

SEARCY, Maurice Rolfe (2nd AIF SX10212)



Name	Searcy, Maurice Rolfe Private
Service Number	SX10212
Date of Birth	22nd January 1905
Died	1st July 1942
Place of Birth	St Peters SA
Resident	Victor Harbor SA
Cemetery	Commemorated at the Rabaul Memorial

Image 1©naa.gov.au 2026
Enlistment photograph of Maurice Rolfe Searcy

Maurice Rolfe Searcy was born at St Peters in South Australia on 22 January 1905. He was the eldest child of five children of John Edwin Searcy and Elizabeth Searcy (nee Kelly). His father was the proprietor of real estate firm J.E. Searcy & Co, in Victor Harbor. Maurice was educated at Victor Harbor Public High School where he completed his first year, he later moved to Adelaide to complete his education. He later became an auditor. The Victor Harbor Times announced on the 29 December 1930, that Maurice got engaged to Isabella Martin of Pembroke St, College Park in Adelaide. However on the 30 August in 1940, in his enlistment application, held by the National Archives, it records his next of kin as his father with no listing of Isabella. His address was at 11 Pembroke Street College Park in the same street as his former fiancée.

After enlistment and some basic training, Maurice was posted to the Australian Army Ordnance Corps (AAOC), a posting that would have utilised his qualifications as an auditor. Maurice then undertook training at the Signals Training Depot in Balcombe (Victoria), followed by infantry training with the 7th Infantry Training Centre at Wilson's Promontory, near Foster in Victoria.

Whilst at Foster, he was admitted to the Casualty Station on 20 April 1941 suffering from an infected insect bite. He rejoined the training course two days later. On 10 May 1941, Maurice was posted to No. 1 Independent Company. This army unit had only been recently formed in May-June of 1941. No. 1 Independent Company was raised for service in the Middle East, although at the time, army headquarters were not quite sure what role the company would play there.

In May, Maurice was graded as a Group II Signaller. This title was an army classification for pay purposes. The Company was warned that it was set for overseas service, and Maurice and other members of the unit were sent on pre-embarkation leave from 20th to 30th June 1941. The expectation they would soon see overseas service did not materialise until after Japan entered the war.

With the war against Japan, looming, No. 1 Independent Company joined the formation “LARK FORCE”, a code-named special formation that would be sent to resist any future Japanese advance towards Australia.

The men boarded the converted cargo and passenger ship HMT “Z” (the code name for the ship ZEALANDIA) on 12 July 1941. (The HMT “Z” would later be destroyed on the 19 February 1942, the in one of the two air raids attacking Darwin. Darwin was attacked by 188 Japanese fighter jets, killing 236.)

The ship disembarked, at Kavieng the capital of the Papuan-New Guinean province of New Ireland. Members of LARK Force, including No 1 Independent Coy, were ordered to strategically defend the most important airfields and harbours.

The objective of the Lark Force was to maintain a forward air observation line as long as possible and to make the enemy fight for this line rather than abandon it at the first threat, as the force was considered too small to withstand any invasion.

In the event of an invasion of New Britain by the Japanese, Major James Edmonds-Wilson, who commanded the 1st Independent Company, was under orders to resist long enough to destroy key airfields and other military installations such as fuel dumps, before withdrawing south to wage a guerrilla war. They did not have to wait very long, as on 21 January 1942, a preparatory bombing raid by about sixty Japanese aircraft attacked Kavieng.

A number of aircraft were shot down. The company’s only means of escape, the schooner called Induna Star, was damaged. Nevertheless, despite the damage the crew managed to sail the vessel to Kaut where they hoped to repair the damage. As they did 1st Independent Company commandos withdrew across the island to Sook, having received word that a large Japanese naval force was approaching the island.

In the early morning of 22 January 1942, the Japanese landed at Kavieng. The landing Japanese force consisted of between 3,000 and 4,000 troops. The Australian troops were outnumbered. As the lead Japanese troops reached Kavieng airfield, fighting broke out. The small force of Australians blew up the supply dump, remaining buildings still left standing, and did further damage to the airfield, so the Japanese forces could not use anything.

Fighting their way out, the commandos withdrew towards the main force at Sook, a number of men were captured in the process. On the 28 January, once the company had regrouped at Sook, they withdrew further south to Kaut, where they helped with the repair of the Induna Star, before setting out along the east coast of the island. They reached Kalili Harbour on 31 January but after learning that the fighting on New Britain was over, and that the Japanese had occupied Rabaul, it was decided to sail for Port Moresby.

