and hunger behind them. Because of the troubled times, when the opportunity presented itself, it was decided to send my mother with a relative of my grandmother’s to Harbin in the mid-1920s.45 Settling initially in Shanghai, designing fashionable dresses for the well-to-do, business took her to Hong Kong where she met and married William Simpson on 26 April 1931.

Amongst the civilian families were a number of missionaries. Michael Stewart’s father Evan had been born to missionaries in 1892 in Bedford, England. As a baby he accompanied his parents to their mission station in Kucheng, Fukien Province, and was with them in 1895 when an insurgent group known as ‘the Vegetarians’ (who were opposed to the presence of all foreigners) attacked. Evan’s parents were killed as were one of his brothers and one of his sisters, respectively Herbert, who was five, and Hilda, a baby. Aside from schooling and service in the Great War, Evan resided in Hong Kong, in 1930 taking over as Headmaster of St Paul’s College where he had previously been a teacher.

Michael Stewart: ‘We rented a large bamboo Mat-shed on the attractive beach at Repulse Bay on the south side of the island and we spent time there whenever we could. It had a covered veranda, two changing rooms and a small space for cooking... There were comparatively few Europeans in the Colony then and they all seemed to know one another so there was a very active social life. Hong Kong before the war was rather like an English country town, with a sprinkling of “foreigners” such as Portuguese, Indians and Scots, and with about a million friendly and helpful Chinese “superimposed” on it. I was educated by a governess and then at the Peak School, travelling to and from the school on the

45 Email from Margaret Simpson to author, 22 February 2010.
Peak Tram. I also picked up a usable amount of Cantonese from Chinese friends and servants. I had a happy and exciting childhood in a vibrant Hong Kong; swimming, sailing, climbing and walking on the island and in the New Territories on the mainland. Most of the European families seemed to have several children so there were many children’s parties for me to enjoy.\textsuperscript{46}

These families had deep roots in Hong Kong and many considered it their home. However, being a civilian was no longer a protection from fighting. Order number 32 of 1939, ‘An ordinance to make provision with respect to compulsory service’, required, with certain exceptions, all male British subjects between the ages of 18 and 54 to join the Defence Reserve.\textsuperscript{47} Although this reserve included a non-combatant key-posts group, and another for essential services, in practice the majority would join either the HKVDC or the Hong Kong Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (HKRNVR).

From a military point of view, Hong Kong was primarily a Royal Artillery establishment, with large-calibre guns providing defence from possible naval attack. The Royal Navy also had a significant presence, and the Royal Air Force operated a small base at Kai Tak. In fact the Colony was so isolated from other outposts of the empire that the garrison had to include every imaginable military unit from vets to military police, from signallers to the pay corps, from doctors and dentists to engineers. The core of the garrison in 1940 comprised four infantry battalions, two – the second battalion of the fourteenth Punjabi Regiment (2/14\textsuperscript{th} Punjabis) and the fifth battalion of the seventh Rajput Regiment (5/7\textsuperscript{th} Rajputs) – from the British Indian army, and two – the second battalion of the Royal Scots and

\textsuperscript{46} Notes on the History of Robert Michael Stewart, Michael Stewart.
\textsuperscript{47} Order number 32 of 1939. Hong Kong University Library.
the first battalion of the Middlesex Regiment – from the United Kingdom. Although the private soldiers in the infantry battalions were generally too young to have established their own families, the same was not true of the senior NCOs and officers. These regulars, and those with specialised trades in the Royal Army Service Corps (RASC), RAOC, Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC), and certain other units (who tended on average to be older than the infantry) were, in many cases, in Hong Kong with their wives and children.48

However, Hong Kong was also primarily a port. As well as the ships of the Royal Navy's China Station, it was firmly on the itineraries of vessels ranging from passenger liners, through other naval craft calling in for rest and recreation, to trading ships of all kinds. Each day newspapers advertised the sailings of many vessels to ports in America, Europe, and many Asian countries. Neve: 'There were always between half a dozen and a dozen ships present, plus warships of the British Far East fleet and the occasional visiting warship from the American, Dutch and French Pacific fleets. Rather as today a young boy might pride himself on being able to recognise to which airline an aircraft belongs by the logo on its tailfin, so I could recognise many shipping lines by their distinctive funnels. Black was P & O, Alfred Holt's Blue Funnel line & the eponymous Red Funnel were easy. There was a Japanese line, their ships names all ended with Maru as the last word, that had red funnels with a black top popular with expatriates taking their leave in Japan, and Shaw Savill and Albion, nicknamed “Slow, starvation and agony”, had yellow ochre. I could also name many of the individual liners by recognising their size and shape when I spotted them during our regular afternoon walks around the Peak. Any that I did not recognise could be identified by a quick look in the shipping columns of

48 The majority of the officers in the Indian regiments were also British.
the *South China Morning Post*, which listed the time of arrival and departure of all major ships.⁴⁹

Alongside the civilians and the military garrison was the Admiralty’s Dockyard. With their wonderful titles such as Chargeman of Riggers, Inspector of Shipwrights, and First Class Draughtsman, these men’s specialized roles meant that the great majority of the dockyard employees were professionals contracted by ‘agreement’ from dockyards abroad.⁵⁰

William Redwood was one such, and like all the Dockyard and military men on postings he was expecting to be in Hong Kong for only a relatively short period. Posted from Rosyth Dockyard in Scotland to the Ordnance Depot at Crombie and then to the Hong Kong Dockyard for a term of three years, his wife Mabel noted: ‘Once we got used to the enervating heat, the huge cockroaches, and the fear of burglars, we began to enjoy life in Hong Kong. With no housework to do, my only duties were shopping and looking after the children, all of whom were happy in their new schools. Olive was able to continue with the violin lessons she had started in Scotland, and Barbara piano lessons. Olive progressed so well that she was chosen to take part in a small orchestra which was asked to play at Government House at a children’s party.’⁵¹ But when war came, the dockyard workers would be formed into the Hong Kong Dockyard Defence Corps (HKDDC) and fight alongside the HKVDC and in defence of the dockyards themselves.

For soldiers, sailors, teachers, businessmen, missionaries, and dockyard

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⁴⁹ *A Wartime Childhood*, Richard Neve.
⁵⁰ There were 141 such workmen in the Hong Kong Yards as at 1936. For more details of the dockyard personnel during the war years, see the *Short History of the HKDDC*, Tony Banham, Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong, 50th anniversary journal, 2011.
⁵¹ *It was Like This...*, Mabel Redwood, page 34. Olive and Barbara (later Barbara Anslow) were two of her daughters.
families alike, this cheerful and carefree expatriate life was based on a very fragile foundation. Mindful of events at home in the UK, and north in mainland China, the Hong Kong Government’s secret draft plan for evacuation was being dusted off. Necessary preparations were begun.

Lieutenant Horace Wilfred ‘Bunny’ Browne was a member of the Financial Adviser (FA) and Army Audit Staff in Hong Kong - a group of War Office civilian staff under the Permanent Under-Secretary for War attached to, but independent from, the military headquarters: ‘When I joined the office in November 1939, one of my duties was to maintain a complete and up-to-date record of all the Army wives and children (and nannies). This was to facilitate their rapid evacuation from Hong Kong if and when needed. I made a name-tag for every one with different colours for each category e.g. officers’ wives, [Other Ranks’] wives, and for their children. I arranged with the Army Paymaster to notify me of families moving in or out of Hong Kong so I could keep up to date with my name tags.’

This preparation would prove to be wise. After the fall of France, worried that Japan might seize this opportunity to exploit the power vacuum created by the European nations’ preoccupations at home, the British Government, as related above had decided on 26 June 1940 to order immediate evacuation. The final

52 Letter from Bunny Browne C.B.E. to author, 12 March 2001. When any FA staff had to operate in a theatre of war, they were commissioned on the General List with rank according to their position and authority. The FA, Mr Kilpatrick, became Colonel Kilpatrick. All quotes from Browne are from this letter.
53 Other nations followed this lead. ‘On the basis of instructions from Washington, (Department’s telegram No. 105 of June 29, 12 midnight) Americans were advised to send their wives and families to Manila where they could be re-evacuated to America in case of trouble. The French Consulate General states that the seventy French women and children in the Colony had been told to prepare for evacuation, which would be carried out in conjunction with the local authorities. The Netherlands’ Consulate General announced that instructions had been issued to all Netherlands’ subjects in the Colony to evacuate as soon as possible. The 150 Norwegian women and children were told to get ready for evacuation. The Norwegian Consul General stated that since there were always Norwegian ships in Hong Kong, such evacuation could be carried out at a moment’s notice.’

Evacuation Of Women And Children From Hong Kong, July 1940. Prepared by John H. Bruins,
command to evacuate women and children of pure European descent was received by the Government in Hong Kong on the afternoon of Friday, 28 June. That evening the local English-language radio station, ZBW, broadcast: 'We are informed by the Government that instructions have been received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies which indicate that the evacuation of women and children from Hong Kong may be ordered in the near future. In the view of the Government this need not be taken as in any way a cause for alarm, but, as the destination of such evacuation would probably be Manila in the first place, all persons who are likely to be affected by such an order are advised to be vaccinated forthwith.'

Accordingly the following morning Hong Kong’s Executive Council held an emergency meeting. With the news already leaking out, gossips were busy. That morning the papers carried the story under the headline 'Colony Alive With Rumour', echoing the uncertainty of the Colony’s inhabitants.

The colony this morning was alive with rumours concerning plans for the evacuation of women and children, but no official statement on the matter was obtainable. A Government spokesman told the ‘China Mail’ that a further statement on the plans now being prepared for the evacuation of all women and children of pure European birth may be issued later in the day. There is believed to be foundation for the rumour in circulation that the wives of members of the Regular Forces have been instructed to prepare themselves

American Consul, 12 August 1940. File 346g.4115, Record Group 59, National Archives at College Park, MD (to be found in RG 59, Stack Area 250, Row B1, Compartment 10, Shelf 6, Boxes 1151-1152).

54 The Secretary of State for the Colonies was the Lord Lloyd. ZBW eventually became today's RTHK. Appendix 42 to the Radio Regulations of the International Telecommunications Union allocated the call signs ZBA - ZJZ and ZNA - ZOZ to the UK, which allocated ZBW and ZEK to the two HK stations, broadcasting in English and Cantonese respectively.
for departure tomorrow (Sunday) or Monday. Plans regarding other members of the community are however less advanced although conferences were going on this morning. A meeting of the Executive Council was in session as we went to press.55

Noting also that ‘plans are also being prepared for the evacuation of Indian women and children’, the paper pointed out that women who had already registered with the Post Master General were not required to do so again, but any who had failed to do so were instructed to immediately give the Post Master General details of their country of origin and the ages and sexes of all children. With very little notice, evacuation was about to be ordered.56

1.4 The Order to Evacuate

Three documents paved the way to evacuation. Firstly, just three days after the French armistice, on 28 June 1940, the Office for the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, Canberra, finally sent a letter (marked ‘secret’) to the secretary of the Australian Prime Minister which clearly stated that evacuation was imminent:

With reference to your letter No. C.A. 13/1 of the 14th December last and previous correspondence, I am directed by the High Commissioner to state that in the present situation it is necessary to prepare for the very early

55 China Mail, Saturday 29 June 1940.
56 Ibid.
evacuation of women and children from Hong Kong as an essential defence measure.

It is probable that the first stage evacuation, when ordered, will be to Manila, but in view of the large numbers involved it is expected that it will be necessary for British evacuees to be sent on to Australia, as shipping may permit.

In view of the Prime Minister's letter of the 22nd June, 1939, on this subject, the High Commissioner has been requested to bring these preparations to the attention of the Commonwealth Government. A revised estimate of numbers is being obtained from the Governor of Hong Kong and will be forwarded as soon as possible, but it is not likely to be less than that given in the High Commissioner's letter of the 16th June, 1939.57

Then, on the same day, Lord Lothian, the British Ambassador to the United States, sent the following note to Sumner Welles, Under-Secretary of State:

I am informing the Foreign Office of the substance of our conversation yesterday regarding the possibility of civilian refugees being evacuated from Hong Kong and I am sure that the British authorities will be very grateful for the assurance that, if necessary, these will be received at Manila. I am also putting the point about shipping, which you mentioned, to the Foreign Office and will let you know the result of my enquiry.

57 Office of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, Canberra, to the secretary of the Australian Prime Minister, 28 June 1940, National Archives of Australia, A433, 1941/2/1096 PART 1.
In the meantime I see that in their telegram to me the Foreign Office said that, provided the United States Government approved, they felt that all detailed arrangements should be made direct between the local authorities in Hong Kong and the Philippines. Perhaps you would be kind enough to let me know whether this proposal meets with your approval.58

Finally, on the following day, 29 June 1940 (the same day that the War Cabinet minutes in London noted that: ‘The American Under-Secretary of State had agreed to receive British refugees from Hong Kong en route for British possessions’)59 the Hong Kong Government issued the following amendment to Section 2 of Ordinance Number Five (which had most recently been published in the Gazette of 7 October 1938 as Government Notification No. 775):60

Amendment

The following new regulation shall be inserted in the said regulations as No. 4A thereof:

4A. Subject to any general or special directions of the Governor the Commissioner of Police and any police officer authorized by him, either generally or specially, shall have power to order any woman or any child

58 Note from Lothian to Under-Secretary of State, 28 June 1940, file 346g.4115, Record Group 59, National Archives at College Park, MD.
59 War Cabinet minutes, 29 June 1940. The National Archives (TNA): CAB 65/7/82
60 The relevant 1938 amendment (one of many) was the addition of regulation 4, which read: ‘The Commissioner of Police and any police officer authorized by him, either generally or specially, shall have power to arrest and detain any person who appears to him to have no regular employment in the Colony, and the Commissioner of Police shall have power to order any such person to leave the Colony forthwith. Any order made under this regulation shall be sufficient authority to all police officers and to the master and crew of any ship or the guards and attendants of any train to use within the Colony and the territorial waters thereof such force and restraint as may be necessary to carry out such order.’
under the age of eighteen years or any other person whose presence in the Colony or any part thereof appears to him to be unnecessary for the defence of the Colony or for the maintenance of services essential to the maintenance and security of the community therein to leave the Colony forthwith or to proceed forthwith to some other part of the Colony.

Any order made under this regulation shall be sufficient authority to all police officers and to the master and crew of any vessel or to the guards and attendants of any train to use within the Colony and the territorial waters thereof such force and restraint as may be necessary to carry out such order.  

The UK’s conflict had now irreversibly impacted Hong Kong. Thanks to a legal framework that had been built bit by bit since 1922, and sparked by war developments in Europe, the governor finally now had the: *power to order any woman or any child under the age of eighteen years or any other person whose presence in the Colony or any part thereof appears to him to be unnecessary for the defence of the Colony or for the maintenance of services essential to the maintenance and security of the community therein to leave the Colony forthwith.* Communications with the Americans had established an accord for the first stage to the Philippines, and a start had been made in firming up plans for the second leg to Australia.

That same day, at 16.00, Francis Sayre, High Commissioner of the Philippines, urgently telegrammed the Secretary of State in Washington:

61 The Hong Kong Government Gazette Extraordinary, Saturday, 29 June 1940. Hong Kong University Library.
It seems not unlikely that developments in Anglo-Japanese relations may render desirable the evacuation of British women and children at Hong Kong numbering, according to report, some four to five thousands, to Manila for temporary residence.

The British Consul General informed this office in a note of August 29 last year, at which time the question of evacuation was under consideration, that ‘the Government of the United States had indicated orally that in case of emergency British evacuees would doubtless be permitted to enter the Philippines in case of need, so far as circumstances permit, care and consideration there similar to those provided for American refugees’. Plans were made at that time by the Red Cross and the army for the housing of Americans and preparations were made to avoid the occurrence of delays in connection with payment of head tax, health requirements, and documents of entry. Their plans and preparations are still in effect, and those concerned are ready if the occasion arises, to operate within a few hours.

It is as yet uncertain as to whether the evacuation will materialize. In the event that it does materialize, time will probably be of the essence. May I take it for granted in such an emergency that the Department approves the temporary entry of the evacuees. Please rush reply.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{62} Telegram from High Commissioner of the Philippines to Secretary of State in Washington, 29 June 1940, file 346g.4115, Record Group 59, National Archives at College Park, MD.
The British Government had sent its instructions, the Hong Kong Government was primed, and the Australian and American governments had given their consent. No legal or political obstacles to evacuation remained.
Chapter 2. Evacuation

Despite the very obvious defence activities in Hong Kong – exercises, practice blackouts, nursing training among volunteers, barbed wire on some of the beaches etc. – I don’t think many of us visualized that war would come to the Colony. It was therefore a bolt from the blue when one afternoon at the end of June 1940 (when Hitler was invading a tottering France) Will phoned from his office with instructions for the girls and me to start packing our clothes at once: all wives and families were to be evacuated from the Colony quickly as possible.¹

Chapter Two describes the actual evacuation from Hong Kong, starting with an understanding of the methods and rationale of those who managed to avoid or evade the exodus, before focusing on the mechanics of the administration of evacuation and the successful execution of the voyages to the Philippines. Looking at the international context (the Japanese reaction, communication with the American authorities in the Philippines, and the planning of the removal to Australia) it then details the practical aspects of the reception and dispersal of the evacuees in the Philippine Islands while they awaited the next step. Here it exposes the ad hoc nature of the evacuation’s evolution, and the first understanding of the evacuees of the fundamental weaknesses of the plan.

¹ It Was Like This..., Redwood, page 51.
There were no bombs; no Japanese forces on the horizon. The evacuation was intended to pre-empt all that. Wisely, the authorities had decided to remove the military families first; they were used to following orders. With just 36 hours notice, all service families (which included those from the Royal Naval Dockyards) were to be evacuated. There was no attempt to ‘sell’ the concept to those being removed from the Colony, and the constantly updated list of military dependants enabled near instant action. Many of those ordered to leave felt the atmosphere decidedly threatening.

Eveline Harloe was married to Charles Harloe of the Chinese Maritime Customs: ‘In late June 1940, it was announced that women and children were to be evacuated from Hong Kong. We had decided earlier in the year that we’d like another child, so to add to our dilemma was the problem that I was pregnant. The Doctor advised me to go (many people were trying to get out of the order on various pretexts) he said that should there be hostilities, medical attention might not be available. The authorities had announced that if the women didn’t go quietly, they would be “carried on board, kicking and screaming”.’

While the enforcers were the government and the police, the military were in charge of the evacuation’s execution. In the words of Staff Sergeant Patrick Sheridan, RASC: “The rumour about the families being evacuated to Australia is true. Instructions to get ready have been issued. Mr Wood’s family have been preparing. The Canadian Pacific Co. liner Empress of Asia arrives and docks at a wharf over in Kowloon docks. I find that I have been detailed as a conducting

\(^2\)Richard Harloe was her womb’s occupant. The excerpts here are taken from a memoir she wrote for the family. Email from Richard Harloe to author, 27 September 2010.
N.C.O. together with a number of other NCOs from all units, who have no families. We go aboard the liner one morning for a rehearsal. It is a real luxury passenger boat. The state rooms have been cleared of all furniture and replaced with camp beds all in rows. I have been allotted a state room on B deck in the 1st class lounge. It contains 60 camp beds. My job is to direct each mother and her children to so many camp beds. Two days later it all begins.3

Civilian families would follow shortly, but they were not used to such manoeuvres and would be less inclined to toe the line.

2.1 Avoiding and Evading Evacuation

A large percentage of Hong Kong’s non-Chinese civilian population had always been transient, coming and going as economic and other opportunities allowed. Military families arrived and departed at the whim of the authorities, business families came and went as they made or lost fortunes, and at any given time expatriates and their children might be present in the Colony or on leave (or studying) back in the UK. But aside from the military dependents, these people were used to making their own decisions; they would not take kindly to being forced from their families and homes. In 1940 the British civilian population stood at around 8,000 people, but in practice less than half would be evacuated, and the remainder would – one way or another – stay in the Colony.

But not everyone needed to be evacuated. Some of the Colony’s usual inhabitants would miss the evacuation simply by already being abroad. William

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3 From Sheridan’s memoir, kindly supplied by his daughter Helen Dodd via email from Brian Edgar to author, 27 September 2012. In fact the first ship was the Empress of Japan.
and Janet MacFarlane of Dairy Farm, for example, were on holiday in New Zealand at the time. William returned to Hong Kong, but Janet stayed away. John Penn, whose father Arthur Harry Penn commanded No. 1 Company HKVDC and worked for the Bank Line, was in a similar situation: 'We were on leave in '39 and my father returned to HK upon the outbreak of the European war. We stayed on in the UK (my sister's schooling came into the decision), and eventually set out to return in June '40. Because of the war in Europe, we had to proceed via Canada (convoy across the Atlantic, then train to the West Coast), and got as far as Vancouver when the evacuation of HK was activated. There were quite a number of HK families in Vancouver, both evacuees as well as folk trying to get back like us. Most of us ended up on Vancouver Island. Once a return to HK became impossible (Dec'41), my mother decided to try and get back to the UK, and in the summer of '42 we moved eastwards to Toronto. We eventually obtained passage back to Liverpool in December '43.'

Other Hong Kong residents then in Canada included Bruce Valentine, son of Keith Valentine (who Commanded No. 4 Company HKVDC), Jane Strellett, daughter of David Strellett (of the HKVDC ASC Unit), and Brian McElaney, son of Dr McElaney of Anderson & Partners. Iain Finnie (whose Scottish father was the director of Swire & Sons’ Taikoo Dockyard) was at school at George Watson’s College in Edinburgh when the evacuation came, but he left and joined his mother and sister who had evacuated to Canada and lived in Victoria, British Columbia. For some families, as the authorities had no objection to private evacuations by those who preferred not to join the official party, the evacuation order was a

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4 Email from John Penn to author, 27 April 2011. John also joined the Bank Line (Weirs) in 1953.
5 Later they would move to Banff, Alberta. Iain Finnie would become professor emeritus of mechanical engineering at the University of California, Berkeley.
catalyst in their decision to relocate to Canada. Eric Mitchell was second in command of the HKVDC and worked for a Canadian insurance company called Manufacturers Life, and his family was such an example. His oldest daughter Pat was then aged fifteen and was at school in England. On 9 June 1940 she boarded a Sunderland Flying Boat in Poole to fly back to Hong Kong and had been home for less than a month when the evacuation order came through. Because her father felt that if anything happened his company would be able to help, he also chose to send Pat, her sister Jean, and mother Rose, to Victoria, B.C.

Some of the people who could have avoided the evacuation missed their chance. Seventeen year old Patricia Rose – daughter of Colonel Rose who commanded the HKVDC when hostilities started but would hand over to Mitchell and take over command of the whole of West Brigade in the fighting - was at school in England, at Bognor, but her parents sent for her to return to Hong Kong when they felt that the war situation in Europe was becoming too dangerous. No sooner had she arrived in Hong Kong than she would again be evacuated, this time compulsorily.

Many of the children of British Hong Kong families who were at school in the UK at this time simply stayed there for the duration, in most cases not being reunited with their families until late 1945. Michael Elston, the twelve year old son of Hong Kong Police Officer Archibald Elston, was at school in the UK at King’s College Canterbury, and stayed there while his mother and three year old brother Jeremy evacuated to Australia. By the time the family was reunited, Michael had

\[\text{\textsuperscript{6}}\text{That flight turned out to be the last to Australia until 1945 as Italy declared war the next day.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{7}}\text{Email from Pat’s son Jonathan Nigel to author, 14 November 2011. Jonathan’s father-to-be, Ferdinand Nigel, was also in the Volunteers.}\]
grown up enough that he never lived with them again. Rita Langston and her two brothers were in the same situation, although as she notes, avoiding evacuation certainly did not mean avoiding the war: ‘My two elder brothers were [also at] school in the UK when the war started – at Dulwich College. My elder brother Alan joined the RAF – he was mad on flying, but was killed in Terrell, Texas whilst in training. My younger brother Morris was in the Royal Tank Regiment, and went over to France on D Day + 5. His tank was knocked out and he was severely wounded, repatriated to a Canadian hospital in the UK, and survived after which he rejoined the tanks until the end of the war.’

Some families had also already moved privately to Australia. Elizabeth Ride and her siblings, for example – whose Australian father Lindsay Tasman Ride was professor of physiology at Hong Kong University and a Lieutenant Colonel in the HKVDC – had been dispatched to Australia as early as 1939, arriving on 13 January. Another lady, Mrs J. Abbott, the wife of a Hong Kong businessman, found herself in Singapore with her newborn baby girl at the time of the evacuation. The two of them flew from Singapore to Darwin by flying boat.

Others would also legitimately miss the evacuation by fortune, good or bad: hospitalised with serious illnesses, heavily pregnant, or having just given birth.

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8 Email from Marjorie Stintzi to author, 14 October 2012.
9 Email from Rita MacDonald to author, 15 September 2012. Alan died 1 February 43, and is one of 20 young trainee airmen buried at Terrell. Rita’s parents and younger brother would be interned at Stanley.
10 Ride would be captured, only to escape and found the British Army Aid Group. Elizabeth notes: ‘I don’t know when my father first decided that we had to go, but I wouldn’t be surprised that his experiences that afternoon in Shanghai (see Volume I BAAG Series - Japan’s Intentions in the Far East) added to his convictions, but of course it was combined with [my brother David’s schooling needs]. It reminds me of what he wrote about Carton de Wiart’s visit to Kweilin when the Japanese attack was imminent - that he (C de W) could sense battle in the air.’ Email from Elizabeth Ride to author, 27 December 2011. The afternoon referred to was 13 August 1937, when Ride was caught in the Japanese attack while passing through Shanghai, and experienced being a foreign refugee at first hand.
11 The Argus, 8 July 1940.
However, as evacuation was not a popular move and neither the Hong Kong nor UK governments had made a case for the necessity of leaving Hong Kong, and there was (from the point of view of those resident in the Colony) no immediate threat of Japanese invasion, the population in general was far from convinced that it was in their best interest to leave.

Not surprisingly, a few who were actually in Hong Kong at the time simply contrived to be absent for the evacuation. Hilda Selwyn-Clarke, the wife of Hong Kong’s Director of Medical Services, wanted to stay in the Colony to continue her work with the China Defence League and a number of charitable organisations. Her husband recorded: ‘But a general order had been issued, and it did not contemplate exceptions. The question, therefore, was one of evading the regulations without directly contravening them, and the answer turned out to be quite simple. A day had been appointed for the registration of British wives and children so that embarkation papers could be prepared. The British Consul in Canton, who was still nominally active though restricted by the Japanese to an island in the Pearl River, was a friend of ours and happy to welcome a short visit from Hilda and Mary. They were thus absent from the colony on the day of registration.’

Many families simply lay low and did not register. However, by far the most common (and legal) way of avoiding the evacuation was to exploit the exemption for those in the essential services, and quickly volunteer. The evacuation plan’s definition of such exemptions being only for women without children had been forgotten, and potential war work seemed far more attractive than exile. Elizabeth Gittins: ‘My mother could not imagine anything worse than being sent to Australia.

12 Footprints, Selwyn-Clarke, page 63. Mary was their daughter.
She would have to look after my brother and me with without the help of servants. Consequently she registered to become an air raid warden and did a first aid course. She then became part of the essential services network and therefore her conscience was clear, she could not go.\footnote{Golden Peaches, Long Life, Doery, page 24.} Such moves were even commented on in the press: ‘despite Government orders Mrs. Curtis Otter, formerly Miss Margaret McRobert, who was travel hostess in Sydney for the P. and O. Line some time ago, refused to leave. She obtained an appointment to staff of the naval chief at Hong Kong.’\footnote{The Argus, 24 July 1940.}

This was the essential difference from the earlier evacuations on the Chinese mainland: the potential evacuees in Hong Kong were not in fear of their lives. To them it seemed that the government, rather than the Japanese, were the cause of the proposed disruption to their generally comfortable lives. The military families – already pre-registered thanks to Bunny Browne – took it in their stride and followed orders. To them Hong Kong had never been more than a temporary home and anyway they were given so little notice that evasion and avoidance were impractical; it was the civilian families that tried their hands at draft dodging. On 3 July 1940, after the military families had already left, the Hong Kong papers would report that the previous day the total registration of women and children for evacuation had been 2,129. They quoted a disappointed ‘Government spokesman’ as saying that arrangements were being made to round up all the evacuation dodgers: ‘It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the Government feels that evacuation must be complete. It is especially imperative that all children leave the Colony. We had hoped that all women and children would voluntarily register and
would not force us to apply compulsion. We must now take steps to meet the situation. Evacuation will be enforced without discrimination, and those people who registered their names yesterday will obtain preferential treatment. They will be evacuated in comparative comfort – we can make no such promise to those who did not register... It has been brought to our attention that some women and children are proceeding to Canton. Some are going there because they want to book their own passages elsewhere and are awaiting the opportunity. With this we have no objection: as was announced, people may evacuate at their own expense if they desire.’

The actual registration figures had been: Kowloon, 585 adults and 554 children (1,139); Hong Kong Island, 469 adults and 521 children (990). The total number of adults registered was 1,054, accompanied by 1,075 children. So by no means had all Hong Kong’s British civilian residents accepted compulsory registration, let alone evacuation. The authorities would keep prodding, en masse or individually, but with this broad lack of cooperation the official evacuation (which was also known as the ‘government scheme’) could never be counted as more than a partial success. While the initial evacuation would number some 3,500 civilians (including those known to have evacuated of their own accord), the final total of British civilians who would be captured in Hong Kong and interned in Stanley Camp some 18 months later would be over 2,500. A large number of these were of course men who had stayed legitimately at their posts. Others were women who genuinely in many cases, but less genuinely in others, held essential jobs. Of the remainder, while a handful were ‘tricklebacks’ from the evacuation (or

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15 *Hongkong Telegraph*, 3 July 1940.

16 ‘This figure excludes those civilians serving in the HKVDC, HKRNVR, and HKDCC who were naturally considered to be military POWs.'
had been rejected for onward travel to Australia, as we shall see), and a handful
had arrived in the Colony in the intervening months, the majority had simply never
evacuated. They would contemplate their evasion at leisure.

2.2 Evacuation Begins

It was Monday 1 July 1940. To put it in its historical context it was exactly
twenty-four years after the first day of the Somme, nine days before the official
start of the Battle of Britain, and eighteen months before Hong Kong would finally
be attacked by Japan. Some 1,640 members of military and dockyard families
boarded the RMS Empress of Japan, which had only just returned to the Pacific
after carrying Anzac forces from Australia and New Zealand to Egypt.\(^{17}\) As well as
families from Hong Kong’s garrison, around 10% of the service families on board
had been sent down from Shanghai for evacuation, particularly the 1st Battalion the
Seaforth Highlanders and the 2nd Battalion the East Surrey Regiment.\(^ {18}\)

Thelma Organ’s father was a British government employee at the
Dockyards: ‘One Friday afternoon, when I got home from school, my father,
William Henry Organ, was there which was surprising so early in the day. He told
me that Mum and I were going to go on a trip to Manila the following day, which I
thought was pretty exciting. I couldn’t understand why my mother was crying.
Early the next morning, the women and children assembled on Kowloon wharf and
ironically, we were being evacuated on the Empress of Japan. Each person was
allowed to take a small suitcase and children could take one if they could carry it. A

\(^ {17}\) Not surprisingly the liner was renamed in 1942, becoming the Empress of Scotland.
\(^ {18}\) These families comprised around 219 individuals in total.
friend of my mother’s (Winifred Smee) had a daughter (Sheila) and a toddler (Roger) and needed his pusher so she couldn't take a case as well. She just packed the pusher with what she wanted and carried Roger.’

Army fatigue parties visited homes and married quarters shortly after seven that morning to remove the evacuees’ baggage, which was limited to one trunk and two suitcases for each adult and half that quantity for each child. After registration at the concentration points (the European YMCA and the Hong Kong Club, familiar venues in all cases and a reminder of happier times) and a medical examination of throat and chest, tea and sandwiches were provided to the evacuees who were each given their label. Bunny Browne noted that they were then: ‘sent straight down to the ship which already had details of those due to arrive; and the labelling system enabled the ship’s staff to direct them to the appropriate accommodation without delay.’

Sheridan, at the receiving end, found that this theory turned imperfectly into practice: ‘They arrive in coaches and taxis with their husbands, friends and baggage. It is absolute chaos trying to sort them out. I have a list of names and the number of camp beds required. I escort the family to the far end of the stateroom and show them their beds. Meanwhile more families have arrived and dumped their baggage on any of the beds they come to. Some persuasion is needed to move them to their correct beds. The children are having a great time chasing all over the decks, with parents trying to find them. Eventually all are sorted out, but I can hear some grumbles about officers’ families getting cabins. The first stage of the journey is three days to Manila, where they will be in a camp for some weeks

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19 From her memoires, sent by email from Thelma Organ to author, 14 September 2010.
looked after by the American Army and Red Cross. Before leaving the boat I bid farewell to Mrs Wood and the boys, Ron, Cyril, Dennis and the baby Valerie. It is very sad to see them go, but in the long run it may be a blessing.\textsuperscript{21} But eventually everyone had found their rightful place, and had been joined by their bags. By 10.00 all the passengers were on the ship, most of them crowding the decks looking for familiar faces in the crowds waving them off.

At this stage all they knew was that they were heading for Manila. Although there were rumours about Australia or even New Zealand, and secret negotiations with the former were in progress, Browne noted: ‘Their ultimate destination had not yet been decided.’\textsuperscript{22} They could not know it at the time, but in the majority of cases husbands would not see wives, and children would not see fathers again for more than five years. Many of the youngsters would share the experience of John Hearn, who: ‘saw my father for the last time as he waved to us as the ship left the wharf.’\textsuperscript{23}

Not surprisingly the news of the evacuation dominated the morning’s newspapers which, in parallel with descriptions of the day’s events, gave instructions to all British women and children (except the nurses and essential workers specifically exempted, though the HKVDC had announced that they were no longer accepting new members of the Nursing Detachment) due for the second wave of evacuation on Friday. They were to attend for registration between 10.00 and 12.00 or 14.00 and 16.00 the following day at the Hong Kong Hotel Lower Lounge, the Gloucester Hotel Lower Lounge, or the Hong Kong Club’s main entrance (for those on the Island), and the Peninsular Hotel, the Kowloon Football

\textsuperscript{21} Sheridan’s memoir.
\textsuperscript{22} Letter from Bunny Browne C.B.E. to author, 12 March 2001.
\textsuperscript{23} Email from John Hearn to author, 6 January 2009.
Club, or the Kowloon Cricket Club (for those on the Mainland). It warned them that no individual instruction letters would be provided, that anyone who failed to register would be ‘evacuated after Friday in conditions that will be decidedly uncomfortable’, and that they must have official small-pox vaccination certificates, otherwise they would not be permitted to disembark in Manila.24

In parallel with the British evacuation, the American President liner, *President Coolidge*, which had left Hong Kong early the previous morning for Manila, was instructed by a direct radio messages from the US State Department in Washington to return to Hong Kong and stand by. Although no orders had been given by the American Consulate to Americans to evacuate, the approximately one thousand US citizens residing in the Colony were unofficially advised that it might be a good time to ‘take a vacation’. The *USS Tulsa* and *USS Asheville* stood by to escort the *President Coolidge* if necessary.25 The Netherlands and Norwegian Consulates also instructed their subjects to be ready for evacuation.

The *Hongkong Telegraph* noted that the American Red Cross in the Philippines was anticipating the arrival of 5,000 refugees from Hong Kong, and that the US Army would establish accommodation for them in the barracks at Fort McKinley.26 Not knowing where the refugees’ final destination would be, Australian newspapers also reported the evacuation solely in the context of the Philippines, noting among other things, that: ‘It is reported that President Quezon

24 *Hongkong Telegraph*, 1 July 1940 (Monday) noted that smallpox inoculations would be issued free at the Port Health Office, Queen Mary Hospital and Kowloon Hospital to all persons affected by the evacuation scheme.
25 101 American citizens (75 Americans and 26 Filipinos) left on the *President Coolidge* that night.
26 Named after the assassinated President William McKinley who had been responsible for the United States acquiring the Philippines.
may issue an executive order prohibiting profiteering through the raising of rent. A similar measure was adopted during the 1937 Shanghai evacuation.\textsuperscript{27}

That afternoon the \textit{Empress of Japan}, escorted by two destroyers, left the harbour. Officers and warrant officers wives and families were housed in cabins, but those originally designed for three occupants now generally held extra double-tiered bunks and camp beds sleeping up to nine in total. And as portholes had to be kept shut because of the blackout, the air was stifling. But even so, the other ranks’ wives were not so lucky. Many were in the large first class lounges which had each been filled with fifty or so camp beds – even the emptied swimming pool was similarly equipped. Originally the empty beds were in neat double rows, but as each family established their own space they were soon in a disorganised mess with people, suitcases, and children's toys freely distributed. The vessel’s progress out of Hong Kong’s harbour was rough, but worse was to come as it entered the South China Sea and ran into a typhoon. The evacuees spent an uncomfortable night as the crowded ship creaked and groaned its way through the heavy waves. The stench that wafted into the corridors was a nauseating mixture of body odour and vomit as the great majority of the occupants were prostrated with seasickness for the whole of the two-and-a-half-day trip.

But while the passengers suffered in ignorance of their final destination, even as early as the day following the evacuation \textit{The Mercury} commented that ‘later they will be transferred to Australia.’ It continued: ‘Plans for the reception of these women and children are being formulated by the Federal Government and officers on the staff of the British High Commissioner. It was stated officially today

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Cairns Post}, 2 July 1940. The implication is that American civilians in Shanghai had at that time been evacuated to the Philippines, while the British evacuated to Hong Kong.
\end{flushright}
that the reception of refugees from Hong Kong will impose no financial obligations on either the Commonwealth or the States. Most of them are well to do and will support themselves in Australia. Any supplementary expense will be met by the British Government. The Australian authorities have been requested to arrange accommodation in advance and direct the refugees on arrival.’ It ended, tellingly, with: ‘The Commonwealth Government will co-operate by waiving the normal migration restrictions in regard to Asiatics and half-castes who may arrive as servants with the women and children.’

While the Hong Kong Government had not given up on their hopes to evacuate all those in Hong Kong who had ‘rendered service to Britain or the Colony’, as the first ship sailed it was finally made clear to the population at large that the reason for sending Caucasian British families first was the difficulty of obtaining permission for persons not of pure European descent to land in ‘nearby neutral places’. However, the wealthier sections of the Chinese community in many cases heeded the advice (which had been issued by the three Unofficial Chinese members of the Legislative Council) to leave if they could. The ferries departing for Macau were crowded to capacity with evacuees, there were many bookings for passage to Singapore, and long before the offices of the Osaka Shosen Kaisha (OSK) opened on the morning that the first evacuees left, a large crowd of Chinese people were waiting to book passages on the Shirogoni Maru which was sailing for Canton the following Thursday. Henry Ching: ‘The general fear of remaining in HK in case of war was very real. We were not eligible for evacuation, but my mother and her five children went to Manila at personal expense. I recall that we lived in a

28 *The Mercury*, 2 July 1940.
29 *China Mail* 1 July 1940. The three Chinese Unofficial Members were: Mr Lo Man-Kam, Dr Li Shu-Fan, and Mr W. N. T. Tam.
bungalow very near the hotel where the HK evacuees stayed (Dewey Boulevard?), but the cost was too great and we moved into a house in a village. We eventually returned to HK late in 1940.\textsuperscript{30}

Later on 1 July the newspapers announced that the Government had also arranged for British women and children of Portuguese descent to register for evacuation, with registration taking place the following day between 17.00 and 19.00 at the Club Lusitano and Club de Recreio. At the same time it was stated that the government would immediately provide facilities (at the Chinese Merchants' Club, China Building, from 10.00 till 12.00, and again from 14.00 to 16.00) for the registration for evacuation of Chinese families, with Mr S. M. Churn, J.P., in charge. However for both the Chinese and Portuguese it was made clear that there was no definite guarantee that those registered would be evacuated, and that the registration scheme was primarily intended to ascertain how many people would need to be covered by any future evacuation arrangements.

But as the evacuees on the \textit{Empress of Japan} were reeling from the rough waves, the Red Cross in the Philippines was reeling from the shock of being given just two days notice that several thousand evacuees were on their way, as this staccato 1 July 1940 cablegram from Charles Forster, the Manager of the Philippine Chapter of the Red Cross in Manila to the American Red Cross national headquarters attests:

\begin{quote}
2,000 British women children arrive Wednesday. \textit{Coolidge} bringing American evacuees probably Thursday number unknown. 3,000 British women
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{30} Email from Henry Ching to author, 15 March 2011. Henry is the son of Henry Ching, editor of the \textit{South China Morning Post}, who would be incarcerated and tortured by the Japanese when they invaded.
children arrive Sunday and probably more coming. Suitable accommodations
ockentals difficult problem. Army and navy cooperating – suggest SecWar
SecNav authorize generous cooperation. Exhausting available civilian
resources. We must equip large houses buildings for dormitories. Ask
permission use army barracks very temporary. Hospital medical service
being arranged. British Consul General guarantees care 2,000 dependents
army navy aircorps but seems unprepared meet relief needs civilian women
children. British plan eventually transport their evacuees Australia. Relief
needs Americans probably about equal Shanghai 1937 our participation
e specially early. This emergency we require substantial sum request
immediate preliminary appropriation. This situation comes close war relief
campaign and opening rollcall. Public and official support all our endeavour
most encouraging but situation appears grave with future uncertain.31

Mabel Redwood: 'What a relief it was when the ship reached Manila safely.
A deluge of tropical rain drenched us and our hand luggage as we disembarked.
American marines carried our cases and shepherded us to waiting lines of small
army trucks with tarpaulin covers.'32 It was Wednesday 3 July. The Empress of
Japan arrived at the breakwater at 05.30 and was boarded by quarantine officials
an hour later. Vaccinations – despite what had been done in Hong Kong before
departure - lasted until 11.30 and the ship tied up at Pier 5 just after 12.30.

31 Cablegram from Forster to the American Red Cross, 1 July 1940, file 346g.4115, Record Group 59,
National Archives at College Park, MD. Franklin D. Roosevelt was President of the American Red
Cross at the time. They immediately wired the Philippines requesting an estimate of the amount of
money needed, stating that they desired to be of assistance. Charles Forster, and some of the other
Red Cross staff, would be interned in Santo Tomas Camp after the fall of Manila.
32 It Was Like This..., Redwood, page 53.
Although some relatives, friends and co-workers (from various companies) of the evacuees had tried to obtain passes, only a limited number of qualified people – primarily American Red Cross workers, US Army personnel, and American journalists - were permitted on the wharf when the 26,000-ton liner berthed. The United Press quoted ‘the evacuee wife of the British military leader’ as saying that: ‘the purpose of the evacuation is to relieve the food problem, as a result of the anticipated lengthy blockade. She said that London had informed Hongkong that Britain would refuse the Japanese demands to close the Burma road and had ordered the evacuation to strengthen resistance against any blockade, and also to strengthen the British future negotiations as this would prevent an appeasement similar to Tientsin negotiations’. A fleet of thirty-five US Army trucks, twenty-five buses, and a number of ambulances and private cars took the evacuees to their destinations.

The numbers were great enough that the American authorities had decided to spread the evacuees across Luzon. At 15.00 that day a group of 482 (of the 1,640 evacuees on board) wives and children of British officers of the armed forces were dispatched to the northern town of Baguio in a special train under the direction of the Red Cross, their baggage following later. The remainder were taken to Fort McKinley by a fleet of army trucks as the rain continued. There they found good accommodation and food, and took hot showers as their vessel departed, setting sail again for Hong Kong at 18.00 for the next stage in the evacuation.

Meanwhile, administrative and diplomatic issues were still being addressed. Bunny Browne: ‘The British Consulate staff in Manila was informed that the families were on the way and would require accommodation. [Clearly they needed

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33 The Canberra Times, 5 July 1940.
our help]. The Americans would not allow any British military personnel to go to Manila, so the G.O.C. asked Mr Kilpatrick, the Financial Adviser, who as a civilian was allowed entry to Manila, to sort out the problems. He in turn first asked me to accompany him, but on second thoughts he decided to take a Mr Hubbard of our staff, an older man whose wife was one of the evacuees. So they flew to Manila and took over the task of sorting out the mess. In addition to the problems of accommodation, families required food and money.'

Thelma Organ: 'When we arrived in Manila, we were put in Fort McKinley U.S. Army Camp as the soldiers were out on manoeuvres. My friends and I thought it was OK as the camp had a cinema, swimming pool, bowling alley, etc and we had the run of the camp. In the ablution block there were wash basins along one wall, open showers along another and toilets along the third wall. My friends and I used to go in and sit on the toilets and watch all the “prim & proper” ladies come in and try to use the facilities while keeping themselves covered.'

Just a few days later, as Fort McKinley had to be cleared before the civilian evacuees arrived, the evacuated service families were moved out. Mabel Redwood and her daughters, among a hundred others, were taken to a Women’s International Club in the heart of Manila. Others were housed in Intramuros. A group of about thirty, including Thelma Organ, were sent to a disused lunatic asylum with grass waist high and bars on the windows and doors. Some, like Doug Langley-Bates whose father was in the Royal Engineers, were sent further afield: ‘We first were sent to a sugar plantation just outside Manila, it was called Carmen

35 Thelma Organ’s memoires.  
36 Intramuros was an attractive area of Spanish Colonial architecture at the time, which would be flattened when the Americans re-took Manila towards the end of the war.
Del Pampanga. We were welcomed by the American owners and their employees. For young children it was marvellous, no school, warm weather, swimming pool, tasting the cut sugar cane, having a ride in the plantation's light plane.37

Others were moved out of Fort McKinley in larger groups; it was the rainy season so most resorts were empty and available for the evacuees. Ron Brooks was familiar with barracks life as prior to evacuation he and his family had lived at Stanley Fort where his father was a Master Gunner: 'We lived for a while at a US Army camp and then were billeted in a Spanish hotel Las Palmas del Mallorca.'38 Some three hundred evacuees were transferred with Brooks, his brother and mother, to that hotel (where eight red cross nurses ‘worked night and day’). The generosity of the locals was much appreciated, and a letter of acknowledgement published in the ‘Manila Bulletin’ listed their many gifts to their Hong Kong visitors: toys, clothes, cookies and juice, magazines, candies, powder and skin lotion, pillows, canned goods, handkerchiefs, puzzles and so forth.39 The dispersal echoed in many ways Hong Kong’s handling of the Shanghai evacuation three years earlier.

Meanwhile in Hong Kong, further registration for the next – purely civilian - phase of the evacuation was being encouraged in parallel. No doubt with this in mind, the first evacuees’ reception was reported positively in the papers back at Hong Kong: ‘ “We may be hard pushed to find accommodation for the next lot of evacuees, but by the time they arrive everything will be fixed up,” an official said this morning. “We intend to give everyone a good time and real American and Filipino hospitality. We want them all to feel that they will have a home away from

37 Email from Doug Langley-Bates to author, 4 May 2008.
38 From an account sent by email from Ron Brooks to author, 26 January 2004.
39 China Mail, 18 July 1940.
home”. As letters ordering registration and evacuation were still not being sent to individuals, general messages were being broadcast by the radio station – ZBW – and by the newspapers. In the summer heat, large queues of women and children formed outside the Kowloon registration centres, despite the fact that newspapers had carried a notice saying that children did not need to accompany their mothers unless needing vaccinations. The Peninsular Hotel, the Kowloon Cricket Club, and the Kowloon Football Club each had one hundred or more people waiting an hour before the official opening time of 10.00. Benches were provided, but so many were waiting at the Peninsular Hotel (where one of the wine cellars had been converted into a vaccination centre) that they decided to open 45 minutes early.

The government also belatedly published a revised list of exemptions from evacuation, including:

- Women who have been accepted by the Director of Medical Services and the director of A.R.P. for essential service.
- Women without children in the Colony who are employed in businesses or in Government Departments, and who are certified by their employers or head of department to be doing work of sufficient importance to justify their retention.
- Women and children for whose departure in the near future arrangements have already been made.
- Women and children who cannot safely travel at present on medical grounds.41

Newspapers also reported that the Chamber of Commerce had held a

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40 *Hongkong Telegraph*, 3 July 1940.
41 *Hongkong Telegraph*, 2 July 1940. This edition also carried an article claiming that semi-official circles in London stated that the ‘food situation’ was the primary cause of the evacuation.
special meeting and had decided to send a request to the Government to rescind the evacuation scheme. However, the Chamber of Commerce themselves refused to either deny or confirm the reports.

Two days after the first wave of evacuees had arrived in the Philippines, the second stage of the evacuation – on Friday 5 July - made use of two Empress ships, the *Empress of Japan* (which had by now returned from delivering the first evacuees) and the *Empress of Asia*. Between them they would carry a further 1,774 women and children to Manila. These were primarily Hong Kong families, or families of the business community, and they were British: those of Portuguese or Chinese descent were not included. However, while not officially defined as ‘military’, the majority of these families had the husband/father, and, often, older sons, as members of the HKVDC, the HKRNVR, or the HKDDC. The total officially evacuated would now reach 3,414. Unlike the service families, the second wave of evacuees had at least had a few days to prepare.

Isabelle Spoors’ father was a prison officer: ‘I recall the anxiety in everyone’s voice as they realised that they had only one week to pack up for the evacuation. When I say “pack up”, even I realised that we couldn’t take very much, in fact almost everything was left behind.’ In fact all the families were in the same situation. Michael Stewart: ‘My mother and I were only allowed to take with us on the ship one suitcase each, so had to leave behind nearly all our clothes, family photograph albums, pictures, books, toys, furniture, silver, jewellery, etc. (We did not know it at the time, but we were never to see our possessions again as they were all looted by the Japanese, or by the starving Chinese, during the Japanese

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42 Email from Isabelle Spoors to author, 6 September 2010.
occupation of Hong Kong. My father put our silver and valuables into the Bank, but the Japanese also looted them.)"  

The evacuees started to arrive at the reception centres long before the appointed time. Dorothy Neale, whose husband Fred worked for Butterfield & Swire: 'Freddie took us to the Hong Kong Hotel in Pedder Street, as directed, on the morning of July 7th [sic] and we found the street crowded with other families and luggage. Freddie had thoughtfully roped Chris’ folding pram onto my trunk and the second cabin trunk I had for the children was crammed with big tins of Cow and Gate milk powder, Heinz tinned baby food and one or two packets of American-made disposable nappies, which was a very new product, expensive and only to be used in emergencies.'  

The three locations on Hong Kong Island were the Hong Kong Club, the Gloucester Arcade (whose entrance was on Des Voeux Road), and the Hong Kong Hotel (where the evacuees entered the downstairs lounge by way of the main entrance). As in the earlier evacuation, ropes and volunteer helpers guided the evacuees to desks to receive their identification labels and be relieved of their suitcases, which would be taken to Kowloon and returned to them on board ship. Their passports were examined and stamped in purple HONGKONG OFFICIAL EVACUEE JULY 1940. The snack bar at the back of the Hong Kong Hotel had been turned into a temporary medical department where health certificates (primarily to check for smallpox inoculations) were distributed. The evacuees then sat down

43 Notes on the History of Robert Michael Stewart, Michael Stewart. For an example of typical household effects lost to the invasion, see Appendix Five – Herbert Leslie Langley Possessions lost to Japanese.  
44 Green Jade, Neale, page 50. Several evacuees recalled the date as 7 July 1940 (the date that the ships in fact reached Manila), but clearly the ships had been boarded on the 5th.  
45 Both the latter were on the site of today's Landmark building.
in Mac's Cafeteria, waiting to be taken down to the Star Ferry for transfer to their ships. While some of the women had a few drinks to combat the stress of this disruption to their lives, Pedder Street’s parking spaces were cleared for the lorries taking their suitcases down to the two ships, and for the buses that would take the refugees down to the harbour. Some asked for extra drinks, stuck straws in them, and pushed the straws through the rattan window screens so that their husbands – waiting uncomfortably outside in the strong July sunshine – could take a sip. Then, in bus-sized batches the evacuees were brought out onto the street, mingling with the growing crowd of husbands, friends and relatives while official Conductors – identified by their green brassards – hurried around, separating evacuees from well-wishers, and guiding the former into their waiting vehicles. As each bus moved off with its party, a small crowd of husbands and friends followed it northwards for the few hundred yards to the Star Ferry pier where a special area next to the travel office and telephone booths had been roped off and signed: ‘Evacuees Only.’\(^46\) Here the evacuees sat and waited for the ferries which were running every five minutes to handle the extra demand. As each ferry made fast to the pier and discharged its incoming passengers, the normal embarking passengers were held up until a batch of 25 to 30 evacuees had gone on board and were safely installed in a cabin again marked ‘For Evacuees Only’.

Arriving at Kowloon, those bound for the smaller ship, the Empress of Asia (these were the evacuees who had registered at the Hong Kong Hotel and Hong Kong Club), were marshalled along to the gang-plank to Number 1 Wharf, while the others, destined for the larger Empress of Japan, were placed on board buses again and driven along Canton Road to Number 5 Wharf. At both wharves,  

\(^{46}\) In 1940 Hong Kong Island's Star Ferry pier was considerably further inland than it is today.
arrangements were the same. Down the centre of the wharf a corridor with bamboo barricades on both sides had been erected, ending in a gang-plank going up into the ship. Police officers at the entrance assisted the Conductors of the parties in seeing that only evacuees entered.47

As in the earlier evacuation, some were lucky enough to share private cabins while others were accommodated in public areas. Dorothy Neale aboard the *Empress of Asia* was allocated two berths in a cabin which she shared with Bubbles Davies and all their children and luggage, but they still considered themselves better off than the hundreds of other passengers who were put into dormitory-style accommodation on lower decks.

The ships pulled away from the wharves. Susan Anslow, whose father Frank Anslow was a member of the Government’s Senior Clerical and Accounting Staff, recalled: ‘We sailed from Hong Kong in a storm and it must have been an absolute nightmare for Mummy, who was just 22 years old at the time. She was the sort of person who can get seasick while the ship is still alongside the dock! The ship was desperately crowded with 3 people in every single berth cabin and stretchers set up in rows in the lounges. On top of all that, for the first time in her life she had to look after me on her own (after growing up most of her life with servants) and having to try to wash nappies in salt water while feeling seasick must have been ghastly.’48 Just two days later, on 7 July 1940, the *Empress of Asia* docked at pier 7 at about noon with 647 evacuees on board (and 100 ordinary passengers for Manila). About 130 of the refugees had made previous arrangements to stay with friends in the city and were disembarked first. Eveline Harloe: ‘Getting off the ship

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47 *China Mail*, Friday July 5, Page 4.
48 From a memoir supplied by email from Susan Anslow to author, 21 July 2009.
was even more tedious than boarding it, the queues were long and slow moving, what was the hurry anyway, so I sat, surrounded by our baggage, whilst the children were here, there and everywhere, anxious to disembark and get going. The usual formula pertained as it did whenever we were involved with officialdom throughout the war. Finally, our son exploded with exasperation, said he, complaining loudly, “I’m fed up with being a civilian, I’m going to be an Admiral!”

By 18.00 the remainder had been trucked to the newly vacated Fort McKinley and were there housed and fed by the American army.

The larger Empress of Japan arrived at about 16.00, but as the Empress of Asia had not yet been cleared and the weather was rough, General Henry Conger Pratt (commanding the Philippines Division at Fort McKinley) decided not to disembark these evacuees until the following morning, 8 July.

Pier 3 in Manila was the scene of a superb demonstration of military efficiency and precision that day as United States Army troops, with General Pratt again supervising the proceedings, disembarked 1,111 women and children. One hundred and twenty-five of these passengers had also made arrangements to stay with friends, and again these were disembarked first; the remainder went to the fort. The operation was concluded in less than three hours with the first evacuee leaving the ship at 08.05 and the last at 11.00.

However, the influx of British refugees had strained the Philippines’ ability to support the Caucasian lifestyle. Colonel Robert M. Carswell of the US Coastal Artillery noted: ‘In view of the fact that the arrival of these evacuees practically doubled the Caucasian population in this locality and created a highly undesirable shortage of proper housing facilities and a probable shortage of foodstuffs

49 Eveline Harloe’s memoire.
normally consumed only by Americans and Europeans, it was deemed wise to take action to ensure their prompt movement to Australia. To accomplish this Radio No. 457 was sent to the Department of State on July 10, 1940, requesting that this condition be reported to the British Embassy in Washington and that the British authorities be urged to arrange for the early movement of evacuees to other places.\textsuperscript{50} But the British authorities were already aware of the need to move on. The arrival of the refugees had coincided with the opening, on 10 July, of the radio link between Australia and the Philippine Islands. This was inaugurated by a conversation between Prime Minister Menzies in Australia, and the United States High Commissioner to the Philippines, Mr Francis B Sayre, and between the British Consul General in Manila, Mr Stanley Wyatt-Smith, and the Australian Postmaster General, Mr Harold Thorby. Wyatt-Smith told Thorby that there were between 3,000 and 4,000 British women and children from Hong Kong in the Philippines. Most of them, he said, would leave for Australia as soon as transport was available.\textsuperscript{51}

But now the first stage was mainly over. The great majority of evacuees had successfully left Hong Kong. Spread around Luzon, both they and their hosts were anxiously awaiting the next stage.

The Japanese had also noticed their departure. They had of course been aware of the earlier evacuations of Allied civilians from cities in China which were the direct targets of Japanese attacks. Now, for the first time, an Allied population had been evacuated of civilians pre-emptively of any Japanese action. The conclusion was obvious: the Allies expected Japan to attack that location – and

\textsuperscript{50} Report to The High Commissioner to the Philippines from R. M. Carswell, 17 August 1940, file 346g.4115, Record Group 59, National Archives at College Park, MD.
\textsuperscript{51} Sydney Morning Herald, 11 July 1940.
sooner rather than later. This, to the Japanese, was the first demonstration of the Allies’ assumption of war.

