

# SBS PRESS KIT

The Fall of Singapore in 1942 shattered myths,  
brought an empire to its knees  
and changed the destiny of millions of people



# SINGAPORE 1942 END OF EMPIRE



**Electric Pictures**  
33 Canning Highway  
East Fremantle, WA 6158  
Tel: +61 8 9339 1133  
admin@electricpictures.com.au

Written & Directed by: **Don Featherstone**  
Executive Producers: **Trevor Graham**  
**Ned Lander**  
**Andrew Ogilvie**

# SINGAPORE 1942

## END OF EMPIRE

2 x 1 hour Documentary Drama Series

### SERIES SYNOPSIS

#### Log Line

The fall of Singapore in 1942 shattered myths, brought an empire to its knees, and changed the destiny of millions of people.

#### One Paragraph Synopsis

A 70th anniversary television event, *Singapore 1942- End of Empire* tells the story of those early shocking days of the Pacific War when belief in security and comfort from empire collapsed. For the first time this momentous 20th century battle, and its equally dramatic aftermath, will be told from a multi-national perspective, revealing new and challenging insights into a battle that turned our world upside down. Whilst the Japanese victory confirmed how useless it was for Australians to rely on Britain for their defence, post-war Australians looked to another great protective power – the United States – to align itself with. And Asian nations would rapidly determine their own destiny and seek a tumultuous independence.

**One Page Series Synopsis**

Singapore is a cosmopolitan world city – an Asian Tiger – playing a key role in international trade and finance with a population of close to 5 million people. But seventy years ago its citizens suffered one of the most bitter and brutal campaigns of WW2. The fall of Singapore on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1942 brought an empire to its knees, dramatically changing the destiny of millions of people. It was a crushing defeat that unleashed national Asian independence movements, and Asian, Australian and British aspirations would never be the same.

In 1941 Britain was fighting for its life against Germany in Europe and Australian troops were under siege in the Libyan port of Tobruk. Surrounded by colonial powers and short of land and raw materials, Japan embarked on a military campaign it believed would expel the white race from East Asia – liberate a billion people and extend the light of Imperial Power to the south. Without warning they dramatically entered World War 11, bombing the American naval base at Pearl Harbour and simultaneously attacking the prime British colony of Malaya and Singapore on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941. Australia, Britain and the US were now at war with Japan who saw themselves as liberators not occupiers, ridding Asia of its colonial masters. Seventy years later controversy still surrounds their wartime motivations.

Nicknamed the “Gibraltar of the East”, Singapore was the major British military base in South East Asia. The spectacular surrender of its British and Commonwealth defenders clearly illustrated the way Japan was to wage war in the Far East – with remorseless speed and efficiency. More than a colossal military defeat, it also buried any lingering notions of white racial superiority.

About 80,000 British, Scottish, Australian and Indian troops became prisoners of war, joining the 50,000 troops captured in the Malaya campaign. Thousands of local civilians were imprisoned too.

For its 70th anniversary, this film will begin in those early days of the Pacific War when belief in security and comfort from empire collapsed. Then we’ll tell the story of the creation of the new nations of Singapore and Malaysia that rose from the ashes of the turmoil.

Shot in key locations, *Singapore 1942- End of Empire* includes firsthand accounts of surviving soldiers, airmen and nurses from the front line. But fundamental to the story telling are civilian eyewitnesses - Malaysian and Singaporean.

*Singapore 1942- End of Empire* is not about winners and losers. For the first time on television this momentous 20th century battle, and its equally dramatic aftermath, will be told from a multi-national perspective, revealing new and challenging insights into a battle that turned our world upside down.

## **EPISODE ONE SYNOPSIS**

**Log Line** Japan's lightning invasion of Malaya threatens Singapore, ignites ethnic tensions and forces Australia to reconsider its own defense.

**One Paragraph** In 1941, the Japanese Imperial Army invades Malaya. The battle hardened Japanese forces quickly push Commonwealth troops – English, Indians, Australians, Scots, Chinese and Malays - south towards the key British trading port of Singapore. General Yamashita prepares to assault the so-called 'impregnable fortress' igniting already simmering ethnic and political tensions in the colony. Australia, for the first time, finds itself directly threatened.