On 2 February 1942, the schooner was sighted by a Japanese plane, which subsequently attacked it, causing considerable damage to the vessel, as well as destroying one of its lifeboats and causing a number of casualties. The Induna Star began taking on water and as a result the men were forced to surrender. Under escort by a Japanese aircraft and then later a destroyer, they were instructed to sail to Rabaul where they became prisoners of war. Maurice was listed as a POW. (prisoner of war)

After a few months at Rabaul, the officers were separated from their companies. The officers were transported to Japan where they remained in captivity for the rest of the war, whilst the rest of the companies including the members of Lark Force, which totalled more than 845, plus 200 civilians that had been captured, were put on to the Japanese passenger ship Montevideo Maru for transportation to the Japanese POW forced labour camp in Hainan Island.

Travelling unescorted, the Montevideo Maru sailed from Rabaul on 22 June. On 1 July, the ship was sighted by an American submarine, the USS Sturgeon, off the coast of the Luzon, in the Philippines.

The USS Sturgeon torpedoed and sunk the Montevideo Maru, without realising it was a prisoner of war vessel. Of the 88 Japanese crew on board, only 17 survived. The Japanese survivors reported that two torpedos hit the vessel and created an explosion in the oil tank in the aft of the hold. 11 minutes later the ship was sunk. The prisoners on board were held in the decks below. All 845 military prisoners from the Lark Force which included, 133 members of the 1 Independent Company and the 2/22 Infantry Battalion, the Other Support Units which included detachments from the Rabaul Anti-Aircraft Battery, Coast Artillery ("L" Heavy Battery), Army Medical Corps, and Signals units, all perished. Over 200 civilian administrators, missionaries, and merchant seamen also perished. In July of 1942, Maurice was listed as a missing POW. He was not officially declared deceased until the 19 October 1945.

As PTE Maurice Searcy has no known grave, he was commemorated at the Rabaul Memorial, along with 1,200 other Australian servicemen who lost their lives in that area during the Second World War.

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Compiled by the Victor Harbor RSL History Research Team 2014. Updated by T.Young & M.Young 29/06/2026

Appendix

Victor Harbor Times and Encounter Bay and Lower Murray Pilot (SA : 1912 - 1930), Friday 23 July 1920, page 3

VICTOR HARBOR HIGH SCHOOL.

As a result of the terminal examination for the half year ending June 30th, 1920. the following pupils obtained highest marks,—
Second year pupils—First, Hubert Millard, 89 per cent ; second, Edna Moore, 71 ; third, Jean Wall, 67.
First year pupil—First, G. Jeffery, 83 per cent ; second, Mabel Miller, 65 ; third, Maurice Searcy, 62.

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<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article167132042>

Image 2 © nla.gov.au 2014
The Victor Harbor Times 23 July 1920,

Victor Harbour Times (SA : 1932 - 1986), Wednesday 29 June 1983, page 15

Focus on school history



* Back Row: Dulcie Mewett, Ada C.J. Wall, Gladys E. Barton, Sylvia Fulton, Mabel Miller, Eileen Jordan, Jean Bond, Primrose Malcom.

Second Row: Mary Henderson, Mary S. Harding, Alice K. Bruce, Helen M. (Nell) Henderson, Edna Moore, Madge Whiting, Doris I. Battye, Una Cakebread.

Third Row: Hector W.T. Martin, William H. Overall, Henry A. Prescott, Matthew J. Kirvan, Philip Simpson, George Jeffery, Lawrence G. Cakebread, Mr. H. LeLacheur.

Front Row: Alexander H. Holborn, Hubert Millard, Oscar T. Mayfield, Leslie A. Watson, Maurice Searcy, Joseph W. Barker, W. Alfred Sweetman.

A historical display featuring the early years of Victor Harbor High School and its pupils will be mounted for the school's ball and 'Dinkum Fair' planned for early October.

Display organiser Lorna Randall said she

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<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article186347672>

Image 3 © nla.gov.au 2014
The Victor Harbor Times 29 June 1983

This article was a throwback from the 1920's at Victor Harbor High School. Maurice can be seen sitting in the front row, third from the the right.

The story reads: A historical display featuring the early years of Victor Harbor High School and its pupils will be mounted for the schools hall and 'Dinkam Fair' planned for early October. Display organiser Lorna Randall said she was keen to obtain photographs of the high school students from its opening in 1910 to 1940. Eight hundred students passed through the school in this period. Photographs could be loaned or copies made at the owners home. The display will be held for noth the hall and the fair. The earliest photgraph to hand so far was taken between April 27 1920 to June 2 1920 when the headmaster was Mr H.LeLacheur, who took charge on January 19, 1920. This photograph from Mrs O.B. Henderson shows from left:

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS

Advertisements under this heading must be substantiated by the name and address of the donor, and are carried at a charge of Two Shillings and Sixpence each when not exceeding five lines, over five lines, Sixpence per line.