Officially they expressed surprise and dismay at this ‘unfriendly act’, which they portrayed as designed to attract American attention to the Far East in an attempt to encourage them to thwart Japan's moves. The Japanese War, Navy and Foreign Offices told Western reporters that they thought the evacuation incomprehensible and could not comprehend the motive behind it. The Army’s spokesman added that Japanese troops were not threatening Hong Kong but were simply blockading war supplies from Hong Kong to Chungking and had no intention of crossing the border into the Colony. The Navy spokesman stated that it appeared that the people at Hong Kong were panicking, but professed not to know the reason why, as the Japanese knew of no disturbance there that could spark such a reaction. In a calming move, British authorities in Tokyo let it be known that the evacuation was just a precaution due to misgivings about Japanese accusations of British connivance with the Chungking authorities. Its aim, they explained, was to forestall the possibility of any incident occurring that might precipitate a clash, and also to conserve the Colony's food in the event of trouble. However, they predicted that the tension would blow over without serious consequences.52

Following a meeting with his Japanese Consul General counterpart in Hong Kong, the American Consul General in Hong Kong, Addison E. Southard, reported to Washington on 8 July 1940: ‘[The Japanese Consul General] said that he could not imagine that Japan would at the present time bring any kind of pressure to bear on Hong Kong which would justify the evacuation move. In his opinion Japanese action against Hong Kong would be avoided because it would immediately bring

\[52\text{ The Canberra Times, 5 July 1940.}\]
repercussions forcing the Japanese to move against the Philippines, Indochina, Singapore and the Dutch East Indies. In his judgment such widespread activities would be foolish and unlikely in that it would for the time [sic] destroy much needed Japanese trade and would accomplish no more than might eventually be accomplished by natural developments.\textsuperscript{53} Interestingly, with the omission of Pearl Harbour, he was describing the Japanese plan of attack eighteen months into the future.

### 2.3 Reception in the Philippines

While the evacuees and the American authorities in the Philippines both knew that their stay was temporary and were trying to expedite the move to Australia, no one was yet certain when that move would come. As they waited, the evacuees had to make the best of things but their lives were effectively on hold – no schools, no work, and little in the way of entertainment. While on the face of it they were made very welcome (Mabel Redwood noted: 'Our first meal was fantastic: a party of Filipino waiters from the swish Manila Hotel arrived and rapidly laid the table with snow white tablecloths... and full place settings for a banquet. An American Red Cross official called in and made a speech of welcome – that and the magnificent meal boosted morale sky high')\textsuperscript{54} the American authorities wanted them out as soon as possible. Radio 457, mentioned by Carswell, had summarised the arrival to date of 3,442 British refugees, 67

\textsuperscript{53} Telegram from Southard to Secretary of State, 8 July 1940, file 346g.4115, Record Group 59, National Archives at College Park, MD. In December 1941, Southard would himself be interned by the Japanese at Stanley.

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{It Was Like This...}, Redwood, page 54.
American, and 34 Filipino, noting that potentially a further one thousand British and two thousand American evacuees could arrive. Although Manila was a large city of 684,000 inhabitants, only some 7,000 US citizens lived in the entire country (excluding American servicemen); 6,500 extra westerners simply would not fit. And with all of the government scheme evacuees now being in the Philippines, the crowding, the bureaucracy, and the strange foods were starting to have an impact on the evacuees too.

Pat Guard, whose father would leave Hong Kong before the invasion: 'Here we slept on camp beds again, in an improvised dormitory with many others, and had to wash in communal facilities which upset my mother as she was washing among some of her pupils! We were issued with army “mess tins” and mugs and queued for meals, tasting some strange and unaccustomed American food, including peanut butter!'55 She was not the only one to wonder about the food. Richard Neve: ‘I hated the unfamiliar American style food; brown ‘mashed potato’ (hash browns) with fried egg for breakfast, how strange. Who would want to drink tomato or prune juice for breakfast? Who would want to eat spaghetti and meatballs in tomato sauce for lunch? Ugh!'56

The lack of privacy for the residents of the barracks and tents of Fort McKinley was a huge shock to those used to a life of privilege in Hong Kong. For those staying in barracks, there were ninety camp beds in rows in each large dormitory, with just two or three feet of space between each bed. However, there were only two mirrors, one at each end of the long hall, and nowhere to store clothes but under the beds themselves. The toilets were downstairs by the

55 Letter from Pat Guard via Barbara Anslow, 3 October 2008. Her mother was a teacher at the army school on Garden Road, Hong Kong.
56 A Wartime Childhood, Richard Neve.
showers, several of which stood in a row with no partitions between them, and with large windows wide open to the gaze of every passer by. However, the camp was situated in park-like surroundings, and the adults found the meals hearty and enjoyable. Generally the evacuees were confined to barracks, but occasionally they were able to take taxis into the city to visit friends in other quarters. The Red Cross had provided bedding and other necessities for the refugees, but some women tore up the sheets to use for babies’ nappies and made off with the toilet rolls and bars of soap that were supplied daily for their use. Eveline Harloe noted: ‘One distracted woman had a baby who was teething and cried all night. Shouts of “drown it”, “strangle the brat”, etc. mixed with the screams of the child. Most of the children slept through all this but others found it hard to settle, with the din going on. Then all the children got diarrhoea. It was difficult at nights, the lights were put out at 9, so one had to find one’s way downstairs in the dark, and go to the dispensary for help - clean sheets – medicine and other aids to cope with the ailing children.’

Some evacuees lost patience with the overcrowding and the anti-social behaviour that it sometimes exacerbated, and privately found their own accommodation instead. Gloria Grant, whose father was a Hong Kong prison officer: ‘On arrival in the Philippines we were taken to Fort McKinley where we were allocated camp beds in a large tent. We’re not sure how many families there were in our tent. After several weeks, our mother found a small flat to rent in

57 The camp was renamed Fort Bonifacio post-war, and those park-like grounds are now home – among other things – to the largest American war cemetery in the Far East, exceeding 17,000 graves.
58 Eveline Harloe’s memoire.
central Manila, overlooking Subic Bay.\textsuperscript{59} Sometimes these arrangements were organised through friends and family, and sometimes simply through the generosity of Americans living on Luzon. Michael Stewart was in the former group: ‘We stayed with [my uncle] John Lander and his family. (John was a senior manager in “Asiatic Oil”, which is what Shell was called in the Far East then. One of his tasks had been to organise the transport of oil to China via the famous “Burma Road”.) I attended an American school in Manila temporarily.’\textsuperscript{60} Andrin Dewar and family were in the latter: ‘A young American couple called Lt and Mrs Wray visited the Fort a few days later and offered to take one adult with one child (not a baby, as they had yet to have one of their own) and my mother and I were the lucky “adoptees” for the duration of our time in that country.’\textsuperscript{61} But in these interactions there was an imbalance. Whilst the Americans pitied the British evacuees, the British in turn envied the Americans. Why weren’t the Americans being evacuated, when the Philippines was even closer to Japan than Hong Kong was? But although the State Department encouraged their citizens to leave China and Japan and other countries in the Far East, and many dependents of US servicemen departed the Philippines, in 1940 the US Government saw no particular reason for a general civilian evacuation of the country.

In parallel with the evacuees settling in, paperwork for the next stage of the evacuation had to be completed. Rosemary Read, whose father, like Pat Guard’s, would leave Hong Kong before the invasion, recalled tellingly: ‘I seem to remember

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{59} Email from Gloria Grant to author, 23 September 2010.
  \item \textsuperscript{60} \textit{Notes on the History of Robert Michael Stewart}, Michael Stewart. John, who had won a gold medal for Britain rowing in the 1928 Olympics and was the son of Hong Kong’s Bishop Lander, would return to Hong Kong before the outbreak of war, join 1\textsuperscript{st} Battery HKVDC and be killed in the defence of Stanley on Christmas Day 1941. His family (wife Betty and son Gerard) stayed in the Philippines and would be interned at Santo Tomas.
  \item \textsuperscript{61} Letter from Andrin Dewar to author, 3 November 2010.
\end{itemize}
in Fort McKinley there were Fowlers, Wheelers, Meffans, Simpsons and Finchers, and after Manila not everyone went to Australia." Isabelle Spoors added: 'There was a process of interviewing of the evacuees, including me, by the Australian authorities.' Many of the relatively few Eurasians who had been considered 'British enough' to be evacuated, would not make the cut.

According to American records, 1,185 refugees were initially received at Fort McKinley in the first wave of evacuation and all had been transferred to civilian quarters by noon on 6 July 1940. On the next two days a further 1,469 arrived and many of these would also be transferred out as more civilian accommodation became available. On 16 July, 906 left for civilian accommodation provided by the Red Cross, leaving just 292 (most of whom would eventually be evacuated to Australia on 28 July). Fifty were admitted to the Station Hospital at Fort McKinley, and thirteen were admitted to Sternberg General Hospital, of whom one (a woman) still remained on 8 August 1940.

But in order to find the requisite housing for so many non-natives, another location outside Manila had to be identified. Approximately 1,700 evacuees in total therefore took the train up to Baguio, though all would alight first at San Fernando and some would stay there. The remainder had been settled in the hotels or amongst private homes in and around Manila.

Standing at an altitude of 5,000 feet and offering a much cooler climate than Manila, Baguio, the 'summer capital' of the Philippines, had always been an American favourite and was an obvious destination. Eveline Harloe was heavily

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62 Email from Rosemary Read to author, 18 September 2010.
63 Email from Isabelle Spoors to author, 6 September 2010.
64 Report to The High Commissioner to the Philippines from R. M. Carswell, 17 August 1940. File 346g.4115, Record Group 59, National Archives at College Park, MD.
pregnant for the trip: ‘One morning early we piled into springless Army jeeps, and were driven to the station - the roads cobbled – I sat there, holding on to my tummy desperately. The carriages were third class – just hard wooden benches. There was a water canister at either end of each carriage. The windows were wide open, the engine a coal burner. It was a very hot August [sic] in the tropical heat. At first the new experience kept the children interested but as the day wore on, everyone got hot, tired, dirty and thirsty, the water had run out, the children were all crying for a drink, we could do nothing but try to comfort them. At last in the late afternoon, we arrived at the station, at the foothills of Baguio. Getting on the train – the soldiers had dealt with our suitcases, but getting off was entirely another matter. There was no platform, so it was a long way down to the ground. My son got down, then I had to collect our 4 suitcases and other bits and pieces, put them at the top of the steps, lift my daughter down, and then lift each case down, which was not easy.’ But this, of course was just the start. The station was at a relatively low altitude, and from there the party took buses up the narrow and dangerous road – with sheer drops of a thousand feet or more to one side – that led up through the mountains to the city above. Leilah Wood, whose father would simply disappear during the war, wrote home: ’We went to town in trucks then in a train for 6 hours and then in a bus for 2 hours. It was very dangerous in the bus for it went Zig Zag which was very frightening. At last we arrived in Baguio and were taken to the Evergreen Boarding House... There are Igorots that come from the mountains and they are meant to eat people.’

65 Eveline Harloe's memoires.
66 Letter to her sister Alice, 29 August 1940, via email from Barbara Anslow, 3 February 2009. ‘Igorot’, in Ilocano (the language of that part of Luzon), simply means ‘Mountain People’, and they are still known by that term today. The railway, alas, closed a long time ago though its course can
They arrived fairly late at night, exhausted and still covered in soot from the train, at the Red Cross Centre in Baguio. The Red Cross took all particulars, fortified the evacuees with tea and refreshments, and allocated them to small hotels and boarding houses (such as the Evergreen and the Shamrock), or various second-homes that had been put at their disposal by wealthy American citizens of Manila, or to the Red Cross Centre itself (established at Camp John Hay) where the majority of the evacuees were housed.

Pat Guard was one of those staying at Baguio's Shamrock Hotel. She recalled another outing as the locals did their best to entertain the visitors: ‘Another vague memory I have is of a coach outing to an "open cast" gold mine!'\(^{67}\) When they arrived, the American superintendent who met them complained vociferously that he had not been told there were children in the party, stating that a gold mine was not a suitable place for children, and that if he had known he would not have agreed to show them round. However he was prevailed upon to let the children in provided that their parents took full responsibility for any accidents. But he was right; it was hot, stuffy, noisy and a great disappointment to the children. Instead of the nuggets of gleaming gold they had expected there were just conveyor belts full of dull chips of grey rock passing noisily by. However, overall Baguio was a popular spot and the evacuees were happy to be away from the heat and crowds of Manila.

The Baguio train had stopped at San Fernando, west of Baguio on the coast.

\(^{67}\) Letter from Pat Guard via Barbara Redwood, 3 October 2008.
While the majority of the evacuees carried on from there up into the mountains in trucks, others stayed. Druscilla Wilson, whose husband was Lieutenant-Colonel John Wilson in command of Hong Kong’s Royal Engineers, noted that there was: ‘a small seaside place available called San Fernando where 36 of us could go, and we were able to go there. The American Red Cross looked after us very well; they had turned one coach into a sort of HQ-canteen-information bureau. We were all given a packet of sandwiches and there was also milk and Coca-Cola and even whiskey for those in need of it. The train journey lasted about 8 hours and then we were bundled out onto a gloomy platform and into lorries with wooden seats and canvas covers. There followed another journey through the dark and rain till finally the few lights of our destination showed and we could hear and smell the sea.’

In this camp there was a main building, an annex and two or three cottages which stood at one end of a picturesque bay with mountains in the distance. It was the middle of the rainy season and very warm and humid, and as the evacuees’ clothes did not arrive for another two weeks they were forced to live out of the single small case of necessities that each family had carried with them.

Some reached this location under false pretences. Mary Neve should have continued to Baguio with the majority of the army wives, but discovered that the Royal Naval officers’ dependants – including her friend Doreen Ralph - were going to the seaside holiday resort at Miramonte at San Fernando. She and her children simply went with them. By the time the person checking everyone onto the bus discovered that their names were not on the list it was too late to prevent them continuing.

68 From an account held by her daughter-in-law, Betty Wilson.
San Fernando was clean and comfortable with narrow but beautiful beaches, but the seas off shore, often calm and reflective, could also be dangerous. Richard Neve: ‘One day we were all in the water when a rainstorm that had been approaching from across the bay suddenly hit. We were used to swimming in a tropical downpour and often did so in Hong Kong. Indeed it was rather fun, for the rain flattened the sea and sometimes, if one kept ones slightly open mouth within half an inch of the surface one could let the rainwater flow in and drink it before it mixed with the salt of the sea. However on this occasion a fierce squall accompanied the rain and a sea soon built up. We were only 20 to 30 yards out and our parents called us in. Everything was fine until we reached the breakers that had quickly developed about five yards from the steeply sloping shore. Suddenly I was swimming flat out, making no progress against a fierce undertow and not yet able to touch the bottom. I began to panic and called out to my mother who waded into the waves grabbed my outstretched hand and pulled me ashore badly frightened. The same thing happened to a number of other children. We heard the next day that an evacuee child at another hotel further round the bay had been drowned when the storm reached there.’

The rumour was true. On 21 July 1940 Patrick Hutton, the six-year-old son of Sergeant Hutton of the Seaforths from Shanghai, had drowned while swimming in Paringao Bay, near Bauang. Patrick had achieved the sad distinction of being the first Hong Kong evacuee to lose his life – not in war, but in the constant background noise of accident and misfortune. He would not be the last.

In the end, the Neves were persuaded to go to Baguio anyway. From there,

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69 A Wartime Childhood, Richard Neve.
70 China Mail, 22 July 1940.
with the great majority of evacuees, they would leave for Australia.

2.4 Not Continuing to Australia

But not everybody would continue the journey. Those who did not can be placed into three groups: those few who had reason (and generally official blessing) to return to Hong Kong, those who simply remained in the Philippines, and those who earlier than others realised that the authorities had just wanted them out of the Colony, and once that they had satisfied that simple ambition they were in fact free to go wherever else they desired.

The returnees started first; in fact some evacuees had to return to Hong Kong almost as soon as they arrived in the Philippines. The Redwoods, plus Mrs Penney and her daughter Bettine had accepted a billet at a sugar plantation sixty miles from Manila: Calamba Sugar Estate. Some twenty-five evacuees were already there. Mabel Redwood: ‘The luxury of the bungalow to which we six were allotted took our breath away. Set high on stilts and reached by a short flight of steps, it was fashioned entirely of nipa palm... From a wide veranda, insect-proofed doors led to two identical rooms, each furnished as a bed-sitting room including desk, telephone, and two of the largest beds I have ever seen.’

She continued on 24 July 1940: ‘After breakfast the manager’s wife took me aside and gave me the shattering news that [my husband Will] had died suddenly the previous day. She had apparently noticed a brief report of this in the morning.

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71 It Was Like This..., Redwood, page 57. Having asked - doubtfully - about the sanitary arrangements when initially offered this accommodation, Redwood was somewhat embarrassed when she saw the mother-of-pearl toilet seats.
paper, and had immediately telephoned the British consul in Manila for confirmation.’

Interestingly, in an evacuation prompted entirely by the threat of war, the Hong Kong authorities had no pre-existing plan for appropriate action upon the deaths of the men left behind. In this case the Redwoods decided to return immediately to Hong Kong. They were the first, but certainly not the last, to go back; a surprising number of those successfully evacuated to Australia and safety would eventually end up back at home and in harm’s way. After returning to Hong Kong, Mabel’s daughter Barbara noted: ‘The Dockyard said we couldn’t stay on in HK but could either be re-evacuated to Australia, or sail back to UK (Battle of Britain time). We only wanted to stay in HK as so far there had been no Jap attack, and we girls had permanent jobs in HK, and my Mum would get a job. Eventually the Dockyard agreed, so it was our own fault entirely that we ended up in Stanley!!’

Rosemary Wood and her sister Sylvia had a similar experience. Their father was in the RASC but their mother had not been evacuated as she was being treated for cancer at the Queen Mary Hospital: ‘I know that we evacuees were all gathered together at the dockside in Manila about to board the ship bound for Australia after the delay. I don’t know that ship’s name, it might have been one of the afore mentioned Empresses, when a British Naval officer came through the assembled crowd calling my name and my sisters’ and when he found us, said he had orders

72 Ibid.
73 Email from Barbara Redwood to author, 5 January 2008. Stanley, of course, refers to Stanley Internment Camp, where enemy aliens waited out the war. As a Dockyard family, the Admiralty had booked them to sail back from Hong Kong to the UK on the Narkunda in late August 1940, but the family vetoed the idea.
that we were not to go with the other evacuees.\textsuperscript{74} They were soon back in Hong Kong where their mother was very ill in hospital. Let out for a period, she was readmitted to die in mid-December 1940; the appropriately named Major Arthur Grieve Commanding 12 Company RASC in Hong Kong would sign her death certificate.

Ellen Field was another who would return: ‘With my mother and my sister “Billie” and my three young daughters – Virginia aged six, Barbara aged four and Wendy who was just over a year old – I travelled as far as Manila, where the American community and Red Cross workers welcomed us and where we were to be transferred to ships sailing under escort. But the journey proved to be an uncomfortable and stressful one: the ship – a palatial Canadian Pacific liner – was over-crowded under troop-carrier conditions. We were refugees; the prospect of further discomfort and loneliness which I felt was unnecessary even at this moment of panic, angered me and I decided instead to return with my little family to Hong Kong and Frank.’\textsuperscript{75} While Field’s book does not mention the subject, it is probable that she was Eurasian and was able to return on that basis.

Even as early as the arrival in the Philippines, some evacuees with more initiative than others realised that the evacuation was in essence not about arriving in the Philippines or even Australia, but simply about being out of Hong Kong. Provided they did not try to return to the Colony, evacuees were essentially free to leave the government scheme and move elsewhere at any time. A surprising number took advantage of this fact even before reaching Australia.

\textsuperscript{74} Email from Rosemary Wood to author, 25 August 2011. The children and their stepmother would spend most of the war at Rosary Hill.
\textsuperscript{75} *Twilight in Hong Kong*, Field, page 11. Field’s husband was Frank Lee of the HKVDC Armoured Car Platoon, who had two brothers also in the Volunteers.
Maunie Bones, whose Merchant Navy father would leave Hong Kong before the invasion, was one of those who deviated from the main evacuation course at this point: ‘My mother was not happy with the thought of travelling to Australia so, through a friend of my father’s, she obtained passage for the two of us from Manila to Shanghai where her mother and three siblings were living. I have no memory of our departure from Manila, nor arrival in Shanghai although I have many memories of our time there, perhaps because by then I was a little older.’

Staying in Shanghai for about a year they would be evacuated again, with her grandmother, an aunt and a cousin, on the Dutch ship *Tjitjalengka* bound for Surabaya in Java. A second aunt remained in Shanghai as she was awaiting the finalisation of a divorce; she ended up in the same prison camp as her ex-husband and his girlfriend. Eventually, when war threatened, the extended family would depart Java for Sydney on another Dutch ship, the *Ruys*.

It was perhaps easier for the army wives to take control of their situation in a similar way, as they were more used to dealing with such moves. Elizabeth Weedon, the pregnant wife of Captain Martin Weedon, 1st Middlesex, together with two other mothers – Nancy Hunt (wife of Major Edward Hunt, HKSRA) and her two children, and Diana Forrester (wife of Major Basil Forrester, 965 Defence Battery) with one, chose to leave the Philippines for the familiarity of Singapore. Mark Weedon (the result of his mother’s pregnancy) and his mother would later be evacuated from Singapore directly to the UK.

A third group of the evacuees simply stayed in the Philippines. In some cases it was the result of personal choice, in others pregnancy, and for some

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76 From memores sent by email from Maunie Bones to author, 21 October 2008.
77 Mark Weedon, thanks to that move, was born 28 October 1940 in Singapore General Hospital.
unfortunates, illness. Ada Jordan and Eleanor Jessop, for example, both fell ill in Manila and could not travel at the same time as the other evacuees. They stayed behind with their six sons ranging in age from thirteen months to thirteen years. They, and at least eight ladies with Philippine-born babies – the first to be born probably being Hugh Dulley, in Baguio on 26 July 1940 - would eventually continue to Australia, independent of the main group. Twenty-five further evacuees simply decided that they would stay in the Philippines.

2.5 Plans For Australia

Despite the accidental deaths, the returns to Hong Kong by some, and the successful deviations to other destinations by a larger number, the great majority of evacuees were preparing to leave the Philippines. Split between Manila, Baguio, and San Fernando, they waited to be moved on.

In parallel with the original departures from Hong Kong, Australia had been making plans for the next stage. On 2 July 1940 the Australian Prime Minister cabled the Premier of each state to warn them of the evacuation and ask that, should arrangements be made for a proportion of the evacuees to be sent to their States, they should arrange for their reception and placement in suitable accommodation. The cable added that further details as to the type of accommodation required, the numbers likely to arrive by each shipment, and the approximate dates of arrival would be forthcoming closer to the time, and it confirmed that neither the Commonwealth nor State Governments would be liable for any of the costs of accommodation. This communication was recorded as

78 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 October 1940.
number 4369. The next – terser - cablegram, 4370 on the following day, was directed at the Hong Kong Government:

Reference proposed evacuation British women and children to Australia; glad receive early advice total number anticipated will be sent here number in first shipment and approximate date arrival also approximate dates arrival subsequent shipments. It is considered advisable that evacuees be distributed amongst various States instead of all being sent Western Australia. It would be preferable if first shipment were landed at Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne on basis ten, fortyfive and fortyfive per cent respectively. In order facilitate placing, kindly advise if possible number first shipment under following separate headings women unaccompanied, women with one child, two children, three children, over three children. Would evacuees have funds enable them be placed in private boarding establishments at rates say from 30/- to 50/- Australian currency per week per adult and 20/- to 30/- ditto per child. Commonwealth will be glad to fully co-operate and complete information will be appreciated so that suitable arrangements can be made.79

The Hong Kong Government replied to the Australian Prime Minister's Department on 8 July:

79 Cablegram 4370 from the Prime Minister’s Department to the Colonial Secretary Hong Kong, 2 July 1940. National Archives of Australia, A433, 1941/2/1096 PART 1.
Evacuation British women and children already sent to Manila number Services 1,600, Civilians 1,775. Dispatched number estimated at 1,000, remainder in Hong Kong, and will probably be evacuated in the near future.

I am informed that the Army and Navy will make arrangements direct regarding service families.

Many Civilians are expected to make private arrangements regarding travel or residence in Philippines, but owing to urgency, details not yet available. When number requiring accommodation in Australia is known, figures will be telegraphed to you at once, also shipping details when arranged. The majority likely to have funds sufficient for maintenance at rates quoted in your telegram.

The above particulars are of European families. Further question has arisen regarding British subjects of Portuguese and mixed descent numbering about 1,000 and of Chinese descent numbering about 500. I may address you separately about possibility of admission of these persons but I give these numbers to complete statement of position.

The Government and people of this Colony are deeply grateful to Australian Government for this generous offer of assistance.80

In Hong Kong, Southard, the American Consul, had also heard about the plans to evacuate non-Europeans. On 4 July he reported to the US Secretary of State: 'In addition of posted plans for evacuation of women and children of so-called European race this Government is now [apparent omission] requests for

80 Cablegram 5190 from the Colonial Secretary Hong Kong to The Secretary, Department of the Interior, 8 July 1940. National Archives of Australia, A433, 1941/2/1096 PART 1.
evacuation British women and children of Eurasian and Chinese race. Evacuation of other than British women and children has not yet been ordered but this Government’s orders to that effect are still pending.81

By 17 July 1940, although nothing had happened in the intervening days to further justify the evacuation or its onward continuation (and in fact the next day the British would close the Burma Road, thus neutralising one of the possible flash points of war), it had been officially announced in Hong Kong that ships had been found to take the evacuees onward; four Dutch liners had become available. Thanks to the fact that in May 1940 the Netherlands had fallen to the Germans, the two rival shipping lines providing services between Holland and the Dutch East Indies - the Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland (SMN or Netherland Line) and the Koninklijke Rotterdamsche Lloyd (KRL) – had transferred the registrations of their vessels from the Dutch ports of Amsterdam and Rotterdam to Batavia.82 Their passenger ships included the Christiaan Huygens, Indrapoera, Johann de Wit and Slamat, and these – together with the Australian vessel Zealandia and the New Zealand liner Awatea – were made available to the Hong Kong government.

Meanwhile the evacuees had been registered at the British Consulate in Manila for transfer to Australia (with the options of disembarking at Melbourne, Sydney or Brisbane) and were divided into three classes based on the amount their husbands could send them for support: 54, 30 and 16 shillings per week. Nothing definite was communicated to the evacuees about the position of those unable to contribute towards their own support, but it was generally believed that the Hong Kong government would assume this responsibility. Interestingly, evacuees were

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81 Southard to Secretary of State, 4 July 1940, file 346g.4115, Record Group 59, National Archives at College Park, MD.
82 Now Jakarta.
permitted to stay in Manila at their own risk (and expense) though it was felt unlikely that many would avail themselves of this offer. Newspapers noted that no indication had been given as to when the transfers to Australia would start, but it was thought that the evacuees would remain in the Philippines until at least 25 July 1940. However, amongst the evacuees themselves it was rumoured that they would be back in Hong Kong within two months and therefore the transfer to Australia would be unnecessary.83

But those rumours were wrong. Bunny Browne: 'It was finally decided that they would be sent to Australia, and a ship [sic] was available. So Kilpatrick and Hubbard had to oversee arrangements to get the families to the ship, which was barely equipped to take on the number of women and children involved. In fact the situation was so chaotic that Kilpatrick decided that Hubbard would have to go with them and help the ship's staff to sort out the problems. Bert Hubbard had quite a task, as he later told us. Fortunately he was middle-aged, sensible, not easily ruffled, and his wife was the same. So he was well able to cope with this ship load of women and children and all their worries e.g. a woman who considered she deserved better accommodation, saying "I'm over 8 months pregnant. What are you going to do about it?"'.84

On 22 July 1940 Hong Kong's newspapers noted that arrangements had been completed for enough shipping to take all the evacuees to Australia, and that the steamers would arrive in Manila before the end of July. The Hon. Mr Roland Arthur North, Colonial Secretary, stated that on the trip between Manila and Australia there would be satisfactory berthing accommodation for everyone, with

83 *China Mail*, 16 July 1940.
84 Letter from Bunny Browne C.B.E. to author, 12 March 2001. Hubbard had related this in POW camp, his return to Hong Kong being unfortunately timed.
ample space for additional luggage. Husbands and parents in Hong Kong were invited to send more luggage to Manila for their families. On the question of finance, he confirmed that no one would be asked to pay for their passage if they travelled in ships that were provided by the Government.

With the question of fares dealt with, the next issue was accommodation. The rates of maintenance had now been fixed: the highest charge for adults would be fifty Australian shillings for a week and the lowest thirty shillings. For children the highest rate would be thirty shillings weekly and the lowest twenty shillings. The Government confirmed that they would make provision for the maintenance of anyone unable to meet these charges, and that the Very Reverend Dean John Leonard Wilson of Hong Kong’s St John’s Cathedral had volunteered to go to Australia to act as the Hong Kong Government’s representative there.\(^8^5\)

On 23 July the government issued an official statement on the continuation of the evacuation. It started: ‘Shipping Arrangement. 1. Five ships will leave Manila for Australia about the end of July. The first four will convey all the Service families, and if space is available, some civilians. It has also been learned that further ships have been secured for the remainder but full particulars are not yet available. 2. A ship will leave Hong Kong early in August and will proceed direct to Australia. This ship will carry about four hundred persons all of whom will have cabin accommodation.’\(^8^6\) It also again laid out the formal grounds upon which those still remaining in the Colony could claim exemption from evacuation. The Governor had appointed a committee consisting of Mr Edgar Davidson (Chairman), Mr Clifford Sollis, Mr Ronald Gillespie, and Mrs E. Cock (Secretary) to consider

\(^8^5\) *China Mail*, 22 July 1940.
\(^8^6\) *China Mail*, 23 July 1940.
permanent and temporary claims for exemption from evacuation. The grounds upon which exemption might be granted were hereby extended to include: ‘Women without children who are in charge of or are employed in schools or institutions which are continuing to function and which cannot be closed without interrupting useful social work’, and, oddly, ‘Special grounds. For example the wife of an invalid or an elderly man requiring special care and assistance’; one wonders why the elderly and invalids were not simply evacuated.

Finally the evacuees in the Philippines themselves heard the news that they were moving on, though it was not always cheerfully received. Thelma Organ: ‘We were there a month when we were put into lorries and told that we were going to Australia. Most of the Mums couldn’t believe it as they thought that we would soon be returning to HK and that the evacuation had been a false alarm. This, of course, was 18 months before HK was attacked.’ Their surprise was understandable. The initial evacuation had been prompted by an understandable fear of an immediate Japanese attack, but nearly a month later it was clear that this had been a false alarm. Despite the fact that no specific catalyst for an attack on Hong Kong was now predictable, the British government made no moves to reverse the initial stage evacuation. No such option had been in the plan. Bewilderingly for the evacuees, the next stage of the operation continued.

As they prepared to depart from the Philippines, the Government in Hong Kong sent a message of thanks to the authorities in Manila: ‘I am requested by the Government of Hongkong and by the military and naval authorities of the colony to convey to Your Excellency, to the United States military authorities, and to the Red

87 Davidson and Gillespie would be interned in Stanley, while Sollis (in the HKVDC) would be a POW. Mrs Cock appears to have left Hong Kong before the invasion.
88 Thelma Organ’s memoires.
Cross, their warm appreciation of the help and facilities so spontaneously and generously afforded on the disembarkation and reception of the British women and children evacuated from Hongkong. I would venture to add my personal thanks and to ask that they may also be conveyed to General John C. Pratt and the members of his staff and to Mr Charles H. Forster, manager of the Philippine Red Cross, and his lady helpers, who by their personal endeavours so materially assisted in the disembarkation and settlement of the evacuees and so alleviated the hardships of this forced evacuation. We can never adequately express our gratitude to them'.

The British Government also considered that they owed a significant debt to the Americans and the authorities in the Philippines. Lord Lothian sent the following message to Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State, as early as 15 July 1940:

I have the honour under instructions from His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to convey to you an expression of the most sincere appreciation of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom for the facilities so generously afforded for the evacuation of British women and children from Hong Kong to the Philippine Islands. His Majesty's Government are deeply grateful for all the assistance which has been given in this connexion not only by the Philippine Government but by the United States Army and also the Philippine Red Cross and their gratitude is shared by all those British subjects for whom so much was done.

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89 Hongkong Telegraph, July 22 1940.
I should be grateful if this expression of His Majesty’s Government’s gratitude could be conveyed to all those concerned in the Philippine Islands.90

In summary, of the 3,414 Hong Kong evacuees who reached the Philippines that July, fifty-seven who were dependents of Army personnel sailed for other destinations than Australia, and twenty-five remained voluntarily in the Philippines. 234 of the civilian families procured their own transportation to other ports or also elected to stay in the Philippines, and a total of thirty-two evacuees were physically unfit to be transported and would be sent to Australia later when the medical authorities pronounced them fit for travel. The remainder, minus 128 who returned to Hong Kong (including those who had little choice, as we will see), would continue on the evacuation’s next leg.91

90 Lothian to Secretary of State, 15 July 1940. File 346g.4115, Record Group 59, National Archives at College Park, MD. This was followed by a similar note from Lord Halifax on 18 April 1941, thanking US Military personnel in the Philippines (Major-General George Grunert, Major-General Henry Conger Pratt, Colonel Carl A. Baehr, Lieutenant-Colonel Ernest J. Carr, Major William M. Tow, Lieutenant-Colonel Robert M. Carswell, and Lieutenant-Colonel John D. Hood) by name.
91 Report to the High Commissioner from Lieutenant-Colonel Robert M. Carswell, Staff of the United States High Commissioner to the Philippines (Co-ordinating Officer) 17 August 1940. File 346g.4115, Record Group 59, National Archives at College Park, MD.
Chapter 3. Arrival in Australia

The Eurasians, because they had achieved a standard of living comparable to the Europeans, felt they were included. When the ship called in to Manila the Australian immigration officer was there to process them. The Australian Government had not had time to set up a processing office in HK before the ship sailed. Then all Eurasians were sent back to Hong Kong. This then caused a tremendous scandal and the citizens of Hong Kong were shocked. It became the talking point for months, even I can remember this... The ill feeling was towards the Australian government, who in time of a world war refused to relax their immigration laws for women and children.1

Chapter Three documents the impact of the White Australia policy on the execution of the evacuation, and the resulting returns of Eurasians - exposing an unplanned injustice in the scheme that sparked vocal dissatisfaction in Hong Kong and serious disagreement within government. It continues by reporting the departure of the evacuees from Manila, and the arrival of each of their ships (plus other smaller groups of evacuees travelling directly from Hong Kong) in Australia, arguing that the evolving sophistication of their reception was a demonstration of the lack of detail in the original evacuation plan. During their first days in the new country, it looks at the balance between the Hong Kong government’s continued

1 Email from Elizabeth Gittins to author, 16 March 2011. Elizabeth added: ‘I think it wasn’t until the 1970’s that Asians were given visas to remain. I was too busy coping with family life to remember much about the changes to the immigration laws. (I was recently widowed and the children were still young).’
push for the remaining civilians to evacuate, and the lobbying (from both sides) for the return of those already evacuated, resulting eventually in the ending of mandatory evacuation. To those who had opposed evacuation it was perceived as a 'victory' tempered by the authorities’ refusal to let existing evacuees return, yet the British government would claim in turn that their evacuation aims had been met.

3.1 White Australia

In their original intention of evacuating non-Caucasians, the Hong Kong authorities had been fair, though – in the context of Australia as a destination – perhaps somewhat naïve. Australia had for almost one hundred years adopted a policy deliberately aimed at barring Asian immigrants. In the Hong Kong newspapers, even on the day that the first evacuees left the Colony, there was serious dissatisfaction with the Government’s handling of the racial aspects of evacuation. ‘However cruel it may seem’, said the Hongkong Telegraph, after noting that many people in Hong Kong thought that the discrimination between races inherent in the evacuation plan was the Hong Kong government’s doing, ‘there are immigration laws in Australia which preclude any but British subjects of pure European descent from entering the country.’

The origins of this White Australia policy lay in the great gold rush that started in 1851. At that time, some 50,000 Chinese adventurers arrived to make their fortune. Almost all – strangely enough, considering what would happen some ninety years later – were Cantonese from Hong Kong and South China. These were hard-working people, and their communal success was not popular with the

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2 Hongkong Telegraph, 1 July 1940.
'natives'. Several riots took place, with some loss of life. The Government’s initial reaction was to restrict further immigration from China, and – later – also from the Pacific islands that supplied labour to the northern part of the country. The Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 formalised these controls, and although the British Government objected in theory, they took no action. It became all but impossible for non-British people to migrate to Australia.

Despite these precedents, in 1940 the Governor of Hong Kong was still trying to arrange for dependents of Chinese and Indian civilians (or at least, those working closely with the Government), and Eurasians to be evacuated to Australia alongside their Caucasian colleagues. As the first families sailed for the Philippines, the papers noted that the government was continuing to consider the position of Indian women and children and hoping to evacuate them in August.

On 10 July 1940 the Governor of Hong Kong sent a cable to the Prime Minister of Australia, copied to H.M. Consul Manila and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, asking that these policies be relaxed – at least temporarily. He noted:

A scheme is being considered for the evacuation of the wives and children of Chinese residents with record of service to Hong Kong thought to justify exceptional treatment. The list includes families of past and present members of the Councils, Justices of the Peace, serving members of the Hong Kong volunteer force, etc. The maximum total is 1500, but probably much less of whom about half are British subjects. The majority are educated class possessing ample means. Original proposal to send to China or Indo-China not found practicable, owning to Japanese occupation of coastal parts and the doubtful attitude of Indo-Chinese authorities. Should the need arise, would
your Government be prepared to relax restrictions to permit the entrance for
a limited period of all or some of these persons. It is hoped to find another
destination for British subjects of Portuguese descent.⁴

Senator Hattil Spencer Foll, Minister for the Interior (who had been born in
London and emigrated to Australia at the age of nineteen) three days later penned
a negative internal response to Prime Minister Menzies, listing seven reasons why
he should not accede to this request. Firstly he pointed out that accepting 1,500
‘Asiatics’ would have no effect on the Colony’s food stocks as Hong Kong’s total
Chinese population exceeded a million, and that the organisation and
administrative work needed to admit these evacuees would be out of all
proportion to their numbers. Although these were reasonable arguments, they
would clearly have been equally valid if used against the European evacuation.
Two further arguments: ‘The State Governments have agreed to attend to the
reception and accommodation of the wives and children of white British subjects,
but they could hardly be expected to do likewise in relation to Asiatics’, and:
‘Chinese already in Australia would not be able to accommodate the proposed
evacuees, but in any event it is doubtful whether the status of more than a few
Chinese residents here would be such that the evacuees could mix with them’,
seem more prejudiced in tone. The fourth argument made little sense: ‘The
evacuees were born and bred in Hong Kong or vicinity and are permanently
domiciled there; consequently they are not people in the category of being forced
to flee from their homeland’, though he also argued, correctly, that although the

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⁴ Governor of Hong Kong to the Prime Minister of Australia, 10 July 1940. National Archives of
Australia A433 1940/2/1837.
request was to house the evacuees for a limited period, if Hong Kong fell into enemy hands ‘there would be no option but to permit [these privileged few] to remain here despite the White Australia policy.’

The ‘privileged few’, who Sir Geoffry Northcote had hoped to protect, were in fact the families of those who the Hong Kong government feared might be badly treated in the event of a Japanese invasion, for being too closely allied with the British. However, following Foll’s note, and their policy in general, the Australian secret reply of 25 July 1940 to the Governor was not favourable:

Your telegram 10th July temporary admission to Australia of wives and children of certain classes Chinese residents of Hong Kong – matter has received very careful consideration of Commonwealth Government but it is felt that difficulties are likely to be experienced in regard to accommodation and other complications arise which do not apply in the case of European British women and children. The Commonwealth Government is therefore reluctantly unable see way to relax restrictions in favour of the Chinese referred to.

As the first batch of evacuees in the Philippines prepared to board the vessel that would take them on to Australia, discussions of Australia’s immigration laws continued in Hong Kong’s newspapers. They quoted Senator Foll, on 29 July

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4 Letter from Foll to the Australian Prime Minister, 13 July 1940. National Archives of Australia A433 1940/2/1837.
5 Northcote would be replaced as Governor by Sir Mark Young in September 1941. To what extent these people were badly treated after the Japanese invaded is unclear, though several hundred civilians were executed at Shek O beach where their bones are washed out of the sand to this day. Thousands of such civilians are known to have been killed in Singapore.
6 Cablegram from Department of the Interior to Governor of Hong Kong, 25 July 1940. National Archives of Australia A433 1940/2/1837.
1940, as saying in Canberra (referring to Hong Kong dependents of British men of European descent): The Australian Government is exempting Hongkong evacuees from the law which permits only limited residence, and Eurasian evacuees will be permitted to reside anywhere in the Commonwealth for the full period of the evacuation’. But while Senator Foll was apparently claiming that Eurasians (though not Chinese or Indian evacuees) would be accepted, in the Philippines a number of Eurasian evacuee families had already been rejected for onward travel to Australia and were about to be sent back to Hong Kong. It seems that Foll’s words were either disingenuous or had not been communicated as policy.

A second column in the same paper that day stated that notices were being sent out to a number of persons calling upon them to prepare to leave the Colony by a ship sailing on 3 August 1940. ‘It is possible that some of these notices may have been sent to women not of European parentage who may wish to claim exemption on that ground. In such a case the recipient should immediately notify the Director of Evacuation, Supreme Court Building... It must be understood that only the persons so addressed in writing will be required to evacuate. Persons who have not received such letters by Monday evening may assume that they will not be required to evacuate for the present.’

But a surprising number of evacuees – The Australian Women’s Weekly estimated as many as ninety - would have no issues at all with Australian immigration authorities, being Australian themselves.

Despite the Australian Government’s note that they would allow the ‘Asiatics and half-castes who may arrive as servants with the women and children’

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7 *Hongkong Telegraph*, 29 July 1940.
8 *The Australian Women’s Weekly*, Saturday 20 July 1940.
to land, and Senator Foll’s claim that ‘Eurasian evacuees will be permitted to reside anywhere in the Commonwealth for the full period of the evacuation’, after all the evacuees had been interviewed approximately one hundred Eurasians amongst them returned from the Philippines at Hong Kong Government expense – a fact that was widely publicised in Hong Kong, together with many of their names.\(^9\) However, to what degree they were compelled to go, and to what degree they were simply allowed to return, is debatable. Stuart Braga notes: ‘Security was poor, and shipping to Australia uncertain. Many women begged to be allowed to return to Hong Kong. [Marjory Braga] lost all her money in a burglary and besought Noel to approach the authorities in Hong Kong to allow her back. He succeeded. Security in Manila seemed even worse than in the precarious Hong Kong situation.’\(^{10}\) Another account claims that a bitter feud erupted between the ‘pure’ and Eurasian British, as a result of which the Eurasian husbands created a petition asking the Hong Kong government to return their wives, though no trace of such a petition can be found in today’s archives.\(^{11}\)

One of the returnees, Leilah Wood (daughter of a British father and a Eurasian mother) saw things through a child’s eyes: ‘For a whole week it was

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\(^9\) One group of around eighty travelled together. They were: Elizabeth Aslett, Majuna Blakeney, Mrs Marjory Braga, Miss G. Braga, Master M. Braga, Maria Connolly, Louise Cross, Victor Cross, Girriomor Drewery, Irene Drewery, Marcus Drewery, Anthony Dudman, David Dudman, Halia Dudman, Michael Dudman, Roy Dudman, William Dudman, Valentina Elberg, Mrs Ayesha Elms, Dawn Elms, Garrick Elms, Kathleen Elms, Lorraine Elms, Sheila Elms, Agnes Gardiner, Carmelia Gardiner, Domitilio Gardiner, Rita Gardiner, Eileen Hill, Pauline Hill, Mary Morganstern, May Nicklin, Alan O’Connor, Daniel O’Connor, Marie O’Connor, Sheila O’Connor, Alfred Osborne, Bertha Osborne, Derek Osborne, Donald Osborne, Edith Osborne, Edmund Osborne, Patrick Osborne, Robert Osborne, Rosalie Osborne, Mr and Mrs R. S. Figott, Iris Prew, Michael Prew, Mrs B. Price, and three sons and daughter, Mrs M. Roe and son and daughter, Diane Scott-Gordon, Ronald Scott-Gordon. Miss E. da Silva, Eileen Simpson, Teresa Simpson, Albert Smirke, Derrick Smirke, Evelyn Smirke, Joyce Smirke, Barbara Stephens, Jane Stephens, Janet Stephens, Bobby Thirlwell, Clotilde Thirlwell, Eileen Thirlwell, Elizabeth Thirlwell, John Thirlwell, Mavis Thirlwell, Milly Thirlwell, Dolly Ward, John Ward, Maurice Ward, Monica Ward, Barbara Willey, Brian Willey, and Veronica Willey. *Hongkong Telegraph*, Final Edition, 5 August 1940 (Monday).

\(^{10}\) Notes on Braga family’s evacuation. Email from Stuart Braga to author, 10 December 2010.

\(^{11}\) This petition is described in *Prisoners of the East*, Corbin, page 62, quoting evacuee Edith Hamson.
uncertain if we could come back to Hong Kong or go on to Australia, one minute you feel happy and the next minute you feel sad. Every day we went up to the Red Cross to see if we had any letters or any news of going back... At last we could come back so we made the downward journey again.'

After staying overnight at La Palma De Mallorca in the Walled City they went aboard the *Empress of Russia* and sailed home. Whatever the reason for returning, the great majority of these evacuees would spend the war years in Stanley Internment Camp. Leilah herself would escape death there by inches.

And yet some Chinese wives of British servicemen were not turned back, and made it to Australia. Sue Quinn was one. Born Sue Leung, she had married Royal Marine John Quinn in March 1940. Ying Boswell, married to Able Seaman Cyril Boswell, RN, was another; in all around twelve Chinese spouses evacuated to Australia though most appear to have returned to Hong Kong before hostilities commenced. In Sue Quinn’s case she returned and would spend the war years in Rosary Hill (a refugee camp established in Hong Kong by the Red Cross and primarily inhabited by Eurasian families of HKVDC personnel), where her daughter would be born in April 1942.

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12 Letter to her sister Alice, 29 August 1940, via email from Barbara Anslow, 3 February 2009.
13 Leilah’s mother was half German and half Japanese, and no doubt found internment in Stanley Camp something of a trial. In 2011 St Stephen’s College, Stanley, turned the bungalow where they were interned into a Heritage Centre.
14 Email from Mary Vaughan (her daughter) to author, 23 October 2012. She notes: ‘[My father said] my Mother was half Portuguese and Chinese. According to the priest in Hong Kong, on their marriage document, her parents had full Chinese Surnames, but he did say that doesn’t mean that there was no Portuguese in their Family.’ John Quinn would survive the *Lisbon Maru*, though Sue herself was to die of TB in 1947 at the age of 29. I am indebted to Bridget Deane for her thorough coverage of these ladies in her thesis.
3.2 Departure From Manila

The Americans assisting the British onto the ships must have had mixed feelings. America at this point had not instigated any official evacuations of civilians from areas that might be threatened by conflict with the Japanese, though approximately one hundred had left Hong Kong for the Philippines pre-emptively. But anyone with a map or a globe would have had no illusions as to what might happen bearing in mind how close the Philippines was to Japan – and it was even closer to Taiwan which had been ceded to Japan in 1895.

A total of six vessels would take the Philippine evacuees onward to Australia. The first, the Christiaan Huygens arrived at Manila on 28 July 1940 and docked at Pier 3. The 277 evacuees still at Fort McKinley were boarded first, starting at 11.00 and completing at 12.30. The Red Cross embarked 315 further evacuees - selected from those living in Manila - that afternoon beginning at 14.00. With a total of 592 on board (mainly the wives and children of civilians) the ship sailed at about 18.00 that day, travelling via Thursday Island on 4 August 1940, and proceeding via Cairns. The Hongkong Telegraph reported their departure: ‘Five hundred and eighty-four [sic] Hongkong women and children boarded a large Dutch liner in Manila yesterday and started the voyage to Australia. The ship in which they are travelling will be the vanguard of six vessels which will, before the end of this week, completely empty Manila of Hongkong evacuees. They were expected to depart from mid-stream at dawn today. Another two ships are sailing tomorrow and a fourth Dutch ship will sail on Wednesday. A thousand wives and children of Army personnel will embark on Wednesday or Thursday.’

\[15\] Hongkong Telegraph, 29 July 1940.
The _Indrapoera_ arrived at Manila on 31 July also docking at pier 3. About 217 evacuees from Baguio (mainly the wives and children of Naval and Dockyard personnel) arrived by train and were picked up by buses of the Manila Railroad Company which took them to the Manila Club, where they stayed until 19.00. Manila Electric Company buses then took them to the pier together with about 180 evacuees who had been staying in Manila itself. Evacuees interviewed by the Manila Bulletin expressed their gratitude for the kindness shown them, though voiced reservations at moving even further from Hong Kong; Manila, after all, was only a couple of days steaming from home. Although scheduled to leave on Wednesday night, the liner remained in port with the evacuees on board until departing at noon on Thursday, 1 August 1940.⁰¹⁶

But the American authorities had made arrangements to embark over 1,000 women and children that day and were apparently not informed that only one ship was arriving (they had expected three), and as a result a number of women who had been instructed to pack for departure were notified at the last minute of the delay. In view of what they perceived as a breakdown in communications by the Hong Kong Government, officials in Manila – including the American Red Cross – asked for more definite information in future regarding the movement of ships so that plans for embarkation would be more orderly.

The _Slamat_ arrived in the Philippines on 31 July 1940. She sailed for Australia with 345 evacuees on board on 4 August. Of these, 114 were wives and children of Naval and Dockyard personnel and 231 were wives and children of civilians.

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⁰¹⁶ _Hongkong Telegraph_, Final Edition, 5 August 1940.
The *Johan De Witt* arrived at Manila on 6 August and sailed for Australia the same day with 286 evacuees on board. These evacuees were mainly wives and children of civilians who had been residing in Manila, though eighteen were dependants of military personnel.

On 3 August the liner *Awatea* arrived in Manila to transport the wives and children of military personnel to Australia. In peacetime the *Awatea* – a modern, fast, comfortable, and fashionable ship - accommodated a relatively small number of passengers, with 377 in first class, 151 in second and 38 in third. A crew of 242 normally attended to this total of 566 passengers. However, for this wartime voyage 960 evacuees were selected, largely from those living in Baguio. Eveline Harloe was one: ‘So two or three weeks passed, then we got our sailing orders late in August [sic]. This time we few pregnant mums, about 6 of us, were given a private first-class carriage on the train. This again brought out the worst in many women, “I’ll see that I’m pregnant, next time we have to be evacuated” was one of the kindly remarks that flew around, purposely in our hearing, but we were just thankful that we were given that little extra privilege. Then from the train, straight on to the New Zealand ship that took us to Brisbane and points South.’\(^\text{17}\) They embarked on 4 August 1940, and the ship sailed on 5 August at noon.

Finally, the *Zealandia* arrived at Manila around 6 August. She remained in port until three days later due to the need for some minor repairs. On that date she sailed for Australia with some 450 evacuees on board, wives and children of civilians, the majority of whom had again been residing in Baguio. Between them, these ships would carry a little over 3,000 evacuees.

\(^\text{17}\) Eveline Harloe’s memoires.
As the liners left, the paperwork travelled in parallel. Cables to Australia alerted the local authorities to the type of accommodation that would be required in each city – being careful to specify the right class of housing for each. For the *Slamat*, for example:

Brisbane. Fifty shillings accommodation: wife and one child one, wife and three children one; forty shillings accommodation: women unaccompanied one: thirty shillings accommodation, wife and one child one.

Melbourne. Fifty shillings accommodation: wife and one child two, wife and two children one; forty shillings accommodation: women unaccompanied five, wife and one child six, wife and two children two, wife and three children one; thirty shillings accommodation: women unaccompanied one, wife and one child one, wife and two children four, wife and three children two.

Sydney. Fifty shillings accommodation: women unaccompanied four, wife and two children five; forty shillings accommodation: women unaccompanied six, wife and one child eleven, wife and two children eight; thirty shillings accommodation: women unaccompanied six, wife and one child two, wife and two children six, wife and three children one, wife and four children two, wife and five children one.\(^\text{18}\)

\(^{18}\) Cable 137/15W, from Consul General of Manila to Australian Prime Minister, 5 August 1940. National Archives of Australia, A433 1941/2/1096: PART 2. A note shows that other families on board had already made private arrangements for accommodation, thus probably explaining the inconsistencies in numbers.
On board the ships, not everyone knew where they were bound. Andrin Dewar: ‘The authorities advised us that we were to board the ship Johan De Witt on Netherlands flag, again for destination unknown. At first as the weather grew warmer we all thought we were headed “South of the border, down Mexico way” and everyone sang this song interminably… We reached Port Moresby where Australian officials enquired where the children were going to school. My mother was greatly affronted by this enquiry, as she and all her friends were sure that we would be back in Hong Kong “within three months”. And there would therefore be no need for school arrangements.’19

Even after the two main evacuations via the Philippines, a large number of women and children who met the evacuation criteria were still in Hong Kong. By this time notifications were being sent individually to those who had not yet left; on 20 July 1940 they received notice of their impending departure, advising them to prepare for evacuation directly to Australia on or about 28 July. On 25 July this notice was amended, setting a new evacuation date of 3 August 1940.20 Their ship would be the Neptuna.

Joan Franklin’s father was acting General Manager of the South China Morning Post: ‘Aged 5, I travelled with my mother, Mrs Gladys Franklin and my brother Douglas and sister Sylvia, aged 14 and 12 respectively… The only passengers I remember on the Neptuna were Mrs Joan Younghusband and her son, John. Plus a Mrs Gordon who had a small son named Gavin… The Neptuna was a passenger ship which sailed from Hong Kong directly to Australia. I remember very well that there were blackout curtains at the windows and portholes, and at

19 Letter from Andrin Dewar to author, 3 November 2010.  
20 China Mail, July 25, 1940.
night the interior of the ship was lit with blue coloured lights.' Joan Younghusband's son had been ill previously, hence they had missed the earlier evacuation.

Unlike the earlier evacuations, the Neptuna had the added convenience of avoiding the Philippines. However, even after this second chance, eight families booked for passage elected not to turn up for departure at the 09.00 rendezvous at the Peninsula Hotel. As officials waited for them in vain, the thirty-two families who reported on time were taken aboard ship in covered lorries at 09.30.

A second ship – the Empress of Japan again - sailed direct from Hong Kong on 4 August, with only 49 evacuees on board, A further 21 ‘evacuation dodgers’ again failed to turn up despite government orders. Small numbers of evacuees would continue to depart for Australia, on normal scheduled sailings, right up until the evacuation orders were cancelled.

### 3.3 The Evacuees Arrive

On 15 July 1940, the Australian Prime Minister's Department sent a slightly panicky cablegram to the Colonial Secretary, Hong Kong, complaining that ‘it has been reported in Australia that the vessel Nanking left Hong Kong 6th instant and will arrive Sydney 25th July with a large number of evacuees who are leaving voluntarily. Would appreciate advice as to whether this report is correct, and if so, to receive information as to...’ the evacuees’ numbers, places of disembarkation, and financial status. The Colonial Secretary replied on 17 July that this was the

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21 Email from Joan Franklin to author, 16 September 2010. Gavin had a baby brother, Colin, who is also quoted in this work.  
22 *Hongkong Telegraph* 3 August 1940. The newspaper stated that the liner was Canadian, though in fact Neptuna was owned by an Australian company, Burns, Philp, and registered in Hong Kong.
*Nanking* on a regular run, with three passengers booked for Brisbane, 79 for Sydney, and fourteen for Melbourne and that ‘these do not come under evacuation scheme, and do not as far as is known, require assistance.’

Unsurprisingly the press were unaware of the difference and reported these passengers as evacuees. More surprisingly, considering the Hong Kong government’s statement, they were right. Their articles told of how, after a tense week, the evacuees left Hong Kong in the heaviest rain for sixteen years, and met a typhoon in the South China Sea. They reported Mrs A. W. Ingram, wife of the secretary of the Hong Kong branch of the Y.M.C.A., saying that: ‘when the evacuation was ordered, suitcases sold out. Bags cost four times their normal price’, and Mrs. B. Hourihan, wife of Hong Kong’s Chief Inspector of Police, describing the evacuation as a ‘terrific undertaking.’ They had no winter clothing, she said, and had to get everything ready in a week. Her first job in Australia would be to buy boots for her children.

The explanation of the misunderstanding was simple; clearly the *Nanking* was on a regular run to Australia and had stopped at Manila *en route*. There a number of enterprising official evacuees had seized the initiative and booked their own private onward passage.

This pre-emptive move caused much confusion. *The Argus* clarified on 25 July (again missing the nuance that these were official evacuees who had jumped the gun): ‘The passengers from Hong Kong who have already arrived in Australia are not families evacuated by the Government. They are people of independent means who have travelled from the East at their own expense. The first batch of

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23 Colonial Secretary to Australian Prime Minister, 17 July 1940. National Archives of Australia, A433, 1941/2/1096 PART 1.
24 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 July 1940.
families evacuated by the Government will arrive soon.\textsuperscript{25} However, because this shipment had bypassed official sanction, no official reception had been prepared. As the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} noted on 27 July: ‘The travel department of a Sydney bank points out that the evacuees will be faced with many problems including accommodation, education of children, medical attention and so on. It was stated that it would be a blot on Australia’s reputation if the path of the evacuees was not made as smooth as possible.’\textsuperscript{26}

The official evacuees started to arrive a week later, on the transports arranged for them by the Hong Kong Government. Each ship would stop at Brisbane, Sydney, and – in all but two cases - Melbourne, disgorging passengers at each port of call. With the bulk of the evacuees now on the horizon, some Australian states saw these new arrivals in a very positive light. In Brisbane it was noted that because of a heavy decline in tourist trade, Queensland was concentrating on attracting evacuees to settle there. An article in \textit{The Argus} quoted a survey as showing that there was more than sufficient accommodation for between 600 and 700 evacuees. It continued: ‘Most of those from Hong Kong have independent means and can make their own choice on the place of residence, and Queensland’s claims will be impressed on passengers by officials, who will join each steamer at Cairns and travel down the coast with the visitors.’\textsuperscript{27}

Then the reality became apparent. The first official evacuation ship to arrive from the Philippines was the \textit{Christiaan Huygens}, docking initially – and unhappily – at Brisbane. From the first reaction, Queensland’s hope of becoming a popular evacuee destination seemed dashed.