## **EPISODE TWO SYNOPSIS**

**Log Line** With the Commonwealth forces in retreat, General Yamashita assembles his troops at Johor Bharu and prepares to take control of Singapore Island.

**One Paragraph** Japanese Imperial Army soldiers pour onto Singapore Island under the skilful command of General Yamashita. They quickly break through a flimsy line of raw Australian troops, outmaneuver General Percival and drive his combined Commonwealth forces back to the Singapore city. Indian soldiers, seeking independence, join the Japanese and fire on their former masters. Australians leave their posts while Malays and Chinese divide along political and ethnic lines. The British finally begin evacuating Singapore but priority is given to the safety of whites. A tipping point is reached - the fall of all the colonial empires throughout the region is now inevitable. Australia is dragged kicking and screaming to the Asian table.

## ABOUT THE MAKING OF **SINGAPORE 1942** END OF EMPIRE

*"Singapore 1942- End of Empire" was made with the backing of SBS Australia, BBC Scotland, Discovery Asia, Screen Australia and ScreenWest.*

### **Writer/Director Don Featherstone says:**

I remember seeing the book 'Why Singapore Fell' on my father's bookshelf as a kid. It didn't really interest me at the time but it always had a sense of mystery to it. What or where was Singapore? Was its fall like that of Humpty Dumpty? It seemed much more important. The whole notion of a 'fall' seemed bad and reeked of failure. Many years later in making 'Singapore 1942 End of Empire' I learned that the person who wrote that book; General Gordon Bennett was part of the reason it fell, but only a part. The reasons are complex and the blame has been passed around ever since.

To get to the bottom of it we needed to talk to all the players, a 'white colonial', a Malay local, a Chinese local, a Eurasian local, an Australian soldier, a British soldier, a Japanese soldier, a Straits Settlements volunteer and a range of historians. After exhaustive research our team located a wonderful array of interviewees who were witnesses to the times.

To complement the interviews we wanted to film edgy and stylish dramatisations but the style had to be connected to the essence of the campaign. The trigger was that this was very much a 'filmed' war. The Japanese wanted to make sure they recorded their momentous Southern advance for posterity so virtually every aspect of their campaign was filmed by embedded war cinematographers. The British wanted to record what they believed would be the successful defence of Singapore - their Jewel in the Crown - and covered all the crucial moments. But the most remarkable piece of battle actuality of the whole campaign if not the Pacific war was filmed by an Australian DOI film crew. At Bakri an Australian anti-tank gunners ambushed and destroyed a Japanese tank column. The film crew arrived minutes after the battle and captured terrifying images of 8 burning Japanese tanks and their crews. The war archive is complemented by telling footage of the colonial life and underlying tensions in the colony.

So the style of archive footage triggered the style of our dramatisations. Our DOP Jim Frater mimicked the role of an embedded war cinematographer - almost being part of the battles. Further inspired by the notion of a 'filmed' war we employed front projection of moving images over actual backgrounds as a transitional device from contemporary locations to the archive footage. The Japanese often attacked at night and in a first for a WW2 war documentary we have incorporated 'night vision' as a stylistic device as a nod to a contemporary filmed war.



*Director Don Featherstone & Producer Andrew Ogilvie on location with cast*

An important final element is the actual locations. We revisited all the key battlefields, towns and cities, as they are today, as a mark of respect and to use them as portals to the past.

It is a very complex story with many strands and levels and emotions run high.

## **Executive Producer Andrew Ogilvie says:**

Over the years, Electric Pictures has produced a number of dramatised historical documentaries. With each new programme we have continued to refine the art of mixing interviews with archive footage and dramatic reconstructions, to bring to life periods of history in a way that would not be possible without this combination of filmmaking techniques. “Singapore 1942 End of Empire” represents our best achievement to date in the use of all the tools in the documentary filmmakers tool-kit to tell a powerful story of considerable international significance.

The fall of Singapore in 1942, and its aftermath, heralded the end of colonialisation in Asia and was a defining moment in the history, not only for Singapore but, for many other nations in the region. Electric Pictures is very grateful for the support it received for the production of the series from SBS, BBC Scotland, Discovery Asia, Screen Australia’s National Documentary Programme and ScreenWest. It would not have been possible to deliver such an important and ambitious programme without all these parties involvement.