Deaths Advertisements in which a Funeral Announcement is made are charged for as if the Death and Funeral were separate announcements, namely:—The minimum charge of 2/6 and 2/6 respectively.

In Memorial and Death Advertisements containing references to more than one deceased are charged 2/6 each for each deceased mentioned, as if they were distinct and separate announcements.

Engagements and Approaching Marriage Notices require the signature of both parties concerned.

BIRTHS

SMART (nee Edna Clark).—On the 27th December, at Bowen, Magill-road, the wife of L. A. Smart, of Peck-street, Prahran—a daughter.

NORMAN.—On the 27th December at the Memorial Hospital, to the wife of FRANK NORMAN, of Burton-street, North Adelaide—a daughter.

GURR (nee Irma Littlefield).—On the 19th December, at Storer Park's Private Hospital, Glendora, to Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Gurr, of Richmond—a daughter. Both well. Special thanks to Dr. E. F. West and Sister Paul.

GARDNER.—On the 26th December, at "Peters" Hospital, Goodwood-road, Kings Park, to Mr. and Mrs. Roy Gardner, of Francis-street, Clarence Park—a daughter.

GOLDEN WEDDINGS

TAYLOR-DIX.—On the 30th December, 1930, at Claremont, by the Rev. T. Fryer, John, third son of the late Mr. and Mrs. John Taylor of Claremont to Sarah Ann, second daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Edward Dix, of Claremont. Present address, Gladstone-road, Blackwood.

CAMERON-DAVE.—On the 29th December, 1930, in Kapunda Congregational Church, by the Rev. B. E. Fennie, James, second son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Cameron, to Charlotte E. third daughter of Mr. and Mrs. B. Dave, Stirling East. Present address, Box 11, Tarwin.

SILVER WEDDING

DUNCAN-FORRY.—On the 27th December, 1930, in the Methodist Church, Maitland, Victoria, by Rev. T. J. F. Forry, Leslie B., fifth son of late Mr. Andrew and Mrs. I. Duncan, to Mabel E., second daughter of late Mr. Edward and Mrs. E. Jory both families of Maitland. Present address, Macleay-street, Geelong, South Australia.

APPROACHING MARRIAGES

WHILLAS-FRIEST.—The marriage of Nora V. third daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Whillas, of 15, Sheriffs-street, Woodville, to Ernest C. elder son of Mrs. and the late Mr. E. C. W. Friest, of Rosetta-street, West Croydon, will be solemnized at the Flanders-street Baptist Church on the 3rd January, 1931, at 7.30 p.m. Reception, Women's Club, Adelaide.

CARMODY-BUTTON.—The marriage of Helen, third daughter of Mrs. B. and the late Peter Carmody, Semaphore, to Bertram James, second son of Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Button, Burnside, will be solemnized at Sacred Heart Church, Semaphore, on Thursday, 1st January, at 11.30 a.m. Relatives and friends invited to ceremony.

ENGAGEMENTS

STEPHENS-SALT.—The engagement is announced of May, third daughter of Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Stephens, Magill-avenue, Royal Park, to Frank, fourth son of Mr. and Mrs. E. Salt, of Cedar-avenue, Royal Park.

and Mrs. E. Salt, of Cedar-avenue, Royal Park.

PATTERSON-BESEN.—The engagement is announced of Lilian E., eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Patterson, of Port Pirie, to Mervyn A. (Boh), second son of Mr. and Mrs. G. C. E. Besen, of Port George.

LOW-WILSON.—The engagement is announced of Ayla, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. P. L. Low, Wilkes Flat, Port Lincoln, to Rex, only son of Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Wilson, Pointon, Port Lincoln.

LOGAN-MACKAY.—The engagement is announced of Jean, youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Logan, of Woodside.

DE VRIES.—To William, eldest son of Mr. and the late Mrs. W. Mackay.

MARTIN-SEARCY.—The engagement is announced of Isabel, second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Martin, of Berri, to Maurice Roffe, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Searcy, of Pembroke-street, College Park.

HANNEN-THOMSON.—The engagement is announced of Margaret M., elder daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. Hannen, of Semaphore, to James E., third son of Mr. and Mrs. W. Thomson, of Semaphore.