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{The Argus}, 25 July 1940.
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 27 July 1940.
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{The Argus}, 6 August 1940.
The ship arrived on 8 August 1940. Twenty-four passengers made ready to step ashore. But before they could disembark after their long and uncomfortable voyage they had to wait for medical and passport examinations on the ship. A tender then brought them from an anchorage in Moreton Bay to a cold windswept wharf near the city, an operation that took more than six hours. There was no reception committee and they - many being mothers with young children - had to wait in a draughty shed while their luggage was examined. Not even offered a cup of tea, and feeling more like refugees than evacuees, the women complained bitterly to the press of the long wait. As Hong Kong’s evacuation plan had included no thought of how their reception should be managed, and as the Australian authorities had not been given much opportunity to think it through, it was perhaps unsurprising that it was not well handled.

The following day Senator Foll publicly stated that the muddle in Brisbane was not the fault of the Federal Government, but of the Queensland Government. As a result he was taking steps to set up a committee of voluntary organisations in Brisbane to ensure that: ‘future evacuees would be met and welcomed in a manner worthy of the generosity of Queensland’.

But the Hong Kong press had written up the Christiaan Huygens experience in a totally different light – largely because the embedded reporter had not personally disembarked at Brisbane. Describing the beautiful Australian weather

28 Elizabeth Collins, Margaret Mary Collins, Timothy Collins, Joseph Collins, Eugenier Evans, George Evans, Marian Evans, Patricia Evans, Titania Green, Clara Liang, Marion Mclinnes, Nellie McLaren, Susan McLaren, Ann McLaren, Iris Moran, Olywn Ann Moran, Ethelwyn Morris, Vera Pearce, Joyce Lillian Perkins, Jeanette Perkins, Margaret Tocher, Alexander Tocher, Martin Tocher, and Claudia Wilkins. The names come from the Hongkong Telegraph, 10 August 1940. The list included the name Florence McLaren, but in fact Florence and Nellie McLaren were one and the same person: Nellie Florence McLaren.
29 Sydney Morning Herald, 9 August 1940.
30 Sydney Morning Herald, 10 August 1940.
of clear blue sky and brilliant sunshine and ‘a shimmering haze that resolved itself into brilliant white beaches backed by stunted white-barked ti-tree and blue gums’, it recorded how ‘this marked the end of what has for all been a perfect trip in ideal conditions’.31 Apparently Maisie Gould, wife of the Prize Court Marshal declared: ‘I have travelled on ships of all countries but I have never had more courtesy shown, nor more comfortable accommodation.’32 Edith Steele-Perkins, wife of Hong Kong’s Director of Air Raid Precautions, claimed: ‘Nobody could complain and I think the organisation and thoroughness shown to us is most praiseworthy.’33 And Florence Trevor, the Australian wife of the Traffic Manager of the Kowloon Canton Railway added: ‘Everything possible has been done for our comfort and I particularly commend the efficiency and speed shown by the Australian Government officials who cleared the ship so rapidly in order to allow rapid progress to Brisbane.’34 But none of the ladies interviewed had disembarked there either.

The low numbers selecting Brisbane as a destination caused questions to be asked, and in a letter to the British Consul-General in Manila the Australian Prime Minister claimed that: ‘It was elicited from evacuees that the Red Cross at Manila had advised that the climate of Brisbane and/or Queensland was deemed unhealthy for children.’35 The letter frostily pointed out that the several thousand Australian children in Brisbane did not seem to mind it too much, and hinted that the weather there might actually be more suitable than that of Hong Kong itself.

31 Hongkong Telegraph, 10 August 1940.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid. All three husbands would survive the war, Trevor and Gould as POWs.
35 Letter from the Australian Prime Minister to the British Consul-General in Manila, undated, but elsewhere referred to as ‘of 2 September 1940’. National Archives of Australia, A433 1941/2/1096: PART 2.
The Colonial Secretary eventually replied stating that no evidence of such advice could be found.\textsuperscript{36} In the end, it was decided that to make up for the shortfall all the Shanghai evacuees who would arrive next month in Australia on the \textit{S.S. Tanda} – with the exception of those with relatives in other states – should disembark in Brisbane.

Officers from the Department of Labour and Industry and of the Tourist Bureau including Miss Grant Cooper, the official representative of the New South Wales Government, then boarded the \textit{Christiaan Huygens} to inform the remaining 557 evacuees of the arrangements made for them, and travelled with them to Sydney where 331 would disembark on 10 August 1940. Here the reception was handled better. Each woman was handed a letter - on the back of which was a map of the central part of the city showing banking and other establishments - signed by the Premier, Alexander Mair, extending a welcome on behalf of the people of New South Wales and expressing the hope that her stay in Australia would be a happy one. Officials of the Bank of New South Wales took aboard Â£5,000 and helped passengers exchange around Â£2,000 of their pesos and dollars. The State also provided Â£1 each for any evacuee needing ready money.

Members of the Citizens Reception Committee, including the chairman, the Rev Dr Ronald MacIntyre, also boarded the liner at the wharf. Dr John Hunter had made arrangements for medical aid if this was needed, and as they disembarked each woman received a bouquet of flowers from waiting Girl Guides who escorted them from the wharf to where more than one hundred cars waited. These had been provided by members of the honorary transport auxiliary of the National

\textsuperscript{36} Letter from Hong Kong Colonial Secretary to Australian Prime Minister, 16 October 1940. National Archives of Australia, A433 1941/2/1096: PART 2.
Roads and Motorists Association, and members of the Women’s Australian National Service (WANS) and other organisations. Meanwhile the government officials who had been on board flew back to Brisbane to be ready for the next ship of evacuees.37

Gloria Grant left the Christiaan Huygens there: ‘On arrival in Sydney we were allocated a “foster family” and our first home was in the boarding house in Bronte. We were well treated. Several weeks later, mother found a suitable flat on Campbell Parade, Bondi, overlooking the famous beach.’38 Margaret Simpson disembarked with her: ‘Together with Paula Simpson, we moved into an apartment, and when we discovered it was infested with fleas, Mother and Paula smeared honey on their legs and walked around the apartment barefoot to trap the little vermin; I thought that was great fun!’39

The ship should then have continued to Melbourne, but the Department of the Navy approved a suggestion that the Christiaan Huygens remained at Sydney instead of proceeding, and that the remaining evacuees bound for Melbourne (approximately 230 passengers) would transfer to the Indrapoera on her arrival at Sydney for onward travel.40

The Neptuna was the next evacuee vessel to arrive, coming straight from Hong Kong to Sydney carrying roughly eighty evacuees. Joan Franklin: ‘Upon arrival in Sydney we stayed first in a “guest house” named “Astria” in Chatswood, and there were no other Hong Kong people there.’41 The Neptuna’s voyage was not

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37 Sydney Morning Herald, 12 August 1940.
38 Email from Gloria Grant to author, 23 September 2010.
39 Email from Margaret Simpson to author, 10 February 2010.
40 Undated note from the Secretary, Department of Navy. National Archives of Australia, A433 1941/2/1096: PART 2. In August 1945, the Christiaan Huygens would hit a mine in the Scheldt estuary, and broke her back after she was beached.
41 Email from Joan Franklin to author, 16 September 2010.
the final one carrying official evacuees from Hong Kong, but her voyage and that of the *Empress of Japan* would be the last of intended specifically for this purpose. A number of further evacuees would still arrive in Australia later via other voyages on the *Neptuna*, the *Empress of Japan*, *Tanda*, *Taiping*, and *Nanking*, but these would generally be families travelling alone.42

The following evacuee vessel to dock at Brisbane – the third in sequence but the second from Manila - was the *Indrapoera*. About ten passengers were landed and then she continued on to Sydney, which she reached on Tuesday 14 August 1940. There, a further 234 disembarked. Thelma Organ: 'When the ship pulled into Sydney Harbour someone said we had to go on deck and see “The Bridge” which was the last thing anyone wanted to do as it was mid-winter and we only had summer clothes... On the wharf there were rows and rows of tables with donated clothes on them and we were issued with about six items each. I remember being very glad of a heavy coat. Volunteers took us to various homes of people who had offered to have a family and be paid for it. As soon as we arrived at the house (can't remember where in Sydney) the elderly couple told us that they really didn’t want us but the money was good.'43

The youngest passenger on board was Vivian Elaine, who had been born in Hong Kong just fourteen days before the evacuation. Her then pregnant mother Elva St John had left her Royal Navy husband in Singapore to stay with her mother (Mrs A.M. Skinn) in Hong Kong for the birth. Three other children on board were found to have scarlet fever. Two were taken to hospital, and one stayed aboard as the ship then continued to Melbourne. When the *Indrapoera* (now carrying a

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42 The *Neptuna* would be bombed and sunk off Darwin in February 1942.
43 Thelma Organ’s memoires. Donated clothes were also made available in Melbourne. See 3.4 below.
combination of her own passengers and those for Melbourne from the *Christiaan Huygens*, about 380 in total) docked in Melbourne they were the first party of British evacuees to reach the city.

The papers took notice: 'Mothers surrounded by children of all ages, some carrying tiny babies in woolly bundles, and boys and girls from toddling age to teens clutching favourite toys or small cases, were all eager to step ashore yesterday evening on their arrival from Hong Kong... Neat grey overcoats with black velvet collars were worn by the two small sons of Mrs. H. Utley, whose husband is assistant superintendent at the Government Hospital at Kowloon. They silently took stock of their new surroundings, and trotted off with their mother to a waiting car'.44 Friends and relatives met some, but representatives of the Housing Commission received the majority. A few, like nursing sister Miss Caroline Huggett, returning to her family in Geelong after three years in Hong Kong, were natives coming home. Others, such as Ettie Williams and her baby daughter Marion, aged eight months, were travelling on to Adelaide. The Victorian press cheerfully quoted Miss Dorothy Moss, whose brother was serving with the A.I.F. in Palestine, as saying: 'We heard that Melbourne was a much better place than Sydney', and young Bill Stoker (whose father was assistant superintendent of the Hong Kong Fire Brigade) who was standing on the wharf handing out pamphlets entitled ‘Map of Melbourne and Suburbs’ to fellow passengers, as stating: ‘I’m selling these’.45

The next ship to dock in Australia was the stately *Awatea*. As she carried the majority of the army families, Bert Hubbard, Staff of the Financial Adviser, China Command, was amongst those on board. Bunny Browne: ‘On the way to Australia,

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44 *The Argus*, Friday 16 August 1940
45 *Ibid*, Bill Stoker went on to have an admirable career as a jet fighter pilot. *Indrapoera* survived the war, finally being scrapped under the name *Asuncion* in 1963.
Hubbard had to ascertain where each family wanted to go, so that the Australian authorities at each port could be informed so that they could prepare for their reception and eventual dispersal.\(^{46}\)

She reached Brisbane on 14 August 1940 and ninety-seven evacuees disembarked there, including John Hearn: ‘My mother chose Brisbane as my father’s sister lived there. We berthed at Brisbane in August 1940 and were taken by bus to Coolangatta to a guesthouse, one of many that had been chosen to house these evacuees.\(^{47}\)

Then the ship continued to Sydney where 387 more would leave. Being determined to give a positive first impression, the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Alderman Stanley Crick, the reception committee, and a big bus filled with members of the Garrison Band waited for several hours in the dark before realising that the disembarkation had been delayed. They reassembled in the morning, accompanying the first evacuees as they landed and were efficiently distributed to their new homes.

These efforts had not gone unnoticed. When the press interviewed Isobel Lamb, wife of Lieutenant Colonel Lamb of the Royal Engineers in Hong Kong, she voiced her satisfaction. ‘After the long hours of waiting, the overcrowding and acute discomfort on the voyage from Hong Kong to Manila it was a relief to find everything was running on oiled wheels. At Brisbane we could not have been treated better and no time was wasted at all.’\(^{48}\)

Interested in ‘British’ class distinctions, the Australian press also asked the evacuees about the difference in treatment between the families of officers and

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\(^{47}\) Email from John Hearn to author, 6 January 2009.
\(^{48}\) Sydney Morning Herald, 15 August 1940.
those of other ranks. Anne Norrell, wife of Staff Sergeant Friend Norrell of the RAPC (travelling with her three children, Anne Elizabeth, Friend William, and Eva May), told them: ‘Everyone has been wonderful to us. I have not noticed any difference in the treatment we received and that given to wives of officers. They were all very friendly to us, and all were treated alike when we had to line up for inspections or signature of papers.’\textsuperscript{49} Elizabeth Bucke, wife of Lieutenant Cyril Bucke of the Royal Corps of Signals confirmed: ‘The only way in which there was any distinction between us and the wives of troopers was the fact that we had separate tables, and one deck to ourselves. Otherwise they had the run of the ship, just as we did and the large majority had private cabins although a few had to be put in the wards.’\textsuperscript{50}

Richard Neve remembered Hubbard: ‘Before going down the gangway to a waiting taxi we queued for ages in the passageway leading to the Purser’s Office where a British army staff officer who had come aboard handed out details of where we were to stay. When my mother told the driver where to take us she pronounced it ‘Bondy’ with a short ‘i’ in the English fashion. He laughed and told her the correct way to say it was “Bond-eye”. It was our first introduction to the vagaries of Australian pronunciation.’\textsuperscript{51} Their destination was the Hotel Astra overlooking the famous beach, but not everyone would stay in the city area. Eveline Harloe ended up in the Blue Mountains: ‘I’ll never forget the arrival in Sydney, we berthed near the harbour bridge, amid much flag waving and cheering, and a band playing the “National Anthem”, “Land of Hope and Glory”, and other patriotic themes. We all stood on deck weeping with emotion, we’d had a very

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid
\textsuperscript{51} A Wartime Childhood, Richard Neve.
pleasant voyage over, though no deck chairs were allowed and no lights were to be shown at night, but the youngsters used to gather on the deck, in the dark, and sing: “Down Mexico Way, Roll out the Barrel”, etc with great gusto. The Red Cross again were most helpful. They looked after us, fed us, and put us on the train for Katoomba.’52

The Awatea continued to Melbourne on the night of 16 August 1940, to disembark her final 414 passengers. After being cleared by health and Customs officials, she berthed within a few minutes of the appointed time of 10.00. Within an hour 105 Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) drivers had taken nearly all the passengers to their new homes. Many precautions were taken on this occasion to avoid any misunderstandings; two Housing Commission officials had gone to Brisbane to meet the ship and make advance arrangements, and others had rechecked with all guesthouses and private hotel proprietors on the Friday afternoon. Then the RACV members waited after dropping the evacuees off to see that all were satisfactorily placed.53 With each vessel and each port, the sophistication of the reception was increasing.

Ron Brooks disembarked there and was billeted with other evacuees in a guesthouse in the northern country suburb of Croydon, but they were disappointed to discover that their accommodation was rather primitive with an outside bucket privy. Druscilla Wilson also arrived in Melbourne on the Awatea but was one of several who decided to continue elsewhere: ‘My friend and I had decided to go on to Tasmania and, as only one other family had decided to go this far, our situation was a lot less crowded than it had been when we were 1500-

52 Eveline Harloe's memoires.
53 The Argus, 19 August 1940.
strong. We left the ship at Melbourne, transferring to a smaller ship that took us to Launceston. Here the Press were waiting for us; we were lined up on the quay and photographed, looking rather like scarecrows.\textsuperscript{54}

The fifth ship to reach Sydney with evacuees from the Colony (not counting the first unofficial group) was the \textit{Empress of Japan}, and she arrived – like the \textit{Neptuna}, direct from Hong Kong - with forty women and eighteen children. The majority of these would stay in Sydney, but there were also some twelve evacuees for Melbourne and two or three bound for New Zealand. Again the chairman of the reception committee, the Reverend Dr Ronald Maclntyre, and Charles Bellemore, the Under Secretary of the Department of Labour and Industry, welcomed the evacuees. The NRMA Voluntary Auxiliary Service arranged the transport, and Girl Guides and members of other women's organisations were present to assist.\textsuperscript{55}

With interesting prescience, the papers reported: 'Some said that if their husbands could be suitably placed in Australia, and they themselves settled down happily, hundreds of the evacuees would make their permanent homes here.'\textsuperscript{56}

Also on board were Dean Wilson of Hong Kong as welfare officer, and Bertie Maughan as chief liaison officer for the Hong Kong Government.

Wilson's role was to act as the representative of the Government of Hong Kong in Australia in all matters concerned with British evacuees (advising them on financial, educational, medical, and social aspects of Australian life). He had an office with the Housing Commission in the T and G Building on Collins Street, Melbourne, but would also spend time in other states. Maughan, of the

\textsuperscript{54} From an account held by her daughter-in-law, Betty Wilson. The \textit{Awatea} would be sunk in 1942 when bombed during \textit{Operation Torch}.  
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 17 August 1940.  
\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Ibid}.  

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Government Audit Department, had similar authorization with regards to financial questions. Hubbard, who had arrived on the *Awatea* the previous day, had an identical mandate to Maughan’s, but specifically in connection with the wives and families of army personnel. Bunny Browne: ‘Having landed them all, Hubbard was faced with yet more problems. Canberra wanted him to arrange with the war office for authority to settle all financial matters connected with the families, e.g. expenses incurred by local authorities on their behalf, or cases where families found themselves in financial difficulties. He was also required to deal with families who wanted to move elsewhere in Australia or return to the UK.’

In fact around one thousand women and children in Hong Kong had originally registered for passage on the *Empress of Japan* but the number gradually dwindled through withdrawals and exemptions for essential services until fewer than sixty actually boarded. At the Hong Kong end, the evacuation was losing steam.

The *Slamat*, the sixth evacuee vessel – the fourth from Manila - arrived in Sydney on 17 August 1940. Mike Ferrier, son of Vivian Ferrier of the HKRNVR, was one of around 380 passengers: ‘It was a most enjoyable trip with a ship full of children sailing through the balmy islands of the Dutch East Indies. We called at Thursday Island to pick up pilots to take us through the Great Barrier Reef to Brisbane where we spent several days.’

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57 Letter from the Colonial Secretary’s staff (Hong Kong) to the Chairman of the Melbourne Housing Commission, 19 August 1940. National Archives of Australia, A433, 1941/2/1096 PART 2.
59 The *Empress of Japan* survived the war as *Empress of Scotland*, but was eventually burned out in a fire in New York in 1966.
60 From memoires sent by email from Mike Ferrier to author, 5 May 2004.
Charlotte Mezger, daughter of a customs appraiser, and her sisters were taken off the *Slamat* as soon as she arrived at Brisbane: ‘My sister - Mary-June then aged about 9 months suffered from pneumonia - my other sister Irene and I were ok.’\(^{61}\) Including these three, a total of fourteen passengers disembarked there. Two hundred and seventy-five more, of whom 102 were children, left the ship at Sydney.\(^{62}\)

Like the *Christiaan Huygens*, *Slamat* did not continue to Melbourne. Ferrier was one of 87 evacuees, including 39 children, who swapped ships in Sydney for the next stage. As before, the Department of the Navy had to give their permission for this change of plan.

Meanwhile the first of the evacuees to settle in Tasmania had arrived, travelling there from Melbourne (where they had landed on the *Awatea*). The party consisted of Bertha Levett (the wife of Lieutenant-Colonel Eustace Levett, Command Signals, China Command) and her five-year-old son John, Doris Burroughs (wife of Captain Sydney Burroughs of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps) and her two daughters, Joan aged fifteen and Patricia aged ten, and Druscilla Wilson with her two sons, Robin aged seven and Charles aged five. They were met at King's Wharf, Launceston, on the morning of 18 August by Mr. L. C. Goss, the manager of the Tourist Bureau there, taking up residence at Aberfeldie, Davey Street, with the children also going to school in Hobart (though Mrs Levett had three older children at boarding school in England).\(^{63}\)

\(^{61}\) Email from Charlotte Mezger to author, 28 April 2012.  
\(^{62}\) *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 August 1940.  
\(^{63}\) *The Mercury*, 19 August 1940. The *Slamat* would be lost less than a year later, dive-bombed off Greece in *Operation Demon*.  

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The next ship in the series, the *Johann de Witt*, arrived at Brisbane (where twelve evacuees would disembark) carrying 91 adults and a similar number of children for Sydney, and 89 women and children for Melbourne. But the ship had departed Manila with one child fewer on the manifest: Norah Thompson, wife of Walter Thompson of the Hong Kong Police Force, had given birth to a daughter during the passage. Joanna Thompson, born on 18 August 1940, became the first Australian born evacuee (as the ship had been in Australian waters at the time). Mrs. Thompson was travelling with her two older children, Brianne and Christopher, returning to her birthplace, Nelson, New Zealand, following a four-year stay in Hong Kong.

As she docked in Sydney, Andrin Dewar noted: ‘Alongside the ship was a long motorcade of black cars each with two Australian ladies armed with notebooks of addresses where the residents were willing to have billeted upon them mothers and children “for as long as necessary – free of charge”. We drove for many hours to a number of addresses which, for one reason or another the ladies deemed “unsuitable”. Eventually, about four thirty on the afternoon the ladies in our car decided this next address would have to be the last one, as most people would be preparing evening meals, thus we were introduced to a Mr and Mrs Roy Barnes in Strathfield, who were to be our hosts for the next 15 months.’

The evacuees were met at the dock by the Girls’ Caledonian Pipe Band complete with Scottish regalia, to the delight of the children and at least one Scottish mother. Sarah McCombe, travelling with her two children, Brian, aged four

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64 Walter Thompson would escape from Stanley Internment Camp in 1942, continue to fight behind Japanese lines in China, and end the war as a Lieutenant Colonel.
65 From *The Argus*, 21 August 1940.
66 Letter from Andrin Dewar to author, 3 November 2010.
and two-year-old Moya, had left Scotland for Hong Kong to join her husband (William McCombe, a flying instructor) in Hong Kong only five months earlier. She had stayed at a hotel while supervising the furnishing of their new home, but the family had only been in it for five weeks when the evacuation orders were announced. At least she and Moya enjoyed the performance.\textsuperscript{67}

The \textit{Johann de Witt} continued to Melbourne. Fifty cars provided by members of the Royal Automobile Club met the evacuees and took the majority of them to addresses in the city, while others left for the homes of friends in the suburbs and country. Charles John Longney, an official of the Housing Commission, travelled on the ship from Sydney to arrange accommodation. One passenger, Bertha Seddon, who had undergone an operation just before leaving Hong Kong, was taken straight from the ship to the Queen Victoria Hospital while the Girl Guides' Association looked after her two children, Thomas, aged seven, and Iris, aged three. By this time all the kinks in the reception process at all three ports had been ironed out; everything was well managed and went according to plan.

Reporting their arrival, \textit{The Argus} carried photos of the evacuees captioned: ‘MORE EVACUEES FROM HONG KONG, who reached Melbourne yesterday. Top Left - Some of the younger children on board the ship. Top Right - Mrs C.G. Tresidder with her baby daughter, Anne. Bottom Left - Scotch lassies from Hong Kong: Ellen, Allison, and Margaret King. Centre Right - Misses Phyllis Kirby, Wendy Anslow, and Mary Cuthill. Bottom Right - Mesdames E. R. Price, R. Markham, and F. Anslow with their baby daughters.’\textsuperscript{68} One of the babies was Susan Anslow: ‘In August 1940 we arrived in Melbourne and my photo was in the National

\textsuperscript{67} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}. 21 August 1940. McCombe would survive the war as a POW.
\textsuperscript{68} \textit{The Argus}, 24 August 1940.
Newspapers together with two other babies as the youngest evacuees to arrive.'\textsuperscript{69} However, she continued: ‘The Australians were nothing like as welcoming as the Americans had been – they regarded the evacuees as spongers and resented having to help them.'\textsuperscript{70}

Doug Langley-Bates arrived on the same ship: 'Our first placement was in a small guesthouse called The Fernery because of the tall ferns that grew all around. It was just across the road from the beach and we enjoyed swimming.'\textsuperscript{71} In fact, though, the Fernery must have been relatively sizable as no less than forty-seven Melbourne-bound evacuees listed it as their first Australian address.

In addition to the 170 evacuees destined for Melbourne itself, the vessel carried eleven for Adelaide and five for Perth who also disembarked there. Mike Ferrier was in the latter group, catching (at about 18.00 on the day they disembarked) the train to Adelaide to connect to the Trans-Australian Railway across the continent to Perth. 'There were no sleepers available until we got to Adelaide and I remember that it was a rather sleepless night and my reaction was childishly prudish on finding my mother asleep with an airman’s arm around her. We arrived at Adelaide next morning and changed trains. This was in the days when railway gauges varied between States. On our trip across we also had to change trains at Port Augusta and Kalgoorlie. It was a very slow train with plenty of stops and wherever we stopped there was always a crowd of Aborigines to sell boomerangs and nullah nullahs.'\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{69} Susan Anslow’s memoires. In fact her mother was called Joy. The papers were following the old custom of giving married ladies their husband’s initials (in this case, F for Francis).
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{71} Email from Doug Langley-Bates to author, 4 May 2008.
\textsuperscript{72} Mike Ferrier’s memoires. Today the Indian-Pacific railway links Sydney and Perth, the gauges having been standardised in the 1970s. In 1940 the longest contiguous section was the Trans-Australian.
The eighth and final ship in this series carrying evacuees from Hong Kong to Australia (via Manila or directly) was the Zealandia. She disembarked thirty-eight women and children at Brisbane, and arrived on Saturday afternoon (24 August 1940) at Sydney with 179 women and children bound for that city and 132 continuing to Melbourne. This brought the number of evacuees from Hong Kong who had by now arrived in Australia in this part of the official evacuation to more than 3,100. Some 56% had disembarked in Sydney, 35% in Melbourne, and 9% in Brisbane. Welcoming the evacuees, Bertie Maughan instructed them that: 'If you try to forget that in Hong Kong, you have been used to servants and to calling “Boy” when you want anything, you will be a great deal happier. We will do all we can to make your stay comfortable and happy.'73 (There would certainly be culture clashes. Evacuee Dorothy Lissaman would take her Australian hotel to court after the manager told her she was too exacting, gave her notice to leave, and on the threatened date locked the door of her room and had her belongings packed and put outside. She complained to the court that she was ‘used to an entirely different type of servant in the East.’)74

But not all the evacuees expected to be living in luxury. As Rosemary Read recalled as she disembarked from the Zealandia with her family and moved into their accommodation in Llewellyn Street, Brisbane: 'I think the reason we were given the house is that a woman had been bludgeoned to death with an anvil by an ex-fiancé and the house had been empty for some time... I remember that it gave me huge status at school which overcame the reigning antipathy to aliens at the time since all hostilities were set aside for the privilege of inspecting the

73 Sydney Morning Herald, 26 August 1940.
74 Sydney Morning Herald, 23 August 1945.
bloodstains that had soaked through the floorboards and were visible under the Queenslander style house, albeit with the inconvenience of a brief crawl due to the slope of the street and the shorter stilts and lower space under our room. Children are just little people - ghouls at heart!’

The initial evacuation to Australia, which had been termed the ‘Great Trek South’ in Hong Kong’s newspapers, was complete. As the *Sydney Morning Herald* noted, Sydney’s population had suddenly increased by more than 1,000 people, and: ‘Each has left an important part of her life behind and does not know when she will recover it. Husbands and sons are still in Hong Kong. Jobs were abandoned and others must be found for the sake of income. Newly furnished houses and cherished household possessions are remembered with regret. One woman parted with a grand piano - a Christmas present - and one had just paid the last instalment on a car. It made things all the harder that there were no bombs dropping on Hong Kong when they sailed. The city seemed the same as usual - and danger difficult to imagine.’

Although the forced migration that had started on 1 July 1940 in Hong Kong had now come to an end, newspapers reported that private evacuations continued. On 30 August they noted around one hundred arriving from England and a number from Hong Kong, by two ships that arrived in Melbourne. These latter included Mrs R.J.T. Hopkins, an Australian, who came from Hong Kong to stay with her sister, Mrs Kattlin, of Webb Street, Caulfield, Mrs W.N. Darkins (whose husband was a detective-inspector and who had lived in Hong Kong for seventeen years) and her

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75 Email from Rosemary Read to author, 12 November 2007.
76 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 August 1940.
son and daughter, and Mr S.W. Cressey and his wife who had spent twenty years in Hong Kong and planned to settle in Australia.77

Now it was time for the paperwork to catch up. On 21 August 1940 Joseph Aloysius Carrodus, the Secretary of the Department of the Interior, called a meeting for 27 August, intending to clarifying a number of matters with respect to evacuees. These included the determination of responsibilities of the State Governments and appropriate Commonwealth Departments in regard to provision of and payment for accommodation, payment of allotments, provision for their after-care, and other issues. Bertie Maughan and Bert Hubbard, representing civilian and military evacuees respectively, attended the conference together with officers of the Commonwealth Treasury and other departments. Five days later on 26 August the Hong Kong Government informed Australia that it intended paying the basic maintenance rate for evacuees of 30 shillings per week for adults and 20 shillings per week for children, noting that: ‘Those who desire better accommodation have to pay excess over basic rate.’78

But minor evacuations still dribbled on. Victor Ebbage, RAOC, who was normally based in Hong Kong but was at this time posted to Shanghai, noted: ‘All families would be evacuated to Australia in a few days time; the Eastern & Australian Steamship Company’s SS Tanda was on her way from Japan to pick them up. The North China Garrison and Legation Guard would be withdrawn and the installations closed down. The two infantry battalions in Shanghai and

77 Stanley Webb Cressey would lose his life aged 47 as a Flying Officer on 11 July 1945 and is remembered on the Singapore Memorial. William Darkins would be interned in Stanley.
78 Cablegram from The Officer Administering the Government, Hong Kong to Australian Prime Minister’s Department, 26 August 1940. National Archives of Australia, A433 1941/2/1096: PART 2.
ancillary troops were being withdrawn, and all installations closed. On 20 August, the SS Tanda set sail, leaving from Miike for Shanghai, Hong Kong, Manila, Rabaul, Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne. Ebbage’s wife and children embarked on 23 August, and sailed the following day, reaching their final destination (Melbourne) on 23 September 1940 with 28 ‘First Saloon’ passengers.

A minority of evacuees who had stayed longer in the Philippines because of sickness or childbirth arrived in Australia over the next two months, mainly aboard the Taiping. These included Ada Jordan (and her four sons), and Eleanor Jessop (with her two), both now recovered from their illnesses. Wendy Smith was one of those born in Manila. Her mother Winifred Smith and her mother’s friends Mary Byron and Tessie Mottram were all married to Hong Kong policemen and were all heavily pregnant on landing in the Philippines. ‘My mother was put off the ship when they reached Manila as the captain said there were no facilities for babies being born on the ship. I think she was lodged in the army barracks at first then transferred to the Red Cross hospital. I (Wendy) was 3 weeks later than expected. I was born on the second of September 1940.’

Those who had stayed in the Philippines to give birth appear to have mainly travelled onwards together, reaching Brisbane on 21 October 1940 accompanied by their babies and older children. The press reported the arrival at Brisbane that day of nine British women, ‘the last of the evacuees from Hong Kong for Australia’,

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80 Ibid. These were: Dr T. K. Abbott, Mrs V. N. Andrews, Mrs M. H. Ashmore and child, Mrs M. L. Bryan and child, Miss J. M. Burton, Mrs T. F. Burton, Mrs M. I. Campbell and two children, Mrs M. Chidson, Mrs M. D. Cornelius, Mrs K. B. Crew and child, Mrs E. Ebbage and two children, Mrs F. E. Eynon, Miss M. F. Eynon, Mrs D. F. Fleming and two children, Mrs E. A. Hennessy and child, Mrs I. Hoskin and two children, Miss W. M. Jackson, Mrs D. C. Levis and child, Miss M. Linklater, Mrs D. A. Macfarlane, Mrs F. A. Mage and child, Mrs J. E. Marsh and three Children, Mrs D. F. Orme, Mrs I. A. Rogers, Mrs E. Simmons and three children, Mrs N. E. Smyth, Mrs I. E. Stone, and Miss M. K. Thomson.
81 Email from Wendy Smith to author, 17 October 2012.
bringing thirteen children with them. One woman and four children left the ship at Brisbane. ‘Eight of the women had left Hong Kong for Australia in other ships, but had interrupted their voyage at Manila, where several babies were born. Other members of the party were delayed there by illness.’82

With all these evacuations of British civilians from the China ports, few would have noticed a short column in The Canberra Times of 27 August 1940 that quoted a Chinese report of a reciprocal evacuation in which 400 Japanese women and children would leave from Hong Kong, starting at the end of that month. ‘The Japanese Consul would not comment. He merely said that he had not issued evacuation orders, and that everyone leaving would be doing so voluntarily’.83

3.4 Early Days in Australia

Before the evacuees had left the Philippines, The Australian Women’s Weekly had stated that: ‘Thirteen women expect new babies will be born before they reach Australia, so the Government has sent two doctors and four nurses to accompany the ships.’84 Although, as noted, Joanna Thompson had been born on 18 August 1940 on an evacuation vessel in Australian waters, at the end of that month the first true Australian evacuee baby – Joan Marie Ingram – was born to Mrs Theodore R. Ingram at the Royal Hospital for Women in Sydney. Then William Taylor, son of Christina and William Taylor senior of the Royal Signals was born in Brisbane on the last day of August. The next was probably William Hirst, on 1 September. Others soon followed: John Mottram, Ray Byron, Richard Harloe. The

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82 Sydney Morning Herald, 22 October 1940.
83 The Canberra Times, 27 August 1940.
84 The Australian Women’s Weekly, Saturday 20 July 1940.
latter recalled: ‘My mother... was accompanied on the trip by my sister Carola Harloe & brother Charles D. N. Harloe. I was nearly born on the journey when they were sent on a hair raising bus trip in dead of night to Baguio in the Philippines. However, I waited & was born in NSW Australia in November 1940.’

By the beginning of September 1940 the majority of the Hong Kong evacuees were beginning to move out of the guesthouses and small hotels where many had originally been billeted, and settle in longer-term accommodation. For example, Alice Rust, whose husband was a commander with the Royal Navy, had taken a flat at Rose Bay, Sydney, and already decided to send her eldest son, Nigel, aged eight, to Cranbrook School. On 5 September she attended, with Joan Gordon (whose husband was also in the navy, serving on a submarine) the monthly meeting of the Naval War Auxiliary at Druids House. Although both their husbands would leave Hong Kong before the attack, the Navy would leave both women widows.

Richard Neve’s mother – who would be widowed too - had also selected Rose Bay, choosing 24 Wunulla Road, a semi-detached gabled house that looked out over the bay from near the base of Point Piper. ‘Neither my mother nor [her friend Doreen Ralph] were conscious of it at the time but it turned out we were living in one of the most prosperous and fashionable areas of Sydney... Next-door in the other half of the house lived the Arnotts. Mr Arnott owned a biscuit factory that made Arnott’s Biscuits, a well-known heavily advertised and popular brand in Sydney. They had a daughter Judith, our age, athletic, a bit of a tomboy and fun. She

85 Email from Richard Harloe to author, 9 July 2010.
had an elder sister called Bernice who despite her, to us, ghastly name had a boyfriend; very grown up. We would tease her about him just to see her blush.”

Stuart Braga, whose father left Hong Kong before the Japanese attacked, recalled: ‘The early weeks in Sydney were difficult. [My mother Nora] found accommodation at Manly, a well-known beach resort, where she held a small first birthday party on 29 August for [me] at a local cafe. It was not a success. The pram was not allowed inside the cafe, and [I] had to be left outside, miserable in the biting winter winds near the seaside. Within a couple of weeks she found a small flat at Cronulla, another seaside suburb, but at the southern outskirts of Sydney. It was a lonely, unhappy time, but things improved as the year wore on and summer drew closer. Nora found a house in Mosman, a pleasant suburb on the northern side of the harbour with trams to the city and a lovely harbour beach, Balmoral Beach, close by.’

Accommodation was one issue, illness was another. In a lettergram to the Australian Prime Minster, Sir Albert Dunstan, Premier of Victoria, noted that the Housing Commission of Victoria was having serious difficulty providing suitable and adequate medical attention for the Hong Kong evacuees in Melbourne. The Commission had been notified that many wives and children were in urgent need of medical attention and there were also ‘many expectant mothers’ unable to pay medical or hospital fees. On top of this there were a number of cases of sickness including fever, malaria, dysentery, and whooping cough which had developed

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86 *A Wartime Childhood*, Richard Neve.
87 Notes on Braga family’s evacuation. Email from Stuart Braga to author, 10 December 2010.
since their arrival. He proposed that any further hospital expenses should be included in the scheme.88

Private evacuees continued to arrive, including a few who had temporarily left the scheme in the Philippines and returned home to Hong Kong – to complete their packing, have a last look at their homes and collect their children’s amahs - before continuing their journey privately to Australia. Mrs E.W. Clark and her three children, Mrs M. McConnell with her two-year-old daughter Sally, and Mrs E.C. Branson, had objected to the crowded conditions in the evacuation to Manila and were amongst those who managed to return by ship temporarily to Hong Kong. On their belated arrival in Australia they stated that clothes in Hong Kong were even more expensive than before and that many business girls and other women with occupations were there. However, they also claimed that the city was very quiet and that the absence of children was particularly noticeable.89

The financial affairs of the evacuees were still being finalised a month after they arrived in Australia. Each evacuee had received a census form requesting their full name, the names, sex, and age of accompanying children, the full name, address and occupation of their husband, and three questions pertinent to finance:

- Are you able to pay for your accommodation?
- Have you sufficient funds to meet your out-of-pocket expenses?
- Do you desire to find employment; if so kindly state the type of employment and your qualifications?

88 Sir Albert Dunstan to Australian Prime Minister, P.M. File No. B.O.16/1/1, 22 August 1940. National Archives of Australia, A433, 1941/2/1096 PART 2.
89 Sydney Morning Herald, 9 September 1940.
In addition to this, on Friday 13 September 1940, the Australian papers announced that all civilian evacuees were requested to furnish Bertie Maughan (Finance Liaison Officer, Hong Kong Government, G.P.O., Box 21a, Sydney) with their name in full, together with their husband's initials, their permanent address, and the details of the ship they arrived on, with date and port of disembarkation.90

Then – on the other side of the world - came Sunday 15 September 1940, the peak of the Battle of Britain. Still more than a year before the Japanese would attack Hong Kong, the UK was facing the testing point of the struggle with Germany. Australia was assisting the displaced on both sides of the world. The Argus noted: ‘With the bombing of London and the destruction of so many houses, there is urgent need for the Red Cross Refugee Clothing Depot, 264 Latrobe St., Melbourne, to help the many families whose homes have disappeared, leaving them with nothing but their lives. Supplies of garments at the depot have been depleted by the distribution of 1,400 garments to Hong Kong evacuees, and the packing and despatching of about 15,000 garments for the use of the refugees from other countries sheltering in England, of whom there are over 80,000.’91

In hindsight, one of the key turning points of the war had occurred; Britain had survived the test. Before the war had even started in the Far East, victory had – in effect – begun to seed in Europe. The fascists would not prevail. American forces would be given the time they needed to grow, and (when they entered the conflict) the place from which they could assault Hitler’s armies. Britain had provided the time, and Russia would provide the blood.92 When Germany was contained, Japan

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90 The Argus, 13 September 1940.
91 The Argus, 18 September 1940.
92 Clearly the 1942 battles of El Alamein, Midway, and Stalingrad would cement the final path to victory using the pause that Britain had provided.
would be isolated; the country’s eventual fate had been sealed even before its attack had begun.

### 3.5 Developments in Hong Kong

In a letter to his wife in Australia, Reginald Vyner Gordon included a clipping from the *South China Morning Post*: ‘A reader sends this letter from the Daily Express, London: “In these parts we have divided people into three classes, the Sentaways, the Runaways, and the Stayputs. We are thinking of adding a fourth class, the Tricklebacks”’. But some could never trickle back. In September 1940, Joan Potter, eighteen months old, became the first evacuee to die in Australia.

In proportion to the distance the evacuees travelled, from leaving Hong Kong and waiting in the Philippines, to arriving in Australia, resentment had been brewing in the Colony. The Government evacuation had succeeded in part because of the sheer speed of its execution, but now that wives and children found themselves apart from husbands and fathers, each side of the divide had time on their hands to consider both the apparently stable international situation in the Pacific and the perceived injustice of their separation. Aware of this growing dissatisfaction, the Hong Kong government enquired of London - as early as late July, in Telegram 454 – whether the evacuation might be reconsidered. On 2 August they received a reply from the British Government regretting that in their view the political situation in the Far East did not yet warrant the cancellation of the evacuation order.

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93 *South China Morning Post*, 30 October 1940.
94 HKPRO 41-2-18 13139/11/40.
Vyner Gordon had evacuated his wife Marion, and two sons (Gavin aged three and a half, and Colin just six months). Living at 8 The Peak, he was a senior executive at Hong Kong Tramways Limited. During this period of separation – like many husbands – he embarked on a regular exchange of letters with his wife in Australia. On 7 September 1940 he wrote: ‘America is as good as in the war, they have given us 50 destroyers as you would probably hear from the wireless news on the ship, and I am confident they are going to take a strong line in the Pacific. They have only got to cut off Japan’s oil supply to cripple them entirely now we have shown an ability to stand up against the German air force at home so damn well. I feel America is 100% behind us. They are full of admiration for Churchill and if only Eden is made foreign minister we stand a good chance of getting along better with Russia and that in itself is full of future possibilities once things start to swing our way.’

In this analysis he was of course entirely correct. In 1940, America and the UK largely controlled the global supply of oil and, as Japan had few natural resources themselves, they needed – in order to literally fuel their continued war in China - to purchase it on the open market. But most of Gordon’s gripes were more domestic in nature. Some three weeks later he wrote: ‘There is going to be hellish trouble here soon if some definite information is not forthcoming about the return of wives and families. The Dock company employees are all threatening to throw up their jobs and go down to Australia, where apparently their wives have said they can easily get other jobs, unless their families are returned and they mean it too – So much so that the Governor has been approached in the matter.

95 Vyner Gordon’s letter to his wife of 7 September 1940, kindly provided, like all his letters quoted, by his son Colin Gordon.
According to someone I was recently dining with the evacuation was never meant to include civilians – only services – but was hopelessly bungled by those in power here.96 And it was not just the Dockyard men who were thinking of upping sticks. He also noted that Dr Edward Stout was leaving Hong Kong to join the Australian army and his evacuated wife.97

Gordon’s, and others, letters detail the mood of the post-evacuation Colony. There was still a sense of injustice at the patchy execution of the evacuation order. Some had complied, others had found loopholes, and still more seemed to have simply ignored orders altogether and got away with it. Should they take direct action, by perhaps joining their wives in Australia or trying to repatriate their families at their own expense? Or should they lobby the Hong Kong Government to return them, knowing that in practice only the UK actually had that authority? But despite these questions and frustrations the mood was shifting towards war. Gordon – a serious and committed member of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps – was pleased to discover that at the end of September he had been recommended for a regular commission. Obviously he could not know that this would result in his death, and was excited by the prospect. But in common with most of Hong Kong’s inhabitants he was under no illusions about the seriousness of the situation; he saw for himself the presence of the Japanese over the border with China – noting their flags flying over distant villages when hiking in the New Territories - and knew that war was coming. With this knowledge, Gordon - like all

96 Gordon letter of 30 September 1940. A very large percentage of Dockyard employees did indeed leave Hong Kong before the invasion.
97 Gordon letter of 21 October 1940. A Lieutenant in the HKVDC, Stout moved to Australia and served on active duty as a Captain and Regimental Medical Officer of the 2/5th Independent Company, AIF.
the other husbands - was caught between the frustration of separation and concerns about potential risks to his wife and sons were they to return.

Realising that there would be complaints and appeals against the evacuation, the Hong Kong Government established a committee - the Evacuation Advisory Committee - to advise as to the exercise of the discretionary powers conferred under regulations 4A, 4B, 4D, made under Section 2 of Ordinance No. 5 of 1922. The committee comprised His Honour Mr Justice Ernest Hillas Williams, Puisne Judge, as Chairman, with Major Richard Edward Moody and Cedric Blaker, Esquire, M.C., as members, and Claude Bramall Burgess, Esquire, as a member and Secretary. 98

The situation had indeed created a great deal of dissatisfaction in every stratum of Hong Kong society. Some families had been returned to Hong Kong whether they liked it or not, others in Australia were witnessing the birth of new children who – in a number cases – the fathers would never see. But even before these developments, the Honourable Mr Leo d’Almada e Castro, Jnr, had announced a set of questions he intended asking the government in Hong Kong’s Legislative Council on behalf of the population in general. These questions were considerably more perceptive of the situation pertaining to the Colony’s actual demographics than the original evacuation plan had been, and were widely publicised by the press before the session. While those whose families had been

98 Burgess would become Colonial Secretary of Hong Kong from 1958-1963. All four committee members would be POWs during the war. These details are from the Hong Kong Government Gazette, 13 September 1940, 1391. Later, Ronald Gillespie was also made a member. No. 573. (12 May 1941) stated: ‘With reference to Government Notification No. 1023 of 13th September, 1940, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint Mr Ronald Dare Gillespie to be a member of the Evacuation Advisory Committee, during the absence from the Colony of Mr Cedric Blaker, MC, with effect from 7th May, 1941.’ Numbers 1156 and 1157 (23 September 1941) gave notification that Blaker had resumed his appointment and that Mr Ronald Dare Gillespie was to be an additional member of the Evacuation Advisory Committee, with effect from 21 September 1941.
evacuated were upset with the government and were generally doing everything they could to be reunited, those whose families had not been evacuated were equally upset with the government for what they perceived as the unjustifiable prejudice shown by leaving them, presumably, in harm’s way. As the China Mail put it: ‘It is doubtful, indeed, if there has ever been a time in the modern-day history of the Colony when sympathy between public and Government has been so strained’.99 If a family was British enough for the male members to serve in the HKVDC, could they really not be British enough to be evacuated? Would it not have been more reasonable to have simply facilitated the evacuation of any and all that wanted to leave? D’Almada’s sixteen questions were asked in the Legislative Council on 25 July 1940, and the Government answered through the Colonial Secretary the Hon. Mr R. A. C. North:

1 – Was the recent compulsory evacuation of women and children from the Colony at the order of the Home Government or directed by the Hong Kong Government? Answer: As announced in the Press communiqué issued on 29th June last this action was taken on instructions from the War Cabinet.

2 – If the former, was the order in terms that only British women and children of pure European descent should be evacuated? Answer: The terms of the order were that this should be done as a first step.

3 – If the answer to (2) is in the affirmative, did Government draw the attention of the Home Government to the following:-

(a) that there is in the Colony a large number of British women and children who are not of pure European descent?

99 China Mail, 23 July 1940.
(b) The consequent discrimination involved in the said order?

Answer: The answer is in the negative. The Government is aware of the position.

4 – If the answer to (1) is that the said evacuation was directed by the Hong Kong Government, will Government state its reasons for limiting it as indicated in (2)?

Answer: Does not arise.

5 – Is it not a fact that

(a) before September 1939 a scheme had been drawn up by a Committee appointed by the Government, which scheme provided for the evacuation inter alia of women and children who are British Subjects?

(b) that the said Committee recommended “selective evacuation” if the available accommodation fell short of requirements and suggested further that a reasonable basis for determining the order of selection would be:

I. Naval and Naval Volunteer families;

II. Military, R.A.F. and H.K.V.D.C. families;

III. Civilian families

(c) that those to whom the operation of the scheme was entrusted were unequivocally informed that, upon an evacuation, and irrespective of the question of accommodation, the said order of selection or precedence would be observed?

(d) that before September 1939 personnel had been recruited for the purpose of putting the scheme into operation when the occasion arose?

(e) that the said scheme was designed to operate at short notice?

(f) that as regards the recent evacuation there was no question of short notice?
Answer: The 1939 scheme was drawn up to meet a contingency which has not yet arisen, and it is considered unnecessary to adopt it in the present circumstances. Should the situation alter appropriate steps will be taken.

6 – If the answers to (5) (a) and (b) are in the affirmative will Government state why the said scheme and order of precedence were abandoned in favour of the evacuation as in fact carried out? Answer: See my reply to question 5.

7 – Who is to bear the cost of the recent evacuation? Answer: The cost of transport of civilian families will be met from Hong Kong funds. The question of the extent to which maintenance will be provided from the same source is under discussion.

8 – Are wives and families of members of the H.K.V.D.C. who are not of pure European decent to be evacuated? Answer: Yes, if occasion arises and if suitable arrangements can be made.

9 – If so, when? Answer: When occasion arises.

10 – If not, why not? Answer: See the answer to 13.

11 – Are British women and children who are not of pure European descent to be evacuated? Answer: This cannot be guaranteed but what is possible will be done.

12 – If so, when? Answer: When occasion arises.

13 – If not, why not? Answer: There may be practical difficulties such as lack of shipping or the difficulty of obtaining admission to other territories.

14 – If the answers to (8) and/or (11) are in the negative, should not Government have made an early statement accordingly, so that the many concerned might make their own arrangements? Answer: There has never been any reason why persons who so desire should not make their own arrangements to leave Hong Kong.
15 – Has Government any definite policy in regard to evacuation? Answer: Yes, but this policy must naturally vary according to circumstances.

16 – If so, will Government make a full and frank statement with regard thereto? Answer: The answer must be understood in connection with the reply to question 15. In view of the present world situation it has been considered expedient to remove from the Colony as many as possible of those women and children who are not normally domiciled here, and can most conveniently be established elsewhere. Should the situation unhappily deteriorate further measures may be advisable. If so, the steps already taken will have greatly simplified the problem.100

Question 14 had of course been poorly worded, leaving the government an obvious path of escape; had d’Almada said instead ‘so that the many concerned might have realised they were being abandoned’ it would have been harder to wiggle out of. The answer to question 16: ‘to remove from the Colony ... those ... who are not normally domiciled here’ really applied only to the service families, as many of the evacuated civilian families were into their second, and sometimes third, Hong Kong generation. However, perhaps the most surprising answer was that to question 5, stating that this was not the evacuation envisaged in the 1939 plan. That plan had started with the words: ‘If a siege threatens Hong Kong it will be necessary to evacuate to safer places all women and children other than those of Chinese and enemy races, and those specifically registered for war work with no children living in the Colony.’ Presumably the rationale was that at this moment there was no immediate threat of siege, but the implication was that therefore the details of the 1939 plan (covering precedence of evacuation, evacuation of all

100 Legislative Council meeting minutes of 25 July 1940. Hong Kong University Library.
women with children, and races other than ‘pure European’) no longer pertained. It was a convenient, though somewhat implausible, loophole.

In fairness, though, in answering the question: ‘was the order in terms that only British women and children of pure European descent should be evacuated’ in the negative, the government was being accurate. That was neither the order from the United Kingdom nor the intention of Hong Kong. Although they baulked at blaming Australia for their racial criteria for immigration (bearing in mind how helpful the Australian had been for the remainder of the evacuees), they were correct in implying that the Hong Kong Government themselves had favoured a multi-racial evacuation. The answer to question thirteen: ‘There may be practical difficulties... of obtaining admission to other territories’, was as far as they would commit themselves in this regard.

Confirming that the order to evacuate had originated in London, and that the Secretary of State was aware of the seriousness of the disruption to Hong Kong life, Norman Lockhart Smith, H.E. The Officer Administering the Government, decided to add his own statement to North’s replies. After noting that the final order to evacuate women and children ‘of pure European descent’ was received on the afternoon of Friday, 28 June 1940, and that a special meeting of the Executive Council on the following morning approved the order for compulsory evacuation, he made an interesting observation: ‘As there was a suitable ship available on the following Friday (5th July), the Evacuation Committee at once got to work on the basis of the list of voluntary applicants for evacuation prepared in 1939 and since then kept up to date. As accommodation was not unlimited, the question of
compulsory registration of all women was not enforced until 6th July.'\textsuperscript{101} The ‘voluntary applicants’ were presumably the military families that Bunny Browne had diligently documented, but in fact instructions to register (which were stated as if they were compulsory) had appeared in the press as early as 1 July. He continued, blurring the issue of whether this was or was not the evacuation that had been envisaged in 1939:

As regards the allegation of racial discrimination in the War Cabinet's explicit instructions, it had always been held, in the original 1939 evacuation scheme, that special treatment would be necessary for persons with no real domicile in Asia and it had been hoped that India, Macao, Indo-China and China itself would be the natural destination for all others. Circumstances in recent months have greatly altered in this latter respect; but I can assure this Council that should further evacuation be ordered the fullest consideration will be given to the claims of all races. The evacuation already effected will clearly facilitate such supplementary action.

I should perhaps make it clear that the secret print of the so-called 1939 evacuation scheme was in the hands of the Secretary of State for the Colonies many months ago, and was no doubt fully considered by His Majesty's Government before the present decision was reached. As the Honourable Colonial Secretary has said, that scheme contemplated a much more urgent emergency than now exists; and moreover the recommendation included in that scheme to the effect that priority should be given to the families of all

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
volunteers has evidently not been considered applicable in present circumstances.\textsuperscript{102}

But the complainers were not mollified. The 1939 plan had not in fact expressed that ‘special treatment would be necessary for persons with no real domicile in Asia’. On the contrary, it had specifically included, for example, ‘local-born Portuguese’. Later in the same Legislative Council session, several members voted against a proposed expense of HK$10,000 for evacuation, but it was of course not the money itself that they were protesting against. Unofficial member Sir Henry Pollock took the position that forcing women to leave against their will was unjust. He argued that only women with children should be evacuated, and that any single women currently in the Philippines should be allowed to return rather than continue to Australia. He also, correctly, pointed out that the current situation could be extended indefinitely depending on when the Sino-Japanese war and the war in Europe might end. He finished: ‘I am aware of the so-called “clear the decks for action” argument, but it seems to me to lack weight in view of the sheer impossibility of evacuating the hundreds of thousands of Chinese women and children who live in our midst. Any comparison with fortresses, pure and simple, like Gibraltar or Malta, must, therefore, be fallacious. The deportation of women from the Colony, against their will, is entirely contrary to those principles of freedom and justice for which we are fighting in Europe, in our struggles against Nazi Germany’.\textsuperscript{103}

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
The Honourable Mr Lo also voted against. In his case he argued that it was unjust to force the bulk of Hong Kong’s population to cover the costs of evacuating an elite few: ‘Therefore the position, as it appears to us, is that the tax-payers of this Colony are being made to pay for the evacuation of a very small and selected section of the community and, whenever necessary, for their maintenance and support during an indefinite period leaving some 99.9% of the population uncared for and unprotected when an emergency does come... Some million and a half people in Hong Kong are made to pay for the evacuation and maintenance of some 5,000 people.’\textsuperscript{104}

D’Almada, Paterson, and Dodwell joined the revolt. Pollock even suggested that the Government should have ignored the instructions of the British War Cabinet as: ‘the War Cabinet is a long way from us and as far as I know they do not form any integral part of the constitution of this Colony. We have no means of questioning them on their motives in this Council or in any other Council. It seems to me that Government, by their answer in this Council today to one of the questions, have, in effect, stated that they do not take any responsibility as regards this evacuation, but leave the entire responsibility to that body which is outside our constitution and which we cannot call to account in any way at all.’\textsuperscript{105}

Mr. Lo added that ‘disgraceful discrimination’ had been meted out to certain women (of non-European, or non-pure-European descent) in Manila, who had been ‘weeded out’ by Dean Wilson ‘on the advice of two ladies from Hong Kong’.\textsuperscript{106} The common talk was indeed that the weeding out was not done by officials, but by

\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Ibid. As you enter Stanley Military Cemetery today, Dodwell’s son Michael’s grave (he died of disease as a POW having served in 2 Battery HKVDC) is one of the first you see.}
\textsuperscript{106} \textit{Ibid.}
a couple of British women ‘of pure European descent’ who were evacuees themselves. The Chairman was in a difficult situation and proposed to hold a second meeting in private so that we could speak freely. Here he was most probably referring to the practical difficulties of getting Australia to agree to the racially broader evacuation that Hong Kong had originally proposed, a point he would have preferred not to make in public for fear of causing embarrassment.

Evacuee Elizabeth Gittins explained the prevailing environment: ‘[The British] set up an elitist group. Every other race, including the Eurasians, were excluded. For instance, in the Gittins family, my father's sisters, before WWII even found prejudice when applying for employment as secretaries. Grandfather Ho Tung became aware of this as soon as he left school and knew he would not be accepted if he took the name Bosman, which was his father’s name. He chose the name Ho (this was auspicious and had nothing to do with his father or mother) and he also embraced Chinese culture. He may even have been the first Eurasian to do this. He then used his business acumen to become most successful. Subsequently other Eurasians followed suit and “pretended” to be Chinese. They certainly could not get away with claiming to be European.’

In fact Robert Ho Tung, as the first non-European to live on the Peak, had been personally responsible for much of the re-positioning of the role of Eurasians in Hong Kong society. Certain very respectable residential areas such as Kowloon Tong were, by 1940, home to a large number of higher-to-middle-income Eurasian families who formed the backbone of many banks and trading houses. While the Eurasian middle-class was well integrated by then, many pure Chinese and pure

107 Email from Elizabeth Gittins to author, 16 March 2011.
Caucasian families in Hong Kong still thought the Eurasians a race apart. Australian attitudes at the time were even more primitive.

Meanwhile discussions about financing the evacuation and the evacuees were continuing between the Hong Kong and United Kingdom Governments. In telegram 510 from Hong Kong’s Office of the Accountant General, the comments from the meeting described above were relayed to London. Initially the British government had stated that they would pay only 50% of the cost of the evacuation, and their tardiness in taking responsibility for the full expense was understandable as they had many bills of their own to consider. By this time their Children’s Overseas Reception Board (CORB) had evacuated fewer than 3,000 British children abroad. Then, early on the morning of 18 September 1940, the City of Benares on a voyage from Great Britain to Canada with over 400 passengers (90 of whom were child evacuees) was torpedoed by U-48. Around 260 of the passengers, including the great majority of the children, died in the sinking. Amidst public indignation in the UK (aimed as much at the Admiralty as the Germans) CORB’s operations would be quickly curtailed. From then on, British evacuations would be purely domestic affairs. Later that same day the UK confirmed the ‘acceptance of H.M.G. of complete charges for evacuation of European women and children to Australia on condition that they would be reimbursed from proceeds of Hong Kong war taxation.’

Despite these raging controversies, the Hong Kong Police Force were still ordering those women and children who had remained behind – if they had no

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108 A fact particularly galling to those Eurasian families whose sons were however ‘British enough’ to be killed fighting for the British once hostilities began. It is worth noting in this context the consensus that the fighting unit that caused the most Japanese causalities in Hong Kong’s defence was Number 3 (Eurasian) Coy, HKVDC.

