

Paddy Knight

Born in Birmingham, UK on 28 January 1911, William Patrick Cotter left Britain for Australia before the outbreak of war, changing his name to Paddy Knight and settling in Kalgoorlie as a railway ganger. He joined the No. 2 Independent Company on 11 December 1940 and embarked for Timor aboard SS Zealandia on 8 December 1941 as a private in No. 4 Section, B Platoon. He was killed in action at East Timor on 2 March 1942. He is interred at Ambon War Cemetery in Indonesia.

A relative of Paddy's from the UK, Tony Cotter, recently made contact with the association:

Paddy Knight, or "Uncle Billy" as he is affectionately known, served in the Australian 2nd Independent Company during WWII.

Partly due to William changing his name to Paddy Knight when he started a new life in Australia, and partly due to the (still unknown) reasons for leaving Britain when he did, the family was, until recently, unaware of William's life as an Australian Commando.

Thanks to the Internet, we have been able to trace some history of William, and have read about some of his exploits and antics in two excellent books, *The Men Who Came Out of the Ground* by Paul Cleary and *A History of the 2nd Independent Company* by CD Doig. Other family members and I have been thrilled and excited to discover more about William and, as a result of our renewed interest

in him, a

Tree of Remembrance has been planted in his name at the UK's National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, near Lichfield, Staffordshire. A plaque bearing the "Double Red" colours of the No. 2 Independent Company has also been placed at the site of the oak tree. A formal unveiling and naming ceremony took place on 29 June 2014. Several members of the Cotter family attended, including my two elder Brothers, Michael and Patrick Cotter, my wife, Linda Cotter, and two of my Cousins and their husbands, Lilian Bailey and Anne Ford-Tuffield.

I believe that William is the first Commando from the Australian No. 2 Independent Company to be honoured at the National Memorial Arboretum in the UK.



Above: John Burridge (L) and Paddy Knight (R)



The entrance to the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, near Lichfield, UK



As William/Paddy was such a character, according to the previously named books, I would be delighted to hear from any of your members who may have further information about Uncle Billy, his life in No. 2 Independent Company and, in particular, if anyone can recall conversations with him about his former life in the UK and his reasons for emigrating when he did.

Thank you once again for the information you have very kindly provided.

With warmest regards

Tony Cotter

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Family members of William/Paddy, attending the dedication ceremony on 29 June 2014, (L-R) Michael Cotter, Alan and Anne Ford-Tuffield, Patrick Cotter, Linda Cotter, Lilian & Frank Bailey. Tony Cotter took the picture.