DEATHS

BEADNALL.—On the 27th December, at a private hospital, Emma, relict of Thomas Culbert Beadnall, and late of Gawler. Aged 73 years. At rest.

WRIGHT.—On the 27th December, at her residence, No. 126, Kentworth-road, Fremantle, Sarah Jane, the dearly beloved wife of Walter Wright, and loving mother of Walter, Roy Sylvia, and Maria. Aged 62 years. A patient sufferer at rest.

GARNER.—On the 27th December, at the Soldiers' Memorial Hospital, Murray Bridge, Charlotte (Lottie), beloved wife of Horace L. Garner, aged 34.

BREIDENMANN.—On the 27th December, at her residence, 108, King William-street, Kent Town, Johanna, widow of Herman Breidenmann, aged 84 years. A resident of 27 years.

DEATHS

NICKER.—On the 27th December, at a private hospital, Maitland, Victoria, beloved husband of Lillie Nickier, of Ulm Magpie Station, Maitland Shire, Central Australia, aged 67 years.

BACON.—On the 27th December, at Maitland, W.A. Henry, the dearly beloved husband of Elsie Bacon, and loving father of P. C. and H. Bacon, W.A. Meddies W. Brocks, W.A. James Llewellyn, Gawler, and W. Francis O'Brien, aged 70.

WATT.—On the 27th December (suddenly), William, Woodcock ("Pop"), dearly loved father of Wyn, Neil, Len, and Don. Late of Rose Park. At rest.

FOOTE.—On the 27th December (suddenly), Mary Jane, beloved wife of the late William Foote and loving mother of L. E. Foote. Aged 63 years.

HUMPHREYS.—On the 27th December, at Maitland Bridge Hospital (suddenly), Walter, loving husband of Ivy Humphreys, of Moorlands, and dearly beloved son of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Humphreys, of Brompton. At rest.

OTTREWILL.—On the 27th December, at his residence, 41, Debridge-street, Kensington Park, Harry, dearly loved husband of Flo Ottrewill, aged 34 years.

NORMAN.—On the 27th December, at Flanders-street, Glen Osmond, William Norman, aged 74 years. Privately interred in Magill Cemetery.

SMITH.—On the 27th December, at his residence, No. 36, David-street, Cheltenham, Thomas Smith, bootmaker. Aged 70 years.

ANDREW.—On the 26th December, at her residence, 1, Cheltenham-street, Burnside, Elizabeth, beloved wife of Francis and mother of Lindsay Andrew of Twinta, aged 65 years.

WOOD.—On the 26th December, at "Nanna" Private Hospital, Richard, of

Image 4 © nla.gov.au 2014
The Adelaide Advertiser 29 December 1930, it reads:

Engagements **MARTIN_ SEARCY** _ the engagement is announced of Isabel, second daughter of Mr and Mrs H B Martin, of Berri, to Maurice Roffe, eldest son of Mr and Mrs J E Searcy of Pembroke Street College Park.



Image 5 © naa.gov.au 2014
Enlistment photo circa 1940

5 JUN 1946
GRATUITY CHECKED

A.A.F. 250 COMPLETED
DATE 27/6/43

P.O.W. 7

Army Form B. 103-1 (Adapted)
(Reprinted, July, 1948.)

SERVICE AND CASUALTY FORM

Rank Private
(On Enlistment)

Christian Names MAURICE ROFFE

Unit A.A.O.C. 2nd A.I.F.
Army No. SX 10212

Surname SEARCY
(Block Capitals)

Date of Enlistment 30th August, 1940

Marital Condition Single

Place ADELAIDE.

Next of Kin John Edwin Searcy

Date of Birth 22/1/05

Address of Next of Kin 11 Pembroke St.,

Place of Birth ST. PETERS. S.A.

College Park. S.A.

Trade or Occupation Auditor.

Religion Church of England.

Relationship Father.

Medical Classification Class I.
(On Enlistment)

Identification—Colour of Hair Brown Eyes Green

Distinctive Marks Small circular scar inner side right leg.