109 HKPRO 41-2-18 13139/11/40.
clear reason to be exempted – to evacuate. Initially the newspapers continued to exhort civilians to register at the Registration Office at the Supreme Court, or the Registration Office in Kowloon, stating that: ‘The last day for registration is Saturday the 30th July and any persons who are required to register and who have not done so by that date will render themselves liable to imprisonment.’ But these notices still specified that they only pertained to: ‘all female British subjects, except those of Chinese race, all male British subjects of over the age of 55 years, except those of Chinese race, and all children of either sex under the age of 18 years, except those of Chinese race.’

But with few takers, a more personal, direct, and threatening approach was gradually adopted as this letter sent to Mrs E. Savitsky on 12 October 1940 (numbered Evac. 324) shows:

I have the honour to inform you that, according to the records of this Department, you are not granted exemption from evacuation.

The purpose of this letter is to enquire on what date, and by what steamer you now propose to leave.

If you consider yourself entitled to exemption from evacuation, or if you wish to extend your stay in the Colony beyond the 18th October, you should make written application without delay to the Secretary, Evacuation Advisory Committee, c/o Colonial Secretary’s Office, and inform me that you have done so. Full details of the grounds on which you claim exemption should be stated.

I must warn you that failure to comply with these instructions will result

\[110\] *China Mail*, 18 July 1940.
in an order to leave being served on you in exercise of the powers conferred under Regulation 4A made under Section 2 of the Emergency Regulations, Ordinance No. 5 of 1922, of which a copy is attached. Every person who disobeys or fails to comply with such an order is liable to a fine not exceeding $1,000, and to a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year. (Regulation 4c.)\textsuperscript{111}

And this communication was followed on 30 October 1940 by a specific order (numbered 119) for her and her two children to leave by a certain date:

As the presence in the Colony of you and your children,

Nikita

and Cyril,

appears to me to be unnecessary for the defence of the Colony or for the maintenance of service essential to the maintenance and security of the community therein, by virtue of the power conferred on me by Regulations 4A and 4B made under Section 2 of the Emergency Regulations Ordinance No.5 of 1922, I hereby order you and your children,

Nikita

and Cyril,

to leave the Colony on or before the 8\textsuperscript{th} day of November, 1940.

I must warn you that failure to comply with this order renders you liable to a fine not exceeding $1,000 and to a term of imprisonment not exceeding

\textsuperscript{111} Via email from Michael Martin (Mrs Savitsky's grandson) to author, 4 January 2008.
Both letters were signed by Colin Luscombe for the Commissioner of Police, and addressed to Elena Savitsky at the Alhambra Theatre Building, Top Floor. By an interesting coincidence, in Stanley Internment Camp a year or so later Luscombe’s fellow police officer Arseny Savitsky (Elena’s husband) would paint his portrait.

Presumably hundreds of such letters were sent (the numbers Evac. 324 and Order 119 probably give a clue), some of which were complied with and some not. However, as no records of prosecutions appear to have survived, it seems that the government had little interest in pushing too hard – possibly mindful of the high status in the Colony of some of those most resistant to evacuation.

Not surprisingly, as time went on and no Japanese attack materialised, both the Hong Kong and Australian sides of the evacuated families started campaigning more strongly for return, even though on 2 October 1940 the Evacuation Advisory Committee completed plans for a further batch of close to 300 evacuees to leave. On 26 October 1940, Helen Kennedy-Skipton (wife of George Kennedy-Skipton of the Hong Kong Government) appeared before the Evacuation Advisory Committee, applying for exemption for her and her children. Her appeal, in common with several similar efforts by others that day, was turned down. On Saturday 2 November 1940, George Thomson, the accountant of The Hong Kong & Kowloon Wharf & Godown Co., Ltd., appealed to the Committee for the return of his wife

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112 Ibid.
113 On 1 September 1950 Luscombe would take command of an incident in which a kidnapping suspect had barricaded himself in a house in Ha Kwai Chung Village in Tsuen Wan Division. He was shot dead by the kidnapper, who fellow policeman Ken Bodie killed in return.
114 South China Morning Post, 28 October 1940.
Katherine who had privately evacuated. The appeal was rejected, and Thomson wrote to the committee complaining that they had claimed, and the press had repeated, that he was ‘applying for permission for Mrs Thomson to return on the grounds that you were unable to support her in Australia and yourself here.’ The Secretary of the committee, Claude Bramwell Burgess, pointed out that Thomson’s lawyers’ (Messrs. Johnson, Stokes and Master) letter to them had stated the key reason for requesting her return as being: ‘As her continued absence from the Colony will involve our client giving up his present home and dismissing his staff’ and that this would ‘imply that your appeal was based on financial grounds.’ Rightly or wrongly Mr Thomson’s wishes would prevail, and as a result he and his wife would sit out the war years together in Stanley Internment Camp. Many others still shared his desire, though, and when on 4 November the Very Reverend Wilson returned from Australia and spoke to a well-attended meeting at the Rose Room of the Peninsular Hotel about his work with the evacuees, Frederick Clemo in the audience suggested that another committee should be immediately formed to approach the Government on the question of returning the evacuees.

In a letter written the same day as that meeting, and the day before the American election, Vyner Gordon noted a thawing of the international situation in which the Japanese now seemed much less truculent, and (assuming Roosevelt would be victorious when the results of the election were announced) America would be likely to take an even stronger line with them, perhaps even to the extent of ‘causing a few sparks to fly’. This thought was bolstered by the fact that the

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115 China Mail, 7 November 1940.
116 Hong Kong Daily Express, 5 November 1940. Clemo’s wife Agnes and son Ernest had evacuated. He himself would leave Hong Kong before the Japanese attack.
117 Gordon letter of 4 November 1940.
Hong Kong press reported on 10 October 1940 that Addison Southard, the US Consul General, had advised all American nationals, including men, whose presence in Hong Kong was not regarded as essential, to evacuate as early as possible. Gordon concluded, however, that at the moment there was not much cause for anxiety and in fact the bigger worry was that the situation would drag on for months, never coming to a head to the point where it might be resolved and the evacuees could return.

Then came the bombshell. Three days later his next letter to his wife started normally enough; ‘Gone with the Wind really was a marvellous picture,’ it began. Advertised in the newspapers the day before at the Queen’s & Alhambra Cinema with two shows at 14.30 and 20.00, the film had clearly made an impression – but the final editions of the newspapers published after the show carried an article that made a greater impression still. The headlines read Sensational Decisions By Home Government and the front page described how the compulsory evacuation scheme had been abandoned on instructions from the Secretary of State for the Colonies (in telegram number 642 sent to the Hong Kong Government on 5 November 1940). Those women and children who had been served with notices to leave the Colony could now ignore those notices if they so wished (though their evacuation was still advised), but it had been decided not to lift the existing restrictions on women who had already been evacuated and who wished to re-enter the Colony. This was yet another source for dissatisfaction. Those who had somehow evaded or delayed to this point would now no longer need to leave, though those who had obeyed the rules and accepted evacuation would not be

118 Gordon letter of 7 November 1940.
119 Hongkong Telegraph, 6 November 1940.
allowed back.\textsuperscript{120}

Continuing the same letter, but with this part typed (as he felt he expressed himself better while dictating) Gordon – after noting the injustice and giving his opinion that despite the UK government’s change of heart there had actually been no fundamental improvement in the relationship with Japan - added: ‘But with Roosevelt (thanks goodness) re-elected, I expect to see America take a much stronger attitude with regard to embargoes etc. in the near future and if Japan feels herself cornered it is impossible to tell whether she will fawn, growl or bite. That remains to be seen and, as you know I regard the [Dutch East Indies] (which is what Japan most needs) the Danzig of the Far East, with Russia always hovering ominously in the back-ground and not to be ignored.’

Again his analysis was accurate; he had correctly defined both Japan’s needs and the coming conflict’s trigger. He continued the letter again by hand: ‘Nearly all the women who are still here (with or without children) are engaged in nursing or other activities and have decided to stick it out thro thick or thro thin. This brings us up against the same old brick wall again and is of course the whole point of my writing so bluntly. In other words I am prepared to assume half but not all responsibility for any consequences there might be as a result of your return. That then is the position as I see it – I have tried to state it unselfishly and I hardly feel I could be accused of putting it in a manner unduly favourable to myself – You know without being told how much I want you back – I know that you want to come

\textsuperscript{120} In a test case of January 1941, Mabel Blair challenged the legality of the government’s position in the Supreme Court, her lawyers arguing that the decision to forbid returns had been made by the local government rather than the British and was therefore \textit{ultra vires}. However, the court found that the regulation was within the powers of the local government, and she lost the case. \textit{South China Morning Post}, 15 January 1941 and 22 January 1941. I am indebted to Christopher Munn for his kind assistance with legal issues.
back. But what of the kids? There I feel the final decision must rest with you and I want to say that I shall understand, and agree with, and back you up on, any decision you may in all the circumstances consider best.121

But despite the official rescindment of mandatory evacuation, by then, having been pressured by her husband’s employers, the police, Mrs Savitsky and her two children were finally on a ship, the Nellore, which departed Hong Kong on November 9th.122 Cyril Savitsky: ‘The day we left HK, the seas even as we were leaving the harbour were fairly rough. The next few days most were confined to their beds and access to the decks was not allowed... I do remember it took nearly 3 weeks to get to Brisbane... We left HK early in November on board the SS Nellore and arrived in Brisbane on the morning of 25 November 1940.’123

The Savitskys were among the final twenty-two official evacuees. The arrival of their ship at her final port of call in Sydney was reported in the papers which noted that the majority of the evacuees would be staying there, with some going on to Melbourne and even a few to New Zealand. In fact almost fifty had been originally booked passage on the Nellore as compulsory evacuees, but around half had cancelled after the end of the evacuation was announced.124

On 11 November the Hong Kong newspapers carried a new message, under the headline ‘Government Outlines New Evacuation Plans’. These plans suggested that a new roster should be prepared, based on need and willingness – irrespective of race – for evacuation. The Government’s new policy was to provide evacuation

121 I have quoted Gordon’s letters here at some length not simply because they express the feelings of the time so well, but also because his interpretation of the global situation was so startlingly accurate.
122 Evacuees on board the SS Nellore. National Archives of Australia, A1539, 1940/W/17383.
123 Email from Cyril Savitsky to author, 29 January 2013.
124 The Argus, 29 November 1940.
in the priority order (but only for those who wish to go) of: a) wives and children of servicemen irrespective of race, b) wives and children, irrespective of race, of other disciplined services including the Police Force, Fire Brigade, A.R.P. Services, certain medical services, and employees of the Royal Naval Dockyard, and c) all others irrespective of race.\textsuperscript{125} Policy had finally met mood. Unfortunately (a) and (b) had – aside from the race issue – already been carried out, and (c) and the ‘irrespective of race’ never would be. In fact after this date it seems that as far as the Hong Kong Government was concerned, the evacuation was over.

On 13 November 1940 Vyner Gordon’s regular letter to his wife described the Husbands’ Meeting at the Peninsula Hotel the previous Friday. Around 500 were present and the ‘speeches for the most part were awful tripe too painful for words’, but the attendees felt that the governor was sympathetically disposed towards allowing the evacuees’ return at the earliest possible opportunity.\textsuperscript{126} Many of the wives in Australia were equally active. While some toed the Government line (‘Though I long to get back to my husband I feel that it is our duty to make the very best of things as they are, and give the Government as little trouble as possible,’ said Violet Macmillan; ‘Who are we to say what is best for us?’ asked Mary Asche),\textsuperscript{127} others did not, and wrote to the papers:

Sir, - ‘The Argus’ of November 4 carried a report, headed ‘Hong Kong Families Happy to Stay Here.’ On behalf of a large number of evacuees, may I say that these isolated cases cannot be taken as the view of the majority. Most of us

\textsuperscript{125} China Mail, 11 November 1940.
\textsuperscript{126} Gordon letter of 13 November 1940.
\textsuperscript{127} The Argus, 5 November 1940. Yet Violet and her son Robert ended up returning as far as the Philippines, where they would spend the war interned.
are anything but happy or content. In England, where the dangers are so real, no pressure has been brought to bear on women - each has the right to decide for herself. We, in China, where the danger was comparatively nil, were given no choice - simply ordered to leave. We resent this. Many of us have had very bad conditions to contend with. There will be no contented wives until this muddle is cleared up, and something definite about our return announced. The wives who now express satisfaction with the conditions are mostly those who complained unceasingly en route. Yours & c.128

There had been understandable resentment at the time of the original evacuation, aimed at the ‘officials’ who were believed to have cheated their way out of the evacuation of their families, but it had been balanced against a belief that there was at least a degree of threat in remaining in Hong Kong. Now, by cancelling mandatory evacuation, the government was implying there was no longer a threat, and if there was no longer a threat, why would evacuees not be allowed to return? The inconsistency did not sit well with families who had been broken up, and again there was a feeling that those who had evaded evacuation had in effect been pardoned, while those who had dutifuly evacuated were being punished.

So why had the government’s position changed? There had been a consideration of whether Hong Kong should be in effect abandoned, but in October 1940 the War Cabinet had noted: ‘The defence policy of Hong Kong has been again examined by the Chiefs of Staff, who had before them a memorandum by Sir

128 The Argus, 9 November 1940. The nine women who signed the letter were a mixture of Army families (Kathleen Bates, Selina Fleming, Ruth Maslem) and civilian (Joan Barnes, Blanch Bishop, Winifred Casey, Gladys Clarke, Vera Scott, Dorothy Stephens).
Geoffrey Northcote, the Governor, in which was raised the question whether, in view of the difficulty of defending the Colony, it should be demilitarized. It was decided to adhere to the policy of defending the Colony as long as possible.¹²⁹ The equivalent report the following month simply noted: 'The compulsory evacuation of British European women and children, only a very small proportion of whom have not left the Colony, has been suspended. Those already evacuated will not be allowed to return until the political situation in the Far East has improved.'¹³⁰ But the claim of only a ‘small proportion’ remaining was disingenuous; those remaining were equal to about half the number of evacuees. In fact, removing the service families from the equation and counting only Hong Kong domiciled civilians, the numbers were almost equal. The British government’s decision implies that they were washing their hands of the affair; it was over, right or wrong there was to be no further mandating of evacuation, but (playing a safe and politically astute game) those already evacuated would stay evacuated.

On 9 December 1940, Gordon wrote describing a well-worded petition that had been recently cabled to the Secretary of State by the Husbands’ Evacuation Committee, noting that if it failed to have the desired effect and nothing had changed by the following March, then he would apply for leave and fly down to join his family in Australia. Others had already taken similar leave. 'Mr. T. J. B. Macintyre, of the Taikoo Dockyard and Engineering Company, Hong Kong, who has arrived to spend his leave with his wife, who arrived in August, said that British nationals at Hong Kong were prepared for any eventuality. Everyone, even men

¹²⁹ The National Archives (TNA): CAB 68/7/24.
¹³⁰ The National Archives (TNA): CAB 68/7/29.
well over 50, had volunteered for service. All had done considerable training.\textsuperscript{131}

With the official evacuation now formally over, Senator Foll summarised the situation in Australia. On 14 November 1940 he announced that Australia had provided a haven for 3,156 evacuees from Hong Kong and Shanghai. Of these 49 percent were civilians, 37 percent wives and families of army personnel, and fourteen percent, naval and naval dockyard personnel. They had found temporary homes in the states as follows: New South Wales 1,762, Victoria 1,060, Queensland 326, Tasmania eight, and another ten in South and Western Australia.\textsuperscript{132} And yet the Pacific War was still more than a year in the future.

\textsuperscript{131} The Argus, 12 October 1940. Those older Volunteers would form a group known as the Hugheseliers, who would perform sterling service in December 1941, holding the North Point Power Station and preventing the Japanese invasion force attacking directly west along Hong Kong Island's north shore. 

\textsuperscript{132} Courier-Mail, 14 November 1940. In fact these numbers do not reflect the final evacuees who arrived with the Savitskys.
Chapter 4. 1941: Pre-Pacific War Australia

This is all wrong. If Japan goes to war with us there is not the slightest chance of holding Hong Kong or relieving it. It is most unwise to increase the loss we shall suffer there. Instead of increasing the garrison it ought to be reduced to a symbolical scale. Any trouble arising there must be dealt with at the Peace Conference after the war. We must avoid frittering away our resources on untenable positions. Japan will think long before declaring war on the British Empire, and whether there are two or six battalions at Hong Kong will make no difference to her choice. I wish we had fewer troops there, but to move any would be noticeable and dangerous.¹

Chapter Four observes the environment the evacuees found themselves in as they struggled to be allowed to return to Hong Kong and made the largely unassisted transition from the pre-evacuation idyll in the Colony to the difficulties (real and perceived) of life in Australia. Lacking family support and security, they now had the social position of refugees. The eighteen months of separation before the Japanese attack had a negative impact on morale; families were immediately under great strain both at the Hong Kong and Australian ends – and were still desperate to reunite. The impact of accident and illness was multiplied by distance. The pressure on evacuated families at this time was far greater than on those not

evacuated, added to for the civilians by the continuing sense of injustice that so many of the latter had deliberately evaded the evacuation, and amplified for service families by the continuing postings of many of the men they had left in the garrison. The Hong Kong evacuees’ experience is put into context through a comparison with the American civilians in the Philippines who were not evacuated and would eventually fare far worse. The vain hope for repatriation to Hong Kong delayed acclimatisation to Australia for many – though during this period more families also realised that they could regain control of their destinies, either by the evacuees themselves leaving Australia or by the husbands who had been left behind leaving Hong Kong (permanently or temporarily). Meanwhile, demonstrations and petitions calling for repatriation of the evacuees to Hong Kong grew to a crescendo.

With mixed messages 1940 came to an end and 1941 started. On one hand, evacuations had ceased, but on the other there was still no indication that those already evacuated would be allowed to go home. But after five months in Australia the settling in process had to begin, though hesitantly, in many cases, due to the fact that settling in was the last thing the evacuees wanted to do. Unwilling immigrants, the majority at this stage still wanted nothing more than to go back to Hong Kong. Susan Anslow: ‘Mummy absolutely hated Australia and the Australians and hated the six years we spent there. The entire time we were living there she fought a losing battle to stop me talking with an Australian accent!’

But of course the perceptions of many evacuees were tarnished by their hatred for the situation they found themselves in; not all evacuees felt so negative

\[2\] Susan Anslow’s memoires.
about their environment itself. In fact, as time would tell, some fifty percent of them would eventually voluntarily decide upon Australia as their permanent home. Druscilla Wilson’s views were better aligned with that group: ‘The Australians are a very friendly, warm-hearted people, and I met with nothing but kindness during the 4½ years that I lived among them. They are also outspoken, very independent, and have a genius for improvisation that must have descended from the earliest settlers who had to do so much of it. They are also exceedingly loyal and take the greatest interest in the affairs of the “Old Country” and particularly in the Royal Family.’

4.1 Settling In & Separation

But the fact was that time was not standing still, and women who in Hong Kong had had large houses, servants, good schools provided for their children, and no money worries had now to confront the reality that all that had gone. While in many cases still in denial, at some point they would need to find at least medium-term solutions to these problems: Australian housing, Australian employment, and Australian schools.

Meanwhile, many of the evacuated families clung together and were initially cautious. Susan Anslow: ‘Our social life, such as it was, consisted mostly of visiting other Hong Kong families on Sundays. There were two families in particular, the Ritchies (who were actually friends of my grandparents - Mr. Ritchie worked for the Hong Kong Police) and the Robertson’s whose daughter, Anne, was my age. The Ritchie’s helped Mummy a lot in any way they could and we always spent

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3 From an account held by her daughter-in-law, Betty Wilson.
Christmas with them.‘4 But others were more independent and were reaching out socially. Evacuee Miss Flint, for example, had previously experienced looking after herself in the Great War, as she explained in a speech at the Melbourne Business and Professional Women's Club luncheon: ‘When war was declared in 1914 I joined the Women's Volunteer Reserve in London - a body of women trained to fill any emergency at home. We trained raw recruits, staffed museums and galleries, took bus conductors’ jobs, and found homes for European refugees who were flooding the country then, as now. Little did I think then that, 22 years later, you would be finding a home for me in Melbourne. Later I joined the Scottish Women's Hospitals staff, and was sent as an orderly to Salonika.’5

But settling in brought dangers too. William Taylor, the first evacuee baby to be born in Brisbane, had died some two months later on 25 October 1940. Older children, being more adaptable and quicker to make friends, were also more vulnerable as they played on unfamiliar streets and beaches; three evacuees died in accidents that first summer. The first victim was Ernest Wyre, aged nine, who had been evacuated with his mother Mary and his two younger siblings Irene and Norman. He was killed on Saturday 21 February 1941 when a bus ran over his billy-cart in Elizabeth Street, Sydney, though another boy who was with him escaped unhurt.6 The second two, four-year-old James Fergus (who had evacuated with his mother and four older siblings) and six-year-old Janet Elliott (who had evacuated with her mother and younger sister) drowned together on 21 March

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4 Susan Anslow's memoirs.  
5 The Argus, 24 January 1941.  
6 Sydney Morning Herald, 24 February 1941.
1941 in a five feet deep lagoon at Kirra Beach, Coolangatta, south of Brisbane. Three other children who were in difficulties with them were rescued.\(^7\)

With families divided, worries multiplied. The impact of these deaths to those left behind in Hong Kong was devastating. James Hearn, RAOC, would write a letter from there to his family in Australia, dated 7 September 1941: ‘We had a tragedy in barracks a few nights ago. A Sgt. Elliott of the R. Scots committed suicide. He was on duty and I was talking to him in the mess only a few minutes before hand when he was as cheerful as any thing. He just went away and shot himself. If you remember he lost a little girl in Australia last year [sic] - she was drowned I think.’\(^8\)

The random background noise of accident and disease was a factor not just for wives and children in Australia, but for husbands and fathers too whether they had stayed in Hong Kong or been transferred elsewhere. William Redwood had died of natural causes as described above, shortly after his family had reached the Philippines, and William Dedear, Principal Officer of the Prisons Department whose wife and three children had evacuated, died on 23 June 1941 having returned from leave just three weeks earlier on 31 May. Although the Pacific war had yet to start, the men that the evacuees had left behind in Hong Kong were already at risk. Many had volunteered for active service in Europe, or had professions that by nature put them in harm’s way. James Thirlwell, for example, was Master of the vessel Tai Koo, a state of the art steam salvage tug launched by Taikoo Dock & Engineering Company of Hong Kong in 1937. His family had been

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\(^7\) *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 March 1941. James Fergus was the youngest of five children of John Fergus, Royal Scots, who would himself perish on the *Lisbon Maru* in 1942.

\(^8\) Email from John Hearn to author, 9 May 2011. Mrs. Elliott remarried an Australian gentleman by the name of Ferguson at the end of the war and did not return to the UK.
evacuated as far as Manila, and then returned, but he lost his life when the tug was
mined and sunk on 12 September 1941 in the Red Sea on a voyage from Aden to
Massowah. Some separations were becoming permanent.

As they attempted to settle in, other evacuees started to match their
professional experience to their new circumstances. Neatly side-stepping the
infamous Mimi Lau issue, the Sydney Morning Herald reported the advice of an Air
Raid Precautions expert, Edith Steele-Perkins, a qualified instructor and lecturer
on the subject in her own right, whose husband (a former Deputy Director of ARP
in the UK who had complied, together with General Pritchard and Wing-
Commander Hodsoll, the official ARP books issued by the British Government) had
been head of the ARP in Hong Kong for a short period. He had been transferred to
India shortly after Edith and her daughters Susan and Mary were evacuated.9
‘Fright is half the battle in a black-out,’ she told them. ‘I have seen girls faint when
they merely looked at a respirator. It is essential that parents familiarise their
children with blackout preparations so that in the event of a raid the youngsters
will not be frightened. My children, who were brought up on blackouts, being 7 and
10 years old, do the “blacking out” with the same excitement as they would
decorate the house at Christmas time.’10

In Hong Kong in April 1941, when the census revealed that the Colony’s
population was an estimated 1,564,000 to 1,594,000 people of all nationalities (of
whom 28,322 were non-Chinese), the second stated aim of the evacuation, ‘to
conserve food supplies’, was put into clear context. Approximately 3,500 had

9 Mimi Lau was a young lady of debatable morals associated with a contractor’s successful bid to
supply suspiciously low-cost breezeblocks for the construction of Hong Kong’s air raid shelters.
Post-war she was said to have had a liaison with American President Richard Nixon.
10 Sydney Morning Herald, 12 September 1941.
evacuated by that date. They comprised less than a quarter of one percent of the total population. The impact on food stocks would be negligible.

To add to the frustrations of the evacuees in Australia, now that they (being the majority of the wives and children of the British community) had been kicked out of Hong Kong, throughout the year 1941 life in the Colony carried on in a surprisingly normal fashion. There was no siege mentality, and no interruption of social life and parties. Business and travel carried on as usual, with no shortage of female company for servicemen and civilians alike. ‘If you say, “What are all these women doing here?” your resident will shrug his shoulders. Their presence is one of the mysteries of Hong Kong today; theoretically, at least, they are engaged in some kind of essential national service, but those people whose wives have been sent away are inclined to be bitter about what they consider to be unfair discrimination.’

4.2 Visits from Hong Kong to Australia

As the enforced separation grew from months to a year, creative minds sought innovative solutions. Many Hong Kong civilians, being both well heeled and senior in their professions, found it relatively easy to escape from the Colony for a while to meet their families either in Australia or some third location.

Some visited Australia on holiday from Hong Kong. On a short leave, George Stopani-Thomson joined his wife and children, Malcolm and Shirley, in Double Bay. They spent a holiday touring New Zealand, returning to Sydney in mid-June.

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11 The Argus, 10 January 1941.
George then sailed back to Hong Kong, but would be killed in the bombing of Bungalow C at Stanley Internment Camp in 1945. Mrs Alberta Buxton, who, with her husband Henry and daughter, Patricia, came to Sydney on vacation, was a member of the Voluntary Nursing Detachment in Hong Kong whose members spent a number of hours on duty every day at military hospitals. When interviewed by the press, she claimed: 'Every woman who has remained in Hong Kong is a member of the VAD or the Auxiliary Nursing Service. People are beginning to show signs of the tension of the past year and their nerves are getting ragged.' Because of the exemption that came with her nursing role, the family were allowed to return to the Colony after their holiday. However, the war would destroy them, with Henry being killed on 18 December 1941 and Alberta being raped and murdered by Japanese troops at St Stephen’s College a week later.

It was harder, though, for the military families to travel. Richard Neve: ‘In early October 1941 my mother began to plan a trip to Singapore flying by the Dutch airline K.N.I.L.M., K.L.M. today, where she planned to meet up with my father who was to fly down on a month’s leave from Hong Kong. Travelling by air instead of sea was a great adventure only for the well to do. The airline even provided her with two lightweight suitcases for her luggage. The run up to the day of departure in early November was one of increasing excitement for us all.’ In the end, though, the garrison’s commander General Maltby cancelled Richard’s father’s (George Neve) leave, fearing that invasion was near.

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12 Sydney Morning Herald 16 June 1941.
13 Sydney Morning Herald, 27 May 1941. Thus far I have been unable to determine the fate of Patricia Buxton.
14 A Wartime Childhood, Richard Neve.
This was not the only leave to be forbidden, though civilians had recourse to another strategy. Stuart Braga: ‘Like all the men left on their own in Hong Kong, [my father Hugh] missed his family. He was General Works Manager of the Hongkong Engineering and Construction Company, and one big project had followed another for several years. He was refused leave on several occasions because of the pressure of work. In mid-1941, he again requested leave to visit his family, but was turned down. To the amazement of his father, who was the firm’s Chairman, Hugh resigned, packed up and left for Australia, facing an uncertain future, with no job to go to. He was convinced that war would shortly break out in the Pacific and that it was essential to leave Hong Kong as soon as possible. He arrived in Sydney knowing nobody and with qualifications as a professional civil engineer that might not be acceptable for all he knew.’

Vyner Gordon also made it to Australia for a while, though not quite as he had been planning. After much correspondence about how to get some leave from both the Volunteers and Hong Kong Tramways, he developed acute appendicitis in early 1941 and as a result was given two months off to recuperate in May and June, which (after time spent in travelling) gave him six weeks with his family. However, he was back in Hong Kong before his sixth wedding anniversary; unfortunately he would still be there when the attack began.

Not all visits had happy consequences. When Prison Officer James Grant visited his wife and three young children in Sydney he departed without knowing that he had left his wife pregnant. Unfortunately, eight days after the resulting birth on 13 April 1942, she passed away. Gloria Grant: ‘My brother and I attended a


15 Notes on Braga family’s evacuation. Email from Stuart Braga to author, 10 December 2010.
16 Email from Colin Gordon to author, 10 January 2012.
local school but had difficulty integrating as we were missing dad and Hong Kong. Meantime, a Hong Kong representative approached the women, asking if any of them were [sic] like a life in the interior. My mother, together with her two sisters, agreed and we were sent to Moree, northern NSW. To our delight there were a few other HK families - the McMahoins and the Organs (Thelma Stewart’s mother)... Our mother died soon after our arrival in Moree - 1942. We were taken in by our two aunts who had accompanied us [there].’17

Brian Bromley explained why so many were at Moree: ‘Mrs. Organ organised quite a few concerts and did a good impersonation of Gracie Fields. We kids were always being recruited as cast members of her concerts. A number of HK evacuee Mothers and children kept in touch throughout the war as when there was a threat of a Jap invasion, most of us were sent out to Moree a country town in northwestern N.S.W. There was quite a community of us there, so we had school chums who’d also been with us at the Kowloon Garrison School at the Gun Club. Some mothers hated the place as it was in the middle of nowhere out on the black soil plains. Those mothers went back to Sydney, whereas the majority stayed on, almost for the duration of the war.’18

Some men who came for what were intended to be short visits were lucky. Harold Brokenshire, an Australian journalist at Hong Kong’s South China Morning Post, went on leave from the Colony in mid 1941 and joined his family in Sydney.

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17 Email from Gloria Grant to author, 23 September 2010.
18 Email from Brian Bromley to author, 2 November 2005. The families had been neighbours in Hong Kong with the Organs living on the top floor of 8 Hillwood Road and the Bromleys on the second.
He was on his way back when the Japanese attacked the Colony and his ship turned round and returned to Australia.19

But aside from visits and interminable letters, there was at least one other way of communicating. On 31 July 1941 the newspapers noted of national radio station 3AR that: ‘at 10.15 there will be a special Hong Kong broadcast, when husbands send greetings to families evacuated to Australia.’20

4.3 Freedom of Movement

Carried on the official wave of evacuation to Australia, many families simply stayed where they landed. But in the same way that early after the arrival in the Philippines some evacuees, realising that the authorities’ interest in them had largely evaporated once they left Hong Kong, rebelled and left, in Australia more started to take the situation into their own hands.

Alice Briggs: ‘It seemed grossly unfair to me that women were being allowed into the Colony who had never lived there before, yet I was not allowed to return to my home. It is a long, sad, and complicated story – [my husband Christopher in Hong Kong] battled from one end and I battled from the other – not always above board, I’m afraid. In the end I was allowed to leave Sydney. The tragic part came when we got to Manila and I received a cable from Christopher saying that I must leave Patricia in Manila or I would not be allowed to land. A cousin of Christopher’s, Stephen Crawfurd, was managing the Shell Company in Manila. He and his American wife Maude offered to take Patricia until things

19 Brokenshire joined the A.I.F. and spent the war in New Guinea. Post-war he worked for the Australian Government in Canberra. Email from Henry Ching to author 27 February 2013.
20 The Argus, 31 July 1941.
settled down and we could make new plans. I need not go into what that decision meant to me and the heartbreak for us both – it is something that I still recoil from and wish it had never happened. It was a deep wrench that has healed over the years but the scars will always remain. The suddenness of it was too severe.\footnote{From Peking to Perth, Briggs, A., page 92. Interestingly Briggs believed that: 'The scare that prompted the evacuation in the first place was not the threat of the Japanese but of a Chinese Triad Society that the intelligence found were planning to massacre the foreigners in Hong Kong.' There was indeed such a threat, but it surfaced much later at around the time of the Japanese attack, and was largely defused by the actions of Admiral Chan Chak. See Tim Luard's \textit{Escape From Hong Kong}.} At least nine evacuee women, including Briggs, who managed to return from Australia before hostilities commenced, are recorded in the Stanley Internment Camp rolls.

The fact was that return was possible; it was just made very difficult. The main loophole appears to have been the authorities granting transit permits to those passing through Hong Kong to some third location. Therese Dulley, for example, had given birth to her son Hugh in Baguio in July 1940 and stayed in the Philippines. In a letter dated 29 November 1940 her husband wrote to tell her that she had been given permission to pass back through the Colony to sail for Australia on the \textit{Tjinegara}: ‘Luscombe of the Police tells me that he will be wiring the British Consul in Manila to say [you] may leave for HK in transit to Australia... The transit rules definitely state not more than one week and people here are sticking to the rules like glue’.\footnote{Email from Hugh Dulley (junior) to author, 31 March 2010. The letter had been written by Hugh Dulley who would be killed in the fighting. \textit{Tjinegara} would be sunk by the Japanese submarine \textit{I-169} on 25 July 1942.} But although they arrived on 12 December 1940, they did not leave for Sydney until 5 March 1941. Clearly it was far harder to force people out once they had arrived.

Others also left Australia before the start of the Pacific War, for a variety of places that they perceived as being safer. Margaret Simpson and her mother were
issued an American visa issued in Sydney on 2 June 1941. Of her mother’s passport she notes: ‘There is a “Permit to land” at Auckland on June 23rd, so we must have sailed from Sydney on or around the 20th of June. Another permission to disembark places us in Fiji on June 26. And although there’s no date for it, I know we touched in at Pago Pago because I lost my beloved Mickey Mouse wristwatch while ashore there. We arrived in Honolulu on July 2nd, 1941, and were greeted by Tasa and Bob Peterson, with whom we stayed at 2111 Nene Street. Like Mother, Tasa was a Russian emigré; they met and became close friends somewhere in northern China, perhaps Shanghai, where Mother spent some time before moving to HK where she met my father. Tasa married an American sailor who was part of the naval forces patrolling China in the late 1920s. In 1941, Bob was, I think, a Chief Petty Officer, stationed at Pearl Harbor.23 Pearl Harbour was the Simpsons’ final destination. Anna, having already evacuated twice in her life – from Russia and now from Hong Kong – had decided that Australia was too close to Japan for comfort, and she would feel safer further away.

Military personnel, of course, were needed for further war work. Robin Fabel: ‘After a short stay in Manila we went on to Sydney. A year later my mother, a Q.A.S., was posted to teach in the army school in Colombo. We sailed in the Nankin. The voyage took six weeks. We arrived in the autumn of 1941. Evacuated again because the Japanese threatened Ceylon, we spent the rest of the war until the surrender of Germany in Durban, South Africa.’24

Many of the men back in Hong Kong were posted elsewhere, giving their families the opportunity, in some cases, to join them. In October 1941 Marjorie

23 Email from Margaret Simpson to author, 10 February 2010.
24 Email from Robin Fabel to author, 23 July 2011. Robin’s father was in the Army Education Corps.
Langley received notice that her Hong Kong Dockyard husband, Herbert Langley, was transferring to the Singapore naval base. Together with her three daughters, she took ship from Melbourne to Singapore on 22 November 1941 and settled with him there. Henry Wheeler of the China Maritime Customs was posted to Shanghai. His wife Muriel and their three daughters applied to reunite with him, and the Government paid their return passage to Shanghai. They were still present when the war started and would be interned in Shanghai’s Lunghwa camp. Pat Guard and her mother left in August 1941, taking a KLM plane to Singapore: ‘My father had been sent there to open a bureau for United Press, who paid our fares. We were in Singapore for five months and I had my ninth birthday there.’

But it was not just the evacuees who were leaving Australia. Bunny Browne: ‘As the months went by the [Financial Advisor] was badgering the war office to replace Hubbard by someone from the U.K, so that he could come back to Hong Kong. But Canberra was reluctant to release him. Unfortunately for him, he was replaced and returned to Hong Kong in November 1941!’

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25 With him went 136 items of domestic goods, documented with their value on the manifest. All would be lost in Singapore, not that their fate would have been any better in Hong Kong. See Appendix Five.
26 For at least 61 evacuated dockyard families, the husband/father was no longer in Hong Kong on 8 December 1941. With the general shift of gravity of naval assets from Hong Kong to Singapore in late 1941, it seems likely that the majority of these transferred there or to Australia itself (Chargeman of Armament Fitters P.A. Peckham being an example of the latter), though some may have returned to the UK. The Governor of the Straits Settlements only opened the Singapore Naval Base on 14 February 1938 upon the completion of the King George VI dry dock, and at that time the Base was far from finished (in fact it would be completed just in time for the Japanese invasion). The RN Base administration moved ashore from the old Monitor HMS Terror to the newly completed RN Barracks on 1 January 1940, and presumably the Base Technical and Supply Departments and supporting services were therefore staffed during the period 1940 to 41. The evacuation of the Singapore Naval Base in 1942 was controversial, but the Admiralty - perhaps influenced by events in Hong Kong - instructed Rear Admiral Malaya to evacuate specialist personnel before it was too late, as they would be required elsewhere for the war effort.
27 Letter from Pat Guard via Barbara Anslow, 3 October 2008.
Like Langley and Wheeler, many of the other men left behind in Hong Kong in July 1940 also left the Colony before December 1941. In fact, a comparison of the list of men recorded as spouses in the evacuation records and those who would become POWs and Internees by January 1942 (or be killed in the fighting beforehand) suggests that up to forty percent had left Hong Kong by then. Some of those men - George Moss, for example, who had timed his retirement from the Hong Kong Fire Brigade to perfection – were able to join their families in Australia. However, with such a high percentage it seems reasonable to believe that in many cases the catalyst for leaving had been the evacuation of these men’s families.

But leaving the Colony did not necessarily mean an easy war, or even survival. Sydney Moreton of the Royal Engineers had been posted to Singapore after his wife and two children had evacuated and died there on 9 September 1940. James Byron of the RAOC would die in Halifax, Nova Scotia on 15 April 1941 leaving his wife and two sons in Australia. Others who left would be lost after the commencement of the Pacific War. James Potton of the Signals had also been posted to Singapore, and would lose his life there as a POW in 1944. William Rennie, RASC, whose wife and four children had evacuated was posted away and lost his life in Burma as a POW in 1943. Norman Ruston of the same unit survived till August 1945, but today lies buried at the Kanchanaburi Cemetery in Thailand within a stone’s throw of the infamous bridge over the River Kwai. James Strachan of the Seaforth Highlanders died in February 1942 and was buried in Delhi, leaving a wife and two children in Australia. John Gordon of the Royal Navy, whose wife Joan had evacuated, died aboard Submarine P.311 when it disappeared in January
1943. Commander Henry Rust, whose wife Alice and two children had evacuated, was lost on *HMS Bramble* which was sunk by the German destroyer *Friedrich Eckoldt* in the Barents Sea on 31 December 1942 while escorting convoy JW-51B to Russia; Rust and 120 other men drowned. In addition to these pre-war professionals, many of Hong Kong’s young British men had volunteered for the services (especially the RAF) when war was declared in Europe in 1939, and would also lose their lives far from their adopted home. This was truly a global war.

So at least eight of the men forcibly abandoned in Hong Kong by the evacuation would perish on service elsewhere, leaving eight evacuee widows, and twelve fatherless children. But leaving Hong Kong was certainly not always a death sentence. As related above, the chief of Hong Kong’s Air Raid Precautions, Wing Commander Steele-Perkins left for India, to become the Director of ARP there. John Whyatt of the Colonial Legal Service was posted from Hong Kong to India, and his wife and son joined him there from Australia. Reverend John Wilson of the Colony’s St John’s Cathedral, who had voluntarily travelled to Australia with the evacuees and helped many there, left Hong Kong in July 1941 to become Bishop of Singapore (and survived, although while interned in Changi he was brutally treated in the Double Tenth Incident). The regular servicemen whose families had been evacuated were generally used to postings every few years, and many of those who were posted away would survive the war. One such was submariner

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29 The only boat of her class not given a name (had she survived, she would have been christened *Tutenkamen*) she was reported overdue on 8 January 1943 when she failed to return to base, presumably having been destroyed by a mine off Sardinia.

30 Whyatt then worked in the Colonial Office with the Hong Kong Planning Unit to map the future of the post-war Colony.

31 At the end of September 1943 in *Operation Jaywick*, fourteen British and Australian commandos raided Singapore harbour destroying or damaging seven Japanese vessels. The Japanese believed that the operation had been coordinated locally, and in the Double Tenth Incident of 10 October 1943 the Kempeitai detained and tortured fifty-seven civilians (including internees) who they incorrectly suspected were involved; fifteen of them died.
Lieutenant Alastair Mars, RN. His mother had followed him to Singapore when he was posted there at the start of the war, and then to Hong Kong when he was transferred – just in time for the evacuation. Then as she left for Australia, Mars left for service in the Mediterranean. The Australian newspapers interviewed her after publishing reports of an attack he made on an Italian convoy in the Mediterranean, crippling two Italian cruisers and gaining a DSO in the process: ‘At the age of 8 Alastair declared he wanted to join the Navy,’ Mrs Mars said. ‘The sea is in his blood, and now nothing exists for him outside the Royal Navy.’

Other men left Hong Kong because of medical issues, either for them or their families. Desmond Inglis: ‘My Father caught malaria and was on sick leave and left HK in October 1941, and had joined the family in Sydney when HK fell.’

Sheila Bolton: ‘My Father, Mr. Andrew Bolton who was with China Light & Power Co. Ltd., had special leave to visit my mother, Alice B Bolton, in Australia for six weeks as she was not well after my brother Andrew Crea Bolton was born. The ship he was on left Manila immediately after arrival there as the Japanese started their invasion of the Far East on the same day I think and he arrived in Western Australia on New Year’s Eve.’

Herbert Langley, who had been transferred from the Hong Kong dockyards to the Singapore naval base in October, there received a letter from his friend George Bowden who served on Hong Kong’s Motor Torpedo Boats (MTBs) and whose family had also been evacuated: ‘I can tell you it’s damned lonely with you gone, going home to empty house but now winter is nearly here I shall try to do

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32 The Argus, 25 June 1943. Mars’s younger brother, Peter Richard Campbell Mars, was killed during the war, being buried at Upavon Cemetery following a flying accident on 19 October 1942.
33 Email from Desmond Inglis to author, 14 November 2011.
34 Email from Sheila Bolton to author, 15 November 2011.
some stamps. I hope you will soon have Marj and the Kiddies with you. I had some mail from Marie. They are both quite well. I expect she will drop you a line. Am just having a tomato juice. I think I’ll have this instead of beer. It’s cheaper. Only thing I might get too much lead in the pencil... It is a pity you did not know about the car. It would not have cost very much to transport it down there and you would have made a substantial profit, just too bad... I have hardly seen anyone in the yard since you left, except Bill Duddlestone. I hear Gage is on his last lap here, will be with you shortly and while I think of it you have my pants (grey flannels) so I am going to ask Gage to bring them down to you and you can send mine back. Now about the fridge, it has been sold for 300 but they had to pay 3.00 for transport. Re the money tell me if you have a banking account in that place. If so, I will pay the money $297 into my account then transfer it to yours.\(^{35}\) Bowden would be killed in the fighting in Hong Kong just one month and three days later. Gage, like Langley and many of the Dockyard men, would also be posted away from Hong Kong before the invasion.\(^{36}\)

Adding to the frustration of the evacuees was the American position in the Philippines. The kind people there who had helped them in transit before the move to Australia were still present and their government showed no sign of wanting them to leave.

Having taken control of the Philippines after the 1898 Spanish-American war, America was left with what was, embarrassingly, effectively a colony of their own. By 1935 they had progressed to the point of establishing a Commonwealth

\(^{35}\) Letter sent from 2 Cox's Road, Kowloon, 16 November 1941. Email from Henry Langley to author, 22 October 2012.

\(^{36}\) Such dockyard postings between the Admiralty's various dockyards around the world tended to be quite regular.
premised on bringing the Philippines to independence within ten years, but in reality their situation was surprisingly similar to that of the British in Hong Kong. Before the start of the Pacific War some 7,000 American civilians unrelated to the military establishment were resident there. But while the American authorities had encouraged their citizens to leave China and Hong Kong as early as July 1940, and actively advised them to do so in October, no such encouragement had been given to those domiciled in the Philippines.

In fact, though, there had been internal governmental discussions of a possible American civilian evacuation from the islands. On 7 January 1941 the High Commissioner sent a telegram to the Department of State referring to an evacuation plan ‘in an emergency’. Very likely influenced by the Hong Kong evacuation, he noted: ‘it would, in event of war, be desirable to have as few nonessential Americans in the Philippines as possible. [The commanding general] feels that the presence of large numbers of American civilian dependents would increase the difficulties of military defense.’ He estimated that a budget of US$2,500,000 would be needed to evacuate all the US citizens who were present. On 17 March 1941, George L. Brandt, Executive Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State, gave the opinion that the US government should not get involved in any evacuation initiative, asking: ‘If the Philippines are threatened by an enemy power, are we going to tell and assist Americans there to depart, and thus subject ourselves to accusation by the Filipinos and others that we are fleeing from our own soil and leaving our wards, among who our people have found a pleasant and profitable existence, to face the danger alone?’

37 Department of State, Special Division Memorandum, 17 March 1941. File 346g.4115, Record Group 59, National Archives at College Park, MD.
contemplate an evacuation of Americans from the Philippines... [Sayre] should visualize the remaining of Americans generally in the Philippines in an emergency and plan accordingly’.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}

The US government’s attitude appears to have been that military families had no choice over their postings, and thus it was the government’s responsibility to ensure their safety in times of crisis. However, civilians who had chosen to move to the Philippines with their families had thus assumed responsibility for their own futures, and could choose to depart again if they decided it best. As a result, aside from the dependants of military families, there would be no American evacuation of the Philippine Islands.

\section*{4.4 From Blasé to Panic}

Rumblings of discontent continued in Hong Kong as 1941 came to its end. The lack of any documented rules determining whether and how the evacuation might be brought to an end, created an assumption of possibilities into which the families poured their energies. ‘I’m afraid wifie dear’, noted Vyner Gordon in yet another letter, ‘it will be quite impossible for any of us to have a really happy Xmas this year, least of all our unfortunate friends at home – But you and I can at least be thankful that the kids can still enjoy themselves.’\footnote{Gordon letter of 26 November 1941.}

Like Gordon, Alec Howard of the Public Works Department was conducting a lengthy correspondence with his evacuated wife, Jean. In his 112\textsuperscript{th} letter to her he recorded how, in the previous meeting, the then Evacuation Committee had been
asked to resign and a new one was elected.\textsuperscript{40}\ After a certain amount of diplomatic shuffling the new Evacuation Committee presented their points in writing to the Governor, Sir Geoffry Northcote. On 3 September 1941 Howard attended a public meeting of the Evacuation Committee that was called to discuss the Governor's reply, which was read out to the attendees: ‘The letter of the Evacuation Representation Committee dated August 29 ends with the statement that the solution of the evacuation trouble is in my hands and calls upon me to remove the ban upon the return of the evacuated women and children without delay. This is a misrepresentation of the facts and I am unable to believe that the signatories of the letter themselves thought that this was true. The decision that European women and children should be evacuated from Hong Kong last year was taken by HM Govt. in London and not by the Colonial Government and its revocation lies solely in H.M. Govt’s. hands. That is a well known fact that has been stated more than once. To attempt to deceive oneself with wishful thinking is futile. To attempt to mislead others who are suffering and unhappy is merely irresponsible.’\textsuperscript{41}

The Governor’s letter continued by noting that the Committee which had recently resigned had already addressed a strong appeal to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for the ban to be lifted at once, stating clearly the misery which the evacuation was imposing on many homes. He endorsed that description and personally agreed that the return of the evacuated families should be permitted as soon as possible. However: ‘I did not recommend the ban should be lifted at the present moment. To do so would have been irresponsible and a dereliction of my

\textsuperscript{40} Letter dated 4 September 1941. Howard was in the roads department of the PWD as an Inspector of Works, Class II, responsible for contracts and labour in the construction of reinforced concrete bridges among other things. Email from Michael Longyear to author, 22 May 2009.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
duty. In my considered view the late committee took the useful and sensible course. I am equally convinced that misstatements of the case can do no good. On the other hand it may set the clock back. For the sake of the evacuated women and children I hope sincerely that the sensible majority of husbands here who are separated from their families by the harsh necessity of war will not allow that course to be pursued on their behalf.’ It was not well received. There were cries of ‘nonsense!’ from the attendees.42

On 10 September 1941, Hong Kong’s new Governor – Sir Mark Young – took over the Colony.43 In Alec Howard’s 114th letter to Jean he presented a partial transcript of Young’s arrival broadcast of the previous evening. Well aware of the issue dominating the thoughts of the expatriate society, the Governor had said: ‘I have come to Hong Kong, as you know, unaccompanied by my wife who, with my daughter, remains in Ceylon awaiting a day to which I know many of my listeners are looking forward with and eagerness equal to my own. The subject of the enforced absence of the wives and families of the British community resident in Hong Kong is, I know, exercising the minds as it is affecting the lives of many of you. It is a subject on which much might be said, but for today I will confine myself to giving all those on whom the order for evacuation has brought hardship, including those who feel that there may have been inequality in its incidence, an

42 Ibid.
43 An extremely experienced colonial administrator, following Great War service Young became Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary of Ceylon from 1923 to 1928, then colonial secretary of Sierra Leone until 1930. From then until 1933 he was Chief secretary to the Government of the British Mandate of Palestine, and from August of that year until March 1938 he was Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Barbados. From that date until his appointment to Hong Kong he served as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Tanganyika Territory British Mandate.
assurance of my very lively interest and sympathy and of my hope that the separations which so many of us are required to endure may be quickly ended.’

Back in London, questions were being asked in the house. Sir Geoffry Northcote’s despatch No. 177 of 12 August 1941 to the Secretary of State had forwarded the letter signed by the (original) members of the Evacuation Representation Committee, in which they argued for the removal of the ban on the return of the evacuees. William Gallacher, the Member of Parliament representing West Fife – and presumably involved at the request of constituents from the Royal Naval Dockyard at Rosyth - asked George Hall, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether he had considered that letter, and what steps he was planning to take as a result. Hall responded by quoting the text of the government’s reply of 16 September:

I have read the letter not only with feelings of sympathy but with a genuine understanding of the circumstances in which the members of the Committee and others who are bearing the hardship of separation are placed. They will for their part, I feel sure, be willing to recognise the responsibility which His Majesty’s Government bears for the defence of the Colony with which British interests in the Far East are so closely involved. His Majesty’s Government have weighed the many serious considerations which affect this problem, and I have kept under constant review the prospect of being able to advise the rescinding or modification of the decision reached last year. I regret that such a prospect is not yet in sight, and I have to ask that the signatories of the letter and those for whom they speak will have confidence that the

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44 Email from Michael Longyear to author, 22 May 2009.
separation from their families will not be maintained any longer than is made necessary by the uncertainty of the international situation in the Far East and the overriding demands of the defence of Hong Kong.45

But even at this late stage, just six weeks before the start of the Pacific War and the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong, a revolution organized by evacuee Alice Bolton of 10 St. Leonard’s Avenue, St. Kilda, was being planned. On the afternoon of 28 October 1941 a meeting was held at the YWCA, Russell Street, Melbourne, at which evacuee wives of Hong Kong residents discussed the question of their return to Hong Kong. The main purpose was to approve and sign a petition that had been already drawn up and signed by Hong Kong evacuees in Sydney and Brisbane, to be handed to Duff Cooper when he arrived in Sydney the following month (with a copy being sent to the Government in Hong Kong). The principal grievance contained in this petition was that when compulsory evacuation was cancelled in November 1940 the women and children who had obeyed the original order in the previous July were not allowed to return. Therefore, they asserted, the government had rewarded women who had refused to leave (or who had themselves exempted) by allowing them to stay in the Colony, whereas those who had toed the line were punished by not being allowed to return; the Hong Kong Government had in effect set a premium on disobedience. Additionally, the petition challenged the right of anyone to separate a woman from her husband particularly when so many women and children were now in Hong Kong. A broad committee consisting of representatives of the wives of Army, Civil and Naval Yard officials was formed as follows - Alice Bolton (Civil), chairman, Mona Wallington (Army), secretary, 

45 Hansard volume 374 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 11 November 1941.
Nora Whitstone (Civil), treasurer; and Mesdames Freda Taylor and Gladys Peckham representing the naval yard, Mary Samways and Vera Taylor the army, and Lillian Watson, Eunice Arnold, and Gertrude Gardner representing the civilians. They decided that this committee would meet once a month, and it was arranged that members would contribute two shillings a month to defray expenses (with any money left over after their return to Hong Kong to be given to the Bomber Fund in Hong Kong). This committee was given full authority to act and joined up with the similar Sydney and Brisbane committees. Mrs Bolton would be lucky: her husband would join her in Australia before local hostilities commenced; Mr Whitstone, Mr Arnold, and Mr Peckham would leave the Colony too. But Mrs Wallington’s husband would lose his life in one of the many massacres in Hong Kong’s fighting; Mrs Taylor’s and Mrs Samway’s husbands would spend the war years as POWs, and Mrs Watson’s and Mrs Gardner’s as Internees.

In Alec Howard’s 130th letter to Jean in Sydney, dated 6 November 1941, he quoted the articulate petition that had been sent to the new Governor signed by ‘hundreds’ of wives in Australia:

Your Excellency. We, the evacuated women of Hong Kong, present the following request for your consideration. Feeling certain as we do, that any words of yours must carry weight in the necessary quarters, we ask that you wield that power to have the ban on our return lifted immediately. You Sir, already know the intense dissatisfaction that exists over the order of

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46 The Argus, 29 October 1941. In their meeting with Duff Cooper on 14 November 1941, it was pointed out that the Chief Justice of Hong Kong, Sir Atholl Macgregor, had said that compulsory evacuation was illegal, and that there were still 1,080 British-born women and 553 British-born children in the colony. The wife of the Crown Solicitor (Evan Davies) who was the director of the evacuation was among the women who remained.
Evacuation and the manner in which it has been carried out, but our bitter resentment at being ordered out of the Colony and being kept away against our will can never be adequately expressed. The women of Great Britain stand beside their men day and night, taking whatever comes with equalled fortitude and strength. We, too, are British women and demand the right to stay beside our men in any trial. We obeyed the Evacuation order because the Govt. stampeded us, but we feel no satisfaction in having obeyed the order, rather do we feel stigmatised at being so easily duped by the Hong Kong Govt. Having succeeded in getting us away, the continued tension in the Far East is made the excuse for our exile. Sixteen months we have patiently waited and hoped for a miraculous easing of this tension, but it is obvious even to the unpolitical minds that such an event is unlikely before the end of the war. Are we therefore to remain away from our husbands all that time, wasting the precious years of our lives? Far better be with them, helping in any way we can and if necessary dying with them, than to continue this futile and aimless separation. These are not empty, high sounding words but are based on the indisputable fact that we can take exactly the same trials as our sisters in Britain who work beside their husbands. The threat of mob violence impresses us not at all, as most of us have previously experienced anti-British demonstrations in the Colony. We are entirely confident that the Police and Military could deal with any uprising as they have always done in the past. Therefore, Sir, we urge you to do all in your power to end this unjust and needless state of affairs without delay and to have us restored to our rightful place beside our men.\footnote{Email from Michael Longyear to author, 22 May 2009.}
The reference to ‘mob violence’ implies that the authors of this note were not expecting outright warfare. In fact, though, as 1941 approached its end many people did realise that war was finally, unavoidably, coming; but some still tried to cling to their old lives. On 16 November 1941, Alec Howard’s letter to his wife in Australia reported that the question of deportation was again answered in Parliament with a ‘very unsatisfactory answer’ to the effect that families compulsorily evacuated from Hong Kong would not yet be allowed to return. He optimistically reported that although the date of a termination or modification of the order prohibiting the evacuees’ return to Hong Kong was still a matter of guesswork, it was already time to plan the execution of their re-entry to the Colony. The Government had therefore decided to appoint a committee to advise them on any preparatory measures that could be taken, and information that should be collected, for the purpose of facilitating their return as soon as permission was given.

On 18 November 1941, Aci Bowker, a merchant at Dodwell & Co. and a member of the HKVDC, wrote of the bad feeling that resulted from the continued refusal of the Hong Kong authorities to allow the evacuated wives and children to return: ‘Unfair discrimination is the trouble as many of the senior Government wives took no notice of the order and they have been allowed to stay. Then again other women have somehow or other managed to get back into the Colony and nothing has been done about them either. I can well understand the feelings of some of these poor unfortunate husbands who must be having a very difficult time making ends meet. Keeping families in Canada or Australia and also keeping a home going here must be pretty trying on their finances to say the least of it. There
is a husbands’ committee which has public meetings every now and then and some pretty outspoken things have been said. I cannot understand anyone with a family wanting them here with things likely to happen at any moment but I can also understand them getting damned angry when they are told that it is not considered safe for their families to return and to look around and see the hundreds of women and kids who either took no notice of the Government and did not go away or else have wangled their way back.  

After eighteen months of separation the evacuees and their husbands had one way or another now firmly established themselves on the UK government’s agenda. In his 135th (and final, dated 23 November 1941) letter before the outbreak of war, Howard wrote: ‘Major General Knox (Conservative) asked Under Secretary of State for Colonies if he was aware that while a certain number of British women and children had been compulsorily evacuated from HK, 950 British women, 400 children, many European and American women and children and 750,000 Eurasian and Chinese still remain. Whether the Secretary of State would allow either the evacuated families to return if they wished or else, if military necessity demanded it, order a general evacuation by women and children’. This was an accurate summary of the question, which was followed by another from Sir John Wardlaw-Milne asking what arrangements were being made for the evacuees’ return (in the light of the cancellation of the evacuation, and the fact that other women were allowed to enter the Colony). George Hall responded: ‘The policy of His Majesty's Government in this difficult problem is explained in the

48 From Bowker to his Godson’s mother, Kitty Hinton in England. Sent from Alix Furey to author by mail, 22 April 2010. Bowker would die in Bowen Road Hospital on 2 October 42, coincidentally the same day that the Lisbon Maru was lost. His initials, A.C.I. resulted in his nickname ‘Aci’.