REPORT		Record of all casualties regarding promotions (acting, temporary, local or substantive), appointments, transfers, postings, attachments, etc., forfeiture of pay, wounds, accidents, admission to and discharge from Hospital, Casualty Clearing Stations, etc., Date of disembarkation and embarkation from a theatre of war (including furlough, etc.).	Date of Casualty	Place of Casualty	Authority W.3011, B.2069, or other Document	Signature of Officer Certifying Correctness of Entries
Date	From whom received					
10.9.40	120.5.757/40	REPORTED FOR DUTY R.R.D.	30.8.40	✓ 4 M.D.	W.3011. 533/40	47/10
5.10.40	MOB 3	Entrained 4 M.D. for 3 MD	9.10.40	✓ 4 M.D.	MOB. 9.	47/10
4.10.40	S. 897/40	Posted to A.A.O.C. from R.R.D.	8.10.40	✓ 4 M.D.	W.3011. 697/40	4
15.10.40	D.R.O.3MD	Marched in to No.1 R.R.D.3MD from 4 MD	10.10.40	✓ 3MD	Ex. No 5352	48/10
1.11.40	Ex. No 5380	Transferred to C.3MD Signal Coy. Bn. 6 Field	28.10.40	✓ 3MD	W.3011. 265/40	48/10
3.2.41	Ex. No 3MD	To 14 Rly. 9th Div Sigs	18.1.41	✓ "	Ex. No 5624	48/10
4.11.40	3MD	Transferred from 7th Sigs. to 3MD Sigs. Depot	25.10.40	✓ "	Ex. No 5391	48/10
20.2.41	"	No.12. Ex. No 391. Should read Ex. No 5381	20.2.41	✓ "	Ex. No 680	48/10
12.3.41	D.R.O. 3MD	Transferred to 7th Sigs. Centre	5.3.41	✓ 2MD	Ex. No 739	48/10
17.3.41	D.R.O. 3MD	Transferred to 4th Sigs. Depot from 7th Sigs. Centre	18.1.41	✓ 3MD	Ex. No 754	48/10
1.5.41	D.R.O. 3MD	Admitted to C.O.S. Foster	20.4.41	✓ "	Ex. No 894	48/10
		Rejoined Unit from C.O.S. Foster	22.4.41	✓ "	Ex. No 894	48/10

S.M. & CO. 21750

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I CERTIFY THAT THIS IS A TRUE COPY OF THE ORIGINAL OF WHICH IT REPORTS TO BE A COPY, AND THAT I AM THE OFFICER HAVING THE CUSTODY OF THE ORIGINAL

bas 5978

SERVICE AND CASUALTY FORM

Army Form B. 103-1 (Adapted)
(Reprinted, July, 1948.)

Army No. SX 10212

Officer-in-Charge District Records Southern Command (4 M.D.)

Christian Names MAURICE ROFFE

Unit A.A.O.C. 2nd A.I.F.

Surname SEARCY
(Block Capitals)

Date of Enlistment 30th August, 1940

Marital Condition Single

Place ADELAIDE.

Next of Kin John Edwin Searcy

Date of Birth 22/1/05

Address of Next of Kin 11 Pembroke St.,

Place of Birth ST. PETERS. S.A.

College Park. S.A.

Trade or Occupation Auditor.

Religion Church of England.

Relationship Father.

Medical Classification Class I.
(On Enlistment)

Identification—Colour of Hair Brown Eyes Green

Distinctive Marks Small circular scar inner side right leg.

REPORT		Record of all casualties regarding promotions (acting, temporary, local or substantive), appointments, transfers, postings, attachments, etc., forfeiture of pay, wounds, accidents, admission to and discharge from Hospital, Casualty Clearing Stations, etc., Date of disembarkation and embarkation from a theatre of war (including furlough, etc.).	Date of Casualty	Place of Casualty	Authority W.3011, B.2069, or other Document	Signature of Officer Certifying Correctness of Entries
Date	From whom received					
10.9.40	120.5.757/40	REPORTED FOR DUTY R.R.D.	30.8.40	✓ 4 M.D.	W.3011. 533/40	47/10
5.10.40	MOB 3	Entrained 4 M.D. for 3 MD	9.10.40	✓ 4 M.D.	MOB. 9.	47/10
10.10.40	RRD R.P.M.	T.O.S. from 4MD S.A.O.C. (Concentration tempy 3MD)	10.10.40	✓ 233/40	RO 112/38/40.	48/10
25.10.40	Sigs. Reg. 24th	Taken on strength from 4th Div Sigs.	26.10.40	✓ 4 M.D.	W.3011. 440/40	48/10
23.11.41	Sigs. Reg. 24th	Posted to 4th Div Sigs.	28.11.41	✓ 13/combe	W.3011. 440/40	48/10
6.12.41	"	Posted to 4th Div Sigs.	18.12.41	✓ 13/combe	W.3011. 440/40	48/10
5.3.41	Sigs. Reg. 24th	Posted to 4th Div Sigs.	5.3.41	✓ 13/combe	W.3011. 440/40	48/10
6.3.41	7th Sigs. Centre	Admitted to C.O.S. 3rd field inf. Bn. right forearm.	20.4.41	✓ 4 M.D.	W.3011. 440/40	48/10
22.4.41	C.O.S. 3rd	Discharged to unit	22.4.41	✓ 4 M.D.	W.3011. 440/40	48/10
27.4.41	"	Rejoined unit from C.O.S.	20.4.41	✓ 4 M.D.	W.3011. 440/40	48/10
28.4.41	7th Sigs. Centre	Transferred to 4th Div Sigs.	10.5.41	✓ 4 M.D.	W.3011. 440/40	48/10
28.5.41	"	Transferred from 4th Div Sigs. to 4th Div Sigs.	10.5.41	✓ 4 M.D.	W.3011. 440/40	48/10
15.5.41	4th Div Sigs.	Transferred from 4th Div Sigs. to 4th Div Sigs.	10.5.41	✓ 4 M.D.	W.3011. 440/40	48/10
15.7.41	4th Div Sigs.	Transferred from 4th Div Sigs. to 4th Div Sigs.	10.5.41	✓ 4 M.D.	W.3011. 440/40	48/10

S.M. & CO. 21750

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DECEASED

NAA: B883, SX10212

REPORT		Record of all casualties regarding promotions (acting, temporary, local or substantive), appointments, transfers, postings, attachments, &c. forfeiture of pay, wounds, accidents, admission to and discharge from Hospital, Casualty Clearing Stations, &c. Date of disembarkation and embarkation from a theatre of war (including furlough, &c.).	Date of Casualty	Place of Casualty	Authority W.2011, B.2069, or other Document	Signature of Officer Certifying Correctness of Entries
Date	From whom received					
21.5.41	O.R.D. 3 M.O.	Transf. 10. Ind Coy.	10.5.41	✓ 3 M.O.	Ex S 970	RMG
14.7.41	O.R.D. 3 M.O.	Re. Emb. Leave from 20.6.41 to 30.6.41	20.6.41	3 M.O.	Ex S 1136	RMG
14.7.41	O.R.D. 3 M.O.	Warrant for Embarkation from HQ 1 Ind Coy.	11.7.41	3 M.O.	Ex S 1136	RMG
16.7.41	O.R.D. 3 M.O.	Embarked 2 M.O. for 3 M.O. by H.M.T. I	12.7.41	✓ 3 M.O.	Ex S 1147	RMG
20.8.41	O.R.D. 3 M.O.	Graded Exp. II. (Synallus Subst.)	10.5.41	3 M.O.	Ex S 1255	RMG
25.3.42	10 Ind Coy	Disembarked. Hoang. ex. Zealandia	24.7.41	✓ 8 M.O.	Ex S 1255	RMG
31.7.42	10 Ind Coy	Missing. Believed Prisoner of War. No date given			Ex S 1255	RMG
4.10.45	" "	Previously reported missing. Believed P.W. Now reported missing. Believed deceased. Whilst P.W. on 8/10 (around 10/10/42)	1.7.42	✓ 8 M.O.	Ex S 1255	RMG
19.10.45	10 Ind Coy	Now reported missing on 1.7.42 and official purpose. Presumed to be dead. (on board Montevideo Maru)			Ex S 1255	RMG

RECORDED IN REPORT OF —

Embarkations & Disembarkations.....

Posting to Units or Detachments for Duty.....

Discharge Particulars.....

Disbursements & Court Martial.....

Courts of Inquiry.....

Honours & Awards.....

Promotions..... (Officers Only)

Signature (Receiving Clerk).....

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS SPACE

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Image 8 © naa.gov.au 2014
Service and Casualty Form final page