49 Email from Michael Longyear to author, 22 May 2009.
answer which I gave on nth [sic] November to the Question by the hon. member for West Fife (Mr. Gallacher). The political outlook in the Far East has not so far improved as to warrant the return of the women and children who were evacuated, nor, on the other hand, is my Noble Friend advised that a general evacuation is now desirable. The admission of British European women to Hong-Kong is at present strictly conditional on the needs of the defence and other public services in the Colony.’ Major General Sir Alfred Knox then asked: ‘are not Americans being allowed to land?’ To which the answer was: ‘I cannot say’.50

But in Hong Kong, the more realistic of the populace were now seeking safety for themselves or their friends and families. Gordon King, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Hong Kong University, suggested to Jean Gittins that she send her Eurasian son and daughter to stay with his wife Mary in Melbourne. Elizabeth Gittins: ‘My mother jumped at the chance, but there was a major obstacle to be overcome. Luck had been on our side as neither my brother nor I looked Asian... She went to the Australian immigration office armed with our passport, which had been prepared at the time of the mass evacuation the year before... She also produced her own marriage certificate, which gave my father’s name and his father’s name as Gittins. The bridegroom’s father’s rank or occupation was noted as “accountant”. Her own name was Ho Tung as was her father’s, and the rank or occupation of Robert Ho Tung was given as ”knight“. It would appear that the immigration officer did not want to argue with this. If he had been more competent and had demanded to see my father’s birth certificate, it would have shown that he

50 Hansard volume 376 cc 295-6. 19 November 1941
was registered as Hung Man To, his father’s name was Hung Shik Chi and his mother’s name was Li Kam Nui.\(^{51}\)

On 28 November 1941, Vyner Gordon started to write his final letter to his wife: ‘There is a mobilization of all the various essential services over the weekend such as ARP, Fire Brigade, ANS, VADs, etc etc and we are to have another blasted black out tonight. All the same it is good to see some of these people doing a job of work for a change...’ Continuing the same letter on 1 December 1941, exactly one week before the attack: ‘Don’t be alarmed at all the wild rumours which are prevailing about these parts, everything is just the same as ever.’\(^{52}\)

As war moved from rumour, to fear, to certainty, those who were able did their best to get out. The busy harbour was always full of shipping, and every vessel was a potential means of escape. The *Pakhoi*, for example, had sailed from Shanghai on 20 November 1941 and arrived at Hong Kong on four days later. After she completed discharge of her cargo on 28 November, with 28 Britons and six Norwegians on board she left Hong Kong. But when war came the ship would be intercepted by the Japanese and taken, with her passengers, to Amoy and internment.\(^{53}\)

Frank Fuggle of the Prisons Department, whose wife Annie had evacuated, was one of the last to sail from the Colony in an orderly manner - departing on leave on 3 December 1941 with his colleague Harold Barrett. However, some of the men left behind in Hong Kong truly escaped at the last minute. Maunie Bones’s father was one; he had been due for overseas leave in early 1941 but it was postponed because of the unsettled situation and his position as ship’s master

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\(^{52}\) Gordon letter of 1 December 1941.  
\(^{53}\) *Captives of Empire*, Leck, page 91.
being classed as an essential service. ‘On the 5th December 1941 he spoke to the Defence Secretary and was told “Your leave has been granted and there is no reason why you should not go.”’

He departed the next day on the *Kumsang* bound for Singapore. The ship was carrying six other passengers plus 650 Chinese third class passengers for Singapore. Just before dark and a little outside Hong Kong waters a Japanese destroyer crossed their track but ignored them. On Monday, 8 December the ship changed direction and headed for Manila instead. Despite the attentions of a Japanese submarine that fired two inaccurate torpedoes at the vessel, they arrived safely in Manila the following day. One day later a formation of Japanese aircraft bombed the ships in the harbour and although several others were either sunk or damaged, the *Kumsang* was fortunate enough to survive. On 14 December she sailed for Surabaya in Java. When they arrived there five days later Bones disembarked and approached the Dutch authorities to enquire if he could enlist in the Dutch military. However, on 3 January 1942 he was told to travel to Batavia and on 8 January departed for Australia on the *Ruys*. He arrived in Melbourne on 17 January 1942 and two days later travelled to Sydney to join his wife and daughter.

Dorothy Neale’s husband Freddie left one day after Mr Bones, 7 December: ‘Freddie told me that he was sitting in the Hong Kong Hotel at 11pm with Sid Hill after they had had dinner together that Saturday evening when someone from the firm came and told him to report at once to the office. Once there he was told to pack as much of his office records and personal belongings as he could and report back at 7am the next morning, ready to sail on one of the China Navigation

54 Email from Maunie Bones to author, 23 September 2010.
55 He was then hired as Wharf Superintendent at the Newstead Wharves in Brisbane and the family moved there.
Company's ships.\textsuperscript{56} Norman Lockhart Smith left Hong Kong the same day on the same ship: \textit{SS Ulysses}. But all those ships, of course, had crews. Many Merchant seamen based in Hong Kong, such as Henry Higgs whose wife Katherine (and son and daughter Katherine and Henry) had evacuated to Sydney, simply happened to be at sea when the invasion came, and missed capture that way. Generally these seamen were able to rejoin their families in Australia later.

Alfred Coates of Hong Kong Tramways escaped with his two daughters, Dorothy and Helen, to Macau. The two girls and their mother, Gladys, had evacuated and returned, but Gladys had died in childbirth in July 1941. Presumably their father had felt he would be separated from the children if he stayed in Hong Kong; as it was, the three of them would remain together in Macau until the end of the war. A few other ex-evacuees were there too. Jonathan Nigel noted of his grandfather Eric Mitchell in Hong Kong: ‘amazingly my grandfather then tried to smuggle [his wife and two daughters from Canada] back into Hong Kong later in 1941 which seems (perhaps only with the benefit of hindsight) a rash move... Eric had prepared for their return to HK by renting a house in Macao... He knew that they would not be allowed to land in HK. The ship that brought them from Canada went on to Manila from where they were able to fly to Macao - that in itself sounds strange but I guess if it was a flying boat it would have worked. His plan was to visit them at weekends but only managed to do this twice before the Japanese attack came. Anyway this is where the three of them spent the rest of the war.’\textsuperscript{57} While being cut off in Macau was not ideal, the Portuguese Colony remained neutral and life there was certainly preferable to an internment camp.

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Green Jade}, Neale, page 60.
\textsuperscript{57} Email from Jonathan Nigel to author, 8 April 2009.
It was the same in Shanghai. Jeannette Bruce evacuated down with her mother and sister, via Hong Kong, leaving her father James Robert Canning behind: ‘The ship I left Shanghai on was the Anhui and it was I think December 1941 when we got to Manila. Yes, I was very young, five and a half at the time and my sister Loretta only three.’\textsuperscript{58} Too late to be evacuated onwards, they would be captured in the Philippines and end up in Santo Tomas Internment Camp.

Interestingly, with war now a clear and present danger and the number of British women and children still in the Colony estimated as 1,350 during a debate in the British parliament, an evacuation could at this moment have been justified not simply for the rather woolly reasons of food or the defenders’ morale, but for the civilians’ own safety. However, neither the British (aside from that one question in parliament) nor Hong Kong Governments appear to have opened the issue of evacuation again. Perhaps it was simply considered that evacuation had already been done, or that the immediate and chronic complaints about the original evacuation had sapped any enthusiasm for further moves. Or perhaps it was simply inertia, a lack of a singular triggering event that would have catalysed such a decision.

But even while some of the families who had initially resisted evacuation were finally leaving Hong Kong of their own volition, many of the women already in Australia against their will were still taking action on their intention to return. The one and only thing that would absolutely, certainly, and completely stop them was...

\textsuperscript{58} Email from Jeanette Canning to author, 23 October 2008. It was actually December 10\textsuperscript{th}. Interestingly, the Anhui was the vessel that had evacuated - through one of the strongest typhoons ever seen in the China Seas - the last British civilians to leave Japan before the outbreak of the Pacific War. See the Japan Times, 27 September 1941.
Chapter 5.  War: Australia 1942-44

I recall it was a Monday morning and getting ready for school (which I had just started) and the planes came over. There was bombing of the airport, we could see the smoke from our house just opposite the Ritz Nightclub. Our neighbour a shanghainese family came out into the garden and kept saying it was only 'practice' but soon changed his tune when the bombs starting falling and we then knew it was for real. There was constant shelling from Kowloon over the Quarry Bay / North Point area for days and this went on after we moved up to Braemar. It is lucky we did because our house was hit and even at Braemar a shell landed in one of the bedrooms and did not explode and although we were in what was known as the basement (servants quarters) we were showered with soot from the chimney where the shell had come through.¹

Chapter Five marks the dramatic change caused by the Japanese attack on Hong Kong. Now there was a material difference between the experiences of those evacuated and those who had stayed, and discussion of reunion was instantly cut. In practice, this was the end of an evacuation that could have no positive impact on the defence of Hong Kong (the tiny percentage who had left were insignificant in terms of food saved, and – contrary to the government’s expectations - the

¹ Email from Dee Dee Bak to author, 2 July 2002.
defenders who fought hardest were Eurasian Volunteers defending their own homes and unevacuated families). But with the deaths of so many husbands and fathers in action, and captivity for those who survived, for the majority of families (for their well-being and integrity then and later) it might have been better had they stayed in Hong Kong. On the other hand, those who had been forced out of the Colony at least had their freedom, relative safety, privacy, access to good education for their children, and sufficient food. While both sides were desperate to communicate, the Japanese occupation and the continuing mortality in the camps made shared decision making impossible. However, with repatriation to Hong Kong now also impossible for the foreseeable future the immediate choices for evacuees were binary: relocate to the UK, or finally (and individually) take the necessary steps with work, housing, and schools, to properly integrate in Australia for the long term. Forced into this situation by the evacuation, behind many such decisions lay the knowledge, or lack of knowledge, of the fate of the husband/father.

Finally, on 8 December 1941 – one and a half years after the Government-enforced evacuation – the Japanese attacked Hong Kong (and many other territories bounding the sea-lanes that they needed to dominate, as Vyner Gordon had correctly anticipated, to ensure an unbroken supply of oil from the Dutch East Indies). While many of the men who had waved goodbye to their wives and children eighteen months earlier had since left the Colony, the majority were still there; those who remained, whether regular forces, Volunteers, police, or civilians, now faced the long-awaited invasion.
Once hostilities commenced, families still in Hong Kong found themselves separated from the fighting and news, even when they could plainly hear the gunfire. Often they relied on no more than the bamboo wireless and the *South China Morning Post* (which stayed in print throughout the battle, shedding a page or so each day until – by 25 December – it was a single sheet).

For those anxiously awaiting news in Australia, there was even less to go by. On 9 December 1941 all the newspapers carried front-page accounts of the invasion of Pearl Harbour, with mentions of the other territories attacked: Guam, Hong Kong, Malaya, the Philippines, Singapore, and Wake. Inside on page ten the *Sydney Morning Herald* ran an article that had obviously been prepared earlier. Describing how ‘Britain's most advanced outpost in the Far East’ had been well prepared with heavy guns surrounding the island, seas sown with remotely detonated mines, and ‘nearly every square yard of the colony’ commanded by machine-gun nests and trenches, it then pointed out that Hong Kong was far from impregnable, being particularly vulnerable to aerial attack from bases on the mainland. Mentioning the vast stocks of food hoarded on Hong Kong Island, and the submarines that would cause a blockading force so much trouble, it concluded: ‘When the Japanese first occupied the border of British territory at Hong Kong and European women and children were advised to leave the colony, they were told that, in the event of an attack, Hong Kong would become a fortress. That attack never eventuated, but since then the defences of Hong Kong have been vastly strengthened.’

But there were no submarines in Hong Kong by then, of course, or fighters for air defence. Most of the Royal Navy's ships of the China Station had left. Many of

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2 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 December 1941.
the best NCOs and young officers of the garrison had been posted back to the UK to form the cores of units being built for a future invasion of Europe. Although two extra battalions of partly untrained Canadian troops had arrived to bolster the garrison, Hong Kong’s defences had certainly not been ‘vastly strengthened’.

The following day as the Japanese pushed south from the Chinese border, the evacuees suffered their first family loss of the battle. Bandmaster Herbert Jordon of the Royal Scots (who were manning the defences across the New Territories) failed to heed a sentry’s warning and was shot dead by his own men. His children Beverley and Timothy, who had been evacuated to Brisbane but had transferred to Sydney on 30 November 1940, would never see their father again. When the Japanese quickly broke through the garrison’s defensive line, General Maltby realized that further defence of the mainland was untenable. After just three days of fighting it was already deemed wise to pull back to the Island.3

On 13 December 1941, the day that the evacuation of all British forces from the New Territories and Kowloon to Hong Kong Island was completed, the Australian newspapers ran stories telling that fierce fighting was still going on in the mainland, while adding that the news from London was that Japanese pressure was forcing British troops to conduct a planned withdrawal towards Kowloon.

Even during the fighting the evacuation was not forgotten. Major John Monro of the Royal Artillery noted in his diary the following day: ‘As I went round two civilians, a man and a woman, sitting in the passage, heard me. The woman gave a gasp, clutched my arm and whispered “God bless you”. What a grim lookout

3 Originally Maltby had not intended to defend the mainland at all as he had far too few men. However, with the arrival of the two Canadian battalions in November 1941 he changed his mind.
there is for them. Still, in many ways it’s their own fault, they would not obey the evacuation order.  

Although (as feared) food was sometimes hard to get once the invasion started, this was a problem of logistics rather than quantity. All over the Island the government had established food distribution points and communal rice kitchens run by the Office of the Food Controller; vast stores of food had been assembled ready for a prolonged siege if necessary. According to one witness, the government was feeding well over a hundred thousand people daily.

On 18 December, after almost a week of bombardment of Hong Kong Island from Japanese gun positions in Kowloon softening up the defences (during which a further four husbands and fathers of evacuees had been killed), the dark skies, rain, and clouds of smoke from a burning paint factory provided conditions that the Japanese could gainfully exploit. Following their successful amphibious landing on the north east coast of Hong Kong Island later that evening, the first major loss of life of the defenders would occur on the following day. As the Japanese forced themselves ashore, penetrating through the middle of the island, the garrison lost more than 400 men. At least fifteen of those had dependents in Australia; the count of broken families was growing.

The landing was reported in Australia on 20 December. The following day, while Number 1 Company HKVDC retreated through Tai Tam, young Ronald Egan was killed by gunfire as he rode in a motorcycle sidecar. His father was in the Dockyard Defence Corps; his mother and two siblings were in Australia. Then, on

4 From his diary kindly sent by email from Mary Monro to author, 13 October 2010.
5 United States Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce (1943), Hong Kong under Japanese occupation: a case study in the enemy’s techniques of control, Washington, Robert S. Ward. Ward had been appointed Consul of the United States of America to Hong Kong on 16 December 1940.
Monday 22 December, under the headline ‘HONG KONG DEFENDERS HOLD ON’ the papers noted that despite the Colony’s stubborn, desperate defence, its fall was thought to be imminent.

That day was also the second worst for losses for the evacuees thus far. Men who had had time to marry and raise families were naturally older than the typical infantry recruits, and often had technical professions within the services. On 19 December, as the Japanese threatened to cut Hong Kong Island in two, 200 members of the Royal Army Service Corps and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps – skilled technicians looking after equipment and arms - had been brought to a prominent position known as The Ridge, in the centre of the Island. This position dominated the main road through Wong Nai Chung Gap along which the Japanese would logically attack to bisect the Island and reach the south coast.6 When The Ridge finally fell to the invaders, this group of men was pushed back from house to house, leaving their wounded behind at each – generally never to be seen alive again. Fourteen of those who died during that withdrawal had evacuee families.

By 24 December, the situation was obviously desperate. Hong Kong’s defenders had been split in two, pushed back into an area defending the central business district in the west and a pocket defending the village of Stanley in the south. John Hudson, whose wife and son had been evacuated, noted in Stanley: ‘Then the nightmare came at 8.50pm on Xmas Eve. They attacked the Village with small tanks and thousands of troops, it was hell let loose, machine guns everywhere, some of the Volunteers defended the left of the Village and the Mary Knoll, but the attack came direct for us from the Beach and Lower Beach Road. For

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6 Wong Nai Chung Gap was known as Wong Nei Chong Gap at the time. This work uses current spelling for Hong Kong place names.
3 ½ hours we fought so, with lulls between, then they would come on again screaming their heads off, just to be mowed down. By this time we had lost McLeod-Carr-Gowland with Foster, Cottrell and Stevens missing. Major Forsyth i/c had been killed, so Fitz-Gerald was i/c, I told him we had better fall back to the first Bungalow overlooking the Village, as we could hear firing and hand grenades bursting back by the Prison, they had managed to break thru along the Beach.’

The Gowland referred to (Cuthbert Gowland, a Prison Officer fighting alongside Hudson in the Stanley Platoon of the HKVDC), had had his two evacuee children placed in the Burnside Presbyterian Orphan Homes in Parramatta – their mother having become too ill to care for them – just the previous day. On that same day, nineteen year old Geoffrey Stone of the 1st Battery HKVDC was also killed in Stanley; his brother Ken, four years younger at fifteen, had been evacuated with their mother. Australian-born Douglas Orr of the same battery was lost then too, though his evacuee wife and two children in Australia would not hear of his death for eight months.

But the battle for Stanley was being matched by a bigger battle in the north against the last British barricades as the Japanese pushed west to Wanchai’s Ship Street. And as these lines crumbled, despite the convalescents drafted in from the hospitals to bolster them, on Christmas afternoon (a day when eight more evacuee husbands and fathers were killed, following the five who had been lost on

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7 From a letter written 30 August 45, kindly supplied by Hudson’s daughter Rebecca via Brian Edgar, 16 June 2012.
8 The Stanley Platoon comprised prison warders from the new Stanley Jail.
Christmas Eve) the commander of the defence reported that they could only hold for a further thirty minutes. Surrender became the only option.⁹

Gwen Priestwood was in central Hong Kong when the end approached: ‘I still couldn’t resign myself to surrender. An officer asked me, as an old China hand, whether I thought the Japanese would observe the rules of civilised warfare when the capitulation came. I thought of Nanking; of the bombing of civilians in Shanghai and Chungking; of the rapings and cruelties up and down China from the Marco Polo Bridge to Canton. “I don’t know”, I said. I was soon to know that the same atrocities would be visited upon the luckless whites and Chinese of Hong Kong.’¹⁰

Knowing that defeat and capture were imminent, the thoughts of many of the men turned to their families. Ernest Bromley recorded in his diary: ‘We arrived back at the Dockyard and had something to eat, it was now about 1 p.m. 25th Dec and I met Ted Goodyer and Claude Langley, I told them I had been told Mrs Bromley had made a Broadcast talk to me from Australia, where she and our children had been evacuated eighteen months previous. We decided to go to ZBW Broadcasting House and enquire as to what was said. We got very little information only that Mrs B did speak but the reception was very poor owing to lack of electricity but we were told she sends all her love and wishes for my safekeeping also from the boys, Maurice, Brian and Colin.’¹¹

At around three thirty in the afternoon the surrender came. At least sixty-six of the men who had put their families on evacuation ships eighteen months earlier had been killed in the fighting, and hundreds of them were now facing POW

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⁹ The local commander was Lieutenant-Colonel ‘Monkey’ Stewart of the 1st Middlesex, who would die in Japan shortly after the sinking of the Lisbon Maru.
¹¹ From Bromley’s war diary, sent by mail from Brian Bromley to author, 5 March 2007. Goodyer and Langley’s families had also been evacuated.
and internee camps. In a letter written later to his evacuee wife Rene, William Mezger noted of that day as the fighting came to an end and the deprivations of captivity beckoned: ‘Café Wiseman had a slice of turkey for tiffin also some Xmas pudding. I must say that I thought longingly of that ham that you sent me and that was I suppose still hanging in the flat. I have thought of it much more longingly many, many more times since.’\textsuperscript{12} Vyner Gordon, lying mortally wounded in hospital, had been right: it would not be a happy Christmas.

But the evacuees were lucky. The Woods children’s experience (they had been evacuated to Manila but sent back to Hong Kong after their mother became seriously ill) gives an inkling of what those who had continued to Australia had missed. They were residing at Ho Tung Gardens, one of Sir Robert Ho Tung’s mansions that had been commandeered by the army.\textsuperscript{13}

After the fighting was over the British left to go to prison camp and the Japanese moved in. The lowest of the low; they shot the dogs, tore the house apart and worst of all, raped the women. I heard the terrible noise of their attacks on the women as we children sat in the drawing room downstairs. Jean never ever spoke of it. I am sure she did not escape their attention. One woman, not the owner’s daughter, was heavily pregnant and I saw one of the Japanese hit her hard in the abdomen with the butt of his rifle. We were all herded around at gun point, even we children were allocated two very young Japanese soldiers who waved their hand guns around and barked orders at

\textsuperscript{12} Letter sent to the author by mail by Mezger’s daughter Charlotte, 5 February 2013. This letter was written immediately after Mezger’s release at the end of the war.\textsuperscript{13} An account of Ho Tung Gardens’ wartime story can be found in the book Resist to the End by Charles Barman.
us; one of them ripped the head and arms off my doll because she had a sound box which enabled her to speak, and he had to see inside her.14

Within a week the pregnant woman had to go to hospital, and under guard the whole household (minus an elderly man who was tied to a chair and beaten for not showing due respect to the Japanese) was marched to the hospital with her.

We got as far as Aberdeen with many a stop. There were dead bodies of many sorts of soldiers still lying out in the fields and Jean insisted on stopping to examine them, saying any one of them could have been my father. We once came across a line of army trucks pulled off the road and when Jean pulled back the tarpaulin curtains amidst a swarm of flies we could see dead bodies of soldiers piled one upon the other. I clearly remember the turbanned heads of dead Sikhs showing up in the gloom of the lorries as they lay stacked one upon the other.15

Finally, two days after the actual surrender, the Sydney Morning Herald carried the sombre front-page headline: HONG KONG FALLS TO INVADERS. Hong Kong had not been impregnable, and had fallen in less than three weeks to a considerably stronger attacking force backed up with air power. On another page the paper continued – trying to emphasize the difference between Hong Kong and Singapore, where Australia had a so much larger investment: ‘We in Australia, who

14 From notes sent by Rosemary Wood to ABCIFER (the Association of British Civilian Internees Far East Region). Mr Wood had re-married on 14 December 1941. The children and their step-mother Jean spent most of the war at Rosary Hill.
15 Ibid.
have given sanctuary to many of Hong Kong's evacuees, join with our British kindred everywhere in saluting the brave survivors of the battle and honouring the gallant dead... Singapore is not, like Hong Kong, an isolated and vulnerable colony. It is the pivot of our Pacific strategy, the bastion of all our defences in the East, and it must be maintained at all hazards and at any cost.\textsuperscript{16}

In the fighting that began on 8 December and ended on Christmas Day, some 1,550 of the garrison – regular forces and local Volunteers – lost their lives. Though it would take months or even years for details to reach their families, the latter had in many cases unknowingly been damaged beyond repair. The great stores of food that the Hong Kong Government had created in anticipation of a long siege, despite the reasons they had given for the evacuation, had fallen into enemy hands. But the coming loss of Singapore, with its far greater ramifications for Australia, would lead to Hong Kong largely becoming forgotten. Some 15,000 Australians would be captured when Singapore fell; the Hong Kong evacuees would have to quietly accept their own losses.

The children who had evacuated had in many cases already adjusted to their new homes, but they would not be children forever. Those who were babies during the evacuation would need to start school, primary school children would move to secondary, and those leaving secondary would typically move to the Armed Forces or marry. Before the Japanese attack, boys reaching their majority had had the option of returning to Hong Kong, but war had changed that.

As communication with Hong Kong had been severed, so was much of the financial help; the evacuees would need to find more permanent solutions for income and housing. One and a half years of separation from husbands and fathers

\textsuperscript{16} Sydney Morning Herald, 27 December 1941.
would now grow to more than five years, and in many cases - through death or other causes - it would become permanent.

5.1 Outside Australia

When the Pacific War finally came, some people had been simply in the wrong place. The Briggs family had been cruelly split. Christopher Briggs was serving on HMS Scout, a destroyer that was ordered to leave Hong Kong for Singapore on 8 December 1941 – the day of the attack. His wife Alice and daughter Patricia had been evacuated, but in Alice’s successful fight to return to Hong Kong to rejoin Christopher, Patricia had been left in Manila. Alice was thus alone in Hong Kong as a nurse in the fighting and later as a civilian internee. Patricia was alone in the Philippines where the Japanese turned Camp John Hay at Baguio (which so recently had housed many of Hong Kong’s evacuees) into an internment camp for Allied civilians, including her. James Templer, evacuee son of Cecil Robert Templer of the Royal Artillery, was also still in the Philippines with his mother and two siblings: ‘Having missed the boat to Australia we spent some time in Manila before internment in Santo Tomas.’

Peter MacMillan’s evacuee family was there too, although he himself had escaped from Hong Kong on the MTBs on Christmas Day 1941. MacMillan noted in a letter to Mrs Maltby, Hong Kong’s Commanding Officer’s wife: ‘I won’t bore you with details of our escape which was exciting enough while it lasted as we got shot up getting away, except to say that we got way [sic] to Chungking in a little under a month and were able to give a picture of Hong Kong to the Military Attaché there.

17 Email from James Templer to author, 15 April 2009.
As far as I know the General then went over with the Governor to the Peninsular Hotel as I heard to arrange the details of the take over with the Japs and was then presumably a prisoner. I am terribly sorry that I cannot give you any further news of him. More have escaped since we did and maybe we shall get more later... How incredibly lucky I am! Except that my own family were in the Philippines and so far no news."

Evacuee Derek Bird explains how their families and others came to share that fate: ‘My father [Godfrey Bird, RE] was given two weeks leave before Staff College in India. The parents decided to meet half way in the Philippines for the leave which they passed in Baguio. My father's course was cancelled and he returned to HK. We were waiting for a ship back to Melbourne when Pearl Harbour happened, all ships ceased and we were taken prisoner on Christmas Eve! This story also applies to Captains Peter MacMillan and Charles Rochford-Boyd, both Royal Artillery.’

But it was not just the evacuees themselves who were caught in the Philippines. Bruce Patey’s family was safe in Australia, but his merchant ship, the SS Seistan, escaped from Hong Kong only to be sunk by Japanese air attack in Manila harbour on 28 December 1941. He survived, but was captured when Manila fell and initially he was also interned in Santo Tomas.

For Marjorie Langley, who had taken her three daughters to join her husband in Singapore (where he had been posted from Hong Kong) in November 1941, a new evacuation loomed. On the evening of 28 January 1942 two bombs fell in their garden at 81 Fiji Road (near the naval base), injuring all five members of

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18 Letter in the Imperial War Museum's Maltby collection, via Rod Suddaby. Email from Tim Luard to author, 7 March 2012. See Tim Luard's Escape From Hong Kong for details of the MTB escape.
19 Email from Derek Bird to author, 7 May 2012.
the family. Marjorie, with oldest daughter Rosemary and youngest daughter Margaret, was admitted to Singapore General Hospital the following day but released after 24 hours. The family embarked on *HMS Electra*, each allowed one trunk and whatever they could carry, and transferred to the American troop carrier *USS West Point* (which had arrived at Keppel Harbour the previous day with a large number of Australian troops to bolster Singapore’s defences) at Harbour Board.\(^{20}\) The ship left Singapore at 17.54 on the evening of 30 January 1942. Via Jakarta, Colombo, Kandy, and Durban the Langleys arrived in Liverpool on 14 March. Pat Guard who (with her mother) had left Australia to join her father at the Singapore bureau for United Press, found herself in a similar situation: ‘In January 1942, because of the impending Japanese invasion, the evacuation process happened all over again. We returned with other evacuees by ship to Australia.’\(^{21}\)

Margaret Simpson had left Sydney with her Russian-born mother in June 1941 for the perceived safety of Pearl Harbour. There she enrolled in the second grade at Kapalama School on 2 September 1941. On the morning of Sunday 7 December she was playing outside in the garden of their house at the bottom of Nene Street while her mother and friend Tasa were in the kitchen drinking coffee:\(^{22}\) ‘I started hearing loud noises in the distance, and puzzled, went into the kitchen to tell the two women that I heard thunder, but the sky was perfectly clear. We all went outside and moved to the west end of the garden, facing toward Pearl Harbor, which seemed to be the source of the booming noises… We saw planes in the sky, and Mom and Tasa decided this must be some kind of military

\(^{20}\) Herbert Langley had been posted onwards to Chatham Dockyard. Email from Henry Langley to author, 22 October 2012.

\(^{21}\) Letter from Pat Guard via Barbara Anslow, 3 October 2008.

\(^{22}\) The other side of the date line from Hong Kong and Australia, this was equivalent to 8 December locally.
manoeuvres, that they had seen announced in the newspaper... By this time we saw planes all over the sky, and suddenly one flew right over our heads, so low that we could clearly see that the pilot was Asian, and of course the rising sun on the wings. Mother, still convinced that this was a war game, said, "Look how clever - they've even painted the planes to look Japanese, and got Japanese pilots to fly them!" Three weeks later the Simpsons moved to the true safety of the United States, docking at San Francisco after a sleepless voyage worrying about Japanese submarines.

The safety offered by their homeland was also in the thoughts of American civilians still in the Philippines. A year before the start of the Pacific conflict, Sayre had noted the advice given earlier to American citizens there, applauding specifically that ‘Americans are advised to return to the United States rather than Manila’. In a communication to the Secretary of State in Washington on 9 October 1940 he added: ‘In caring for Hongkong refugees we faced the danger of possible shortage of food suitable for Occidentals and were also unable to provide comfortable and adequate shelter in all cases.' He also issued a press release including the words: ‘Manila is one of the safest places in the Far East today.’

But in a similar message of 7 January 1941, Sayre noted: ‘A study of shipping facilities in Philippine waters clearly indicates that ships available locally would be totally inadequate to handle an evacuation of Americans from the Philippines.’

He continued to recommend that the department should order a civilian

23 Email from Margaret Simpson to author, 10 February 2010.
24 Telegram from Sayre to Secretary of State, October 9, 1940.
25 Ibid.
26 Telegram from Sayre to Secretary of State, January 7, 1941.
evacuation if war became imminent. However, Brandt expressed the opinion internally within the Department of State that: ‘we have not engaged in a wholesale evacuation of Americans elsewhere at Government expense during the present war, that we have advised Americans that it is not an obligation of the Government to repatriate citizens, that Congress has not appropriated funds for the purpose, that citizens are expected to provide their own expenses, if necessary by obtaining them from relatives, friends or employers, and that while the Department has been able to provide from special funds available some financial assistance for transportation expenses for destitute Americans in certain hazardous areas, by making loans to them against promissory notes for repayment, those funds are limited...’

Brandt continued by asking whether it would be right to abandon the Filipinos if the country was threatened by an enemy power, adding: ‘I think we should tell the High Commissioner that we do not contemplate an evacuation of Americans from the Philippines and while the evacuation plans may be completed, as it is well to be prepared against any eventuality, the possibility of their use is most remote... he should visualize the remaining of Americans generally in the Philippines in an emergency and plan accordingly’. 

But in contrast the military continued to remove their dependants from the country, leading the private sector to query whether the State Department felt that their civilian dependents should leave too. In a note of 21 April 1941, the Department stated that American citizens now in the Philippines were not being

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27 Confidential Memorandum from George P. Brandt, 17 March 1941.
28 Ibid.
29 This military evacuation was largely completed in May 1941. I am indebted to internee Angus Lorenzen for insights into the Philippine experience.
urged to return to the United States at this time.\textsuperscript{30} By June nothing had changed. Sayre recorded: ‘For some time I have felt that the American Coordination committee ought to be taking more vigorous steps to look after the welfare of American civilians in the Philippines in case of emergency... Manila is at present rife with rumor, speculation and gossip concerning possible civilian evacuation.’\textsuperscript{31}

As with the British in Hong Kong, there was no clear or pre-defined delineation of where the government’s responsibilities and those of private citizens met. When war came, the civilians were still there - though there is no evidence that their staying left any positive impressions on the local people who, like Hong Kong’s Chinese population, would be so negatively impacted by the Allies’ defeat. Some 3,800 civilians would spend the war years in Santo Tomas Internment Camp, 2,150 in Los Banos Internment Camp, and 500 in Internment Camp #3, Baguio (Camp John Hay). A handful of military reservists would be moved to POW camps, around 700 internees would die in captivity (a considerably higher percentage than in Hong Kong) and roughly 100 would be repatriated in 1942 and 1943 aboard Gripsholm.\textsuperscript{32}

\section*{5.2 Hong Kong Battle Deaths}

On 12 December 1941, Noreen Jordan was holding her daughter Beverley’s fifth birthday party at their new home in the suburb of Ashbury, Sydney. But the festivities were interrupted by the arrival of a telegram from the General Post

\textsuperscript{30} Memorandum from Alger Hiss, Assistant to the State Department’s Political Adviser in Charge of Far Eastern Affairs, to Mr. Walden, Standard Vacuum Company, 21 April 1941.
\textsuperscript{31} Letter from Sayre to Secretary of State, 27 June 1941.
\textsuperscript{32} Perhaps 25\% of the approximate total of 7,250 internees were Allied Enemy Aliens, primarily British or British Empire.
Office, Hong Kong, stating that her husband Bandmaster Herbert Birket Jordan, Royal Scots, had been killed in action. On 15 January 1942 she received a second telegram from Australian Army Base Records, Brisbane, confirming her husband’s death. Then she simultaneously received two more telegrams. One was from Base records, Sydney again announcing Jordan’s death, and the other from Army Base Records, Brisbane stating that her husband’s name had been deleted from the list of those killed in action at Hong Kong. ‘It is very puzzling’, the papers quoted her as saying, ‘but I do hope that my husband is alive.’

The beginning of 1942 was a watershed. After eighteen months of waiting, the potential event that had originally catalysed the evacuation had finally come to pass. The possibility of reverting to the status quo had evaporated; short-term adjustments to life in Australia had to be re-evaluated in the light of the uncertain future. In many cases, those adjustments would now become permanent.

For the unpredictable time before war’s end (only in hindsight do we know it would be three and a half years), life had to continue. Now that Hong Kong had fallen and return was for the moment out of the question, the evacuees’ concerns became much the same as anyone else’s in Australia: finances, work, relationships, children, health, and accommodation. Of course, many were also worried about husbands and fathers who were POWs, but so were the families of the many more Australians captured in Singapore – while families of Australian men still on service in the RAAF and RAN, in the army in the Western Desert, and elsewhere also worried about their safety as the war progressed. Perhaps the only special consideration of the evacuee families was the possibility of their leaving Australia again at some point in the future.

33 Sydney Morning Herald, 26 January 1942.
In the New Year, news slowly filtered through to Australia of who had lived and who had died in the invasion of Hong Kong. Jordan’s death, so early in the fighting when much of Hong Kong’s infrastructure was still functioning, was unique in being communicated so rapidly – though clearly even this speed did not prevent confusion. In most cases, however, news filtered through to Australia months or even years later.

Then news of the atrocities broke. Newspapers all over the western world carried banner headlines based on the disclosures by the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, of Japanese brutalities in Hong Kong. Eden had said: ‘The Japanese Army at Hong Kong perpetrated the same kind of barbarities which aroused the horror of the civilized world at the time of the Nanking massacre of 1937... Fifty officers and men of the British were bound hand and foot and then bayonetted to death... Women, both Asiatic and European, were raped and murdered... One entire Chinese district was declared a brothel regardless of the status of its inhabitants.... All the survivors of the garrison, including Indian, Chinese and Portuguese, have been herded into a camp consisting of wrecked huts without doors, windows, light or sanitation. By the end of January 150 cases of dysentery had occurred, but no drugs or medical facilities were supplied. The dead had to be buried in a corner of the camp.’  

Unfortunately the reports were not exaggerated; many of Eden’s facts had come from escapee Lieutenant Colonel Lindsay Ride in China, and in reality the stories that had reached London by then were a small subset of the actual

34 See The National Archives (TNA): CAB/66/22/12, which refers to the reports provided by Ride, Phyliss Harrop, and others on which this statement was based. The pages are marked: ‘TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY. It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document.’
atrocities. In Hong Kong it can be argued that more men and women, as a percentage, were murdered after capture than on any other British battlefield of the Second World War. Mrs Buxton, who had visited Sydney with her husband and daughter the previous year, was one of the victims - one of the eight nurses (three British, five Chinese) raped and murdered at St Stephen's College emergency hospital in Stanley just seven days after her husband had been killed on the front line. James Barnett, a Canadian padre at Stanley, noted: 'We found the three missing nurses Mrs Buxton, Mrs Begg and Mrs Smith dead covered in blankets under bushes about 100 yards from the hospital. Sgt Mulchay came down and I gave him orders to remove the bodies uncovering them as little as possible and to put them on the funeral pyre. I read burial service and took Mrs Fido back to hospital. Most of the St John's Ambulance boys were killed also a number of Chinese women who were working down at our cookhouse. Bill Stoker paid us a visit in the early afternoon and brought us some food and some cigarettes. As I thought St-Stephens a bad place for the nurses I asked Bill if he could get them a safer place. He said that he would come at dusk and I was to have the ladies down at the corner of back verandah. This was accomplished quite successfully.'

With news of this nature on the front page, everyone was worried.

The number of Hong Kong’s garrison who had died in the eighteen days of fighting represented more than ten percent of the defending force. The ten thousand or so who remained alive – minus those Chinese and Eurasian soldiers who (with the approval of their officers) had blended back into the civilian population – were captured and theoretically safe. But, over time, capture was to

35 Padre Barnett's diaries. Email from Lawrence MacIsaac (Office of the Chaplain General / le cabinet de l’aumonier general National Defence / Défense nationale, Ottawa) to author, 11 August 2009. Bill Stoker’s family were themselves evacuees.
prove more deadly than war and the final mortality would be closer to thirty percent.

5.3 *Prisoners of War*

While in general it was the father and husband who had been left behind in Hong Kong and was now a prisoner, families with older siblings had also been split. In at least one case, an evacuee had come of age in Australia and elected to return to Hong Kong and sign up: John Ken FitzHenry (who had been evacuated to Australia aged sixteen but returned when seventeen and joined the HKVDC) became, as a Gunner at the surrender of Hong Kong, one of the youngest POWs. More commonly the older siblings had simply been left behind when the women and younger children left for the Philippines. Mary Lapsley had evacuated with children Mary, Cecilia and Harold, leaving her husband Robert and three older sons (Robert, Tony, and Ferdinand) behind. As members of the HKVDC, all four of these men had become prisoners. Georgina Foster had evacuated with two daughters and two younger sons, leaving her husband and oldest son (both serving in the Royal Scots) in the garrison. Her husband would survive the surrender, but young Jack was taken out of St Albert’s Hospital by the Japanese on 23 December 1941 and would never be seen again.

A large number of those captured, of course, had earlier been wounded. Evacuee Joan Franklin’s father, Frederick Franklin, was one of many such. Acting

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36 Though he was not actually *the* youngest. That dubious honour went to Brian Harper, the son of the dockyard Electrical Station Supervisor, Henry Harper, who was allowed to stay in Hong Kong and join the HKDC underage as his mother had passed away before the evacuation.

37 That area, on the northern slope of Mount Nicholson, was captured two days before Hong Kong’s surrender.
General Manager of the *South China Morning Post*, he stayed in Hong Kong and volunteered to serve with the Royal Engineers. During the fighting he was in charge of a munitions dump near Wong Nai Chung Gap with a number of British and Punjabi soldiers. On 19 December 1941 they were ordered to retreat from the position and retire to central Hong Kong, but while running for cover across a playing field at the Indian Club, Franklin was hit by enemy fire and fell wounded. He was later taken to the Bowen Road Military Hospital, and then Sham Shui Po POW Camp. Going into unhygienic POW camps with wounds, especially with the poor nutrition available, was not a healthy move. However, in the longer term it could be a blessing in disguise, as many of the more seriously wounded would avoid being picked for onward transportation to POW camps in Japan itself.

At the moment that Hong Kong fell, its hospitals were overflowing with seriously injured men. A grenade had wounded Richard Neve’s father, Major George Neve, GSO 2 of the garrison, during the battle. He had survived to be technically a POW, but died of his wounds in hospital shortly after the surrender. The American writer Emily Hahn was a regular visitor to her wounded British lover, Major Charles Boxer, who was in the same hospital: ‘In the next-door ward Major Neave [sic], who had been wounded with Charles in the same engagement, lay battling for his life against the odds of countless shrapnel wounds all up and down his left side. Whenever I brought Charles anything extra to eat he sent the best part of it to Major Neave, and for a while it looked like Neave would win the battle for life. He smiled and talked sensibly when I went in, and he kept an enormous photograph of his wife and child where he could look at it. And I never

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38 Later he became the Managing Director.
got the feeling there, as I did in some of the other wards, that his spirit was flagging. He lost the battle, though.  

Neve's son describes the day that he was on his way to play a game of junior inter house rugby at the school playing fields in Rose Bay, when another boy came running up and told him he was to report to the headmaster's office: 'I protested that I was about to play rugger for my house but he insisted that it was so important I had to go immediately... I had no inkling of why I was wanted and spent the whole of the walk back wondering what misdeed could possibly warrant such an urgent summons. I knocked timidly on the door of Mr Hone’s study. It was immediately opened by Miss Fallon the matron in her white uniform and forbidding horn rimmed spectacles. She was a capable person who stood no nonsense from us boys but could show sympathy when needed. This was odd; what was up? The headmaster anxiously told me sit to down on the sofa in front of his desk. Miss Fallon sat beside me. I do not remember his exact words but he then told me in a straightforward and sympathetic manner he had just heard from my mother that my father had died of his wounds. Although he had done it at least half a dozen times before it was clear to me he found it difficult and upsetting to be the bearer of such sad news.  

Gavin Gordon’s experience was sadly similar. His father Vyner had finally been successful in being commissioned from the HKVDC to the Royal Scots as a regular officer, but had been very badly wounded in Wong Nai Chung Gap by a shell that smashed one hip and the opposite thigh. He passed away in the first week of the New Year. His nurse noted: 'I saw him the day before he died as I was

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39 China To Me, Hahn, page 278. She married Charles post war.
40 A Wartime Childhood, Richard Neve.
able to get a lift to the QMH in an ambulance. He looked very ill but he was as cheery as ever and said that he was very comfortable and being very well looked after and he obviously meant it. I told him how much the WM would like to be looking after him particularly for your sake but he answered then that he was very happy and very well cared for. The next morning when I called again he had died just before about 4 a.m.‘

Gavin recalled: ‘All our friends in Australia seemed to be refugee families and the other fathers appeared to be dropping like flies so when [my mother] asked me one day “Do you know what has happened to Daddy?” I can remember replying without any emotion at all (because I really did not know him) “Is he dead?” I think it must have been some time after she herself heard the news that she plucked up the courage to tell me.’

Initially the captured men were spread all over Hong Kong, but by the end of January 1942 they had been concentrated – except for those still in hospital - at a refugee camp in North Point, and the pre-war Sham Shui Po barracks. In April 1942 the majority of officers were moved to a separate refugee camp on Argyle Street, and the North Point POWs moved to Sham Shui Po. There the situation stabilised until September.

Slowly, and over a matter of months or even years the evacuees would discover where their husbands and fathers were. Ron Brooks, son of Master Gunner Charles Brooks, Royal Artillery, who had survived the fighting: ‘In July

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41 Letter from Nursing Sister Margaret Marion Lee to Vyner’s wife Maidie Gordon at an uncertain date shortly post war. Email from Colin Gordon to author, 10 January 2012. He notes: ‘My mother had originally gone out to Hong Kong from King’s College Hospital in London to help start up the War Memorial Hospital when it first opened on the Peak, about 1931. She was a senior “Sister” or possibly Matron at the hospital and so many of the staff at the WM and also the Queen Mary would have known her and Vyner quite well.’

42 Marion Gordon had first heard of his death in a letter dated 16 March 1942. Email from Gavin Gordon to author, 13 March 2014.

43 In fact the Indian POWs were held at Ma Tau Chung Camp, and the Canadians remained – alone – at North Point Camp until September. However, neither group had any evacuated families.
1942 my mother had official notification that my father was a prisoner of war. Via the Red Cross she also had at least two letters from my father from the POW camp in Hong Kong.\textsuperscript{44}

Andrin Dewar, daughter of John Dewar, HKVDC, who had also survived: ‘In January 1942 my mother was indefatigable in her quest through the Hong Kong Liaison Office, the Red Cross, and every other source to trace my dad, to no avail for many weeks. At long last, a “Major J.G.B. Dewar” was located in Sham Shui Po Camp, and forthwith my mother searched for an apartment (as there was no further space where we were for another person) believing that my dad, if alive, would be following King’s Regulations to make every attempt to escape and somehow reach us in Australia.\textsuperscript{45} Oddly, this Major Dewar was a different man entirely, but fortunately Andrin’s father, a Captain, was indeed also a POW.\textsuperscript{46}

Altogether, some 500 of Hong Kong’s Prisoners of War (the majority being HKVDC or HKRNVR, the remainder senior regulars) had had their families evacuated. Many of these men would later be drafted to camps in Japan, or die on the voyage.

But the ‘enemy alien’ civilians remaining in Hong Kong had a different experience. Immediately after the Christmas Day surrender, they found themselves in a dangerous vacuum. Law and order – not to mention electricity and water - had at least partially broken down, and food was hard to come by. But ten days later they were ordered to register with the Japanese authorities and were then

\textsuperscript{44} Email from Ron Brooks to author, 26 January 2004.
\textsuperscript{45} Letter from Andrin Dewar to author, 3 November 2010.
\textsuperscript{46} The ‘other’ Major Dewar was actually a particularly tough Australian in the RASC, who the Japanese had to talk into surrendering the ordnance depot at Little Hong Kong after the general surrender of the Colony, rather than blow it – and himself – up (which he appears to have been more than willing to do).
temporarily billeted in cheap hotels along the Sai Ying Poon waterfront. Towards the end of January 1942 they were rounded up and transported to a Civilian Internment Camp in Stanley on Hong Kong Island’s south coast, a site that had been selected by the Director of Medical Services, Selwyn Selwyn-Clarke.\(^{47}\) Made up of the buildings of St Stephen’s College on the west side and the living accommodation for the warders at Stanley Prison on the east, the Camp housed civilian men, unevacuated women, and children. In total, at its maximum, it held some 3,325 non-combatants of all nationalities, of whom 2,633 called themselves British.\(^{48}\) Nine hundred and nine of the British internees were women, whose most common profession was ‘housewife’, and a further 284 were children.\(^{49}\) While some of the women had clearly held essential roles and a handful of others had arrived in Hong Kong after the evacuation was called off, a large percentage could have been evacuated. There were also a fair number of internees – almost sixty - who had evacuated and returned, voluntarily or otherwise.

Barbara Redwood was one of the latter group and her Stanley diary entry for 9 March 1942 noted: ‘Warmer. Lots of hard work in office - census. Soon our little stock of firewood (Marina Kingdon’s doll’s house) will be finished, and that will be the end of the porridge.’\(^{50}\) Marina, whose father had been a Prison Warder and had lived at Stanley, had been evacuated. Her possessions, like everything left behind in the area now bounded by the Camp, were used for cooking fires or whatever other purposes the internees required. It was far from being the worst

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\(^{47}\) This camp was run by the Japanese. The Red Cross also ran a camp at Rosary Hill, as recorded in an earlier footnote. A third civilian camp, Ma Tau Wai, was opened later in the war.

\(^{48}\) Approximately 180 men and women had no nationality recorded, but can probably be regarded as British too. The total numbers of internees fluctuated due to births and deaths, and most significantly due to both American and Canadian internees being repatriated in 1942 and 1943 respectively.

\(^{49}\) Interestingly, a further 51 children would be born in the camp.

\(^{50}\) Barbara Redwood’s wartime diary, a copy of which she kindly deposited with the author.
internment camp in the Far East, but it was a very different environment from the
pre-war world of plenty that the majority of internees had known. While their
privations were of course far worse than anything experienced in Australia, and
there was the ever present threat of violence from the guards, there were very few
decisions to be made. In that one respect their lives were at least simpler than
those of the evacuees.

Included in Stanley’s internees were more than two hundred men whose
wives and children had been evacuated. Lionel Eugene Lammert, whose wife
Florence, and daughter Marjory (aged 20 then) had evacuated in 1940, was typical
of these men. His 24-year-old son Lionel Ernest had stayed in Hong Kong.
Policeman Wright-Nooth noted as he walked around the Internment Camp: ‘I met
old Lammert on my stroll today. He tells me he hopes his son is still alive. As far as
I know from authentic sources he has been beheaded.’\textsuperscript{51} The younger Lammert had
indeed been decapitated after capture in Causeway Bay, for refusing to salute a
Japanese soldier; even within the Colony, let alone in Australia, there was still
uncertainty about who had survived.

All the separated families were trying to ascertain what had befallen their
loved ones. In the early months of occupation, no letters could be sent to or
received from Hong Kong, and as no list of internees had been published, those
outside the camp had no idea who was held there. With no other recourse open,
many contacted the authorities in London. A typical communication was this from
the Colonial office on 20 March 1942 to a Mrs Tonge, concerning George Moss of
the Hong Kong Police who was interned in Stanley:

\textsuperscript{51} Prisoner of the Turnip Heads, Wright-Nooth, page 94.
1. I am directed by Viscount Cranborne to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th March and to state that no information has been received in this Office regarding your son-in-law Mr. G. Moss.

2. Lord Cranborne sympathises with you and Mrs. Moss in your anxiety and a note has been made of your enquiry, so that in the event of any information being received, it may be sent to you.

3. Every effort is being made to obtain information through any possible channel regarding persons who may have become casualties, prisoners of war or internees in Japanese hands but at present there is no means of communicating with Hong Kong.52

Mrs Tonge was enquiring on behalf of her evacuated daughter Kathleen who was married to George and had given birth to their first son in Australia a year before. The Colonial Office were as good as their word. They followed up this letter with one of 4 May 1942, reporting that a list of internees in Hong Kong had been received from ‘a European who escaped on the 19th March and who reached Chungking on the 13th April’, and that the list included Mr Moss.53 The escapee bearing the list was policeman Walter Thompson, whose wife and children were also evacuees.

Of course, the presence in Stanley of those who had avoided evacuation was a cause of comment and discussion. Internee Mabel Redwood recalled that parents with small children lived under severe strain, as only the larger families justified a room to themselves. Most had to prevent the youngsters from annoying the other

52 Email from Peter Moss to author, 12 January 2012.
53 Ibid. No less that seven Stanley internees escaped on the 19 March 1942, in two parties.
occupants of their shared room - a challenge amplified by the fact that the majority of the internee mothers were not used to coping with their offspring for twenty-four hours a day, having always had amahs to rely on: ‘People without families, or whose children were grown up, were not always sympathetic, as had the young mothers obeyed the evacuation order, they and their children could have been safely in Australia. Many groused that the small quantity of special foods which came into the camp for young children could have been used for sick adults; this did not necessarily follow, however, for had the children not been in the camp there was no guarantee that any special supplies would have been sent in at all.’

Sometimes the complaints were direct. Mabel Redwood also observed: ‘For pipe smokers, a small quantity of cheap suk-yin (Chinese tobacco) sometimes came in when cigarettes did, and this was generally used as the basic ingredient and other things such as grass etc. added to it. The resultant aroma beggared description (to non-smokers). One evening when we were leaving a concert, two women were walking behind two men who had just lit up their pipes and the ladies got the full benefit of the first whiffs. “Oh!” shuddered one, wrinkling up her nose, “that vile tobacco!” “You should be down in Australia, lady,” the nearest man retorted. “They tell me the tobacco smells lovely down there.”’

Mabel’s daughter Barbara recalled: ‘Personally, I never noticed any bitterness on the part of the grass-widowers towards the camp children. In retrospect, I think the presence of children in Stanley helped to make life more normal for all of us than it would have been without them; I think it’s also probably

54 It Was Like This..., Redwood, page 161.
55 Email from Barbara Redwood to author, 12 February 2013. The quote is taken from the original, longer draft of It Was Like This... The published version (which can be found on page 136) is shorter.
possible that the Japs might have been harder on us if all internees were adults. I’m certain that most parents with children in camp would have bitterly regretted putting their children through internment. But even the evacuated children sometimes found the situation very difficult to understand. Susan Anslow: ’I knew [my father Frank Anslow] was in prison camp, but as no-one ever explained the difference between prison camp and prison, I was very ashamed of the fact and if anyone every asked me where my Father was, I used to say he was dead!’

Although there would be a few escapes from Stanley, and a number of births and deaths, it was a stable camp and would remain largely unchanged until Hong Kong’s liberation.

In the months between the surrender and the end of September 1942, another seventeen Hong Kong Prisoners of War and internees with family in Australia died of disease or other causes (leaving a total of 32 more fatherless children). But that September brought a new challenge to the POWs: the Japanese, short of manpower for their armed forces, realised that if Allied prisoners were shipped to Japan they could free up Japanese men from the factories, mines, and docks for the army, air force, and navy. In early September the first draft of some 600 British POWs departed Hong Kong and arrived safely in Japan. Encouraged by this success, the Japanese authorities decided on a more ambitious plan: they would ship almost 2,000 more men – this time on a vessel called the Lisbon Maru.

At the end of September, filled with a cross-section of British POWs from almost every service, the Lisbon Maru left port. Initially all went well, but as the vessel approached the Zhoushan islands to the southeast of Shanghai an American

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56 Ibid.
57 Susan Anslow’s memoires.
submarine was waiting. That submarine, the *USS Grouper*, was specifically hoping to intercept Japanese shipping heading north. There was nothing to indicate that POWs were on the vessel; in fact, some 600 or so Japanese troops (who were being shipped back to their homeland) could be seen on the deck. *Grouper* fired six of its old, unreliable Mark 14 torpedoes. Three missed; one blew up in the water; one hit the ship and bounced off, and by great mischance one hit and exploded - blowing an unpluggable hole in the old ship’s hull.\(^{58}\)

Fearful of escapes, the Japanese battened down the hatches. Eventually, as the vessel foundered stern-first on a sand bank, those inside managed to break out, but they were still in deep water. More than 800 would drown as currents bore them away from shore and out to sea. Of the thousand or so men who survived the sinking, over 200 more would die of exposure, exhaustion, shock, and disease in the next two months; one unlucky torpedo had done almost as much damage to the Hong Kong garrison as an entire Japanese invasion nine months earlier.

Evacuee Doug Langley-Bates’ father was one of those lost: ‘We moved from the Fernery to a rented house nearer to Frankston. It was there that Mother got the news that Dad had been killed while on the *Lisbon Maru*. That was a dreadful day, it is the first day I can remember crying.’\(^{59}\) Just six weeks earlier, she had received the following letter at Kohenoor, Warringard, Frankston, Victoria, from the war office:

> With regard to the information already communicated to you by the British High Commissioner’s Office, Melbourne, I am directed to confirm that

\(^{58}\) For more details, see Tony Banham, *The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru*, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 2006.

\(^{59}\) Email from Doug Langley-Bates to author, 4 May 2008.
a report has been received from official sources, stating that your husband, No.30877, Warrant-Officer Class I. R. L. Bates, Royal Engineers, is a prisoner of war in Japanese hands. No details have yet been received regarding his camp address of prisoner of war number, but as soon as any further information is received, you will be informed immediately.⁶⁰

In January 1943 the families of those lost on the Lisbon Maru started receiving official notices with the wording: 'It is with deep regret that I have to advise you that notification has been received that your husband, [name], is now officially reported as Missing at Sea following sinking of the Lisbon Maru.' Unfortunately many of those who were taken onto the vessel had written a last letter home just prior to boarding, and as those arrived after these formal notifications they gave hope where none was justified.

Some 55 of Hong Kong’s evacuees were widowed by this one incident, and at least 83 more of the children lost their fathers. Twenty-four of the two hundred or so survivors of the sinking who died of its effects before the end of the year, also had evacuee families. Those women with husbands in the police force would generally not have worried, thinking that as civilians they would be still safely ensconced in Stanley Camp, but for Minnie Hill in Melbourne there would be a shock: by bad luck, her policeman husband (captured on the front line in the fighting) had been held in Sham Shui Po Camp as a Prisoner of War and put aboard the ship. Fortunately, he survived.

There would be four more drafts of POWs to Japan after the Lisbon Maru, but all would get safely through. By the time of the last sailing, there would be

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⁶⁰ Email from Doug Langley-Bates to author, 5 May 2008.
slightly more ex-Hong Kong British POWs in Japan than in Hong Kong, and those left behind would all be concentrated in Sham Shui Po until liberation.

While the *Lisbon Maru* had been a particularly hard blow, the painful, insistent, dull hammering of malnutrition and disease continued to chip slowly away at the surviving captives. Before the Japanese surrendered, 88 more men with families evacuated to Australia would perish in the camps, leaving a further 116 fatherless children. One of those men would be John Egan of the HKDDC who died on 27 November 1942 of general avitaminosis, and whose son had died of gunshot wounds in the fighting. His wife and two younger children were evacuees in Sydney.

Some men, however, died different deaths. Sanitary Inspector Alexander Christie Sinton had stayed outside camp in Hong Kong after the surrender, aiding Selwyn Selwyn-Clarke in the latter’s attempts to keep some degree of medical services going. All went well until Japanese suspicions were aroused. On 2 May 1943 they arrested Sinton and Selwyn-Clarke at St Paul’s Hospital in Causeway Bay. Many other arrests followed, and those detained were taken to Stanley Prison for interrogation.

There was a sham trial on 19 October 1943: 'The accused Alexander Christy Shinton [sic] worked in the Public Health Section of the Governor-General’s Department, after the fall of Hongkong. He made contact with Leung Hung, head coolie of the truck taking supplies to Stanley Internment Camp, and through him between February 1942 and April 1943 he sent between ten and twenty secret messages to an acquaintance of his named Bradley in the Internment Camp. About

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61 For details of the Hong Kong POW experience, see Tony Banham, *We Shall Suffer There*, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 2009.
this time William John White asked him if he would assist him to get messages into the Camp. He agreed to do this, and, again through Leung Hung, got secret messages through to the camp and handed to the accused Evans and others.'

Sinton and thirty others were executed. His evacuee wife Lillian and son William (then aged nine) were at Avoncourt, 55 Alma Road, St. Kilda. Patricia Anderson in Tasmania was luckier, her husband James Anderson of the GPO had also been found guilty in that trial, but was sentenced to just fifteen years; he would survive. Perhaps unluckiest of all the POWs would be Staff Sergeant Gerald Golledge of the HKSRA, who survived the fighting at Ho Tung Gardens, the Lisbon Maru, and the POW years, but was killed with a number of other ex-POWs in the crash of an American Liberator bomber flying them home from Japan to Manila in 1945. He left a wife and three children in Toowoomba, Queensland.