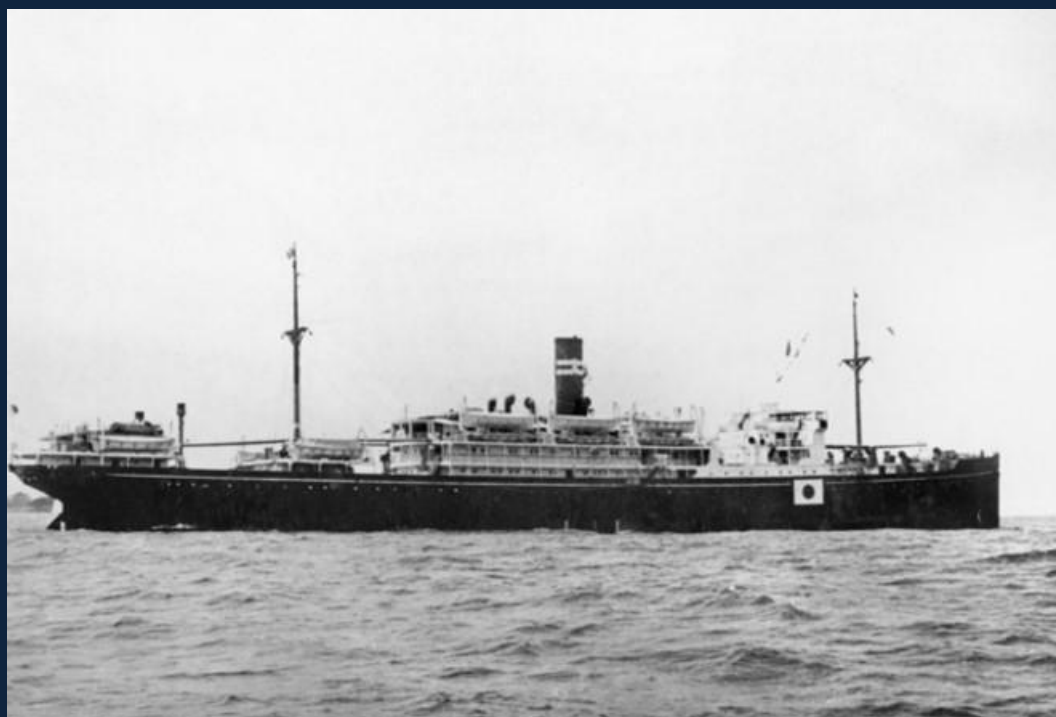


Image 9 © abc.net.au 2023
Image of the Montevideo Maru 1941

Deep sea expeditions finally located the sunken Japanese POW ship that was sunk off the coast of the Philippines on July 1 1942. For over 80 years its location had been a nautical mystery. For more images of the sunken wreckage please see the direct link in the reference list.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-04-24/new-images-from-the-montevideo-maru-shipwreck-car-truck-seabed/102261198>
Service and Casualty Form final page

NEWS IN BRIEF.

Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Searcy received a letter last week from their son, Private Maurice Searcy, in which he states that he is a prisoner-of-war in Rabaul. Prior to this no word had been received from him since last December.

Relatives of A.B. Ross Birbeck, a member of the crew of H.M.A.S. Perth, which was sunk by the Japanese some months ago, have been advised that he is a prisoner-of-war. Prior to joining the navy Ross was in the employment of Mr. C. C. Castle for five years.

The Victor Branch of the 2/3 Machine Gun Battalion held their first birthday party during September, when a very successful afternoon was enjoyed by those present. Mrs. Blackburn and Mrs. Burden, from Adelaide, addressed the assembly. The afternoon's effort realised the sum of £36/3/-, which sum goes towards the P.O.W. Fund.

The monthly meeting of the C.W.A. will be held at the Masonic Hall on Friday next, at 2.30 p.m. At this meeting arrangements for the Red Cross Junior effort, International Day, and the birthday meeting will be discussed.

A ball will be held in the Town Hall on Wednesday night in aid of Baby Cocking's candidature in the Red Cross Junior Competition. Dancing will be from 8 until midnight, and an excellent home-made supper will be provided.

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home-made supper will be provided.

Image 10 © nla.gov.au 2014

Victor Harbor Times Friday 2 October 1942. At the time this letter was received, Maurice's family had been advised that Maurice was a missing POW, it would take three

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article169543803>

PRISONER AT RABOUL.

Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Searcy have received a letter from their eldest son, Sig. Maurice Searcy, which states that he is a prisoner in Japanese hands at Rabaul, and that he is being well treated. Maurice attended school at Victor Harbour prior to proceeding to Adelaide to further his education, and will be remembered by those of his age. He enlisted in the Australian Independent (Commando) Corps early in 1941, and this communication is the first from him since last December.

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<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article169543833>

Image 11 © nla.gov.au 2014

Victor Harbor Times Friday 9 October 1942. repeated story with extra details



Image 12 © nla.gov.au 2014

Victor Harbor Times Friday 2 October 1942. New that the POW's were being treated well. The news of this came out when the Japanese bombers dropped several mail bags onto land. In the bags were letters from POWs that had written to their loved ones.