In fact the majority of husbands would survive until liberation, though at least two would escape the camps and return home early. However, concrete information about the prisoners’ health and safety came through to Australia very slowly, and in many cases with no real certainty, making it even harder for the evacuees to plan for their future. However, they collectively took pains to commemorate those lost.

On 17 October 1942, Bertie Maughan, the finance liaison officer to the Hong Kong Government in Australia, died aged 59 at his office in Sydney. Mr Maughan’s replacement, the new Acting Finance Liaison Officer, was Thomas George Stokes who had been Accountant to Hong Kong’s police force and took office in Australia

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just in time to commemorate the first anniversary of the fall of Hong Kong.\footnote{Stokes was Hong Kong’s Deputy Registrar of Births and Deaths and had been appointed to the Police from 1934. Documentary evidence shows that he was still there in 1939 though clearly he was outside Hong Kong when the Japanese attack commenced.} War correspondent Edgar Burroughs, best known for creating \textit{Tarzan}, wrote: ‘Shortly after breakfast this morning I witnessed a touching ceremony. A crowd of several hundred people, mostly women, were gathered before a cenotaph in the center of a broad avenue. It is a memorial to the Australians who fell in World War I. There were flowers at its base when I first saw it yesterday, and very early this morning I saw two women in black placing wreaths before it. And now one side was fairly buried in flowers. An Australian sailor sounded taps on a bugle as a large wreath was placed at the base of the cenotaph, and the crowd stood with bowed heads, the men uncovered. T.G. Stokes, acting finance liaison of the government of Hong Kong, who was in charge of the ceremony, told me that it was to honor the men who died when Hong Kong fell a year ago today. These people gathered about the cenotaph were of the 3,000 who had been evacuated from Hong Kong in July 1940. Their men had remained behind to fight and die.’\footnote{\textit{Honolulu Advertiser}, 4 January 1943 (also reproduced in \textit{Edgar Rice Burroughs Tells All}). Stokes was officially given the full role on 12 January 1943. The cenotaph is in Martin Place in front of Challis House.}

But the evacuees weren’t safe either. The very next day, 26 December 1942, fifteen-year-old Denise Rosemary Burch of Cliff Street, Manly, who had evacuated with her mother Alice and sister Pamela, was attacked by a whaler shark in two feet of water in Middle Harbour. She was one of a party of four girls and four boys, including her older sister. At Ironstone Point, near Bantry Bay, the children had landed their boats before lunch, and at around 10.50 in the morning while one or two of the boys swam in deeper water, Denise was paddling in the shallows when
the other members of the party heard her scream. The shark had seized her by the legs and dragged her under the water. The boys grabbed oars, sticks, and stones and drove it off. They carried Denise from the water but she was badly injured and was dead before the party reached the shore. Back in Hong Kong, her father Reginald Burch, and older brother Landon, were in Sham Shui Po Camp having both been in the HKVDC.65

The memorial service at the cenotaph became an annual event, led each time by the incumbent Finance Liaison Officer. In 1944 the official wreath was laid by Stokes’s replacement, the new Finance Liaison Officer, George Walker Reeve who took the position on 28 October 1944.66 Another wreath laid that year on behalf of former residents of Hong Kong now living in Sydney bore the inscription ‘In memory of our glorious dead who made the supreme sacrifice courageously defending the colony.’ The Mayor of Moree, Alderman Frederick Thelwell Yeoman, placed a third wreath on behalf of the Hong Kong evacuees living in Moree, and Captain Frederick C. Gambrill, OBE, laid a fourth on behalf of the captains and officers and men of the Changte and Taiping.67 Many evacuees attended the ceremony, as they always would.

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65 Sydney Morning Herald, 28 December 1942. I corresponded with her ex-POW brother Landon Burch for many years, though he never mentioned his sister’s fate. Reginald Burch was 60 in 1940 and Chairman of Moutrie & Co. In the Boer War he had served in the 5th Royal Irish Lancers, and in the Great War in a machine gun battalion.

66 Reeve had been in Hong Kong’s Education Department since 1922 and had been appointed Senior Master in 1940. Clearly he was outside Hong Kong when the Japanese invaded.

67 Sydney Morning Herald, 26 December 1944.
5.4 **Wartime Returns to the United Kingdom**

Once in Australia, the evacuees were still permitted to ‘leave the scheme’ if they wished. Starting as early as spring 1942, some decided to brave the wartime seas and sail for the United Kingdom and other ‘safe’ destinations.

In 1941, *Ulysses* had been in Hong Kong for a major overhaul. Damaged when a typhoon struck, she was repaired again and was still present when Japan attacked. She sailed for Manila, but changed course for Singapore when news was received that the Philippines was under attack. Picking up evacuees from there, she arrived in Fremantle on 31 December. After further lengthy repairs in that port and then in Adelaide, she continued to Melbourne, and finally Sydney. There more cargo was loaded for Liverpool and she took on more passengers who had escaped from Hong Kong, Singapore, and other far-eastern ports and wished to return to England. These were the first to return from Australia after the start of the Pacific War.

The Hong Kong evacuees who boarded in Sydney included Nellie McClaren and her two daughters Ann and Susan. By coincidence, the retiring former acting governor of Hong Kong, Norman Smith, CMG, and his daughter were also on board. After passing through the Panama Canal, *Ulysses* headed north along the Florida coast then set course for Britain across the Atlantic. On the night of 8 April 1942, she collided with the tanker *Gold Heels*, the damage reducing her speed to seven knots. She steamed for the nearest port but was torpedoed by *U-160* 45 nautical miles south of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina on 11 April. As ten lifeboats were launched the wireless operator sent out a distress call, and soon *USS Manley* picked up all 290 survivors (no one was lost). Eventually in New York they boarded a vessel bound for Britain in a North Atlantic convoy.
Despite the fears of U Boats, and the *Ulysses* experience, a large number of evacuees returned to England well before the end of the war in Europe. Most of these mid-war voyages would be surprisingly uneventful. Catherine Hill: ‘My mother and Grandmother [Isobel & Christine Lamb] came to Liverpool on the *Ruys* – Blue Star Line, which was a passenger ship. It left Sydney on 6th July 1942.’68 Isobel Lamb’s husband, Lieutenant Colonel Ronald Lamb, RE, was a POW in Hong Kong. This was no coincidence; the majority of the early returns to the UK were military families who had been in Hong Kong on temporary postings. However, the POWs themselves seldom knew that their families had left. RQMS Percy Hale and CSM Edwin Soden of the Middlesex Regiment, for example, wrote to their evacuated wives (Rhoda Hale and Matilda Soden) on 3 June and 22 August 1942 respectively, neither knowing that both women (and their children) had already departed for the UK.69

It was easier for those without strong family ties to Hong Kong to make the decision to move on. This was true not only of the army and navy families, but also those whose fathers or husbands were working at the dockyard under Agreements. One preserved naval signal from the time (13 August 1942), read ‘Please arrange for Kirman son Deacon son Lumby son Maisey Vagg travel same ship England’. All those named were dockyard families.70

Even as early as July 1944, the Hong Kong Fellowship newsletter in the UK would carry the text: ‘Army wives compulsorily evacuated from Hong Kong to

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68 Email from Catherine Hill to author, 21 July 2009.
69 David Tett, *A Postal History of the Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees in East Asia During the Second World War*, Volume 4, Hong Kong and China, reproduces these envelopes on pages 62 and 65 respectively.
70 Email from Brian Allen to author, 5 September 2012. While Edith Deacon and her son, Arthur, were evacuated to Australia, Edith’s daughter Marion was at home in England. Marion got married on 20 July 1944 in Egguckland Parish Church in Plymouth, with her mother, Edith (who had also returned by then) a witness.
Australia, who have since returned to this country and who need financial assistance for the replacement of essentials lost in Hong Kong, should apply to the local branch of the Soldiers’, Sailors’, and Airmen’s Families Association (or to the Head Office, 23. Queen Anne’s Gate, S.W.1) where their claim will receive sympathetic consideration.\(^71\)

Ron Brooks, whose Royal Artillery father had been lost on the *Lisbon Maru*, was in Australia with his mother and brother. His paternal grandfather and his father’s three brothers and sister lived in England, while his maternal grandmother and his mother’s three brothers lived in Eire.\(^72\) ‘It would have been in 1944 that my mother must have had to face decisions about our long-term future... I don’t know what had happened to the friends my mother had when first in St Kilda but they no longer seemed to be around. She made one good friend from her workplace who was very kind to me. (I think the name of this lady’s son is on the Sai Wan memorial. He had been recently conscripted into the RAAF at that time).\(^73\) I think that my mother must have felt very lonely, unsupported and far from home.’\(^74\) She therefore chose to return, with the boys, to the UK.

As each evacuee trickled back to Great Britain, the paperwork went with them, this example – sent on 1 November 1944 by Stokes, the Financial Liaison Officer, from his office on the third floor of the Blashki Building, 61 Hunter Street,

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\(^71\) The Fellowship was formed in Britain to link families with members who were POWs or Internees in Hong Kong. The President was Lieutenant-General Grasett (Maltby’s predecessor), and the Vice President was Arthur Morse of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. The newsletters communicated all known news from the POW and Internee Camps for the benefit of the prisoners’ families. *Hong Kong Fellowship. The Hong Kong Fellowship news letter* [London 1943 http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn5019974, National Library of Australia.

\(^72\) A fourth brother was serving with the army in Italy.

\(^73\) This was Flight Sergeant Mervyn Rex Vagg, RAAF, aged 20 who died 25 February 1945. He was the son of Cecil Mervyn and Mabel Blanche Vagg, of Elwood, Victoria, Australia.

\(^74\) Email from Ron Brooks to author, 26 January 2004.
Sydney, to The Crown Agents for the Colonies, 4 Millbank, London - concerned the wife and son of policeman George Moss:

I have the honour to advise you that Mrs. Kathleen Eleanor Moss, wife of George Charles Moss, Sergeant of Police, Hong Kong, is shortly proceeding to the United Kingdom accompanied by her son, aged three years. Passages have been provided at Government expense.

Mrs. Moss was officially evacuated from Hong Kong on the 5th July, 1940, and arrived in Australia on the 10th August, 1940.

Mrs Moss has been paid a family allotment from her husband’s salary up to and including the 31st October, 1944 at the following rates:-

1. 12.41 to 31. 7.43 @ &24 Aust. Per month
2. 8.43 to 31.10.44 @ &20 Aust. Per month

Mrs. Moss’ address in the United Kingdom will be:-

c/o Mr. & Mrs. E.F. Tonge,
78, Leighton Street,
Ruchill,
Glasgow, N.W.75

Wendy Smith and her mother Winifred (also the wife of a British policeman in Hong Kong) had a different motivation for leaving. Winifred had heard a rumour that the British Government would not pay for them to return to England if her husband died in Stanley camp so she decided to pre-emptively take a boat bound for England. Travelling via New Zealand where they loaded boxes of butter, and

75 Email from Peter Moss to author, 12 January 2012.
then across the Pacific to the Panama Canal, up the north coast of America to New York and then on to Newfoundland, they joined a slow convoy of thirteen ships to cross the Atlantic to Liverpool. Children had to wear their life jackets continuously whatever the temperature, and Wendy’s fourth birthday, 2 September 1944, was celebrated on that ship.76

Ann Vernall’s mother was an exception to the military rule. The Vernalls were a Hong Kong based family, with her father serving in the HKRNVR. She had been born in Hong Kong in 1929, and in 1936 when the family returned to the UK on leave they left her there at a boarding school and returned to Hong Kong. They had intended to return for leave again in 1939 but the war intervened, and then her mother Katie was evacuated to Australia aboard the Slamat. Naturally she wanted to be reunited with her daughter: ‘It was in 1944 (8 years later) that my mother returned to the UK in convoy at the time of “D” Day. A traumatic meeting as you can imagine when we again met after her stay in Sydney and my experiences here at school.’77 Each family sailing for the UK at this stage seems to have had their own specific reason for taking the voyage. Although the main repatriation to the UK would start shortly before the end of the war, by no means all those who returned to the UK, then or earlier, would stay.

5.5 Australianisation

Hong Kong’s evacuation plan had not considered what the evacuees should do once they arrived in Australia, and the Hong Kong government - beyond

76 Email from Vic Rayward-Smith to author, 17 October 2012.
77 Email from Ann Pumphrey to author, 15 June 2009.
ensuring as an afterthought that the evacuees were temporarily housed and financially above water – never attempted to address this. From the end of 1941, of course, they were physically unable to anyway. Work, schools, and other social aspects were therefore entirely left up to individual families, and much depended on where they settled. While some had been quite independent and had moved to smaller towns and remoter areas, the majority continued to stay near the ports where they had originally landed.

The groupings of evacuee children that resulted at several schools were therefore partly random, and partly caused by the fact that friends who had evacuated together often stayed in the same suburbs – a pattern of fragmentation and regrouping that would occur until the end of the war.

Ron Brooks and family originally lived in Croydon on the eastern side of Melbourne. He and his brother attended school there, but later they moved to a flat at 332, Beaconsfield Parade, St Kilda and attended St Kilda primary school next to the terminus of the electric railway line from Flinders Street station. Because of the availability of flats in the area, thanks to the seaside holiday trade, a number of other evacuees were at the same school.

Vera Taylor (whose husband in Hong Kong had been secretary of the Men’s Evacuation Committee) lived a little further south, and her young son was at Mentone Grammar School; Reg Banham was also a pupil there as he was in its catchment area, living initially at 6 Deakin Street, Hampton and later (after January 1941) at 22 Borne Street, Mooney Ponds.78

78 Email from Reg Banham to author, 11 June 2008. To the best of our knowledge, our families are not related.
Doug Langley-Bates lived further south again: ‘We had to attend school and were sent to a local one, “Davey St Frankston”. Because of a large school population I had to have lessons in a local hall next to the football ground. I can remember that I was teased because I followed the English Cricket team and liked soccer... At about this time Mother decided that she wanted a really good education for us she dressed herself up and made an appointment with the Headmaster at Trinity Grammar School. She must have been very persuasive as she obtained half fee scholarships. I was a boarder and spent the rest of my school life there, finishing up as Dux of Humanities and being awarded my School colours for football (Aussie Rules) and lacrosse.’79

The teasing was a common issue. Thelma Organ would recall that: ‘At school the kids told me I was a “chinky-pom”’.80 As there was no centralised planning of evacuee schooling, it was left to the individual schools themselves to adapt to their new pupils, or help the pupils adapt to them. The Argus described that: ‘At the Dame Nellie Melba Free Kindergarten it was noted that one minor problem that had to be contended with during the year was the influx of evacuee children from Hong Kong. Some of them were nervous wrecks. It was some time before they became sufficiently used to their strange surroundings to be able to mix freely with their young Australian confreres who were inclined to tease them until Miss Jackson, directress, hit on the happy notion of placing them in the care of the worst offender, who thereupon took his duties so seriously that within two weeks they had become Australians in thought and speech.’81

79 Email from Doug Langley-Bates to author, 4 May 2008.
80 Thelma Organ’s memoires.
81 The Argus, 22 August 1944.
In Sydney there was a cluster of evacuees in the Coogee Bay area. Pat Guard (whose QAS mother was one of several such appointed to teaching posts at New South Wales schools) attended Coogee school and had her eighth birthday there. Margaret Simpson, though she left Australia early, was originally at the same school: ‘I first started attending school, at Coogee School, and walked there, so I assume the apartment was in that area. Mother told me that I didn’t want her to accompany me on the first day of school, so she followed me at a distance, like many a mother before her, I imagine.’

A little closer to the city centre, Douglas Franklin, son of the editor of Hong Kong’s South China Morning Post, went to school at Cranbrook with Paul, John and Michael Harriman, and Nigel Rust, who were fellow Hong Kong evacuees. In fact a bigger concentration of evacuees appear to have attended Cranbrook School than any other. In December 1941 at least twenty-three boys studying there were evacuees from China or Hong Kong. Another of them, Michael Stewart, was initially housed in a hotel at Bondi Beach with his mother. They then moved to an apartment in Rose Bay, sharing with fellow-evacuees Dorothy Hunter and her son David. Stewart attended Cranbrook, first as a day student and later as a weekly-boarder (as did his friend Phillip Ralph). Many months after the fall of Hong Kong it was confirmed that his father was alive and a POW, and their income from the British Government was then halved, his father theoretically receiving the other half in the POW Camp. This was not enough to both cover their living costs and

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82 Email from Margaret Simpson to author, 10 February 2010.
83 Only one photograph of any wartime ‘overseas’ boys was published in The Cranbrookian, in December 1941, and no others are held in the School Archives. Of the 63 boys in the photograph, the Archivist (so far, using the original Scholars’ Register to locate the names of boys, their dates of birth, arrival and leaving dates at Cranbrook and their previous school) has been able to identify this number of evacuees from Hong Kong or mainland China who arrived at Cranbrook during 1940 and 1941.
keep him as a boarder. However, his mother Dorothy had qualified as a nurse in King's College Hospital in London before her marriage. ‘The U.K. Government offered loans to ex-H.K. families, but my mother did not want us to face big repayments at the end of the war... So she took a job as the Nursing Sister at a large boys boarding school in Armidale, a country town in northern New South Wales, The Armidale School, which I then attended as a boarder. We spent most school holidays on a nearby large sheep station called Colomendy owned by friends Peter and Margaret Poole, where I rode most days and very much enjoyed “working” on the station with the Pooles' son and daughter, Adrian and Bronwyn.’

Douglas Franklin’s sister Joan initially attended Chatswood Public School in North Sydney, and then moved with her sister Sylvia to the Presbyterian Ladies College. Like Michael Stewart, after about a year the Franklin's discovered that their father had survived as a POW. Joan Franklin: ‘My sister and I became day-girls at the private school we attended. The headmistress was very kind indeed and allowed us to continue there even though mother was unable to pay the fees. I was very much aware that we lived in considerably different financial circumstances to those of my peers.’ Many families had to take their financial situation into account when making schooling decisions. Susan Anslow's mother found a job teaching the first form of Melbourne Girls School and Susan was put into a crèche. But later: ‘Special permission was given for me to start at Primary School at the beginning of the Australian school year in January 1944 (I turned 4 one month later, in February) instead of the usual age of 5. This made a lot of difference to our financial position as Mummy no longer had to pay for the crèche,

84 Notes on the History of Robert Michael Stewart, Michael Stewart.
85 Later renamed Pymble Ladies College.
86 Email from Joan Franklin to author, 16 September 2010.
no school fees had to be paid for the children of teachers and we both had a hot lunch every day at school, so she didn't have to cook in the evenings.\textsuperscript{87}

Maunie Bones was in Brisbane where her first two years of school were spent at St Margaret's Church of England Girls School in Clayfield. Gloria Grant was further inland at Moree: 'We received such warm hospitality from the citizens of Moree that we soon integrated. I went to Moree Inter High and stayed they [sic] until I matriculated.'\textsuperscript{88} Thelma Organ had the same experience once she left Bondi: 'We were staying in North Bondi for just over a year before we went to Moree and I was in the last class in Bondi Primary School then started high school in Moree Senior High School. I was broken-hearted that we got shoved off to Moree as I had passed for Sydney High School which was the top girls' school at that time. However, I loved Moree and was very happy in the school there. Even though it was a country town, the education there headed me towards a great career in teaching and lecturing.'\textsuperscript{89}

Mike Ferrier was in Perth: 'Dad was in the Hong Kong Club one day, when he met a Mr. Eric Warren selling sandalwood on behalf of his firm in Perth, The Australian Sandalwood Co. Dad mentioned the problem of our schooling and Warren suggested that we be sent to Guildford Grammar School where he had sent his sons Anthony and Denys.'\textsuperscript{90} Ferrier's Russian mother took Mike and his two brothers to the school. They arrived during the holidays, but found that they weren't the only pupils there; a number of other boys had stayed for the break too.

\textsuperscript{87} Susan Anslow's memoires.
\textsuperscript{88} Email from Gloria Grant to author, 23 September 2010.
\textsuperscript{89} Email from Thelma Organ to author, 3 February 2013. The school is now known as Moree Secondary College.
\textsuperscript{90} Mike Ferrier's memoires. Anthony joined the R.A.A.F. and was killed later in the war as a Flight Lieutenant flying a Mosquito with 5 OTU. There is a stained glass window to his memory in the School Chapel.
and the Head of the Prep School, Alexander Todd, and his wife kindly took them to the cinema. As they drove down the coast to Rockingham they saw the lights of the Queen Mary, the Queen Elizabeth and the Mauritania at anchor in Gage Roads where the Ninth Division was embarking for the Middle East. The ships sailed that night, and the following morning Mike’s mother sent a telegram to his father in Hong Kong saying ‘Three boys left for School last night’! Within a very short time the police picked her up as a possible Russian spy under the suspicion that the ‘three boys’ mentioned in her telegram were code for three ships. She was held overnight until both the School and the British authorities in Hong Kong vouched for her. 

Having dropped the boys off in Australia, Mrs Ferrier managed to return to Hong Kong and eventual internment. Mike Ferrier: ‘We had some very good and kind friends but even so there was no getting away from the constant hurt of not having our own parents. You always felt that you didn’t belong. You were the outsider. I remember one day looking towards the School gate as a Naval Officer walked in and thinking “Please God. Please let this be my father”. Of course it wasn’t.’

Evacuees Bernard and George Trinder attended Coolangatta State School until June 1945, Jeremy Elston went to King’s School in Parramatta, Vicki Moss went to Hampton High School, Jean Whitecroft was a pupil at Standish, North Sydney (a branch of the Sydney Church of England Girls’ Grammar School), and the

91 Ibid. Margaret Simpson’s Russian mother had a similar experience in Pearl Harbour. The day before the attack she attended a dinner with a group of junior-grade naval officers and spouses with whom she had become acquainted. At this event, talk naturally turned to the possibility of war with Japan, and she reminded them of Japan’s surprise attack on the Russian navy at Port Arthur in 1904. The officers laughed, declaring that nothing like that could never happen to the powerful and prepared United States. Following the attack she was asked whether she had actually had prior information.

92 Ibid.

93 Email from Marjorie Stintzi to author, 12 October 2012.

94 Email from Sue Gibson to author, 13 January 2012.
other 2,000 or so evacuee children from Hong Kong attended a variety of schools all over Australia. It was simply a matter of where fate or their families took them. Some families, unnerved by the evacuation and the invasion of Hong Kong, feared a Japanese attack on Australia and kept on the move. John Hearn’s was one such and he was educated in a total of twelve different primary schools as a result: ‘My mother left Coolangatta because I think she was concerned about the pending “Brisbane Line”, that is, Australia would be defended from Brisbane and further south. We moved to various places in Australia during the war, eventually returning to Coolangatta. Coolangatta became an “R. & R.” for American servicemen. At one stage we lived in Sydney but my mother thought that Sydney was not safe from the Japanese, so we moved to Goulburn (near Canberra). Then Jap submarines entered Sydney harbour.’

Marilyn Hunter noted that her mother lived with some other evacuees with young children in a rented a house in Sandringham, Melbourne and: ‘After a while these families were sent to the country when Australian shores were threatened by Japanese invasion, e.g. mini subs in Sydney Harbour/bombing of Darwin.’

But despite the lack of coordinated assistance from the Hong Kong or Australian governments, the evacuees generally maintained a good impression of the education that their children received in their new home.

Since Hong Kong’s fall, the overriding concern of the families evacuated to Australia had been the safety of the men left behind in Hong Kong. Initially there had been no news at all, and then in January 1942 the authorities started sending

95 Email from John Hearn to author, 6 January 2009. John’s father James had been killed in the fighting, and his loss may well have been an influence.
96 Email from Marilyn Hunter to author, 4 June 2012. As discussed above, this was the fear that sparked the move of many families to Moree.
out letters simply confirming that certain men had been serving at Hong Kong at
the time of its capitulation, and that they must be regarded as ‘Missing on War
Service’. In the following months, as related above, many families sought news via
government channels but these could seldom be of immediate assistance. On 17
March 1942 the Australian papers published a shortlist compiled from lists
brought out of the Colony by escapers and naming approximately 75 surviving
POWs.

In many cases the first firm news to get through to Australia was directly
from those early escapers. Benny Proulx of the HKRNVR had broken out of North
Point POW Camp at the end of January and soon afterwards wrote to Mrs P.A.
Marton, c/o Minister of the Interior, Canberra: ‘Your husband is alive and a
prisoner of war… The Japs were in occupation of your bungalow and I hid in
Blaker’s house during the final day. All the houses in your district are ruined,
looted and filthy beyond description… Vyner Gordon died in hospital around
January 22nd of wounds… Harry Penn was shot through the face and it was a
miracle he lived: in fact he is now as right as rain and in fact it hardly shows a scar.
It was a million to one shot… I am afraid that Lieut. Commander Dulley of Jardine’s
is killed… I feel so sorry for his wife and I think she had an infant with her when
she left for Australia… Sub. Lt. Price of the Mine Watching branch was missing and
never turned up in prison so he must be presumed killed… I have tried to notify
Mrs Jupp through Mrs Harriman that her husband is okay. If you see her tell her
that Edmund is well and was in the same mess with me. We had Tiny Coates,
Harrison of the Bank, Evans of the BAT and Geoff Worrall of the APC.’

97 Email from Tim Luard to author, 13 April 2012. Luard received this letter via: ‘Helen Hyatt,
daughter of Harry Owen-Hughes. She says it was given to her some years ago by Georgie Brooks -
to Marton himself, Blakeney, Coates, Dulley, Harriman, Gordon, Jupp, Penn, and Price all had evacuee families in Australia.

Vyner Gordon’s family received a letter from Maughan in March 1942 referring to a telegram received from escapee Professor Ride in which only the quoted date of death was wrong:

Inform Mrs Vyner Gordon personally saw husband after wounded no further official news. Casualty report Hongkong News published 28th January states ‘Gordon 37 died 19th December QMH’ corroborates camp rumour of his death.98

In general, the arrival of official news of POWs’ survival through the 1941 fighting to the point of capture in Hong Kong bracketed the sinking of the Lisbon Maru. Mrs Savitsky, who had resisted evacuation so long but was now at 19 Gibbons Street, Wooloongabba, received a letter dated 7 September 1942 from the Red Cross stating that her policeman husband was well and interned at Stanley Camp.99 Occasionally these notices were reported by the local press, for example:

‘News has been received from Surgeon Rear-Admiral Penfold, DSO, England, that his elder son, Lieut Col R. J. L. Penfold, is a prisoner of war in Hong Kong. His wife, her 3 children, and nurse, who were evacuated from Hong Kong, and were living at

nee Holmes, daughter of Lesley Holmes, who as you know died in the battle.’ Holmes served in 3 Coy. HKVDC, and his daughter assisted my research when I wrote the Short History of that company. Oliver Marton served in 2 Battery HKVDC and survived the war. Richard Stuart Harrison would die in the sinking of the Lisbon Maru, Edmund Jupp soon afterwards of the effects, and Worrall would lose his life as a POW in Japan. Evans was also on the Lisbon Maru but was one of just three men who escaped the sinking and recapture, and made it back to the UK – though he would be murdered in Vietnam shortly after the war.

98 Email from Colin Gordon to author, 14 March 2014. The Hongkong News was a Japanese propaganda newspaper published in English in Hong Kong throughout the war years.
99 Email from Michael Martin to author, 15 February 2010.
Frankston, have now arrived safely in England.'

In America the Simpsons were now living at 650 Fell Street, San Francisco, and received notification on 19 November 1942 that a telegram had been sent from the Foreign Office stating they had reliable unofficial information that Mr Simpson was alive and well, but was a prisoner of war in Hong Kong. Later they received a less typical communication from Major General Archer Lerch, the Provost Marshall General: ‘Following enemy broadcast from Japan has been intercepted “very worried, are you alright financially? If not, contact British Consul. Don’t worry, I am very fit. Hope you are both well. Reply quickly. By cable. Received news, England, mother dead. Keep insurance up to date. SGT William Charles Simpson Hong Kong Camp” pending further confirmation this report does not establish his status as a prisoner of war. Any additional information received will be furnished.’

In November 1942 the Colonial Office in London received official lists of Stanley Internees from Tokyo via the Red Cross, and started communicating these details to the families. However, many of those letters included the paragraph: ‘It is hoped that the names of prisoners-of-war and casualties in Hong Kong will follow in due course but no indication has been received that such will be the case.’

Official news of deaths during the fighting also started arriving at the beginning of the second half of 1942. Rosemary Orr, then eleven, recalled: ‘I (had) developed measles... and it would have been after that, when I was better, in August, 1942 that the Hong Kong Government’s liaison officer in Australia told Mother that they had been notified through the British Embassy in Chungking that

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100 The Argus, 13 October 1942
101 Email from Margaret Simpson to author, 13 February 2010.
(father) had been killed... I could not take in or believe that our strong, vital, energetic, life-loving father was simply not in this world any more. It just could not happen. I said that we would go back after the war and find him.’

And as late as February 1944, the deaths of those who had died of wounds following the Hong Kong fighting were still being confirmed. Marion Gordon, who was already in no doubt thanks to earlier communications, received a further letter from The War Office on the 21 February: ‘I am directed to inform you, with deep regret, that it has now been decided to accept the report of the death of V. Gordon at Hong Kong, on the 6th January, 1942, as referring to your husband, 2nd Lieutenant V.R. Gordon, The Royal Scots. It is, therefore, being recorded officially that 2nd Lieutenant V. R. Gordon, The Royal Scots, died of wounds on 6th January, 1942. I am to convey to you an expression of the Army Council’s sincere sympathy.’

For those who died as POWs later in the war, confirmations of their demise were received sometimes as late as 1946.

Some communications were a little obscure, such as this example sent to Elena Savitsky from the Red Cross on 17 November 1944: ‘We thought you would be interested to learn that the following information has been received by us through our Melbourne Headquarters concerning your Husband, Mr A. G. Savitsky, who is interned in Military Internment Camp, Hong Kong. This information was

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102 Occasional Paper Number 17, Henry Ching, Hong Kong Volunteer and Ex-PoW Association of New South Wales.
103 Email from Colin Gordon to author, 10 January 2012. Even post war she received letters. That quoted above from nurse Margaret Marion Lee ended: ‘It does seem very late to sympathise with you over the loss of Vyner but you know how all of us at the War Memorial even the newest member, like me, felt about him. He was the dearest soul and always so very kind to all of us.’
supplied by a repatriate whose name we are not allowed to disclose, but he mentioned that when he left Hong Kong your Husband was quite well.’

Letters to and from Internees and POWs were also getting through, though they could take as long as a year to arrive (an example sent by Francis Brett in Sham Shui Po POW Camp, to Charlotte Brett, care of Mr B.E. Maughan, Hong Kong Liaison Officer, was posted on 23 September 1942 and received on 16 September 1943, exactly one week short of a year later). An unidentified POW’s letter written in July 1943 and quoted in the Hong Kong Fellowship newsletter stated: ‘A grand month this has been. Five letters from home. All 1942 of course’. Families were given clear instructions on how to address letters to those in the camps. Where the camp name was known it should be used, and where not the letter should be addressed c/o Japanese Red Cross.

A typical internee letter, this example from George Moss in Stanley Camp addressed to his wife at 8 Beverly Hall, Elizabeth Bay Crescent, Sydney, was posted on 30 April 1943. In it he noted that he had not been allowed to write to her since July, and had just received her letters of June and August 1942. Like the letter from escapee Proulx, it focused mainly on who was well and who was lost: ‘Peter must be a fine little chap [now]. Look after him & yourself Darling. Please inform Dorothy I received her letter as did Bates. Received letter from [my] Aunt Jane let Mum and Dad know please. Lyn, Elizabeth, Una, Harold, Val well. Bill I hear is well.

104 Email from Michael Martin to author, 15 February 2010. Stanley Camp had indeed changed its designation to Military Internment Camp by this date (as from 19 January 1944).
Walter [I] do not hear from. I believe he is in hospital. Harold Brown I am sorry to say was killed.’

But it was not only those in Hong Kong who were reachable. This example, sent on 27 June 1943 by William Poulter, a Lisbon Maru survivor in a POW Camp in Japan was addressed to Mrs D. A. Poulter, 42 Brighton Boulevarde, North Bondi, Sydney and was typical in its brevity: ‘I am alive and well, in fact everything is O.K. Don’t worry, tell Robin to be a good boy. So long my Love, I’ll be seeing you soon. All my love to you Both.’

Incoming letters were even more valued by the POWs. As William Mezger wrote from Stanley in his final letter to his wife before being reunited: ‘The snaps that you enclosed among your later letters were also among the first that were received into camp, and once more I cannot thank you enough for sending them along. I think I have some idea as to how the kids have grown, but without those snaps I would be hopelessly at sea.’

By this time, another form of information was also available to the evacuees. Books written by evaders and escapees from Hong Kong were reaching an early market, though not all received praise. Jan Marsman’s I Escaped From Hong Kong was one of the first, and was subject of a scathing letter in the press, signed only as ‘Evacuee’: ‘One discovers firstly that the author attempted to escape by plane from the mainland; then, using his influence as a big business man, drove away from the town to Repulse Bay Hotel, which had been assigned to the military as a point of defence. Some time later we find him and other civilians - largely women and

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106 Email from Peter Moss to author, 12 January 2012. Sergeant Brown was a Hong Kong Volunteer killed on 17 December 1941. His wife Una had stayed in Hong Kong and was also interned in Stanley.

107 Email from Robbie Poulter to author, 21 May 2007.

108 Letter sent to the author by mail by Mezger’s daughter Charlotte, 5 February 2013.
children, who have gathered there from neighbouring bungalows - protesting at the “threat to their safety” caused by the presence of soldiers and ammunition in their chosen refuge... Personally, as one who loves Hong Kong and respects her people and the gallant stand they made, I prefer to reserve judgment until someone better qualified to speak pronounces a final verdict. Marsman is not competent to judge military strategy, and made out a vehement case for early capitulation without having the facts in his possession.'

Marsman was far from being universally popular. He also came in for criticism in repatriate Wenzell Brown's book *Hong Kong Aftermath*, which was advertised in Australia a little over a year later as: ‘Wenzell Brown. Every army officer and every naval man still in training should be ordered to read this report against the time when he will go into action against the Jap. It’s not a pretty story, but it’s one that every Australian should read. 10/6 (3 1/2d.).' Two weeks later *The Argus* also advertised *Hong Kong Incident* by escapee Phyllis Harrop: ‘A graphic account by the young English woman who escaped six weeks after the city's capitulation to the Japanese. As this brilliant social worker spent 14 years in the colony she has a very authoritative testimony to offer; 15/6 (4 1/2d.).'

The lack of clear, up to date, and trustworthy information was a great frustration to all sides during the war years. Captain Penn, who had commanded 1 Company HKVDC during the fighting (and had survived being shot in the face as Proulx had reported), wrote the following to his evacuee wife Irene immediately after liberation: ‘For all the major inhumanities and minor pinpricks which these

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109 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 August 1943.
110 *The Argus*, 7 October 1944. American internees in Stanley, such as Brown, were repatriated in mid-1942.
111 *The Argus*, 21 October 1944.
swine imposed upon us, I really think their deliberate and callous withholding of our mail from wives and relatives hit us more than anything. There must be literally thousands of letters somewhere which they have never delivered, unless they just destroyed them. But there was another side to it all, and the latent sense of humour – a bit bitter sometimes – and a firm conviction even in the blackest days that we would win the war in the end, enabled the vast majority to bear these discomforts reasonably equably and make the best of a bad job.\textsuperscript{112}

Some measure of the value of these letters can be made from the fact that almost every family appears to have retained them.

Although letters were also important to the evacuees, work and finances were generally more pressing concerns. While it was never intended that they should bear the cost of either their evacuation or eventual return, the evacuees’ daily living expenses were largely their own concern.\textsuperscript{113} Aside from assisting with appropriately priced accommodation upon their arrival, and providing loans to those who required them, the Hong Kong and UK governments’ attitudes were largely hands-off, leaving it – at least until the Japanese invasion - to husbands to provide remittances.\textsuperscript{114} In the case of Servicemen (including the Dockyard families) the arrangements were primarily handled centrally, recorded as ‘husband’s allotment paid by treasury’. QMS Langley-Bates, for example, paid nine shillings for his wife and three children, Sergeant Banham of the RA paid four shillings daily for his wife and two children; and Sapper Bacon paid two shillings for his wife. Officers, however, paid by the month: Lieutenant Bonney, RAOC, paid

\textsuperscript{112} Occasional Paper Number 16, Henry Ching, Hong Kong Volunteer and Ex-PoW Association of New South Wales.
\textsuperscript{113} For an example of such costs, see Appendix Three – Costs of Hiring/Crewing Zealandia.
\textsuperscript{114} Very few of these loans were ever recovered from the evacuees. See Appendix Two.
twenty pounds for his wife and two children; Lieutenant Bucke of the Signals paid fifteen pounds for his wife and child.\textsuperscript{115} The treasury also paid for the accommodation of Service families, at thirty shillings for sergeants and below, forty shillings for Warrant Officers, and 'officers should have accommodation and board better than fifty shillings as each officer is paying average sixty three shillings for his wife though when children are added he only pays an additional seven shillings per week'.\textsuperscript{116}

As early as 23 August 1940, however, there had been confusion about the civilians' status, as on that date Maughan had cabled the Hong Kong Government: 'No information received concerning financial policy reference civilian evacuees. Interview arranged with Commonwealth officials Canberra Tuesday 27\textsuperscript{th}. Grateful you cable instructions for guidance in discussions and to facilitate administration.'\textsuperscript{117}

But by 1 October 1940 financial order was being established. The State Authorities in Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne were functioning under different guidelines depending on the evacuees’ status. Naval and Dockyard families requiring accommodation were placed in board and lodging at rates varying from A£3.10.0 per week to A£1.10.0 per week according to their husbands’ rank, with half rates for children under sixteen and full rates thereafter. The State Authority paid these amounts on behalf of the evacuees, or granted suitable allowances to them for maintenance if they rented flats or houses. For the army, those needing accommodation were placed in board and lodging at up to a maximum of A£3.18.9

\textsuperscript{115} Listing of payments, National Archives of Australia, A433, 1941/2/1096 PART 1.
\textsuperscript{116} Burns to Hubbard, 19 August 1940. National Archives of Australia, A433, 1941/2/1096 PART 2.
\textsuperscript{117} Premiere New South Wales to Governor of Hong Kong, 23 August 1940. National Archives of Australia, A433, 1941/2/1096 PART 2.
per week for Officers’ wives, £2.10.0 per week for Warrant Officers’ wives, and £1.17.6 per week for Sergeants’ and lower ranks’ wives. Half rates were payable for children under fifteen, and full rates thereafter. Again the State Authority paid these amounts on behalf of the evacuees. Where Army evacuees rented flats or houses the State Authority paid the rent and made a cash payment according to a revised scale for maintenance. Lastly, civilians requiring accommodation were placed in board and lodging at rates as near as possible to £2.10.0, £2, and £1.10.0 per week with commensurate payments for children according to age. The State Authority only paid the board and lodging of those evacuees who were without the means to do so. Any civilian evacuees who had had their board and lodging paid and subsequently transferred to rented houses or flats, had their rent paid by the State Authority and were granted the cash difference between the cost of the rent and the cost of board and lodging, in order to maintain themselves.118

For the civilians, remittances were a private matter and often something of a strain as many families were – for the first eighteen months - still managing a residence in Hong Kong at the same time. But whatever the concerns of husbands back in Hong Kong, children had to be fed and schooled and clothed, and however easy life might have been previously in Hong Kong, in Australia these refugees would need to fend for themselves. Although often the Australian government and the Finance Liaison Officer assisted with emergency funding (to be invoiced to the Hong Kong government for reimbursement), jobs would need to be found.119

118 The Director, Publicity & Tourist Bureau, 1 October 1940. National Archives of Australia, A433, 1940/2/2309. Unfortunately this file fails to mention how the correct rates for each civilian were decided upon.
119 For an example funding case, see Appendix Two – Mrs Rosemary Margaret Holmes.
Susan Anslow: ‘Soon after our arrival in Australia Mummy found a job teaching a little crippled boy at home, so that she could bring me with her and, of course, in the first year money was also being sent to her by Frank. We lived in one room in someone’s house in Melbourne for the entire War years, sharing the kitchen and bathroom... We were always very short of money and I soon learned never to ask for small treats such as ice cream or sweets. Mummy made all my clothes herself, and most of her own as well. We once had a windfall when I found a purse containing 9 pounds, when we were out walking. Mummy dutifully reported it to the police, but it was never claimed and she was able to use the money to buy herself and me much needed new shoes.\(^{120}\)

Tony Bushell, whose father Harold was in the Corps of Military Police: ‘At first we were busy enough, like all evacuees, just being accepted by the Australians and making ends meet. At one time my mother held down three part time jobs to provide for us.’\(^{121}\)

Teaching was a popular and available occupation for many young women. Marilyn Hunter: ‘My mother landed with some other evacuees and took up residence in Sandringham, a bay-side suburb of Melbourne. Several of them rented a house and my mother found a job teaching at Melbourne Grammar School, Junior Section (Wadhurst). At the start this income helped support the house occupants. Some of the women had young babies / children.’\(^{122}\)

When Hong Kong fell, the worries rose. For civilian Dorothy Neale: ‘Peggy’s husband was caught in Hong Kong and, until I had a second cable from Freddie telling me he had arrived in India, both of us were worried as to what we would do

\(^{120}\) Susan Anslow’s memoirs.
\(^{121}\) Email from Tony Bushell to author, 31 October 2011.
\(^{122}\) Email from Marilyn Hunter to author, 4 June 2012.
if our husbands’ monthly remittance stopped. We thought Peggy might try to get a job as she had worked in an office before she was married, but I was not qualified for any type of work, so could look after the four children and run the house, although I was still a pretty awful cook.”

Joan Franklin’s mother did not know whether her husband had survived, and applied to the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital as she was a registered nurse who had qualifications from Edinburgh Royal Hospital in Scotland, and also had experience with the Colonial Service in Hong Kong where she had been a nursing sister prior to marriage. However, her qualifications were not recognised in Australia, so she was put in charge of the Nurses’ Home at Concord West. After about a year, she received news that her husband was alive and she resigned. The Anslow family was in the same situation and when the remittances suddenly stopped, Joy Anslow had to find better paying employment.

The great majority of evacuees found themselves in similar predicaments. While in many cases the civilian remittances stopped altogether, the military allotments were often reduced. Ron Brooks recalled that his mother’s financial situation changed significantly in 1943, presumably because she no longer received her husband’s full salary as he was a Prisoner of War: ‘It was perhaps reduced to that of a war widow. Anyway, from that time my mother had to seek ways of maintaining her income. My mother had taken in lodgers in our flat for short periods. I remember another lady evacuee with a small daughter and at another time a young man from Tasmania in the Australian Air Force. In March 1943 [my mother] went to work full time as a sales assistant in the millinery department of Manton’s Department store in Melbourne city (I have the reference

123 Green Jade, Neale, page 61.
she received on leaving on 9\textsuperscript{th} February, 1945). Geoff and myself became “latch-key” kids. Sometimes, by arrangement, I went to the flat next door after school where the lady made me a cup of cocoa and played with her daughter Judith until my mother returned home from work.’\textsuperscript{124}

Druscilla Wilson joined the Red Cross and among other jobs worked two or three days per week at a Blood Bank taking about twenty donors each day, collecting up to a pint of blood from each volunteer. After separation and treatment, much of the serum was flown to New Guinea and other places where it helped save lives on the front line. By this time the majority of women had found employment of one kind or another: Joan Younghusband, whose husband Percy was in the Official Weights and Measures Office in Hong Kong, had offered her services as an opera singer for AIF concert parties soon after she arrived in Sydney, Eileen Hargreaves worked as the Assistant Town Clerk in Yass, north of Canberra and kept her two sons with her there, Marjorie Elston worked as a censor in Sydney, Kathleen Langley-Bates (whose husband had been lost on the Lisbon Maru) worked as a clerk in the Victorian Railways and also as a waitress.\textsuperscript{125} Others worked in shops, schools, and hospitals, and for a broad range of concerns across Australia.

Unsurprisingly in the context of the time, few if any of the evacuee children who were in their late teens before the end of the war, appear to have gone to university; the majority either found work or – more often - joined the forces. Joan Burroughs, for example, who was sixteen when she evacuated and whose father,

\textsuperscript{124} Email from Ron Brooks to author, 26 January 2004.
\textsuperscript{125} Before she was married Joan Younghusband belonged to the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, and during the Great War she had entertained Australian soldiers in camp on Salisbury Plain. \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 9 September 1940.
Captain Sydney Burroughs, RAOC, had been killed in the fighting, joined the RAAF as an Aircraftwoman. Evacuee Jack Strange, eleven in 1940, also joined the RAAF on reaching his majority. Typical of children who arrived in their teens were Maureen and Donald Chester-Woods, who were fifteen and thirteen respectively when they arrived in 1940. By the end of the war Donald, who had attended Scotch College Melbourne, was at the Military Academy, Dehra, India, while Maureen (by now Mrs M. J. Keesey, married to an American) was a decoder with the RAN. Douglas Franklin, evacuated at fourteen, volunteered to join the Royal Australian Navy when he was seventeen and a half, and spent the remainder of the war years on a Fairmile in the waters around New Guinea.126

When the war ended and more normal communications resumed, POWs and internees tried to pick up the pieces. As William Mezger wrote to his wife upon his liberation: ‘You have never mentioned money in any of your letters, so that I suppose that you have been OK on that account. However, don’t forget to let me know how you have been making out. We understand here that the Service is making you some sort of allowance, but none of us here have any idea as to the amount or for how long it has been going on.’127

Five years had been a long time. Children had grown up, and cosseted wives of the Colonial system had become more independent; those who had been interned had changed too. As the end of the war loomed, the long-term effects of the evacuation would become clear.

126 The Fairmile was a type of coastal Motor Launch built for the Royal Navy, Royal Australian Navy, Royal Canadian Navy, and Royal New Zealand Navy by the Fairmile Marine Company during the war years.
127 Letter sent to the author by mail by Mezger’s daughter Charlotte, 5 February 2013.
Chapter 6. 1945: War and Peace: Britain, Hong Kong, or Stay?

Feeling bloody queer... The British Fleet have just entered harbour... An Australian Major came into our Camp from the Fleet and he took a telegram from me to my wife.¹

Chapter Six argues that the five years elapsed time from arrival in Australia till war’s end transformed the evacuation, for approximately half of those involved, into a permanent unplanned and initially involuntary migration. For some women their newly forced independence opened fresh horizons and catapulted them into better lives, often continuing without those husbands (either due to war deaths or post-war separations, the latter typically sparked by the husbands’ and wives’ different experiences in those years). Children growing up in Australia also found new opportunities which return to post-war British austerity could not match. When families reunited at war’s end, many stayed in Australia, others fragmented, and some returned to Hong Kong or to the UK - but many of these later decided to move back to Australia. Essentially – for all its claims of grandiose aims of facilitating the defence of the Colony, and actual aims of preventing loss of civilian life - the only long-term effect of the evacuation had been the accidental and

¹ From Brian Bromley’s diary, written in Sham Shui Po POW Camp on 30 August 1945.
unplanned establishment of a unique ‘lost tribe’; a significant segment of the Australian population descended from the garrison and business community of 1940 Hong Kong. The evacuation had been far more permanent than was ever imagined.

Initially, of course, 1945 seemed no different from earlier war years. Life and death continued as normal. For the Stanley Internees the year started badly: a US Navy air attack on a Japanese lighter just off shore resulted in a bomb hitting Bungalow C killing fourteen internees by blast. Three of the dead, Sydney Bishop, Albert Dennis, and George Stopani-Thomson, left their evacuated wives and a total of three evacuated children in Australia. A bomb also hit Bungalow A where Leilah Wood, a Eurasian evacuee who had returned from the Philippines, lived; she was lucky to survive. Her mother Emily recounts her discovery that the bomb had been designed to detonate upon contact with water: ‘How freakish then that the next bomb would also crash through the roof of our bungalow and find its way straight into the bathroom located next to our room. Even more unbelievable that it should find its mark straight into the bathtub, which we kept full of water. The bomb exploded on impact. The bath was positioned against our adjoining wall, and the blast blew straight through the brickwork, showering debris everywhere… I was stunned and disorientated, and apart from a high-pitched ringing in my ears, I could not hear anything. I was still clinging tightly to Leilah, but her body was limp. I looked up at her face and her eyes were open, but she looked like the dead people I had seen. I was crying hysterically and looked across at Grannie, who was
covered in blood.’ POWs continued to die that year too. William Organ in Japan, for example, and Walter Lumby in Hong Kong (both of the HKDDC, and dying of disease and malnutrition); each left an evacuee wife and child.

But evacuees weren’t safe either. In June 1945 the newspapers carried an invitation to the funeral of evacuee Ethel Margaret Gowland: ‘to leave T. J. Andrews’ Funeral Chapel, 42 Walker Street, North Sydney, This Day at 3.15 p.m. for the Crematorium, Northern Suburbs. T. J. Andrews, A.F.D.A.’ Janis Gowland, whose father was one of the many men killed in Hong Kong in 1941 who had no known grave, had been put into an orphanage with her brother Clive at the end of 1941 when their mother was too ill to look after them. Clive had died of malignant diphtheria the following year. Finally now, on 10 June 1945 at the age of seven, she had become an orphan and was suddenly alone. By coincidence Ethel’s cousin Raymond Wilson was serving on HMS Indefatigable, and when the carrier docked in Sydney a few days earlier he discovered by chance that she was dying from TB in North Shore Hospital. He was with her when she passed away.

The war had ended early for the internees in the Philippines. Patricia Briggs had been transferred from Camp John Hay to the larger Santo Tomas internment camp towards the end of the conflict. ‘It was a very different camp from the one we had just left. People were housed in the main university building and we started off there sleeping in a room with about 30 others… On the night of February 3rd 1945 American troops arrived at Santo Tomas and we were finally free once more… three days after liberation the battle of Manila began.’ Jeannette Bruce and family, who had evacuated from Shanghai and had also been interned in Santo Tomas

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2 Prisoners of the East, Corbin, page 263.
3 Sydney Morning Herald, 12 June 1945.
were brought to safety in Australia on the American troop transport *David C Shanks*. They docked in Townsville, Queensland and were taken by train through Brisbane and Sydney, ending up at Lithgow in the Blue Mountains. The family stayed there in a refugee camp run by the Red Cross until the war ended. Bruce Patey recuperated there too. Rosemary Read: ‘[He] came up to us in the Blue Mountains for a spell. He was half the man we knew and after the first shock we tried to make him laugh and fatten him up a little before they let him go on to Brisbane to join his family. He had not been officially released from hospital but was allowed to come to us as we were close relatives in the area. Some of them did not survive long after release, my uncle did not.’

James Templer was liberated from Los Banos and was taken to Bilibid prison then, via Los Angeles, to Halifax from where he travelled to Liverpool and London. Many Philippine internees would be home months earlier than those in Hong Kong.

At the beginning of May, Germany surrendered and the European war came to an end. It was hard for the evacuee families – or others with friends and relatives either interned by the Japanese or fighting them - to celebrate with the masses. However, the Allied High Command could now focus entirely on the grim task of planning the invasion of the Japanese home islands.

It is easily forgotten now, but until 15 July 1945 not only did just a minute fraction of the Allied High Command know about the new nuclear bombs, but they also had no certainty that they would work. As Gadget sparked an incandescent fireball over the New Mexico sands that day, the uncertainty concerning their efficacy ended – but those prosecuting the war in the Pacific continued building up the men and resources for the final attack on the Japanese home islands. Even for

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5 Email from Rosemary Read to author, 18 March 2014. Rosemary was Bruce’s niece.
the cognoscenti, proof of the bomb’s power was no guarantee that its use would precipitate surrender.⁶

On 6 August, at 08.15, Little Boy – a Uranium bomb, a fundamentally different design to Gadget – turned a few grams of that metal to pure energy over Hiroshima. Before the Japanese could collectively react, Fat Man – Plutonium, identical to Gadget – was dropped on Nagasaki; just days later, Japan surrendered. With unbelievable efficiency, the sprawling, dangerous American invasion force massing off the Japanese coast was instantly re-tasked to a rescue mission: the Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees (RAPWI). Armed to the teeth, men whose only experience of war to date had been kill or be killed, found themselves compassionately assisting ex-POWs in their first shaky steps to freedom.

American recovery teams in Japan, charged now with liberating Allied POWs or their remains, also found documentation of deaths. The list of British Osaka POW Camp Group fatalities, though dominated by next of kin in the UK (mainly parents), had a smattering of wives in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, South Africa, and then a long list of forty evacuee wives in Australia.⁷

But a higher priority was given to the living. At the Ikuno Camp, for example, on 2 September 1945 Lieutenant Alexander Hilton was recovered, and he immediately requested ‘permission to send personal cable to ascertain whether wife still resident in Australia. Wife evacuated from Hong Kong to Australia. Last known address c/o Bank of New South Wales, George Street, Sydney, N.S.W.,

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⁶ Identical to the Nagasaki bomb, Gadget was the plutonium implosion device tested in New Mexico on that date.
⁷ The full list is reproduced in Appendix One.
Australia. Letter received dated March 1945.\textsuperscript{9} Finally it was time to facilitate the reuniting of families, a challenge never considered in the original evacuation plan, and – although a small part of a far bigger issue with displaced people who numbered in the millions globally – one made harder by the sheer geographical scale involved.

### 6.1 Broken Marriages, Broken Homes

A husband and wife surviving to be reunited was no guarantee that their marriage would live on. Having been apart, typically, from July 1940 until October 1945 – or later – couples discovered that five years of separation could be fatal to earlier relationships. And by no means was this confined to wives who had found themselves in new relationships in Australia; Stanley Internment Camp in Hong Kong had been a mixed-sex camp, and many new liaisons flourished there. While Prisoners of War had had little opportunity to fraternise with the opposite sex (and often little inclination, due to dietary deficiencies), many of their marriages would suffer too.

Nikki Veriga, of internee Vitaly Veriga and his evacuated wife Antonia: ‘Why did they split up? Good question. Our understanding is that Dad (Vitaly) met Mum (Aileen Thirlwell) while in camp and from that relationship my eldest sister (Lydia) was born in camp. I can’t even be sure that they were actually divorced!’\textsuperscript{9}

Mark Weedon noted that his parents were both very different people after the war: ‘Liz [couldn’t] tolerate Martin carrying the camp commandant’s samurai

\textsuperscript{8} Personal requests, Ikuno Sub-Camp, Osaka POW Camps, 2 September 1945. RG407 Box 167, NARA, courtesy of the late Roger Mansell.

\textsuperscript{9} Email from Nikki Veriga to author, 21 January 2012.
sword about, he clinging to his possession, for example. Both had had 1941 wartime affairs.’

Even early in the POW years, Mark’s father (Martin, of the first Battalion the Middlesex Regiment) himself had noted in his diary: ‘Two years since E. and Mark left H.K. Realise now that she should never have come up to H.K. Both of us in a very highly-strung state and not ourselves at all. Can see things more clearly now. A POW’s life leaves one with plenty of time for reflection!’

In the end, Elizabeth would move back to Australia with her new ex-POW husband, Anthony Hewitt, the Adjutant of Martin’s regiment, and Martin would marry Jean, a friend of Elizabeth who had served with her in the Wrens.

Policeman Walter Thompson (who escaped from Stanley soon after internment) had evacuated his pregnant wife Norah and two children, a third being born on the ship to Australia. Thompson stayed in China, working with British forces there. A Eurasian lady, Renee Fincher, also escaped from Hong Kong with her child in 1942 (her husband Ernest having been killed in the Lyemun massacre of 5 Battery HKVDC) and became Thompson’s secretary in Kweilin. The two of them had a son, Colin, and daughter, Philippa. After the war, Renee and the children would move to Australia, while Norah and her three children rejoined Thompson in Hong Kong. Eventually, though, Thompson took that family to the UK, and came back to Hong Kong alone. There he would live with Renee again from 1969 until her death in 1980.

Susan Anslow’s internee father Frank joined the family in Australia soon after the end of the war: ‘I knew nothing about it at the time, but apparently

10 Email from Mark Weedon to author, 4 May 2004.
11 Guest Of An Emperor, Weedon, page 66 (entry for 8 October 1943).
12 Email from Sue Barclay to author, 26 May 2014. A fourth child Janet, was born of Walter and Nora in 1949.
Mummy told him immediately that she wanted a divorce on returning to Hong Kong. By this time she was thoroughly accustomed to being independent, so she made a bargain with him. She would not ask for any alimony or child care and in return he would give up all rights to me. I’ve heard it was a terrible blow to him, but he agreed to everything in the conviction that that would be the best solution for me. I do remember that visit of his mainly because I’d never seen anyone before who was so terribly thin – I told him that his face was exactly like the letter “V”!

Barbara Redwood did not know Frank Anslow pre-war. She had first met him in Stanley when he used to visit his father who, like her, worked in the camp’s hospital office. After visiting his family in Australia: ‘Frank returned to Hong Kong on his own. He was already back in Hong Kong when I [returned from UK leave] in June 1946. Because of the lack of Govt. flats through war damage etc., the Govt. took over the French Mission, Battery Path, as a hostel, women on the top floor, men on the middle floor, and dining room and lounge on the ground floor. It was in this communal life in the French Mission that Frank and I really got to know each other... The Govt. allowed ex-internees to go on Long Leave after a shorter tour of service after the war. In December 1947 Frank went to Australia where his parents had retired. He proposed to me by cable soon after he arrived; I joined him (by ship) in March 1948 when we were married.’

Tony Bushell: ‘By war’s end [my mother] was in a serious relationship with an Australian sergeant, and was I think quite surprised that my father had survived

### Notes

13. Susan Anslow's memoirs.
14. Email from Barbara Redwood to author, 30 May 2012. Barbara added: ‘About 40 years later, Susan and family knocked on our door in Sussex where we’d retired, and we’ve been in contact ever since. It must have been such a shock in 1940 for the evacuees to find themselves in Australia, a strange country, without the luxuries and the amahs and Hong Kong life, especially mothers with young children. Although husbands in HK made financial allowances, money must have been very short for the wives and children; and when the Japs attacked and internment followed, the wives must have been haunted by the thought that they might never seen their men again.’
internment and was on the way to Australia to join us. The reunion was far from joyous. Things were strained right from the start and in one of those inevitable coincidences she was unwell soon after and was in hospital for routine checks when a letter came from the sergeant proposing marriage. Of course my father opened it and replied! Even so he was still prepared to make a go of the marriage. My mother was not. There was a lot of anger between them and while she was determined to stay in Australia he had no choice but to go on to England with other repatriated soldiers and their families. But he was determined not to sacrifice all his dreams of family life and so they came to an agreement that I would return with him and my sister would stay with my mother. It all seems very strange now.15

Evacuee Rosina Robertson and her interned husband John (an X-ray technician in Hong Kong), would divorce in 1947 but Rosina remarried the same year, staying in Australia with her two older daughters.16

Jeannette Canning’s father, James Robert Canning, had been left behind in Shanghai where the Japanese arrested him as a suspected spy (because of friends he had who were also suspects). He was taken to Bridge House where he was tortured to the point of near death then transferred to Lunghwa POW camp where he remained so ill that he was moved to the Columbia Country Club for the balance of the war. ‘During this time he tried to contact my mother and he did not know that we had not reached Australia. In the camp he became attached to a woman and before the war ended they had a son in the camp. When he was able to contact

15 Email from Tony Bushell to author, 31 October 2011.
16 The younger daughter, Isobel, visited her estranged father in Hong Kong in 1949, met Leonard Sykes, an ex-HKVDC POW who worked with the Kowloon Canton Railway, and married him. Email from Janet Sykes to author, 5 March 2012.
my mother just after the war he asked for a divorce so that he could marry the woman who had his son. They divorced and I have never seen or heard from him since. In the refugee hostel in Lithgow my mother developed a loving relationship with a gentleman who became my stepfather who had been in Stanley Camp in Hong Kong. We all returned to Hong Kong where my stepfather was in the police force... they married soon after we reached Hong Kong. We returned to Australia when Dad retired.'

Peter MacMillan, and his wife (who, like Jeannette Canning, had been interned in the Philippines during the conflict) were divorced after the war. Yet Christopher and Alice Briggs, who had both had affairs whilst separated during the war years, stayed together and moved back to Australia. As Alice wrote on meeting Christopher again for the first time after VJ Day: ‘A great loneliness and the sadness of it all. We had to start all over again, almost strangers – three years and eight months is a long time – with all the unknown difficulties that lay ahead, not being able to start where we left off, war and internment saw to that, but both wanting to succeed, which was our salvation in the end.’

Jan Gowland, whose parents and brother had all died during the conflict: ‘I returned to the UK alone, but under the supervision of a Chinese woman and her son until I was picked up in Liverpool by a close friend of my late mother... I remember lots of things from the orphanage time, and just a few things from the time I was with my mother before she had to put us [into the Burnside Homes]. She, my mother left a kind of a diary, a précis of her life which she wrote in hospital, (I think, for me) when she knew she was dying. She was very artistic,

\[17\] Email from Jeanette Canning to author, 23 October 2008.
\[18\] Escape from Hong Kong, Luard, page 258.
\[19\] From Peking to Perth, Briggs, A., page 142.
loved drawing, playing the piano etc. and the précis obviously makes very sad reading.  

Of course the biggest single impact on families was the loss of so many of the men, such as Cuthbert Gowland, who they had left behind in Hong Kong. By VJ Day, more than 200 of the husbands and fathers who had waved their wives and children off from Kowloon on 1 July and 5 July 1940 were dead. More than 300 children had become fatherless. While these numbers are small compared to Australia’s losses in Singapore, the Western Desert, Bomber Command, and other theatres, there was a difference. On other battlefields it was sons who were lost – with an average age of perhaps twenty - too young, in the majority of cases, to have started their own families; those few married men on the front line were generally senior NCOs or officers. In Hong Kong, which being an isolated garrison included elements of every military function from a Pay Office to the Army Dental Corps, a much higher percentage of senior men with wives and families of their own were captured. And the civilians (the majority of whom had served with the HKVDC, the HKDDC, or the HKRNVR) were generally senior government employees or businessmen. The percentage of those who died who were married with families was uncommonly high.

Colin Gordon: ‘Our mother could never talk about Vyner without bursting into tears. In the end we just stopped asking questions. It seemed so hard for her and she could obviously never forget him or get over it. She kept the letters tucked away and even though I stumbled upon them one day, she wouldn’t talk about them and I never saw them again until she died. She left written instructions that all of the letters, her photos of Vyner and her wedding ring should be cremated

20 Email from Jan Gowland to author, 24 April 2009.
with her. I had a hard time dealing with that and had to countermand her last wishes - Sorry Mum! After all they were part of my life too and I needed them to find some connection to [my father].

Some never recovered. After internee John Osborne’s death in Stanley Internment Camp his evacuated wife and one daughter were institutionalised, with the Hong Kong Government paying for their care in a Brisbane mental hospital until at least 1960.

6.2 Leaving Australia

On arrival in Australia in August 1940, the average evacuee wanted nothing more than to leave immediately. Although a large percentage would leave over the following five years, many would choose to return.

The main relocation to the United Kingdom occurred shortly before the end of the war, though a number of families (particularly those of servicemen) had returned earlier. In the first quarter of 1945 as ships bringing reinforcements for the expected final push against the Japanese home islands arrived in Australia, there was space available on the return journeys. The British Government announced that they would provide evacuees in Australia (who had homes and family connections in the United Kingdom) with free passage to the UK, but commercial firms were not relieved of any liability to pay passages in accordance with their employees’ conditions of service. A committee comprising representatives of shipping companies and the Malayan and Hong Kong Governments drew up lists of evacuees for repatriation to Britain, calculating

21 Email from Colin Gordon to author, 10 February 2012.
priorities according to the length of time since application, close relatives held as POWs, the number of children, and various other domestic factors.\textsuperscript{22}

On 22 January 1945 many of the evacuee families received telegrams offering free passage on a ship leaving Sydney for England on 5 February. Michael Stewart: 'It was very short notice, and the implication was that if we did not take up this offer there would not be another such. My Mother felt she had to accept it despite the problems of giving up her job, taking me away from school, packing and moving to Sydney.'\textsuperscript{23} The ship, the \textit{Athlone Castle} - which had been partly converted to a troop-ship with dormitories but still had some smaller cabins (presumably intended for officers) - actually sailed from Sydney a day late on 6 February. Helen, Ian, and William D’All were also aboard, as was Colin Gordon: ‘I can remember the excitement of the regular torpedo drills that all mothers and children were a part of, since U Boats were still active at that time... There were two families of mothers and two boys each sharing a double cabin. It was a fun trip for the kids but must have been quite tense for the mothers.’\textsuperscript{24} On 10 February the vessel arrived at Wellington, New Zealand where the children were given a ‘Prime Minister’s Picnic’ five days later. Leaving Wellington on 18 February it passed through the Panama Canal on 7 March. They crossed the Atlantic in a convoy, but the ship was later detached from the other vessels to pick up stranded American sailors on the Azores. With an escorting destroyer they then dashed to Liverpool, arriving on about 26 March 1945. It was a risk; the war in Europe was not over.

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 7 February 1945.
\textsuperscript{23} Email from Michael Stewart to author, 1 September 2010.
\textsuperscript{24} Email from Colin Gordon to author, 16 January 2012. Other details from an email from Helen D’All to author, 23 January 2012. Bill had been born in Hong Kong in 1934 (he died in 2002) and Ian was born in Sydney, Australia in 1940.
(the last German V2 rocket fell on London the day after they arrived), U Boats were still active in the Atlantic, and rationing of food and clothes was at its height.

There were sufficient returnees by April 1945 for the Hong Kong Fellowship newsletter of that date to carry the administrative message that evacuated wives and widows of regular soldiers on the authorised married establishment who had since returned to UK, had been instructed by the War Office to submit claims for property lost as a result of compulsory evacuation. It added: ‘We have been asked whether we advise the return to England of those wives who still remain in Australia. We are informed by the Colonial Office that it is likely that it will only be possible to bring repatriated prisoners of war and internees to this country, owing to the amount of shipping available, and we consider, therefore, that any opportunity for returning home should be taken. It is also the agreed medical opinion that the captives will recover their health better in the familiar surroundings of their own country.’25 After hostilities ceased, of course, there would be many more opportunities to leave Australia.

March sailings continued with the Dominion Monarch taking the Dewar family, the Moss family, and many other Hong Kong evacuees aboard, and following very much the same route: Sydney, Melbourne, Wellington, before joining a 45 ship convoy across the Pacific to the Panama Canal, continuing up to New York and then arriving, after many days off the Azores, at Liverpool on the night of 7 May 1945. That evening the news on the radio was interrupted by an announcement that the following day would be a public holiday: VE Day.

The *Stirling Castle* was next. Druscilla Wilson was on board, as was Ron Brooks who noted: ‘I assume that the army offered [my mother] free passage back to Britain and that it was an offer she dare not refuse in case it was not made again.’

They sailed from Sydney on 5 March 1945, docking in Wellington for several days while the ship was loaded with meat, butter and cheese for England. Again the children were taken in trucks up the Hutt Valley to a picnic in a National Park. Arriving at Panama on 30 March, they sailed to Bermuda and waited to join up with a convoy for the journey across the Atlantic. Generally the mothers shared cabins while the children slept in dormitories of up to thirty beds. However, one mother who shared a cabin with her son died and was buried at sea; a soldier volunteered to share the cabin with the boy who was now on his own. The broadcast stating the end of the war was put out over the ships Tannoy and they docked in Liverpool on 11 May 1945.

The Australian newspapers noted the departures: ‘Remember when they came here about three years ago to an unknown land? Most came from the Far East. Remember how they battled with unknown domestic problems here in Australia, and how they were soon helping so much in our war effort! Many of these women have become proud and efficient cooks since their stay in Australia, and they do appreciate the kindness of the Australian people, and many of them are sad at having to leave our land: These evacuee women have British courage and cheerfulness. Now they are facing the awful journey back with their children to wait for their husbands... We Australians wish them all the best and all the future happiness they deserve.’

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26 From an account held by her daughter-in-law, Betty Wilson.
Following VE Day, the returns increased. In May 1945 the Moreton Bay sailed with the Guard family, Mrs Kaufmann and her three daughters Peggy, Sadie, and Doreen, the Bromleys, and a large number of other 1940 evacuees. But the romantic nature of a sea voyage had the traditional effect. Brian Bromley recalled: ‘Whilst on board, Peggy had a romance with a soldier on his way home. He was a Military Policeman. When he was demobbed he joined the Constabulary, he and Peggy married. Sadie also married about the same time and within a couple of years or so she died tragically’.  

Annie Organ, widowed by the war and returning with her daughter Thelma on the Rimutaka, had a similar experience. They sailed from Melbourne in November and arrived in Liverpool on New Year’s Eve 1945. During the voyage she came to know fellow passenger Archie Thomson, an ex-internee from Stanley. They married and soon travelled back to Hong Kong.

The Stirling Castle made another trip departing Sydney on 29 July sailing via Freemantle and Madras and docking in Liverpool on 10 September 1945. Amongst those on board and travelling together were the wives and seven children of three Royal Artillery men lost on the Lisbon Maru: Frank Rawlings, Harry Gould, and Sid Ford.

Many of the early returnees went to London for VE Day, or, more significantly, VJ Day. Brian Bromley was in London for the latter: ‘We were up against the Palace fence by the time the whole Royal Family and Winnie came out to wave and acknowledge the crowd’s enthusiasm. That’s one event I’ll never forget. The other was when Dad finally came home to us.’  

28 Email from Brian Bromley to author, 4 December 2007. In fact Sadie took her own life. The girls also had an older brother, Fred, already in the army, who became a POW in Germany (email from Sue Leagas to author, 12 February 2013).
29 Email from Brian Bromley to author, 2 November 2005.
(ex-POW Ernest Bromley, HKDDC) noted, after landing at Southampton on the morning of 30 October 1945 and taking a variety of trains to get to Sittingbourne: ‘On arriving at Sittingbourne I met Lil and Doll also Reg Edgar, who had his car, ready to run us home to Sheerness. We stopped at the Ferry Inn and had a few whiskies to warm us up. We eventually arrived at the British Queen, Minster, my mother’s public house, there I met all the family. My sons didn’t recognise me. They hadn’t seen me for five years. The place was all decorated up and flags out with “Welcome Home Ern”. We had quite a few drinks together and a good old chinwag.’

This period was the start of family reunions for the evacuees who had returned to Britain. Admiral Harcourt and the British fleet had reached Hong Kong on 30 August 1945 and immediately began providing assistance to the POWs and Internees (as American forces were doing in parallel in Japan itself) before processing them for repatriation. Those recovered from Japan generally returned to the UK via a sea voyage to the west coast of North America, a train to the east, and then a ship again to England. Men who were particularly unwell often had periods of recuperation in Australia or New Zealand before setting out on the long journey home. However, many POWs and internees liberated in Hong Kong were shipped straight back to the UK; others – as we will see – went to Australia.

But some of the sicker POWs and internees, and those who had been badly wounded and never fully recovered, returned on hospital ships. Evan Stewart, the commander of 3 Company HKVDC, was one. He returned via Australia aboard Oxfordshire, suffering from the after effects of severe malnutrition and of

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30 From Ernest Bromley’s diary. At this point in the text where he wrote ‘My sons didn’t recognise me ’ his sons had pencilled in: ‘Oh yes we did!!’
improperly treated wounds from the fighting. He would spend months in Stoke Manderville Orthopaedic hospital near Oxford being treated for those injuries, but never recovered completely. However, eventually he and his wife would return to Hong Kong.

Repatriations of evacuees continued over the New Year and into 1946. Joan Franklin and family were repatriated to the UK in early 1946, on the 28,000 ton Dominion Monarch, a troop ship that also picked up approximately 3,000 troops in Bombay on the way.  

Joan, with her mother and sister shared a cabin with five ladies while her brother was in a big dormitory of men. By this time large numbers of POWs and Internees had arrived from Hong Kong for recuperation in Australia, and many were also on board including Dr John and Mrs Dora Lanchester, who had been interned in Stanley, Dr George and Mrs Shaw and their children Yvonne and Ronald (Dr Shaw had been interned in Stanley and Mrs Shaw and her children had spent the war years in Perth), and Bill Rowe of the HKVDC who had been a POW in Japan. Joan Franklin: 'When we arrived in England, we were taken at first to a sort of refuge for displaced persons in the crypt of a bombed out church in Binney Street, not far from Baker Street. Aged 10, I was very shocked at the bombed and flattened buildings all around.'

This was a common reaction. Returning from Australia where they had been insulated from the direct effects of war by its plentiful food supplies, generally warm weather, and undamaged infrastructure, to a grey, austere, rationing-riddled, bomb- scarred Britain was certainly a shock. In many cases this would lead directly to the new arrivals packing their bags and turning around:

31 It was common for these vessels to make multiple voyages on the same routes.
32 Email from Joan Franklin to author, 16 September 2010.
voluntarily heading back to the land they had so resented being forcibly sent to just a few years earlier. But once at home in Great Britain, some evacuees never seriously considered going back to their wartime sanctuary.

Timothy Holmes was one of several whose family ties in the ‘old country’ were too strong to think of leaving again: ‘When we got back to the UK my mother had two sisters and her mother living here. She also had a house so I don’t think there was any thought of going back to Australia where we had spent some time after leaving Hong Kong. My Uncle and aunt went back to HK but my mother never even visited the colony again.’

Tony Bushell’s family had split, half in Australia and half in the UK. He returned with his father, leaving his sister and mother behind. Unsurprisingly, before his father died in 1962 he had never considered emigrating to Australia: ‘By then I was well into an Army career which lasted until 1976, and by then I had teenage children to launch into their own careers. My sister asked me if I ever missed my mother and sadly I had to reply that since I had hardly ever really known her I never missed her. I belonged to a generation which just got on with life and I am sure the war contributed to that. I was however very glad to be reunited with her.’

Richard Neve’s mother and step-father (his biological father had died of wounds) discussed staying in Australia, but decided to return permanently to the UK so that the children could have a conventional English education: ‘Probably it was snobbery as much as anything else as I was reprimanded if I ever spoke with an Aussie accent! I know that many of the Brits who arrived in Sydney from all

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33 Email from Timothy Holmes to author, 7 May 2012.
34 Email from Tony Bushell to author, 16 July 2012.
over the Far East stayed for good. Many of them went to Cranbrook School because it had an English headmaster and was said to be run like an English Public School... When I arrived at Wellington College I found it very different. I was very happy there; ending up as head of my house and a College prefect.’

In some relatively rare cases, returning to Australia was rejected outright. Robbie Poulter: ‘I can recall my mother saying that she would NOT go back to Australia under any circumstances. I do not know what the reasons were but she was quite adamant. I never considered it for myself or family.’

Some considered returning to Australia, but for one reason or another it just did not work out. Emily Brooks, whose husband had simply disappeared when the Lisbon Maru sank, went back to the UK as that was where she thought he would search for his family had he survived (like many families whose husband and father had no known grave, they were never quite sure). Her two children, Ron and Geoff, also stayed in the UK but they harboured thoughts of returning to Australia. Ron Brooks: ‘The Australian government was looking for engineers to work on the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric project, with good incentives. I applied and was offered a job. However, I failed the medical because of a ‘shadow’ on my lung, which proved to be a warning. My Mother had died of tuberculosis in 1949. In 1961 I was admitted to a sanatorium for three months, where with the aid of streptomycin, the TB was eradicated. By then I had just started work that I liked with John Laing Research and Development... Margaret and I had two young children and were buying a house in Kimpton. We were looking for security, a safe job and put thoughts of Australia to the back of our mind. We visited Australia for a

35 Email from Richard Neve to author, 7 May 2012.
36 Email from Robbie Poulter to author, 16 May 2012.
few weeks in 1995 and I was able to return to St Kilda where my Mother, Geoff and I had lived from about the end of 1940 to the beginning of 1945.\textsuperscript{37} Geoff never returned to Australia.

Jan Gowland, who had arrived back in the UK orphaned, and was brought up by foster parents in Birmingham: ‘When my husband Dave and I were newly married, I did try to persuade Dave to the idea of emigrating to Oz. Circumstances prevented it really. He had a strong sense of loyalty to his parents, especially as his mother wasn’t that healthy (though she lived to be over 80yrs!) My adopted parents rarely talked about my time in Oz and though I would have loved to have got in touch with people who I had been living with, there was no IT and no one I could get in touch with to ask questions and talk things over with and I did feel very homesick for years. After that, we were kept busy rearing our three daughters. We did intend to spend a week in Sydney back in 2001 visiting the homes and the crematorium where my Mother and brother are but picked up a virus and had a mouthful of ulcers and hacking cough! Sydney [is] an unlucky place for me it seems.’\textsuperscript{38}

But other evacuees still in Australia had no intention of ‘returning’ to the UK even temporarily because they considered Hong Kong their permanent home. But Hong Kong had suffered badly during the war years. As much as these families wished to go back, a city that had seen its population drop from 1,600,000 to 500,000 during four years of occupation, destruction, and starvation, simply was not ready for them. While the liberating forces restored order and essential services, a great deal of work would be needed before returns would be

\textsuperscript{37} Email from Ron Brooks to author, 4 May 2012.
\textsuperscript{38} Email from Jan Gowland to author, 16 May 2012.
'European type' housing in Hong Kong and Kowloon had suffered badly during the Japanese occupation, chiefly due to extensive looting. Almost every removable item, including doors, wooden floors, pipes, glass, and fittings had been taken. Official estimates placed the percentage destroyed or rendered uninhabitable at around 70% of those that had been available for occupation in 1941, but virtually all the remainder were damaged to some degree. Over 175,000 Chinese tenements were in a similar wrecked state. Even when there was little structural damage, many looted houses had been reduced to empty shells exposed to the weather. The Hong Kong government complained that the global shortage of timber and building materials and a local shortage of skilled labour had combined to seriously handicap attempts at repair, and estimated it was probable that very few European style houses could be rendered inhabitable ‘within the next six months’.40

A handful of internees and POWs had stayed on in Hong Kong after liberation to help restore order, and some who had left Hong Kong for recuperation returned either from Australia or the UK within months. Generally these were essential personnel who were specifically invited, such as Maunie Bones’s father who had received a letter as early as September 1945 advising that he would receive instructions from Hong Kong about his return. On 13 October 1945 an urgent telegram arrived and within a month he was back in the Colony to

39 Aside from the original fighting and damage during occupation, there was also heavy American bombing of certain residential areas towards the end of the war. In February 2014 as I was finalising this thesis, an American 1,000 pound bomb was uncovered at a construction site in Happy Valley.
40 Letter from Governor Hong Kong to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 4 June 1946. HKPRO 41-1-1189.
help get the wharves up and running.\textsuperscript{41} However, the major Hong Kong
government-sponsored shipment of returnees did not take place until almost a
year after the Japanese capitulation. This was, in fact, the first and only centrally
organised governmental initiative concerning the evacuees since the evacuation
itself.

It occurred in August 1946 when the Government brought a large number
of the 1940 Hong Kong evacuee families in Australia back to Hong Kong on the
\textit{Duntroon}. In the majority of cases, these consisted of the evacuees plus an ex-
Internee or ex-POW husband who had earlier been sent to join them in Australia
for a few months to recover their health (such as Roy Rosen of the Prisons
Department who travelled with his ex-evacuee wife Constance). Delayed by a
strike by the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union, the \textit{Duntroon} finally
sailed from Number 10 Walsh Bay, Sydney, with some 400 evacuees aboard, on
Saturday 20 July 1946.

These evacuees were the hardcore of multi-generational Hong Kong
families who considered the Colony home. Susan Anslow was one of those on
board: ‘The ship was dreadfully overcrowded (though not as bad as the evacuation
ships had been) and we shared a single cabin with another woman. We had to eat
in relays – the children first and then I would be locked into the cabin with 3 or 4
smaller children with instructions to look after them and keep them amused while
the adults had lunch or dinner… During the voyage one of the children on board
died (not one that I knew). Everyone attended the funeral service which was read
by the captain and at the end of the service I will never forget seeing that tiny body,

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{41} After he passed away his daughter discovered diaries he had kept during his voyage out and
back, from which these details are taken.
wrapped in a sheet, being lowered over the side into the sea. Probably to cheer everyone up after that, the sailors made quite a ceremony of crossing the equator.’

Desmond Inglis recalled that the ship suffered quite severe engine problems, necessitating stops for repairs at a number of ports along the way: ‘[Finschhafen] was obviously a military built supply port with a very substantial dock. We spent nearly a week there and the army laid on the jeeps to take the passengers sight seeing which turned out to be an eye opener of what happens (when a war ends) to most of the equipment. MTBs towed out to sea and set on fire as were the aircraft sitting in neat rows on the runways. A large hospital with all the beds neatly made and operating theatres with equipment all in place, left for the jungle to take over. A trip to the beach where the troops had landed and not a tree standing for some two miles, something a young teenager is not likely to forget. Morotai Island, a much larger base at the Western tip of West PNG where the spare parts caught up with the ship so a much shorter stay. My most vivid memory - the execution ground where the war criminals were shot.’

As the ship pulled into Hong Kong’s harbour, some returnees had no idea of the damage that the Colony had suffered in three years and eight months of occupation and were horrified at the state of the city – and of the accommodation that they had previously occupied. Journalist Peter Russo met the ship: ‘Passengers had mixed impressions of Australia. Some spoke of Australians’ “unbearable manners” and “extreme antagonism to anything or anybody foreign.” They felt they were treated as foreigners in Australia, and were glad to be out of the place. Others

42 Susan Anslow’s memoires. I have so far failed to identify the child.
43 Email from Desmond Inglis to author, 14 November 2011. The beach referred to was Scarlet Beach to the north of the town.
were almost violently in favour. One group maintained that in spite of strikes and certain Australian idiosyncrasies, Australia was the finest country in the world, and they intended to return as soon as they had recouped their fortunes in Hong Kong.’ He added presciently: ‘The majority had an air of rather pathetic bravado, refusing staunchly to accept the blood red proofs about them that the day of the Taipan had ended, and that the future of Hong Kong had become little more than an experiment with time.’

Barbara Redwood: ‘Goodness knows where they were all accommodated, despite the speed with which damaged flats etc. were being repaired. The Peninsula Hotel charged $8 a day but you had to pay for your meals. Most male internees returned to Hong Kong with their families because their jobs were there, and you couldn't compare life in UK with the climate, beaches, servants and relaxed living that made even immediate post-war Hong Kong so attractive. Many families had been living with relatives in UK but couldn’t expect to stay there indefinitely; relocating in UK and finding another job didn’t appeal.’

The *Duntroon* arrivals certainly strained the Colony’s available accommodation. Each passenger was given a disembarkation card stating where he or she would be lodged and how they would be taken there. Twenty-eight of these passengers, including Susan Anslow and her mother, were placed in the Repulse Bay Hotel. It was a popular location with the beach and beautiful gardens for the children to play in, though families often had to share rooms. Maunie Bones was luckier. She was yet another evacuee on board, although her grandmother,

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44 *The Argus*, 12 August 1946.
45 Email from Barbara Redwood to David Bellis, 27 August 2012. 284 Jewish refugees – mainly enemy aliens, had come down from Shanghai to Hong Kong on the *SS General Gordon* to take passage to Australia on the *Duntroon*'s return trip. Unfortunately the *Duntroon* was requisitioned for troop movements. HKPRO 41-1-1189.
aunt and cousin remained in Sydney and never returned to Shanghai. When her father greeted Maunie and her mother on arrival they moved straight back into their old house, 249 Prince Edward Road, as it had not been damaged. It had been used by the Japanese for the length of the occupation, and thus still had its wooden floorboards, window frames, and other fittings.\textsuperscript{46}

A month after the \textit{Duntroon} arrived, on 19 September 1946, the Central British School reopened with just 79 students (39 girls and 40 boys) many of whom were ex-evacuees.\textsuperscript{47}

In total, those who returned on the \textit{Duntroon} comprised:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
& Men & Women & Children \\
\hline
Hong Kong Government & & & \\
Senior Officials & 3 & 5 & 1 \\
Hong Kong Government & & & \\
Subordinates & 38 & 43 & 34 \\
Non-Government & 40 & 126 & 63 \\
\hline
Shanghai and China & 18 & 55 & 25 \\
Total & 99 & 229 & 123 \textsuperscript{48} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

But not all the established Hong Kong families came back on that vessel.

Ann Vernall’s father returned in 1946 followed by Ann and her mother in early

\textsuperscript{46} Email from Maunie Bones to author, 27 October 2008. Unfortunately their furniture and trunks of belonging that had been put into godowns prior to the war had all been looted. Today their house is the site of yet another high-rise block.

\textsuperscript{47} In 1948 the school’s name was changed to King George V, by which it is still known. By then there were 344 students: 166 girls and 178 boys in 13 classes.

\textsuperscript{48} Letter to P.C. Barry, Hong Kong & Shanghai Hotels, Ltd., 24 July 1946. HKPRO 41-1-1189.
1947 (in a Sunderland Flying Boat, a journey of five days). Andrin Dewar and family returned to Hong Kong on the SS Otranto in October 1946. June Winterton’s family returned the same year on the SS Eastern, where her father – who was in the Prison Service, and had lost a hand in the fighting opposite the police station in Stanley in 1941 - joined Government Stores. Like many others, they stayed at the Peninsular Hotel until alternative accommodation became available.

But by the end of 1946, the majority of those who planned to return to Hong Kong had done so, though many of these would later relocate to Australia. But the housing situation remained so dire that even as late as October of that year the Accountant General, H.R. Hirst, noted: ‘Our present policy is to discourage people from returning when possible and we should therefore ask the High Commissioner to be as generous as possible in deferring passages and not to abide rigidly by the final date of December 31st.’

6.3 Australia as a Permanent Home

On 2 April 1947 when it was clear that this great movement of people could be considered all but over, T.G. Stokes sketched out on behalf of the Hong Kong Government a list of the Australian authorities that had rendered the most help from the earliest days of the evacuation to the present – though he noted that his personal experience ended when he left Australia at the end of 1944. Firstly he named the Department of Social Services, particularly the sub-departments in the

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49 Email from Ann Vernall to author, 14 June 2009. Her father died at the age of 55 in 1956 of cancer.
50 Email from June Winterton to author, 24 April 2011.
51 Note from Hirst to High Commissioner, 12 October 1946. HKPRO 41-2-18.
six States of the Commonwealth, who upon his instructions had executed the payment of family remittances and maintenance and Volunteer allowances to evacuees. This had involved regular fortnightly and monthly payments to all evacuees, and preparing accurate accounts and returns each month. Secondly he mentioned the Department of the Treasury for its close co-operation in providing the funds to meet these commitments, and for patiently awaiting reimbursement. Further he noted that the Prime Minister’s Department, the Department of External Affairs, and the Department of Internal Affairs, were also particularly helpful. Lastly he listed the non-governmental and voluntary organisations that had helped most, namely: Far East Welfare Auxiliary (New South Wales), New Settlers League (Brisbane), Victorian Auxiliary (Melbourne), and Victoria League (Adelaide).

A slightly modified version of his note, signed by the Military Governor (or ‘Officer Administering the Government’) David MacDougall was sent to the Australian Prime Minister, Ben Chifley, on 23 July 1947 after input from the accountant Anthony Liddon Cole and others.\(^{52}\) The Prime Minister’s reply concluded: ‘I take this opportunity to say that the courage and fortitude of the people of Hong Kong in the very difficult times experienced by them as a result of the war were greatly admired by the Australian people who regarded it as a privilege to be able to assist in any way possible.’\(^{53}\)

As a precursor to this dialogue, the Hong Kong Government Finance Liaison Office in Sydney had finally been closed on 16 May 1947, and the Hong Kong Planning Unit in London from the end of 1944 he returned to Hong Kong on 7 September 1945 as Brigadier Colonial Secretary with responsibility for Civil Administration, and served as acting Governor from May to July 1947.

\(^{52}\) MacDougall had escaped from Hong Kong on Christmas Day 1941. Having headed the Hong Kong Planning Unit in London from the end of 1944 he returned to Hong Kong on 7 September 1945 as Brigadier Colonial Secretary with responsibility for Civil Administration, and served as acting Governor from May to July 1947.

\(^{53}\) Australian Prime Minister to Officer Administering the Government. HKPRO 41.2.18. B.39/1/3.
Finance Liaison Officer George Reeve returned to the United Kingdom a few days later on leave prior to final retirement. Cole, who had been in Australia helping wrap up, had already returned to Hong Kong and the records of the office had been dispatched to the Colony's Accountant-General. Prior to the closing down of the office, arrangements were completed for all payments on behalf of the Hong Kong Government to be made in future by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services, and details of continuing payments were forwarded to the Colonial Office for communication to the Crown Agents for the Colonies and the Government of Hong Kong. A report at that time by Edward John Williams, the post-war High Commissioner to Australia, noted the size of the task that had been performed by the Hong Kong Finance Liaison Office:\textsuperscript{54}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evacuees</th>
<th>Ex-internees and prisoners of War 1945/6.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940/41.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total arriving in Australia</td>
<td>2968</td>
<td>993\textsuperscript{55}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still remaining in Australia</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awaiting passages to United Kingdom or Hong Kong</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remaining permanently in Australia</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{54} High Commissioner to Australia, 21 May 1947. HKPRO 41.2.18. No. 163.
\textsuperscript{55} This is only around 10\% of the total number of Allied servicemen and civilians captured in Hong Kong. Many had gone straight from Hong Kong (or straight from Japan for the many POWs who had been relocated there) to the UK.
In total the Hong Kong Finance Liaison Office had paid out just over 85,000 Australian pounds in evacuee costs. These comprised Maintenance Allowances totalling A£29,624.19.9, medical expenses of A£323.4.1, Evacuees’ Passages A£54,371.10.1, and A£1,069.18.1 for other expenses relating to a few individuals’ medical or mental institution fees.\footnote{The ‘other expenses’ were made up of: small payments to Mary E. Berch and Janet R.E. MacFarlane, reimbursement to the Malayan government for a maintenance allowance to Mrs C Finnie on SS Nestor repatriation to UK, passage from Sydney to UK for Mrs C. J. Smith and daughter, and mental hospital costs for the two Osbornes mentioned above, plus a Miss Lysaught.}

After VJ Day the great work of reassembling families had started, a job made harder by the global nature of repatriation and lack of speedy or easy communication with the ex-war zones. However, many of those initial reunions would be in Australia. On 19 September 1945 it was announced that the Empress of Australia had left Hong Kong for Manila with a large number of fit civilian ex-internees on board and that the ship might come to Australia. Evacuees still in Australia had to decide whether to gamble on seeking passage back to the UK in case their released internee and POW husbands and sons were going there, or stay in Australia in case they were on that ship.\footnote{The Argus, 19 September 1945.} Two days later, further details were published: the United Kingdom High Commissioner’s office announced that in cases where on liberation a man’s family was still in Australia and he desired to join them there, every effort would be made to assist. ‘Families who decided to remain in Australia must realise that there was a risk that the husband might have to be repatriated to the United Kingdom. British rescue missions had lists of all men whose families were in Australia and any wife who decided to return to England now could be assured that her husband would be repatriated there and
not to Australia. On that day the hospital ship Oxfordshire arrived at Brisbane carrying many of the sicker Hong Kong internees and POWs, shocking Australians with their skeletal frames as they walked or were helped ashore.

As documented above, some family reunions were short lived and quickly ended in divorce. However, in many of those cases one or other party would remain in Australia. But of course many other reunions were happy ones. Chief Inspector William Chester-Woods arrived in Melbourne for recuperation after Stanley camp, staying with his evacuated wife. Having been in the Hong Kong police for 27 years he had observed at first hand the police systems of at least ten other British colonies. The papers quoted him as saying that: ‘Melbourne’s police force compared more than favourably with police systems of other British countries, and even with Scotland Yard...’ Government servants are not allowed to go back to Hong Kong yet, but even if they were, Mr Chester-Woods is not sure that he wants to return. He is thinking of settling in Melbourne. While Chester-Woods seemed cheerful enough and chose to stay, like all other internees he had to face the fact that things had changed. Neither of his children, who had been evacuated in 1940 as teenagers, were still in Australia to greet him. His daughter was now on the way to the United States with her American husband, and his son was still with the army in India. Unfortunately Chester-Woods himself would pass away on 19 November 1946.

Jean Gittins, also newly arrived from Stanley, advertised in the press for a flat for her evacuee daughter Elizabeth: ‘BRITISH evacuee Hong Kong girl, 16 P L O

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58 Sydney Morning Herald, 21 September 1945.
59 The Argus, 1 January 1946.
wants Flat or Rooms. Mrs Gittins Pathology Dept Melb Univ. F0484 ext 355.'

Many young ladies, like Elizabeth, would stay after marrying Australian men. It could also happen the other way round, with couples who had met in Australia returning to Hong Kong: 'MRS Eunice Arnold, of Melbourne, attended the wedding of her son, Geoffrey, in Hong Kong last Sunday. Mr Arnold, who was a POW in Hong Kong, came to Melbourne in 1945 and returned to China in 1947. He married Miss Sheila Le Tissier, a Hong Kong evacuee who lived in Sydney during the war.'

The evacuees had become a close-knit bunch. Colin Gordon: 'I think that the network of the HK expats was a tremendous support for the mothers both during and after the war and [my mother] did maintain close contact with several of the families such as the Penns, Forsyths, Bellamy, and others for many years and occasionally with Lady Grayburn.'

Then there were the war widows; their families were of course beyond reunion. Doug Langley-Bates, whose father had been lost on the Lisbon Maru in 1942: 'Mother finally managed to get a 3 bedroom flat in Elwood. I remember that she could not afford carpet at the time so she bought underfelt to try to keep it warmer. She worked very hard and saved her money until she finally achieved her life’s aim, a house. She managed to buy one and turned the garden into a typical English one with roses everywhere. She lived there until she died, never returning to her family in England.'

Lena Trinder had also lost her army husband on that vessel. She and her sons were considering going to England at the end of the war but she was quite

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60 The Argus, 26 February 1946.
61 The Argus, 29 March 1949. Geoffrey Arnold was in 2 Coy, HKVDC.
62 Email from Colin Gordon to author, 16 January 2012.
63 Email from Doug Langley-Bates to author, 4 May 2008.
reluctant as she had been born in South Africa and had spent most of her married life with George Trinder outside the UK. But she met an Australian, Thomas Glen Dewar, who she married in Brisbane on 30 June 1945. Although the marriage to Dewar did not work out and was later annulled, by then the family had firm roots in Australia. Lena moved to Mount Isa and met and married Patrick Coyle from Northern Ireland. The three boys, Bernie, George, and Charles, stayed in Australia, all joining the Royal Australian Navy, while Lena and Patrick had two more sons before she passed away in 1952. Bernie was an aircraft engineer in the Fleet Air Arm and then joined Qantas in 1958 where he stayed until retirement in 1993. George became a Naval photographer and used those skills when he worked for the Queensland Government Forestry Commission upon his discharge. Following a long career there he worked for the Premier's Department and finally ended up as a court Bailiff, Charles lived in Sydney for many years but ended up moving to Coffs Harbour, NSW.

Studying the families of regular servicemen who were lost during the war, it seems they were noticeably more likely to remain in Australia when peace came than the families of those who had survived.

A number of families were forever disjointed, with some members staying in Australia and others moving on. Although Tony Bushell had been separated from his mother and sister at the end of the war, he eventually remade contact with the latter when she came to England for a holiday in about 1980. During his daughter's gap year in 1986 she went to Australia, stayed with his sister and met his mother. 'They got on like a house on fire and so I was persuaded to follow in her footsteps in 1988. My mother had thought that I would have been resentful

64 Email from Aileen Trinder to author, 25 June 2004.
because she had “abandoned” me. I was only ten years of age when we parted and
I was over 60 when we were reunited, and I could not bring myself to tell her that I
could not resent something or someone I scarcely remembered. Thankfully my
father had explained the whole business to me from start to finish, dispassionately
and without rancour, and I refused to make judgements about either of them.
Instead we just started afresh.”

The Hill family would be separated in a different way. Nora Hill and her
children Norman and Helen returned to Hong Kong to join husband and ex-
internee James Hill of the Hong Kong Police Force. He resigned from the police in
1947 due to poor health brought on by his time as an internee, and the family
moved to Melbourne where he joined the Royal Melbourne Regiment in June 1948
when it was reformed after war service. He stayed with them until May 1949, by
which date he had attained the rank of Warrant Officer, and then worked for
various Australian government departments before returning to the UK in 1955.
However, his son Norman chose to remain behind as he was now twenty years old
and had become quite attached to Australian life. He married in 1958 and he and
his wife established their first home in Bentleigh East, which at that time was a
new suburb of Melbourne. Their children and grandchildren are today split
between Victoria and New South Wales.

The Inglis family is a typical example of an evacuee clan in Australia.
Constance Inglis had been evacuated with her two sons, Alistair and Desmond. Her
husband left Hong Kong before the invasion and joined them in Sydney where they
had two further children (Yvonne and Donald). Later, Alistair would have two

65 Email from Tony Bushell to author, 31 October 2011.
66 Email from Andrew Hill to author, 3 February 2013.
children and four grandchildren. Desmond would marry fellow evacuee Rosemary Read and they would have two children and eight grandchildren. Donald Inglis would also have a child. One evacuee family had four children, five grandchildren and twelve great grandchildren, of whom nineteen were born in Australia and most (at time of writing) live in Perth or Adelaide.67

According to the Hong Kong government’s figures, 654 of the evacuees (including their POW/Internee husbands and fathers) simply never left Australia, and over the generations those hundreds would become thousands. But were those that had been born abroad legally Australian? Before 1949, Australians were just British citizens. The concept of Australian citizenship dates only from the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948 (later renamed the Australian Citizenship Act 1948) which received Royal Assent on 21 December 1948 and came into force on 26 January 1949. But this seems to have affected evacuees in different ways. Robin Patey, for example, having been evacuated to Brisbane and having lived in Queensland from mid 1940 was a member of the Citizen Military Forces and had been granted an Australian passport.68 However, in 1996 he was informed that he had to apply for Australian citizenship and go through a naturalisation ceremony.69

Yet Doug Langley-Bates notes: ‘[I] have a Certificate of Australian Citizenship showing that I became an Australian Citizen on January 1st 1949. This was done without any application needed.’70

But those 654 people were the tip of the iceberg. Just as the original evacuation from Hong Kong had resulted in ‘tricklebacks’, so did many of the early evacuation from Hong Kong had resulted in ‘tricklebacks’, so did many of the early

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67 Email from Rosemary Read to author, 8 September 2012.
68 Other evacuees, such as Paul Bonney, report receiving Australian passports before 1947.
69 Email from Patricia Patey to Rosemary Read, 24 November 2008.
70 Email from Doug Langley-Bates to author, 5 May 2008.
decisions to leave Australia. Despite the first evacuees abandoning Australia within months of arriving, a continual flow away during the latter war years, and a major exodus - to both Hong Kong and the UK – from late 1945 until the end of 1946, a very large number of those evacuated (even those who were infants at the time, or who were born in Australia) returned and settled permanently. Some came back almost immediately in a wave that peaked in around 1950.

Although John Hearn and his family had returned to Portsmouth in 1945, after just one year in England he and his mother and sister returned to live in Australia.71 Violet Hearn simply felt that Australia held more promise for the family than anything England could provide at that time. She never re-married.72

Ian McNay returned from Sydney to Hong Kong as a fifteen year old in 1946 and was one of the first pupils to return to the reopened Central British School where he became the first post war head boy.73 After finishing the Cambridge School Certificate in 1947 he worked in the Inland Revenue Department of the Hong Kong Government until leaving in September 1949 to take up a Government Scholarship at Edinburgh University. He had intended to return to Hong Kong when he graduated in 1952 but diverted to Sydney where his father (who had been a POW in Sham Shui Po) and mother had retired. ‘After my return to Australia in 1952 I had misgivings for some months even the first year that I might have made a mistake. Hong Kong was still calling me. But love came in the way and I

71 While in the UK he met up with an evacuee school friend, John Burling. Burling’s father William had been in the Merchant Navy in Hong Kong and was captured, returning home to Portsmouth with a Japanese sword which hung above the mantle piece in his lounge. ‘John and I would crawl to the door of his lounge room and would watch his father. At about 4.00p.m. for about one hour each day his father would sit and stare at the sword. Six months later he returned to sea.’

72 Interestingly, after Lena Trinder died some of her younger children also stayed with John Hearn and his mother at Coolangatta on the Gold Coast, Queensland, for a short time.

73 Other ex-evacuees joining him there that first year included Maunie Bones, Frances Brett, Julian Crozier, Joy Ford, Alistair Inglis, Desmond Inglis, Patricia Nimmo, Phillippa Portallion, Rosemary Read, Susan Robertson, Vera Rumianzeff, Michael Salter, Fay Swan, Jack Tinson, and Coralie Woolfe.
married in 1955. With a daughter coming and trying to make a career for myself thoughts of HK receded. My first job was with Lever Brother advertising agency then a change to the public service in the State Library of New South Wales. Eventually I came up with the ideal match of academia and commerce. The answer was publishing so I settled in with a law publisher and continued in be in that field ever since until retiring in 1998... I have three daughters, five grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. All are proudly Australian.\textsuperscript{74} Ian’s friend and fellow evacuee Jack Strange, who joined the RAAF during the war, came back to Hong Kong for a short time post-war and then, like many others, returned to Australia to study and never left.

Sometimes people born after the evacuation – or even after the war – ‘returned’ to Australia. Marilyn Hunter, born of an evacuee mother in the UK, is an example. Her mother had worked in Melbourne as a teacher and continued to teach until peace was declared, then returned to Scotland to rejoin her ex-internee husband James. However, she had made several good friends during her time in Melbourne as an evacuee; they would take her for holidays to different parts of Victoria and she had fond memories of those times. ‘I was born in Scotland in late 1946, and we went back to Hong Kong as a family in 1947. My father left the HK Police Force due to ill health in 1950, returning to live in Scotland. However, due to continued health problems, his doctor advised emigrating to a warmer climate. My parents chose Melbourne (as a result of my mother’s evacuation to there during the war). We were sponsored by one of the teachers from Melbourne Grammar, who had befriended my mother... I was an only child, and I trained to be a primary school teacher (following in my mother’s footsteps). I married an Australian and

\textsuperscript{74} Email from Ian McNay to author, 16 April 2012.
had 3 children, and now have 7 grandchildren (to date), all living in suburbs close to where my parents settled in later life.'

Rob Patey and his mother Elizabeth returned to Hong Kong in the late 1940s for a visit and to meet up with Rob’s father Bruce whilst he was on shore, but then went back to Australia and decided to permanently settle in Ashgrove, Brisbane (as Bruce was a captain in the Merchant Navy and was regularly on the run to Australia) where Elizabeth would spend the rest of her life. She returned to teaching and retired at 65 from Oakleigh School. Bruce Patey passed away in January 1953 in Brisbane, his family believes as a result of the hardships experienced as an internee.

In Dorothy Neale’s case, the threat of the Korean War was the driving force: ‘Freddie decided eventually that in 1951 we would leave Hong Kong and come to Australia and he would find a job there. He would have completed thirty years with the company by then. I too had had enough of Hong Kong, having gone there first in 1929. Everything was changing and I was terrified that we could all be parted again if the Korean War became serious.’

Thelma Organ took a more roundabout route: ‘I wanted to come to Australia when we left HK as I had so many wartime friends here (at least, in NSW). My husband, a Scot, wanted to go to UK and live in Cornwall which I had accepted. Then Tai Koo Dock sent him to Perth for six weeks to survey a ship that was coming to HK to be re-fitted. When he returned, he said that Perth was the place for us.’

75 Email from Marilyn Hunter to author, 4 June 2012.
76 Green Jade, Neale, page 100. Two other evacuee families, the Clarks and the Orems, were on the same vessel when they returned.
77 Thelma Organ’s memoires.
Policeman Stanley Smith was one of those who very soon after the war acquiesced to the Hong Kong government’s request for police to return to the Colony to keep the peace. He decided that as he only had a few years until retirement he would go back, and his wife and daughter would follow very soon after. He was expected to serve for one year and then have six months leave before returning for a further three years before finally retiring. Wendy Smith: ‘As it happened he couldn’t bear the memories and we stayed just two years before he took early retirement. We went to Western Australia as my father had an old friend there and there was still strict rationing and much hardship in England. The Mottrams and Byrons also returned to Hong Kong but didn’t retire until after my father. The Byrons came to Perth, Australia, and settled near us; the Mottrams also came for short while but then returned to England… The Williamsons didn’t return to Hong Kong but moved to Somerset in England for a while but then emigrated to Tasmania for a few years before moving to Melbourne. Anne [Williamson] had two children but sadly died of cancer several years ago. Winnie [Anne’s mother] died two years ago just short of her 100th birthday.’

Mary-June Mezger and her two sisters did not return to Hong Kong with their parents after the war, as they had no idea of what conditions would be like. Instead they went to boarding school in Brisbane until their parents returned to Australia in 1949 and the family was reunited. The sisters all continued their education, all married in the nineteen sixties and all live today in Queensland within a few hours of each other.

78 Email from Wendy Smith to author, 17 October 2012. The Byrons, Mottrams, and Williamsons were also police families who had been evacuated.
79 Email from Mary-June Littleton to author, 6 November 2012.
Evacuee Stuart Braga’s father Hugh went into business as an engineer and architect after the Military Administration ended, eventually establishing his own company, Hugh Braga & Co. He embarked on what were in the late 1940s significant residential development projects at Jardine’s Lookout, Kowloon Tsai and Headland Road at Chung Hom Kok. However, the downturn in activity that followed the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 caused him to decide to return to Australia. ‘He and Nora left Hong Kong in August 1951. He again joined Timbrol Ltd, remaining with the firm, and its successor, Union Carbide (Australia) until his retirement in 1970. They again became active in youth work, and Hugh was a member of the Councils of his children’s schools and later Warden of an Anglican Retirement village. He was honoured in 1983 by being given the award of NSW Senior Citizen of the Year. He died in 1987, and Nora died in 1993.’

Evacuee Charlie Wilson had returned to Northern Ireland. When he finished grammar school he was uncertain about a future career, but as he enjoyed working outdoors he returned to Australia and ended up at Townsville and Magnetic Island working on fishing boats and as a guide on the barrier reef. He married an Australian lady called Marion, then divorced, then married Sue and had two children, Justin & Tara. Betty Wilson, who married Charles’ older brother Robin: ‘[Charlie] always seemed to be looking for something. I never met Charlie but we wrote to each other and always kept up to date by my mother-in-law. My [mother in law Druscilla Wilson] returned to Australia many times. She would visit Charlie and then visit Marion in Western Australia. Sometimes visiting people she had known when she stayed there.’

80 Notes on Braga family’s evacuation. Email from Stuart Braga to author, 10 December 2010.
81 Email from Betty Wilson to author, 16 April 2012.
Every family was different. Nikki Veriga: ‘... they went to Australia because that is where Dad’s mother and sister lived. My understanding is that Dad’s mother wanted him to leave our mother in HK and go to Australia to be with Antonia - but that’s not what he wanted. [Lydia my eldest sister] was born in Stanley, my brother and myself were born in HK and we travelled to Brisbane in 1955. My two younger sisters were born in Brisbane.’ 82

In some cases return took many years. Peter Moss had been born to an evacuee mother in Australia in February 1942: ‘I went from Australia to UK... after arriving in England my mother went to stay with her parents Frank and Eileen Tonge, in Glasgow. We lived there until my father was released from internment and came back to UK (second real memory, of waking up, obviously having been told but forgotten, and waking my mother to warn her that there was a strange man in her bed!!!) We... all returned to HK where dad resumed his police duties and my mother returned to her job as a teacher at Kowloon Junior School (where I also went as a student)... I was sent off to boarding school in the UK whilst mum and dad stayed in HK. I lived and worked in UK till I was about 30 then one day just got the urge to “go try Australia”. I don’t know if it was a sort of homing instinct or just chance and I don’t know if any others did the same.’83

Joan Franklin: ‘We ended up back in Sydney because Bill, my husband, was posted here by the HSBC in 1979, a few months after the death of our 13-year-old son in HK. Bill had refused promotion to postings other than HK as he wanted our son to remain in HK where there were good medical facilities, as our son had congenital heart disease. It was just around the time of HSBC’s mergers with the

82 Email from Nikki Veriga to author, 21 January 2012.
83 Email from Peter Moss to author, 13 January 2012.
Mercantile Bank of India and the British Bank of the Middle East (& maybe a few others, I forget!) Anyway, 3 months after we arrived here, Bill was made redundant, apparently because his proposed posting to Singapore had been cancelled as the Singapore Government had localised the position the bank had arranged for him. [Douglas my brother] had considered himself Australian after being in the RANR and had returned here around 1962. And my sister came here about 8 years ago as she had no relatives in the UK.84 Joan, Sylvia, and Douglas were three more Australians presented by the evacuation.

John Ken FitzHenry, who had evacuated but then returned to Hong Kong to join the Volunteers and had spent the remaining war years as a POW, returned to Sydney almost immediately after the war and graduated in Architecture in 1952. He has practiced there as an architect ever since. POW Landon Burch of the HKVDC, whose evacuee sister had been killed by a shark in 1942, also settled in Sydney post-war. Many HKVDC members, and members of the armed forces generally (whether they had any direct connection with evacuees or not) would follow.85

In all there are five groups of wartime Hong Kong people or their descendants identified in this text who are still in Australia today. The first group are, of course, those who were evacuated in 1940 and who chose to remain in Australia after the war or to return there (often joined by their POW or internee husbands) after time back in Hong Kong or Great Britain. The second are those who moved to Australia at some time soon before the outbreak of war, but

84 Email from Joan Franklin to author, 17 September 2010.
85 Examples who I have had contact with include Solly Bard, Norman Broadbridge, Pat Fallon, Robert Lapsley, Andrew Ostromouff, Osler Thomas and Philip Yvanovich. Nursing Sisters Mavis Rose and Kathleen Edith Glendinning also applied to remain in Australia upon discharge from the British Armed Forces after serving in occupied Japan.
privately, as pre-emptive evacuees or otherwise. The third group are the POWs and internees who were repatriated from Hong Kong (or Japan) by the government after the war and who either chose to remain in Australia or to return there upon eventual retirement. The fourth are those who emigrated from Hong Kong to Australia after the war, many of whom were local Hong Kong Portuguese with relatives who had served in the HKVDC. The fifth and final group are the Australian Hong Kong residents who returned to their country from Hong Kong after the war, or some years later upon retirement.
Conclusion

So we decided to emigrate to Australia and I suppose we could now be called ‘Dinkum Aussies’ – after 30 years.¹

By 1946 Hong Kong’s pre-war colonial society, which had celebrated its one hundredth birthday just five years earlier, had gone forever. Hong Kong, to the British people who lived there between the twentieth century’s two great wars, had been perhaps the prime real estate to be had in the Empire. Life there was entertaining and cheap, profits were bountiful; but then came the threat of war. Mindful of their own situation in 1939, the British Government decided to instruct the Hong Kong Government to mandate the evacuation of British women and children should the Colony be threatened by attack. In mid-1940, as the Battle of Britain stamped an indelible greasy smoke stain through British skies thousands of miles away, the majority of Hong Kong’s civilians prescriptively escaped the threat of Asian war. Those families split asunder would often – in the context of the more than 200 husbands killed, and the many divorces – never be reunited; the cost of war being measured in permanently broken homes. That evacuation, in stages from Hong Kong to the Philippines, from the Philippines to Australia, and from Australia to the UK, or back to Hong Kong, and – in many cases – back to Australia again, would define many lives. Looking at Australia’s population today, a

¹ From Peking to Perth, Briggs, A., page 145.
surprisingly large number can – at least in part – track their heritage back to Hong Kong’s pre-war society: the garrison, the businessmen, earlier evacuees who had washed up in the Colony, and local families. From the perspective of Australia’s twenty-first century population, the effects of Hong Kong’s evacuation still reverberate through tens of thousands of its people. Many of the ancestors of those Australians are buried in Hong Kong, or - for those who died as Prisoners of War – in Japan, or lying lost and forgotten, skeletons in Hong Kong’s remotest ravines or at the bottom of the South China Sea.

Post war years have of course seen a continuation of that migration, with many Chinese Hong Kong families choosing to make Australia their home. But the forced diaspora documented here was different; families that lived in Hong Kong and in many cases had never lived anywhere else, had been uprooted and transported to Australia whether they liked it or not. But this is not a simple story of a homogenous group of 3,500 people making such a journey. Choices had to be made, rules had to be followed or broken, luck – good and bad – tilted the board this way and that; this is a story woven of some 3,500 remarkably varied threads.

According to the Hong Kong Government’s original plan, the stated purposes of the evacuation had been:

(a) To enable the morale of the defenders to be maintained at the highest possible level untrammelled by any considerations not directly affecting defence.

(b) To conserve food supplies.
In hindsight it seems that (a) had little if any substance. The defenders’ morale had no great impact on the outcome of the eighteen day battle for the Colony, and any positive impact of not having to worry about families being in harm’s way had arguably been negated by eighteen months of bitter debate about the rights and wrongs of the evacuation itself. To some degree the evacuation was self-defeating in this respect, as many of those men who were free to leave Hong Kong (for example, skilled Dockyard workers) did so when their wives and children were evacuated, thus reducing the number of defenders. And when war eventually came to Hong Kong it was generally considered that 3 Company HKVDC did the most damage to the invaders, fighting hardest in Wong Nai Chung - a battlefield from which many of them could see their own homes (homes where their unevacuated families still lived, because, to rub salt in the wound, number 3 Company were all Eurasian).2

(b) is hard to take seriously. With a population of some 1,600,000 at the time of the invasion, the food saved by having approximately 3,500 fewer mouths to feed was irrelevant; even had Hong Kong’s siege been longer, the government had stockpiled considerable reserves of food around the Colony. In 1939 alone they had spent over one and a half million dollars on purchasing rice for storage ‘to meet possible emergencies’.3 As early as 12 August 1940 in a report for the US government, American Consul John Herman Bruins in Hong Kong, noting the small

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2 Aside from just two officers: Evan Stewart and Bevan Field. Stewart’s family had evacuated to Australia, and Field’s to Canada.

3 Audit Office report 1939, Hong Kong University Library.
numbers that left the Colony had pointed out that: ‘As a means of alleviating the local food problem, the evacuation can therefore hardly be classed as a success.’

But clearly these stated justifications were primarily designed to be acceptable for public consumption, both domestic and foreign. The decision makers were no-nonsense men with Great War experience; the same clear thinking that drove them pre-war to establish a chain of carefully-sized emergency hospitals across Hong Kong wherever they expected the fighting to be fiercest, also led them to preserve women and children from the imprisonment that would logically be expected to follow. The government could not baldly state that the purpose of the evacuation was to ensure that the civilians would not be there to be interned by the Japanese once the latter had captured Hong Kong, but this understanding (amplified by the experiences of fallen Chinese cities) was without doubt the prime motivation for ordering evacuation. The British and Hong Kong governments simply desired to move as many civilians as possible to safety. However, in fact the roughly 1,200 British women and children who had remained in Hong Kong to be interned had not fared too badly. This ‘control group’ experienced fear, hunger, lack of privacy, and lack of freedom for three years and eight months, but there was no great mortality. Seven uniformed British women were killed during the 1941 fighting, but no British children died. Some 35 women died in internment in Stanley, but after subtracting those who died of old age or in the accidental Allied bombing of Bungalow C, their death rate did not significantly differ from that of the evacuees. A small number of infants died in the camp, but only one (Brian Gill) was lost to an accident before war’s end, compared to at least

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4 *Evacuation of Women and Children from Hong Kong, July 1940*, John H. Bruins, American Consul, 12 August 1940. File 346g.4115, Record Group 59, National Archives at College Park, MD. This report was approved by Southard.
five evacuee children. Stanley was not considered a bad camp; aside from the miseries listed above, the main complaint of the adult internees was boredom. Many of the children adapted well and even enjoyed the experience; in fact due to the lack of many formal structures the children often interpreted the same environment that meant captivity to the adults, as freedom.

Internee William Mezger had noted: ‘By and large the kids are about the healthiest persons in the camp. Of course they have had as good a chow as it has been possible to provide, but I do not think that that is the only explanation. I think that their mental attitude has as much to do with their health as any other factor. They have no cares and no troubles, have never heard of vitamins, or proteins or calories or what have you. All they know is that meals are provided and they just go ahead and forget all about the fact that they are prisoners, and that they are wasting years of their lives. A fat lot they care about this recital of woes. They simply accept things as they are, go ahead and play and forget all about what is to come.’