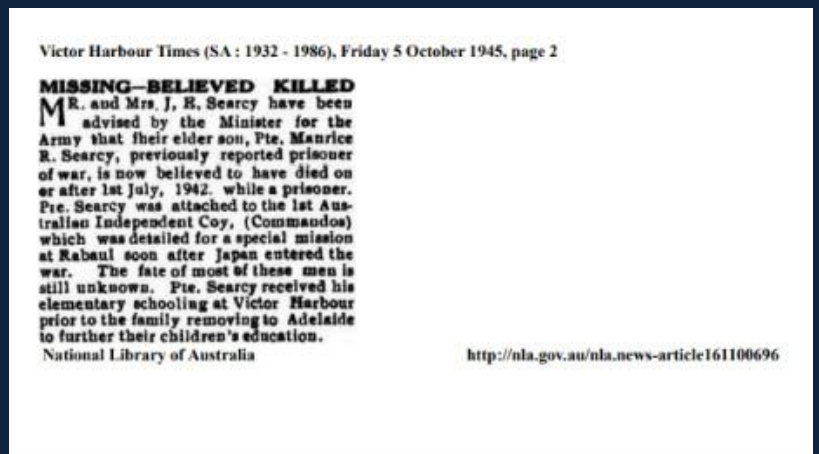


Image 13 © nla.gov.au 2014

Victor Harbor Times Friday 5 October 1945. At last families of those on board the Montevideo Maru were finally told officially, that the boat had sunk in 1942 and all Australian military personnel on board had perished. It took three years of anguish for families all around Australia to finally be told what they had dreaded for so long.

Image 14 © findagrave.com 2026

Plaque with all the Australians who had perished at sea during WWII at Rabual Memorial



Image 15 © abc.net.au 2026

Expedition image of the sunken Montevideo Maru on the sea floor.

OFFICER'S APPRECIATION OF FORMER P.O.W.

The following letter has been received by Mr. J. E. Searcy from Major Edmonds-Wilson, of the 1st Independent Coy. (Commandos), in reference to the death of Private Maurice Searcy, which occurred when a Japanese ship in which P.O.W. were being transferred to Japan, was torpedoed off Manila early in 1942:—

"You have, no doubt, been informed by the authorities that your son was lost when the ill-fated Montevideo Maru was sunk about 1st July, 1942.

"Your son was of course well known to me, and it is with deep and everlasting regret that I think of his passing; all the members of the 1st Independent Coy. were a great bunch, loyal to one another, and it was wonderful to see how they looked after each other at all times, and as a consequence, their life in the P.O.W. camp at Rabaul was much more bearable than it otherwise might have been.

"Your son was a great chap and I know he was held in especially high regard by his platoon commander, Capt. A. E. Goode, who often spoke to me about him. He suffered a little from a skin infection on his legs but was otherwise in perfect health, both mentally and physically. I saw him last on the morning of the 22nd June, 1942, when they sailed from Rabaul.

"As so little is known to the public of the work of the company, it will interest you to know that the boys did a wonderful job while in action, and more than squared accounts before we fell. Their sacrifice was not in vain, as I am sure it was their heroic resistance, coupled with the resistance of the Rabaul Garrison, that, during the few vital weeks of January and February, 1942, really held the Japs up long enough to allow Australia to get into a position to stave off invasion.

"I hope that one day I will have the pleasure of meeting you, and, in the meantime, please accept my most sincere and deep sympathy in your sad loss, for I, too, mourn your son as a dear friend."

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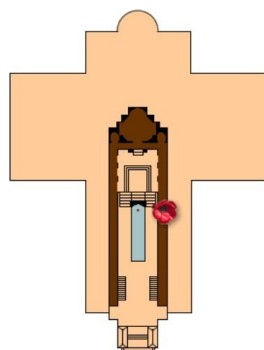
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article168548828>

Image 16 © nla.gov.au 2014

Major Edmonds-Wilson wrote about Private Maurice Searcy to the Searcy Family.

Location on the Roll of Honour

Maurice Roffe Searcy's name is located at panel 71 in the [Commemorative Area](#) at the Australian War Memorial (as indicated by the poppy on the plan).



Roll of Honour name projection

Maurice Roffe Searcy's name will be projected onto the exterior of the Hall of Memory on:

Sunday, 2 August 2026 at 3.21 am

Wednesday, 14 October 2026 at 1.00 am

For more information view the [Roll of Honour name projections page](#).

Please note: These dates and times are estimates. The actual time of projection could also change as a result of weather and other factors, so it is advisable to check closer to the date. In the rare event of a temporary loss of electrical power, the names scheduled for display in that period will not appear until the next time listed.

Image 17 & 18 © awm.gov.au 2026

Position of Maurice's memorial name at the Australian War Memorial and dates and times for the name projection at the AWM Canberra