The evacuees by contrast were of course not imprisoned, though they had in practice been sentenced to exile. Aside from return to Hong Kong, they had freedom of movement and access to food, medicine, schools, company, and entertainment. Some women, thrown suddenly out of a pampered and wealthy lifestyle into a situation where they had to fend for themselves with little financial support, hated it. Others found a new independence that they revelled in. They were forced to make their own decisions about staying in Australia or moving back to the UK, often without any certainty of their husbands’ continued existence. It is worth remembering again that only in hindsight do we know that the war ended in

5 Letter sent to the author by mail by Mezger’s daughter Charlotte, 5 February 2013.
the late summer of 1945. When many of these decisions were being made, there was no certainty of victory, let alone of the date it would arrive.

When husbands and wives were reunited at the end of 1945, the evacuees had (except for those whose husbands visited Australia before the invasion) been apart for a little more than five years, and this separation clearly took a toll on many relationships. However, women who had stayed in Hong Kong but had husbands in the regular or volunteer forces were separated from them too – held in different camps for almost four years. Only relatively few families (approximately 300 in number, where the husbands were also regarded as civilians) stayed together in Stanley, not that this always helped - as internee Mezger again relates: ‘Kids were born as usual, people died (only about 120 in all) and there were even a couple of divorces. There will be a lot more of the latter though when we finally get away from the place, as there have been a number of not too savoury affairs. Oh well, I suppose boys will be boys and girls will be mothers.’

Women in Stanley who had been widowed by the fighting immediately before internment, or became widows before the end of the war, had no choices to make about their future until liberation came – and they were in a supportive environment in which so many were in the same boat. Freedom, on the other hand, was more complex, and lonelier; either way, families had been forever disrupted. Barbara Redwood had the unusual experience of being both an evacuee and an internee and summed up her feelings thus: ‘In my opinion, the 1940 evacuation was an excellent idea, despite all the moaning that went on by grass widowers. If all those evacuees had still been in Hong Kong on Dec 8 1941 when the Japs

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attacked, the HK Government would have been severely criticised for not enforcing an evacuation beforehand. Although Stanley Camp was an unforgettable experience and I made many friends there, be sure I would rather have been in Australia! The accommodation in camp was crowded as it was: I just wonder what it would have been like if the number of internees had been doubled with the “evacuees”?  

The point about criticism is insightful. In Bruin’s report, written eighteen months before the invasion, he noted that: ‘Government officers are quick to point out that in case any real danger had developed, the Government would have been criticised for not providing more efficient means of evacuating non-combatants.’

By comparison the American civilians in the Philippines – aside from military dependants who had been removed – had been left there to be interned en masse when the country surrendered. Their mortality had been considerably higher than the Hong Kong internees, in the region of 10%. In 2002 almost 600 of them (or their estates) combined to bring a class action against the American government alleging that: ‘the United States deliberately left them in harm’s way by preventing them from securing passage back to the United States despite the overwhelming probability if not the virtual certainty of Japanese attack. American officials falsely reassured the members of the plaintiff class that the Islands were well-defended and perfectly safe. However, the Philippines was under-defended and vulnerable to enemy attack. Moreover, the United States was making strategic decisions that were intended to bring about a Japanese attack upon the Philippines. The decisions had the effect intended, and on and after December 7, 1941, plaintiffs were

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7 Email from Barbara Redwood to author, 7 September 2013.
8 Evacuation of Women and Children from Hong Kong, July 1940, John H. Bruins.
subjected to injuries, torture, and death, all of which were, in the aggregate, foreseeable consequences of the plans and policies of the United States. United States decision-makers knew or had reason to know of the Japanese atrocities committed against Chinese civilians such as the “Rape of Nanking” and had no reason to believe that American civilians in the Philippines, Guam, Wake, and Midway islands would be treated any differently if they were abandoned there and left subject to the tender mercies of the armed forces of Japan.”9 Looking at these two groups it appears that those evacuated, and those not evacuated, felt equally set upon (and of course this was equally true of the Caucasian and non-Caucasian populations of Hong Kong).

But such pre-emptive evacuations differed from the earlier ones of Shanghai or the British cities threatened by German bombs. Shanghai was not a British territory, attack there was imminent, evacuation to Hong Kong required travelling a relatively short distance, and returns began almost immediately. The London evacuation was primarily of children, again from an immediate danger, and within the same country; this flexibility allowed the number of evacuees and the period of evacuation to vary dynamically with the threat level. The more complex Dominion Plan (to take the children further afield to other parts of the Commonwealth) was rapidly scrapped after the sinking of City of Benares, and only 1% of the applicants were actually moved.

So the strength and weakness of Hong Kong’s evacuation plan was that it was specifically and solely an evacuation plan. It was a plan, too, in conflict with Australia’s philosophies of the time (bearing in mind the demographic realities of Hong Kong’s civilian population with its Asian, Eurasian, and Caucasian

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9 Achenbach vs. USA, Northwestern University School of Law.
components), and in conflict with the desires of the majority of those evacuated. In covering only the exit from Hong Kong, it can be seen as simply the first chapter of what should have been a far more sophisticated and long-lived plan.

However, the evacuation itself (if defined simply as getting a certain demographic segment of civilians out of the Colony) was well executed, with the one exception of letting too many civilians, one way or another, avoid or evade. But the moment they were out of Hong Kong, the execution stumbled. The coordination with Philippine authorities was serviceable but imperfect, and that with Australian authorities did not start in earnest until the evacuees were already on their way. Longer-term but vital issues like housing and finances were addressed piecemeal and ad hoc, and work, medicine, schooling, not at all; once landed, the evacuees were almost entirely left to their own devices. Nor, with the exception of the provision of passage on the Duntroon for a few hundred returnees, would there be an ‘unevacuation’ plan at the end of the war. The authorities, though admittedly by then overwhelmed with many other issues, made only limited attempts to reconstruct families at war’s end; in most cases, no more than providing the passage for either or both separated parties to some point of rendezvous. It would be accurate to state that the American authorities in the Philippines were in effect relied upon to develop the second chapter of Hong Kong’s plan, and the Australian authorities the next. However, the middle and later chapters of the ‘plan’ were constructed entirely by the evacuees themselves.

But of course in those years the fundamental relationship between government and governed was on the cusp of change. The Beveridge Report published two years after the evacuation in 1942, sought for the first time to fully define an expanded relationship of support – a contract - between the British State
and the individual, and covered the ‘five giants on the road of reconstruction’: Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor, and Idleness. It began: ‘A revolutionary moment in the world’s history is a time for revolutions, not for patching... Social security must be achieved by co-operation between the State and the individual. The State should offer security for service and contribution. The State in organizing security should not stifle incentive, opportunity, responsibility’. But this philosophy would not be implemented until Britain’s 1945 government took power, though it would then form the basis of the 1945 consensus which would dominate the United Kingdom’s political platform until the Thatcher years. As it was, in the context of the millions displaced by the war, the fate of the Hong Kong evacuees (though driven more by chance than planning) had not been too unkind. However, had an evacuation occurred after the Beveridge Report and the mindset that precipitated it (and that it in turn precipitated), the evacuees might have expected its planning to include a far more comprehensive approach to their future. It could have considered the timing and catalysts of war, and the triggers for reversing evacuation had war not come; the children’s needs as children, and their opportunities as exile continued and childhood ended; the women’s changing circumstances and requirements for short and longer-term housing and income; the effects of the losses of husbands and fathers; the psychological impact on relationships for those who survived internment; and the need for rebuilding and relocating families when war ended. In short, a plan that went beyond simple evacuation and instead understood that the evacuation itself was just an inflection point in a far more enduring experience.

10 The National Archives, (TNA): PREM 4/89/2.
By the standards of the time, however, perhaps the Americans in the Philippines were closer to the most appropriate model. They had recognised that service families posted to a given location, and civilian families there by choice, warranted fundamentally different approaches. Service families could be pre-emptively moved out, and the forces would provide the necessary infrastructure of support. Civilians could choose to leave if they wished.\(^{11}\) Had Hong Kong followed this model it is likely that Stanley Camp would have held more internees, but it is also clear that realistic men-of-the-world such as Vyner Gordon would have at some point ensured their families’ evacuation anyway.

In the final analysis of 1940’s flawed evacuation of Hong Kong, arguably doing generally the right thing, incompletely, in an imperfect way, for the wrong reasons and at the wrong time, it seems that the only lasting impact of the arrival of the thousands of women and children from 1940 Hong Kong who had suddenly found themselves, unbidden and involuntarily, in Australia, was on Australia itself. Australia has had many immigrants, voluntary or otherwise, over the last 250 years: but due to that evacuation approximately one in two thousand of today’s population is directly descended from these exiles of Hong Kong’s 1940 Colonial expatriate society.\(^{12}\)

\(^{11}\) However, the plaintiffs in the Philippines case claimed that the US authorities actively made it hard for them to leave. Unfortunately the case was never argued as it was dismissed under the Statute of Limitations.

\(^{12}\) See Appendix Four – The List of Evacuees, for details.
### Appendices

**Appendix One – Evacuee wives of Osaka POW Fatalities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fred Archer</td>
<td>Mrs H. L. Archer, 20 Neptune St., St Kilda, Melbourne(^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Banks</td>
<td>Mrs Banks, 3 Willanby Avenue, North Brighton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Beament</td>
<td>Mrs E. F. Beament, Carageen Flats, Wylde St, Potts Pt, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Bearman</td>
<td>Mrs G. H. Bearman, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Blake</td>
<td>Mary Gertrude, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Bowes</td>
<td>Mrs A. R. Bowes, c/o Government Tourist Bureau, Brisbane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Brewin</td>
<td>Mrs E. Brewin, 22 Lamrock Ave, Bondi(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Bromley</td>
<td>Mrs Bromley, 164 Wellington St, Padova, Bondi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Curry</td>
<td>Mrs T. Curry, 152 Oberon Street, Coogee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick Davis</td>
<td>Mrs Davis, Robert Avenue 3, Randwick, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie Dyke</td>
<td>Mrs Ethel C. Dyke, Biltmore Hotel, Bridport St., Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Ellender</td>
<td>Mrs D. E. Ellender, Rutledge St, Hillside, Collacatta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Ford</td>
<td>Mrs M. A. Ford, Adelaide St, c/o Gov Tourist Bureau, Brisbane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert Foreman</td>
<td>Mrs H. G. Foreman, 15 Broad Moor Flat, 89 Roscoe St, Bondi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Fraser</td>
<td>Mrs Fraser, 231 Boundary St, Brisbane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick George</td>
<td>Mrs Julia Peter, c/o GPO New Castle, NSW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Fred Archer was marked ‘not arrived’ in the Osaka records, and presumed lost on the *Lisbon Maru*, as were Bromley and Makel.

\(^2\) Emily had evacuated with seven younger children. Older son Alan had been left in Hong Kong, and had died in Japan following transportation on the *Lisbon Maru*. 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isaac Goodfellow</td>
<td>Mrs Goodfellow, 1 Sarah Flats, Boundary St, Brisbane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwin Goodwin</td>
<td>Mrs R. Goodwin, 23 Golf Parades, Manly, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Hobbs</td>
<td>Mrs N. R. Hobbs, “Cowrie” Alma St, Playfield, Brisbane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Jack</td>
<td>Mrs J. M. Jack, c/o Bemaughan [sic] Esquire HK Govt. Representative, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard Jordan</td>
<td>Mrs A. W. Jordan, Great Southern Hotel, Berry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Jupp</td>
<td>Mrs Frith Jupp, 101 Victoria Road, Bellevue Hill, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Knight</td>
<td>Maud Knight, 2 Strathmore Flats, 324 Edgecliffe Road, Woollahra, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Lavis</td>
<td>Mrs F. N. Lavis, 109 Ramsgate Ave, 5 Warwick Court, Bondi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Makel</td>
<td>Mrs G. Makel, 53 Delaware St, Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Maxwell</td>
<td>Mrs Helen Maxwell, 14 Holdsworth St., Neutral Bay, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas McConnell</td>
<td>Mrs B. E. McConnell, 20 Cowper St, Sandringham, Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Miles</td>
<td>Mrs Miles, c/o Queensland Govt. Tourist Bureau, Brisbane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Mills</td>
<td>Mrs H. M. Mills, 613 Canterbury Rd, Surrey Hills, Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Neubronner</td>
<td>Mrs D. L. Neubronner, Linga Longa, Main Rd, Tecoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Read</td>
<td>Mrs E. Read, c/o Imperial Army Paymaster, Canberra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold Spanner</td>
<td>Mrs Lilian Spanner, 84 Perouse Rd, Randwick, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charry Spong</td>
<td>Mrs H. Spong, 78 Ocean Beach Manly, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Stoneham</td>
<td>Mrs Irene Stoneham, Flat 5, 232 Glenhartley Rd, Elsterwick, Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Teggarty</td>
<td>Mrs H. Teggarty, 18 Porter St., Bondi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Tibble</td>
<td>Mrs F. Tibble, Sir Thomas Mitchell’s Mansion, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Tynemouth</td>
<td>Mrs R. Tynemouth, Sydney</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
W.L. Walker  Mrs M. G. Walker, 12 Sunray Flats, Campbell Parade, North Bondi

Thomas Ward  Mrs Ward, T. Govt. Tourist Bureau, Brisbane

George Wilson  Mrs Wilson, Old Southhead Rd, Bondi Junction

3 Osaka POW Camp Remains List, British. Extracted 11 September 1945, RG407 Box 187, NARA, courtesy of the late Roger Mansell. All the next of kin were evacuees except Mary Gertrude, Julia Peter, and R. (actually V.M.) Tynemouth. William Gittins’ name also appears in the list, with his wife Jean (parents of evacuee Elizabeth Gittins) correctly listed as being in Hong Kong at that time.
Appendix Two – Mrs Rosemary Margaret Holmes

From: Accountant General  To Deputy Financial Secretary

Ref. Australia/391/1  5th August, 1950

Mrs. Rosemary Holmes

I enclose letter No. IMP/Pens. Misc. dated the 20th July 1950, received from the Director of Social Services, Australia, which I think should have been addressed to you in the first place. I also enclose a statement of account in respect to Mrs. Holmes.

The history of the case is roughly as follows:-

Mrs. Holmes was evacuated from Hong Kong on 5th July 1940, her husband then being in Rangoon but able to support her.

After the fall of Burma Mrs. Holmes received no further assistance from her husband (who was believed to be in Calcutta but could not be traced) and was paid a maintenance allowance from September 1942 until June 1945 amounting in all to A£798.2.1. These payments were charged to final expenditure in the Australian Accounts.

In June 1945 Mrs. Holmes requested by letter that the allowance should cease and offered to repay the advances already made by quarterly instalments of A£13.0.0. To the 30th April 1950 she had refunded A£260 leaving a balance of A£538.2.1 outstanding.
In October 1946 Mrs. Holmes informed the Finance Liaison Officer in Australia that she had decided to remain in Australia as she had no relations in China and all her property in Hong Kong had been looted. It is assumed that she has had no further news of her husband.

From the records available in this office it appears that only a small percentage of the total amount paid out by Australia in respect of Maintenance was ever recovered and Mrs Holmes appears to be the only person who is still refunding anything and is one of the few who have made any attempt to repay.

All expenditure in Hong Kong on the maintenance of evacuees in Australia has been, or is being, reimbursed by the United Kingdom and any recoveries from individuals are therefore due to H.M.G. Hong Kong is unable to say whether or not refunds by Mrs. Homes should continue, but I think it would be reasonable to recommend to H.M.G. that in the circumstances no further recoveries should be made.

P. Accountant General

D.F.S.

Mrs. Rosemary Margaret Holmes

The history of this case is dealt with at encl. (68) and I set below additional details for transmission to S. of S. in reply to Saving 1025 of 11th October, 1951.

2. I confirm that Mrs. Holmes was officially evacuated from Hong Kong under the 1940 Evacuation Scheme and that the cost of her maintenance in Australia w.e.f. 31st August 1942 to 30th June, 1945 amounting to A£798. 2s. 1d. was included
in the claims for reimbursement of Hong Kong expenditure against H.M. Government.

3. As far as I can trace in our records, Mrs. Holmes was in receipt of a Maintenance Allowance through the Department of Labour and Industry & Social Services, Sydney, N.S.W., chargeable to Hong Kong Funds, prior to the fall of Hong Kong. Repayments for these allowances it is assumed (as all Treasury records were destroyed in the occupation) were made by Mr. Holmes who was at that time in Rangoon, Burma.

4. Recoveries of Maintenance Allowance paid to Mrs. Holmes for period 31.8.42 to 30.6.45 commenced, at her own request, in June, 1945 and the amounts recovered were allocated as shown hereunder:-

(a) **Recoveries for period June, 1945 – January, 1947:** £102. 19s. 2d.
   included in the sum of Stg. £1964. 4s. 3d. shown as credits in the statement of accounts forwarded under cover of our Savingram 102 of 17.2.48 and in the net amount shown for Maintenance Allowance in our revised statement dated 10th May, 1949 which was forwarded to S. of S. under Hong Kong Savingram No. 422 of 26th May, 1949 in the opening balance of Stg. £29,904. 12s 1d. (total claim Stg. £53,688.14.8d).

(b) **Recoveries for period April and July, 1947:** £26 –s. –d.
   This amount was received vide C/Agents Cr. Vr. Nos. 1487/8 I January 1948 and was wrongly allocated to offset corresponding debits, in respect of ex-internees, appearing in a suspense account styled
“Maintenance Allowance paid in Australia.” The final balance of which was met from Hong Kong Funds.

(x) **Refundable to H.M. Government.**

(c) **Recoveries for period May, 1947 – July, 1950: A£143 –s. –d.**

Amounts recovered during the above period were Credited to Suspense and Advance Accounts in the First instance and finally transferred to Deposits.

“Recoveries and Maintenance Allowance paid in Australia” where they are still retained.

(x) **Refundable to H.M. Government.**

Note: It will be noted that the total amount recovered from Mrs. Holmes (i.e. (a), (b) & (c) above: A£271. 19s. 2d) differs to the sum previously submitted. The difference being an amount of A£11. 19s. 2d (i.e. Stg. £9.11s.4d) refunded by Mrs. Holmes in July, 1945, included in the figure of Stg. £1964. 4s.3d listed as credits in our claim under cover of our Savingram 102 of 17.2.48 and was not taken into account in the subsequent statement forwarded under Savingram 1068 of 2nd October, 1950.

5. Regarding H.M.’s Government claim for refund of credits (i.e. (b) & (c)) I now consider the circumstances of this case to be exactly the same as in the case of our claim forwarded under our Savingram 1220 of 11.11.50 in that paragraph 1 (XXI) of the Financial Settlement of April, 1950 between H.M. Government and Hong Kong Government applies. (para. 11 of S. and S. Savings 329 of 14.4.51 encl. (91) in file refers).

6. If my view expressed in para. 5 above is not shared and it is proposed
to refund £169 to H.M. Government, of this amount, £143 will be met from
Deposits “Recoveries of Maintenance Allowance paid in Australia.” and the balance,
i.e. £26, will have to be met from expenditures.

7. With reference to the last paragraph of Savingram 1025 of 11th October, 1951 (Savingram under reference) I have to inform you that in our revised state-
ment of claims dated the 10th May, 1949 forwarded under Saving 422 of 26th May, 1949, (and in subsequent claims), the full amount recoverable from non-
Government evacuees has been credited to H.M Government, namely Stg. £6389.

8s. 1d. No further credits are therefore due to H.M. Government in this respect.

(signed)


(Aust/391)

22.11.51

Statement of Maintenance Allowance Account

Mrs. R. M. Holmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Payments</th>
<th>Refunds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td><strong>Amount</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 42</td>
<td>£24.0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 42</td>
<td>16.0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 42</td>
<td>16.0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 42</td>
<td>16.0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 43</td>
<td>16.0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4*HKPRO 41-2-18.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>From-Date</th>
<th>To-Date</th>
<th>Next-Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 43</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>(1.2.43-14.3.43)</td>
<td>Oct. 46</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 43</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>(15.3.43-11.4.43)</td>
<td>Jan. 47</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 43</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>(12.4.43-9.5.43)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 43</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>(10.5.43-6.6.43)</td>
<td>Apr. 47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 43</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>(7.6.43-4.7.43)</td>
<td>July 47</td>
<td>39.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 43</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>(5.4.43-4.7.43)</td>
<td>Ar. Oct. 47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 43</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>(5.7.43-15.8.43)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 43</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>(16.8.43-12.9.43)</td>
<td>Apr. 48</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 43</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>(13.9.43-10.10.43)</td>
<td>May 48</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 43</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>(11.10.43-7.11.43)</td>
<td>Sept. 48</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 43</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>(8.1.43-5.12.43)</td>
<td>Nov. 48</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 44</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>(6.12.43-16.1.44)</td>
<td>Jan. 49</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 44</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>(17.1.44-13.2.44)</td>
<td>Apr. 49</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 44</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>(14.2.44-12.3.44)</td>
<td>Aug. 49</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 44</td>
<td>32.63</td>
<td>(increased rate)</td>
<td>Jan. 50</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 44</td>
<td></td>
<td>up to 21.5.44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 44</td>
<td>150.00</td>
<td>(30 weeks X A£5)</td>
<td>Apr. 50</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 44</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.34-8.10.44)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 44</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.11.8</td>
<td>(increased rate)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 44</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.5.44-8.10.44)</td>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>538.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 44</td>
<td>23.18.4</td>
<td>(9.10.44-5.11.44)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Jan. 45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>From</td>
<td>To</td>
<td>Calculation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 45</td>
<td>203.5.10</td>
<td>203.5.10</td>
<td>(34 Weeks X £5.19.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 45</td>
<td>6.11.44</td>
<td>30.6.45</td>
<td>6.11.44-30.6.45)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**  £798.2.1

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\[\text{\textsuperscript{5}} \text{Ibid.}\]
Appendix Three – Costs of Hiring/Crewing Zealandia

2026.13.1662

27th February, 1948

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

DEPT. OF THE NAVY

NAVY OFFICE, MELBOURNE.S.C.1.

Deputy High Commissioner
Australia House
The Strand

(For transmission through the Prime Minister's Department)

Transportation of Hong Kong Evacuees from Manila per s.s. “Zealandia”.

I desire to advise that in response to a message, dated 16th July, 1940, received from Commodore in Charge, Hong Kong, the Australian Government agreed to make the s.s. “Zealandia” available for the purpose of transporting Hong Kong evacuees from Manila to various Australian ports. Preparations for the trip were commenced at Bowen on 19th July, and the s.s. “Zealandia” sailed for Manila
on 26\textsuperscript{th} July, 1940. On the return voyage, evacuees were disembarked at Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, and the vessel finally returned to Sydney, its home port, on 29\textsuperscript{th} August, 1940.

2. Claims for expenses incurred in connection with this trip were submitted by the owner of the s.s. "Zealandia", Huddart Parker Limited, and paid by this Department, and a claim for reimbursement of such payments has now been prepared at Navy Office, and is attached hereto. Advice was received at the time that, as the total cost of evacuation and maintenance of evacuees was to be met from the funds of the United Kingdom or the Hong Kong Governments, this claim should be forwarded to the High Commissioner for Australia in London, with the request that the amount involved, viz. £18,809.13.4 (Aust.) be recovered from the responsible British Government Authority, and it is desired that appropriate action be taken to give effect to this suggestions.

3. The amount recovered is to be credited to Division 206 – Other Credits Item 1 – Earnings from Services on account of other Administrations – London Order 40.

(SIGNED)

A.R. NANKERVIS

Secretary

Statement of Cost of Transporting Evacuees

In s.s. "Zealandia"
1 Charter Money 19 July 40 – 29 August 40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42 days @ £202</td>
<td>8484.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1A Management Expenses 42 days @ £9,000 p.a.</td>
<td>1035.12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Crew’s overtime and pay in lieu of time-off</td>
<td>1152.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Victualling costs: Evacuees</td>
<td>917.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilots</td>
<td>212.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cost of coal consumed, 2812 tons</td>
<td>5676.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Miscellaneous disbursements at various ports:-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Expenses of replacing certain members of crew</td>
<td>184.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Expenses of stewards and stewardesses</td>
<td>142.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Travelling expenses of trained nurse</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Expenses in connection with gear, linen, cots, etc.</td>
<td>88.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Pilotage</td>
<td>275.15.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Towage</td>
<td>54.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Berthage</td>
<td>135.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Supply of water and incidental services</td>
<td>115.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Boat hire running lines</td>
<td>5.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Lighter hire unloading ashes</td>
<td>9.710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Use of gangway</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Customs overtime</td>
<td>31.16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Launch hire</td>
<td>22.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Car hire</td>
<td>5.11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. Labour:-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attending telephone 2.10. 0
Watching gangway 31. 2. 9
Gatekeeping 15.11
Taking lines 6. 2. 0
Cleaning jetty 6. 0

Loading and unloading baggage 48. 3. 0

Unloading ashes 12. 6.10 101. 6. 6

p. Labour Bureau charge 1. 4
q. Insurance on labour 1. 1
r. Laundering linen, etc. 98.11. 4
s. Trunk line calls 22.19. 0
t. Telephone, telegrams and cables 16. 2. 1
u. Postages and patties, stamps, exchange 5.11.10
v. Agent’s commission on disbursements 47.15. 9
w. Agency fees 53.12. 1
x. Port rates, Light and Harbour Dues etc. 123. 6. 7 1541.14. 9

£18,809.13. 4 (Au)

I certify that the above costs have been paid by the Commonwealth Department of the Navy for the services stated, and that receipted vouchers for such expenditure are held by me.

Navy Office, Director of Navy Accounts

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Appendix Four – The List of Evacuees

In the absence of an official list of persons who were compulsorily evacuated to Australia in 1940...

In creating this work I compiled, from a variety of sources, a list of just over 3,500 evacuees. I believe this reckoning to be approximately 95% complete and accurate. The starting point was the list of army, navy, and air force evacuees compiled by Albert Hubbard, Staff of the Financial Adviser, China Command, held today in the National Archives of Australia. This was augmented by lists of passengers on individual ships from Manila to Australia, held at The National Archives, UK. Further details came from Hong Kong newspapers, and papers from the Hong Kong Public Records Office relating to the financial arrangements of repatriating ex-evacuees from 1945-47.

In addition to these formal lists, I was also able to locate over 300 evacuees, or their immediate family members, who kindly helped complete and correct their data.

The biggest challenge was correlating evacuee data with the men who had been left behind in Hong Kong, a surprising number of whom had left the Colony before the Japanese invasion. I was keen to do this in order to understand how the splitting of families, in particular for those where the husband/father was killed in

7 ‘Report by the Director of Audit Hong Kong on the Statement of Claims for Sums Recoverable from His Majesty's Government in Respect of Hong Kong Evacuees to Australia.’ 18 May 1949. HKPRO 41-2-18.
the Hong Kong fighting or died as a POW or Internee, affected decisions on staying in Australia post-war or returning to Hong Kong or the UK. In this effort I was successful in around 70% of cases, with the majority of the unsuccessful searches relating to those men who had left Hong Kong before 8 December 1941 and could not easily be traced.

Relating these lists back to a full accounting of individuals who had stayed in, or returned to, Australia, after the war turned out to be impossible. Even with the 319 evacuees in the families I contacted, it was hard to come up with perfect numbers. Many people spent considerable time post war swapping between Australia, the UK, and other countries. Taking those 319 evacuees who made up the families I was able to track down and contact, 147 settled in Australia, 126 in the UK, and 46 in Hong Kong or other countries. Assuming these numbers are statistically significant (covering a little less than 10% of the evacuees), approximately 50% of the evacuees would have settled in Australia.

To calculate what that means in relation to today's Australian population I have had to take a statistical approach. The degree to which the 'one in two thousand' concept can claim credibility is thus uncertain. A simple model shows no more than that it is within the bound of possibility, that had all 3,500 evacuees remained in Australia, with normal birth and marriage rates in succeeding generations, approximately one in a thousand of today's population could be

---

8 In 1940 society, as noted in the text, the number of single British females living and working in Hong Kong independently was negligible.
descended from them.\(^9\) As research implies that in fact roughly half the evacuees stayed, this becomes one in two thousand:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E V A C U E S</th>
<th>Adults</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Spouses</th>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>% Alive</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>2750</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4469</td>
<td>2905</td>
<td>1788</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7262</td>
<td>4720</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>11503</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11800</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1280</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total:* 23192

*One in:* 975

---

Australian Population: 22620600 Year 2012
Australian Marriage rate %: 65 Average over period 1940-2012
Australian birth rate: 2.5 Average over period 1940-2012
Assuming: 500 Husbands survived to rejoin spouses
Assuming: 250 ‘New’ evacuee babies were born after Liberation
Assuming: 10 % of the babies expected of the 2010 generation have been born so far
Assuming: 1000 Of the 1985 generation are married already.

Clearly the ‘generations’ are averages, and marriage and birth rates have also varied over the years, adding to the inaccuracies. However, were all five categories of immigrant described in Chapter Six above included in this calculation, the numbers would be noticeably greater.

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\(^9\)The model simplifies by assuming the evacuees comprised exactly 1,000 wives and 2,500 children, with a further 250 being added to the latter figure to account for further children born to evacuees after hostilities.
Appendix Five – Herbert Leslie Langley Possessions lost to Japanese

Although Langley lost most of his possessions when Singapore fell, these were the items that he had shipped from Hong Kong and give a useful perspective on the contents of a 1940 household.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of items</th>
<th>Year purchased</th>
<th>Price paid £.s.d</th>
<th>Value at which assessed £.s.d</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Double bed with box spring mattress</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>9.10.0</td>
<td>8.0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 2 single beds with box spring mattresses</td>
<td>1936, 1939</td>
<td>14.0.0</td>
<td>12.0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Single bed with spring mattress</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>4.10.0</td>
<td>3.10.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Large wardrobe in teak with long mirror, drawers, fittings and coat hangers</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>8.0.0</td>
<td>7.0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Large dressing chest</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>4.0.0</td>
<td>4.0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Large dressing table with long mirror in centre and stool</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>6.10.0</td>
<td>6.0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Boot and shoe rack</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>1.10.0</td>
<td>1.0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. 2 medium oak and teak wardrobes</td>
<td>1928, 1933</td>
<td>10.0.0</td>
<td>8.10.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. 2 medium oak and teak dressing tables</td>
<td>1928, 1938</td>
<td>9.0.0</td>
<td>8.0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Medium oak dressing chest</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>3.0.0</td>
<td>2.10.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. 3 bedroom chairs</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>2.5.0</td>
<td>2.0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Bedroom stool</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>1.0.0</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18.6/15.</td>
<td>17.0/14.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. 2 bedside tables, oak and teak</td>
<td>1928, 1938</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. 2 bedroom carpets</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>8.0.0</td>
<td>6.10.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>2 bedroom slip mats</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>4.10.0 3.0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>2 bedroom linos</td>
<td>1933, 1935</td>
<td>5.0.0 4.0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>2 bedroom reading lamps</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>2.0.0 2.0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Basket for soiled linen</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>12.6 10.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Dining room suite of furniture, comprising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dining table, 6 dining chairs and sideboard in oak</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jacobean style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Food cupboard in pine with perforated sides and front</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>18.0.0 16.0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Cakestand in oak (three-tier)</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>15.0 14.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>3 food trays of various sizes (teak)</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>17.6 16.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Food trays, lacquered, 1 set</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>1.2.6 1.0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Norge refrigerator, 4 cu ft*</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>28.2.6 16.17.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Left in HK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c/o Messrs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Destroyed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Destroyed by bombs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Electric fires</td>
<td>1941**</td>
<td>2.10.0 2.5.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Electric hot plate**</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>1.17.6 1.17.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Electric hot water jug**</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>1.7.6 1.7.6</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>2 wall plaques</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>5.0 4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Tapestry picture in gilt frame</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>3.10.0 3.10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Firescreen, silver-plated engraving</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>5.0.0 5.0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Set of Blackwood teatrays</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>3.10.0 3.10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Joss table, Blackwood</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>3.10.0 3.10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Leather pouffe with box spring</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>2.10.0 2.10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Bookcase and writing bureau (teak)</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>5.0.0 4.10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Wooden curio stand</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>1.5.0 1.0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>Sewing cabinet (teak)</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>1.10.0 1.10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>Drawing room occasional table</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>2.0.0 1.15.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Item Description</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Price 1</td>
<td>Price 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Card table and 4 chairs</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>3.10.0</td>
<td>3.10.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Table tennis table and gear</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>2.10.0</td>
<td>2.5.0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Broken, could not be repaired at Hong Kong, kept for repair in UK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>41. HMV Portable AC/DC main set</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>14.10.0</td>
<td>2.10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>42. G.F.C. all wave 1941 Tropical Model mains set (7 valve)</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>21.0.0</td>
<td>19.10.0</td>
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<td>43. Standard electric lamp, Blackwood carved, with silk shade</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>2.0.0</td>
<td>2.0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>44. Hearth rug</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>1.5.0</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>45. New World gas cooker</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>12.10.0</td>
<td>12.10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>46. Kitchen table and chair (ash)</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>1.2.6</td>
<td>1.0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>47. Pair house steps</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>13.6</td>
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<td>48. Acme wringer and stand</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>3.0.0</td>
<td>3.0.0</td>
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<td>49. Bathroom cupboard</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>1.5.0</td>
<td>1.2.6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>50. Bathroom towel horse</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>51. Clothes horse</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
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<td>52. Draught screen</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>17.6</td>
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<td>53. Copper coal scuttle</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>1.15.0</td>
<td>1.14.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>54. Set of oxidised fire-irons</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>1.2.6</td>
<td>1.0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. Iron poker</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. 2 household shovels</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>57. 2 household brooms</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. 2 household buckets</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. 2 household baths</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. Clothes baskets and pegs</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. Household tools - axe felling shaft, chopper,</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>4.0.0</td>
<td>2.10.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
pliers, hammers, screwdrivers, soldering bit and gear, coupling gear, brace, set of wood lines, 1/4 inch steel drill, set wood chisels, 1/4 inch, 1/2 inch, 1 inch and 11/8 inch paring chisel, tenon saw including spare electrical gear such as plugs, sockets and flexible wire and tool bag.

62. Set engraving gear including wood block anvil and accessories together with 5 lb resin and Plaster-of-Paris composition 1941 1.10.0 1.0.0

63. Household Bissel carpet sweeper 1928 1.10.0 10.0

64. 6 bamboo rods 8 ft long 1937 10.0 6.0

65. Electric light fittings and bulbs including 5 silk shades and 6 glass opaque shades 1937-1940 1.10.0 1.0.0

66. Electric iron 1935 15.0 14.0

67. Charcoal iron 1937 3.6 3.0

68. Singer sewing machine 1928 11.11.0 10.0.0 £18

69. Underwood portable typewriter 1939 8.10.0 8.10.0

70. Gent’s bicycle 1942 5.0.0 5.0.0

71. Violin and case 1939 4.0.0 3.10.0

72. Columbia portable gramophone 1935 4.0.0 3.0.0

73. Approximately 40 gramophone records 1935-40 5.0.0 2.0.0

74. Model junk, complete with sails, rigging etc, approximately 18 inches long 1941 6.0.0 6.0.0

75. Folding camera and stand 1935 6.0.0 5.0.0

76. Agfa box camera 1938 10.0 10.0

77. Various flower vases and ornaments, ashtrays etc 1937-41 5.0.0 5.0.0

78. 3 wastepaper baskets 1937 6.0 6.0

79. Large Chinese vase 1941 8.0.0 8.0.0
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Value 1</th>
<th>Value 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Inlaid Chinese jewellery box</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>4.10.0</td>
<td>4.10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 photo frames, silver-plated and Blackwood</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>1.15.0</td>
<td>1.12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various books and stationery, including reference books, household cookery books, bibles and prayer books, hymn books, text books of scientific subjects and languages etc, violin music, books of song music, children’s rag books and children’s reading books - approx weight 2.5 cwt</td>
<td>1918-40</td>
<td>50.0.0</td>
<td>40.0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children’s play apparatus and toys, including dolls’ house, tables and small chairs, dolls, dolls' clothing, scissors, sets of paints, brushes, cutting out material, bricks for model building, bicycle, skipping ropes, games sets etc, Hornby train</td>
<td>1933-40</td>
<td>25.0.0</td>
<td>23.0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting box containing aim facts, rifle rest aperture back sight, cleaning gear and score books</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>3.17.6</td>
<td>3.17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oilstones, 1 Stanley blockplane</td>
<td>1918-35</td>
<td>1.10.0</td>
<td>1.10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather attaché cases</td>
<td>1928, 1938</td>
<td>4.0.0</td>
<td>3.10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carved camphor chest, 3 ft long</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>4.0.0</td>
<td>4.0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain camphor chest, 3 ft long</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>4.0.0</td>
<td>4.0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelling wood box, 3 ft long</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>2.15.0</td>
<td>2.0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelling wood box, 3 ft long</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>2.10.0</td>
<td>2.0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelling wood boxes, 3 ft long</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>2.0.0</td>
<td>1.18.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travelling crate for item 91</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fibre trunk cabin</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>1.11.0</td>
<td>1.0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibre suitcases</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>2.0.0</td>
<td>1.10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shopping baskets</td>
<td>1935, 1940</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathing baskets and hampers</td>
<td>1937-41</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Food provision etc and fuel in hand on 31.1.42, valued at $50 Straits – most was entirely destroyed by bomb damage on 28.1.42** | 1940 | 6.0.0   | 6.0.0   | by bombs
| Vacuum flasks                                                                     | 1939 | 15.0    | 15.0    |
99. Medicines and toilet requisites damaged and destroyed by bombing in house at time of explosion

28.1.42

100. Large steamer saucepan with two steamers, aluminium hotplate type 1935 2.0 1.18

101. Cast iron hotplate type frying pan 1935 10.0 9.0

102. Ordinary large frying pan 1928 5.0 4.6

103. Set of 4 aluminium saucepans 1928 10.0 9.0

104. Meat tins, cake tins, colander, 2 kettles, rolling pin and board, bread board, kitchen tray, scrubbing brushes, cleaning powder, polishers and wax, heavy floor polisher, 12 lb kitchen cutlery, tin opener, bottle opener, canning knife egg beater, mincing machine, soap basket, metal polish, etc 1928-38 4.0 4.0

105. 2 enamel bowls 1937 5.0 5.0

106. Large china bowl 1935 5.0 5.0

107. Large preserving pan 1935 6.0 5.9

108. Ironing board and stand 1937 7.6 7.6

109. Kitchen scales and set weights 1937 1.5 1.23

110. Bread bin 1935 7.6 7.0

111. Table ware, cutlery, rotary knife sharpener, large carving knife and fork, 6 dinner forks, 12 dessert forks, 6 dinner knives, 12 dessert spoons, 12 bread knives, 6 tea knives, 6 tea forks, 1 paste knife, 2 children’s knives and forks, 6 fish knives, 6 fish forks, 13 tablespoons, 6 soup spoons, 6 egg spoons, 11 teaspoons, 2 pairs nut crackers, 4 salt spoons, 1 jam spoon, Chinese silver, 1 butter knife, 1/2 inch, 2 pickle forks, 1 plated toast rack, 2 jam dishes with plated fittings, 1 marmalade dish with plated fitting, 1 pickle jar, 1 plated cake knife, 1 stainless steel 15.0 15.0

** Destroyed by bombs
bread knife

112. Crockery and glassware:
a) Full-size English dinner service (china): 12 soup plates, 12 dinner plates, 12 bread plates, 2 vegetable (dishes), large tureen, 2 gravy boats, 4 meat dishes 1933 12.0 11.15
b) Full set Chinese-patterned, English-style tea service, 12 pieces of each 1932 7.10 7.0
c) 1/2 set, tea service 1928-40 5.0 2.10
  1 E. P. N. S. teapot (1928) 1928-40 1.2 1.2

d) Teapot, 2 cruet sets, 2 meat dishes, 2 vegetable dishes, 5 meat plates, 3 basins, 4 china finger bowls, 5 porridge (bowls), 5 cups and saucers, 5 teaplates, 1 sandwich set plates, 10 breakfast cups, 11 breakfast plates, 1 china eggstand, 1 cakestand, 1 cheese dish, 2 plated dishes, 3 egg cups, 1 water jug, 2 lemon squeezer, 6 fruit plates, 1 fruit bowl, 1
glass bowl, 2 fruit sets 1928-40 4.4 4.4
e) 6 champagne glasses, 7 plain tumblers, 6 tumblers, 6 liqueur glasses, 6 sherry glasses, 3 port glasses 1928-40 17.9 17.9
f) 10 crystal tumblers 1933 1.2 1.2
g) 6 glass finger bowls, 1 sweet dish, 2 large white jugs, 1 slop basin 1933 15.0 14.0
h) Chinese coffee set, 6 pieces 1937 17.6 16.6
i) Coffee percolator 1937 7.0 6.0
j) Coffee caddy 1928 15.0 15.0

113. Linen:

114. Large eiderdown, silk-covered 1941 7.0 6.10
115. 8 large blankets 1933-40 8.8 8.0
116. 8 single blankets 1933-40 6.0 5.10
117. 8 feather pillows 2.0 1.17
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
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<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Prices 1</th>
<th>Prices 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>118.2</td>
<td>dozen pillowcases</td>
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<td>2.8.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>119.8</td>
<td>double sheets</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.0.0</td>
<td>3.10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>120.18</td>
<td>single sheets</td>
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<td>6.15.0</td>
<td>6.0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>121.18</td>
<td>bath towels</td>
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<td>3.3.0</td>
<td>3.0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>122.12</td>
<td>hand towels</td>
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<td>1.0.0</td>
<td>18.9</td>
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<td>123.6</td>
<td>tablecloths</td>
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<td>2.5.0</td>
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<td>124.24</td>
<td>table napkins</td>
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<td>1.4.0</td>
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<td>125.8</td>
<td>teacloths and serviettes</td>
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<td>126.7</td>
<td>linen bedspreads</td>
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<td>128.2</td>
<td>luncheon sets</td>
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<td>129.4</td>
<td>dressing table sets</td>
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<td>130.</td>
<td>Wooden chest containing curtains, lace and cretonne, linen covers for chairs, cushion covers, blackout material, 3 walking sticks, 2 tennis racquets, remnants of material and personal clothing</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.10.0</td>
<td>7.10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>131.1</td>
<td>Single bed, rattan-filled mattress</td>
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<td>18.9</td>
<td>15.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>132.3</td>
<td>single-bed size mosquito nets</td>
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<tr>
<td>133.</td>
<td>Teak show case for butterflies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>134.</td>
<td>Electric drawing room clock**</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.15.0</td>
<td>1.12.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>135.</td>
<td>Alarm clock</td>
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<td>15.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>136.</td>
<td>Travelling clock</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Destroyed by bombs**

**TOTAL**

|             | 583.7.0 | 499.9.6 |

Deduct item 24 (Hong Kong) | 28.2.6   | 16.7.6   |
Add item 137 Technical equipment, drawing equipment, books etc 6.17.6

REVISED TOTAL 489.9.6 ¹⁰

¹⁰ Email from Henry Langley to author, 22 October 2012.
Bibliography & Sources

Primary

Hong Kong Public Libraries

China Mail 1940

The Hong Kong Express 1940

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HKRS170-1-530 Repatriates and Evacuees – Enquiries and Claims from various firms in regard to the incidence of the cost of return passages for...

HKRS41-1-5327 Evacuation from Hong Kong, Malaya and North Borneo – Proposal for the destruction of files concerning the... By the high commissioner’s office, Canberra.

HKRS41-1-1722 Evacuation Scheme of 1940 – Question of Free Return Fare entitlement of women and children compulsorily evacuated to Australia under the...

HKRS41-1-1189 Passengers per SS Duntroon from Australia – arrangement for reception of... and onward transportation of those in transit to Shanghai.
HKRS41-1-1190 Passenger per *Empire Joy (Nellore)* from Australia – arrangement for reception of...

HKRS41-1-1195 Passengers arriving in Hong Kong on *SS Eastern* from Australia – arrangement for reception of...

HKRS41-1-1199 Passengers arriving in Hong Kong on *SS Empress of Australia* – arrangement for reception and onward transmission of...

HKRS41-1-1204 Passengers arriving in Hong Kong by *Tai Ping* and *Yochow* from Australia – arrangements for accommodation and/or onward transmission of...¹

**Hong Kong University**

Hong Kong Government Reports (1842 – 1941)

**The National Archives (TNA), UK**

CO 129/563/12 Sino-Japanese War: Evacuation of refugees from China

CO 129/563/13 Sino-Japanese War: Comments at Cabinet meeting concerning evacuation

CO 129/587/12 Evacuation from Hong Kong: Passenger lists for: *Indrapoera, Johan de Witt, Slamat, Awatea, Christiaan Huygens*

CO 129/589/17 Evacuation of British families, Evacuation Advisory Committee

CO 129/589/18 Complaints against evacuation scheme

PREM 4/89/2 Beveridge Report

Cabinet Papers:

CAB 65/7/67

CAB 65/7/68

¹These latter files were essential for building the lists of evacuees.
CAB 65/7/70
CAB 65/7/78
CAB 65/7/82
CAB 66/8/37
CAB 66/8/43
CAB 66/9/2
CAB 66/9/14

National Archives and Records Administration

File 346g.4115, Record Group 59, National Archives at College Park, MD. (Record Group 59, Stack Area 250, Row B1, Compartment 10, Shelf 6, Boxes 1151-1152.)
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National Archives of Australia

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A433 1941/2/1096: PART 1 Evacuation of British non combatants from Hong Kong
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A461 AM337/1/1: Evacuation - Hong Kong - Main File
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A663 011/2/5: Evacuation of non-combatants from Hong Kong
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*China Boy*, Roger Proulx

*Notes on the History of Robert Michael Stewart*, Michael Stewart

*A Wartime Childhood*, Richard Neve

Correspondence and Interviews with Hong Kong Evacuees

- Susan Van Andel (nee Anslow), daughter of Stanley Internee Frank Anslow.
- Barbara Anslow (nee Redwood), daughter of William Henry Redwood who died before the Japanese invasion, and herself a Stanley internee.
- Reg Banham, son of Tom Banham, RA, who died as a POW in Japan.
- Ray Barman, son of POW Charles Barman, RA.
• Derek Bird, son of POW Godfrey Bird, RE.
• Andrin Blaauw (nee Dewar), daughter of POW John Dewar, HKVDC.
• The late John Black, son of Stanley Internee Tom Black.
• Paul Bonney, son of Robert Bonney, RAOC, who was lost during the Battle of Hong Kong.
• Wendy Borthwick (nee Smith), daughter of Stanley Internee Stanley Smith, HKPF.²
• Maurice (Max) Braga, son of Noel Braga who left for Macau during the occupation.
• Stuart Braga, son of Hugh Braga who left for Australia before the Japanese attack.³
• The late Brian Bromley, son of POW Ernest Bromley, HKDDC.
• Georgina Brooks (nee Holmes), daughter of Leslie Holmes, HKVDC, who was lost during the Battle of Hong Kong.
• Ron Brooks, son of POW Charles Brooks, RA, who perished on the Lisbon Maru.
• Tony Bushell, son of POW Harry Bushell, Corps of Military Police.
• Isabelle Clough (nee Spoors), daughter of POW Alfred Spoors, HKVDC.
• Kathleen Crawford (nee Mathieson) daughter of POW Donald Mathieson, Royal Scots.
• Elizabeth Doery (nee Gittins), daughter of POW William Gittins, HKVDC, who died in Japan, and Jean Gittins who was a Stanley internee.

² Born in the Philippines 2 September 1940, Wendy was evacuated in utero.
³ Hugh and Noel Braga were of Portuguese descent and they and their siblings were not considered enemies of the Japanese. However, these two had British wives who were thus evacuated with their children. Of the sixteen members of the Braga family still in Hong Kong at the outbreak of the Pacific War, all but one, Jean, eventually went to Macau between April 1942 and June 1944.
• Tony Dudman, son of POW Bill Dudman, HKVDC, and himself a Stanley Internee.

• Hugh Dulley, son of Hugh Dulley, HKRNVR, who was lost during the battle of Hong Kong.

• Robin Fabel, son of POW Fred Fabel, Army Education Corps.

• Michael Ferrier, son of POW Vivian Ferrier, HKRNVR, and of Stanley Internee Olga Ferrier.

• Murray Forsyth, son of Henry Forsyth, HKVDC, who was lost during the battle of Hong Kong.

• Vicki Gibson (nee Moss), daughter of George Moss who retired from Hong Kong Fire Brigade and moved to Australia before hostilities.

• Colin and Gavin Gordon, sons of Vyner Gordon, HKVDC and Royal Scots, who died of wounds immediately after the Battle of Hong Kong.

• Dorothy Hardwick (nee Coates), daughter of civilian Alfred Coates who escaped with his family to Macau just before invasion.

• John Hearn, son of James Hearn, RAOC, who was lost during the Battle of Hong Kong.

• William Hirst, son of POW William Hirst, HKVDC.\(^4\)

• Gloria Hitchcock (nee Grant), daughter of Prison Officer James Grant, Stanley Internee.

• Janis Hollis (nee Gowland), daughter of Cuthbert Gowland, HKVDC who was lost during the Battle of Hong Kong.

• Timothy Holmes, son of Leslie Holmes, HKVDC, who was lost during the Battle of Hong Kong.

\(^4\) Born in Australia 1 September 1940, William was technically another evacuee in utero.
• Desmond Inglis, son of John Inglis who left Hong Kong before the invasion.
• Rosemary Inglis (nee Read, who post-war married Desmond above), daughter of Alfred Read, who left Hong Kong before the invasion.
• Joan Izard (nee Franklin), daughter of POW Frederick Franklin, RE.
• Neil Johnston, son of Stanley Internee Herbert Johnston.
• Maunie Kwok (nee Bones), daughter of Leslie Bones, Merchant Navy, who left Hong Kong before the invasion.
• Annmarie Leslie (nee Hitchins), daughter of POW Cecil Hitchins, RASC.
• Mary-June Littleton (nee Mezger), daughter of Stanley Internee William Mezger.
• Cyril Martin, son of Stanley Internee Arseny Savitsky, HKPF.\(^5\)
• Ian McNay, son of POW Edward McNay, Dockyard Police.
• Richard Neve, son of George Neve, GSO, who died of wounds as a POW.
• Robin Patey, son of Bruce Patey, Merchant Marine, who was interned in the Philippines.
• Sue Penn (nee McClaren), daughter of Stanley Internee Harold McClaren.
• Robin Poulter, son of POW William Poulter, Middlesex.
• Roger Proulx, son of POW escapee Benny Proulx, HKRNVR, and himself a Stanley Internee.
• Charlotte Quinn (nee Mezger), daughter of Stanley Internee William Mezger.
• Jone Radda (nee Davies), daughter of Stanley Internee Ridyard Davies, HKPF.
• Roger Rawlings, son of POW Frank Rawlings, RA, who perished on the

\(^5\)Surname changed from Savitsky to Martin post-war.
*Lisbon Maru.*

- Elizabeth Ride, daughter of POW escapee Professor Lindsay Ride, HKVDC.
- Sheila Roberts (nee Bolton), daughter of Andrew Bolton, who left Hong Kong before the invasion.
- Mike Salter, son of Alfred Salter, Stanley Internee, and brother of POW Cedric Salter, HKVDC.
- Margaret Simpson, daughter of POW William Simpson, HKVDC.
- Michael Stewart, son of POW Evan Stewart, HKVDC.
- Thelma Stewart (nee Organ), daughter of William Organ, HKDDC, who died as a POW in Japan.
- James Templer, son of POW Cecil Templer, RA, and himself a Philippine Internee.
- Patricia Tring (nee Guard), daughter of Harold Guard, who left Hong Kong before the invasion.
- June Williams (nee Winterton), daughter of Stanley Internee Frederick Winterton, HKVDC Stanley Platoon.
- Leilah Wood, daughter of Cecil Wood, and herself a Stanley Internee.  
- Rosemary Wood, daughter of POW Thomas Wood, RASC.

**Correspondence and Interviews with Relatives of Hong Kong Evacuees**

- Hugh Balean, son of evacuee Viola Raven (daughter of Stanley Internee Arthur Raven).

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6 Cecil Wood was a junior port pilot on the China coast, at Swatow. He lost his life during the war, though the Commonwealth War Graves Commission does not list him and his family has tried in vain to ascertain the circumstances of his death.
• Cathy Biondich, daughter of evacuee Roy Holmes (son of Clifford Holmes, HKSRA, who was killed in the battle of Hong Kong).
• James Brooks, son of evacuee Georgina Brooks (daughter of Leslie Holmes, HKVDC, who was lost in the Battle for Hong Kong).
• Mike Chapman, son of evacuee Jessie Pollock (daughter of POW Joshua Pollock, RN).
• John Cooper, nephew of evacuee Faith Jupp (wife of John Jupp, HKRNVR, who was lost on the Lisbon Maru).
• Rick Coxhill, brother of evacuees Ronald, Karel, and Robin (post-war son of POW Fred Coxhill, HKVDC).
• Helen D’All, cousin of evacuee William D’All (son of Stanley Internee William D’All, HKPF).
• Sue Dunwoody, daughter of evacuee Ernest Neubronner (son, of Robert Neubronner, RE, who died as a POW in Japan).
• Sue Gibson, daughter of evacuee Vicki Gibson (daughter of George Moss, who left Hong Kong before hostilities).
• Lorraine Hadris, daughter of evacuee and Stanley Internee Donald Osborne (son of Stanley Internee Alfred Osborne).
• Richard Harloe, son of evacuee Eveline Harloe (wife of Stanley Internee Charles Harloe).
• Marilyn Hartney, daughter of evacuee Isabella Hunter (wife of Stanley Internee James Hunter, HKPF).
• Andrew Hill, son of evacuee Norman Hill (son of Stanley Internee James Hill, HKPF).
• Catherine Hill, daughter of evacuee Christine Lamb (daughter of POW Ronald Lamb, RE).
• James Hobson, son of evacuee Rosemary Wood (daughter of POW Thomas Wood, RE).
• Rebecca Hudson, daughter of evacuee Peter Hudson (son of Internee John Hudson).
• Janet Jones, daughter of evacuee Norah Thompson (wife of Internee & escapee Walter Thompson, HKPF).
• Sarah Jordon, daughter of evacuee Robin Jordan (son of Leonard Jordan, RE, who died as a POW).
• Henry Langley, son of evacuee Marjorie Langley (wife of Herbert Langley, who left Hong Kong before hostilities).
• Duncan Lapsley, son of POW Robert Lapsley whose mother and three of five siblings were evacuated.
• Sue Leagas, daughter of evacuee Doreen Kaufmann (daughter of POW Fred Kaufmann, HKDDC).
• Michael Longyear, nephew of evacuee Jean Howard (wife of POW Alec Howard, HKVDC).
• Michael Martin, son of Cyril Martin (son of Stanley Internee Arseny Savitsky, HKPF).
• Shane Miller, son of evacuee Frank Walsh (son of John Walsh, HKPF, who died as an Internee).
• Peter & Robert Moss, sons of evacuee Kathleen Moss (wife of Stanley Internee George Moss, HKPF).
• Kristeen Nagle, granddaughter of evacuee Margaret Mitchell (wife of Donald Mitchell, RN, who died as a POW).

• Jonathan Nigel, son of evacuee Patricia Mitchell (daughter of POW Eric Mitchell, HKVDC) and POW Ferdinand Nigel, HKVDC.

• Patricia Patey, wife of evacuee Robin Patey (son of Internee Bruce Patey).

• Suzanne Pincevic, daughter of evacuee Helene Brooks (wife of Stanley Internee Roland Brooks, HKFB).

• Jane Prophet, daughter of evacuee David Prophet (son of David Prophet, HKVDC, who was a POW).

• Emma Pruen, daughter of Malcolm MacPherson (son of Robert MacPherson, RAOC, who was killed in the battle of Hong Kong).

• Ann Pumphrey, daughter of evacuee Kate Vernall (wife of POW Richard John Vernall, RNVR).

• Vic Rayward-Smith, son of evacuee Winifred Smith (wife of Internee Stanley Smith, HKPF).

• Stewart Sloan, brother of evacuee James Sloan (son of POW Charles Sloan, HKVDC).

• David Stanford, son of evacuee Fred Stanford (son of Fred Stanford, Royal Scots, who was lost on the Lisbon Maru).

• Marjorie Stintzi, daughter of evacuee Marjorie Elston (wife of Stanley Internee Archibald Elston). Majorie is also great niece of evacuee Eileen Hargreaves (wife of Stanley Internee John Hargreaves).

• Bill Stoker, son of evacuee Bill Stoker (son of POW Bill Stoker, HKVDC).

• Janet Sykes, daughter of evacuee Isobel Robertson (daughter of Internee John Gray Robertson) and POW Leonard Sykes, HKVDC.
• Gweneth Thirlwell, granddaughter of evacuee Clotilde Thirlwell (wife of James W. Thirlwell, POW).

• Kim Tomlinson, daughter of evacuee Grace Valerie Haskins (daughter of POW Cecil Haskins).

• Aileen Trinder, wife of evacuee Bernard Trinder (son of POW George Trinder, Royal Scots, who was lost in the Lisbon Maru).

• Mary Vaughan, Daughter of evacuee Sue Quinn (wife of POW John Quinn, Royal Marines).

• Nikki Veriga, daughter of Stanley Internee Vitaly Veriga, HKPF, whose first wife, Antonia, was an evacuee.

• Semi Vine, daughter of evacuee Ann M. Daniel (daughter of POW Frank Daniel, RE).

• Mark Weedon, son of evacuee Elizabeth Weedon (wife of POW Martin Weedon, Middlesex and, later, wife of POW Anthony Hewitt).

• Briony Widdis, daughter of evacuee Julian Crozier (son of POW Douglas Crozier, HKVDC).

• Betty Wilson, wife of evacuee Robin Wilson (son of POW John Wilson, RE).

**Correspondence and Interviews with Other Individuals**

• The late H. W. ‘Bunny’ Browne, CBE, Financial Advisor & Army Audit Staff.

• Jeanette Bruce, Shanghai evacuee.\(^7\)

• Henry Ching, son of Henry Ching, editor of the *South China Morning Post*.

• Gerry Lander, Philippines internedee and son of John Lander, HKVDC, who was lost in the fighting.

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\(^7\) Nee Canning.
• John Penn, son of POW Arthur Harry Penn, HKVDC.
• Angus Lorenzen, Philippine civilian internee.

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