Last but not least, a big thanks to all of the crew and cast. This series show-cases some the very best filmmaking talent in the country and I know I speak for all of those who worked on the production when I say its something that we are very proud of.

## **Executive Producer Trevor Graham says:**

There are moments in a nation’s national history that are pivotal—like turning points in a classic three act drama—they propel the ‘national’ story forward. February the 15<sup>th</sup> 1942, is one of these key events in Australia’s 20<sup>th</sup> century history. The fall of Singapore provides a dramatic ‘plot point’ too for our regional neighbours Singapore, Malaysia and for the United Kingdom. The battle and defeat dramatically changed forever Australia’s perceptions of the British Empire, the region we live in, and our attitudes to our defence as a nation. The defeat not only burst the bubble of British superiority in the eyes of the Singaporeans, Indians and Malaysians but also in the eyes of the Vietnamese, Indonesians and others leading to a rush of decolonisation over the next 25 years.

With the encouragement and support of the participating broadcasters and the Australian funding agencies, Director Don Featherstone has assembled an extraordinary cast of characters from Australia, the UK, Singapore, Malaysia and Japan. Amongst them are soldiers, airman, nurses and civilians with eye witness stories full of drama. Their stories are supported by an international cast of insightful historians who analyse not only the military history but also its post war regional and global implications.

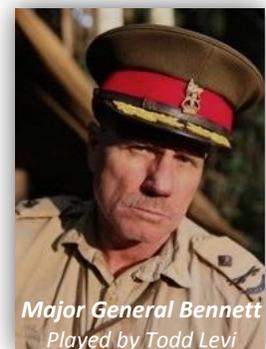
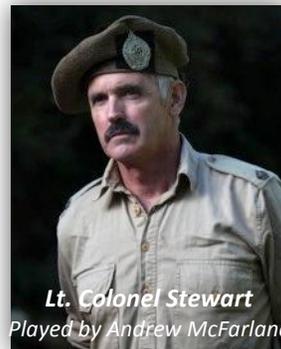
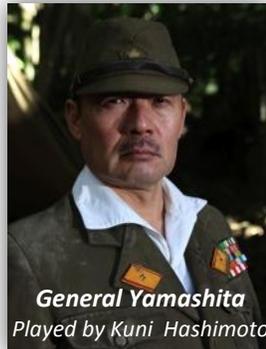
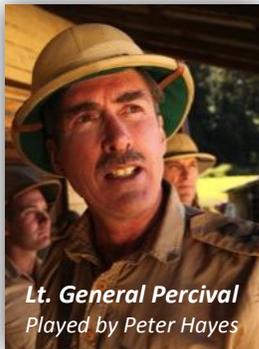
For its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, this is the story of those early shocking days of the Pacific War when belief in security and comfort from empire collapsed. Out of the vacuum sprang new leaders— firebrands forged in the heat of battle, with a passion for nationhood—who launched new nations that would control Asia into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Japanese victory also confirmed how useless it was for Australians to rely on Europeans to provide a protective arc around them. Post war Australians looked to another great protective power—the United States—to align itself with.

## Executive Producer Ned Lander says:

When Singapore fell, Australia found it was no longer fighting for the British Empire it was fighting for its life. What happened in those weeks and months leading up to this cataclysmic event? Director Don Featherstone has masterfully pieced together the military and social history - through interviews, archival records and intensely personal stories - to give us a startlingly clear picture of why the great 'impregnable British fortress' of the south suddenly collapsed.

For me, and I suspect much of our audience, this story offers a new understanding of our recent history and some unique insights to parts that have been glossed over. I learned that 20,000 Indians changed sides and joined the Japanese to fight their former colonial masters; that the British released Chinese communists from gaol to help them fight the Japanese (only to hunt them down again after the war); and that when the order came to evacuate the city, Malays, Chinese and Indians were left on dock while the Europeans looked after their own.

As the British Empire fractured and buckled under the determined onslaught of the Japanese Imperial Army, the abiding interest of Singaporeans began to emerge – the right to determine their own future. With the benefit of hindsight we remember the appalling loss of life and suffering but we also see how this terrible conflict changed our region and the way we, as Australians, understand our place in the world.



**DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT- DON FEATHERSTONE**

The fall of Singapore fascinated me on many levels. On a military level there is a lot to learn. It is often overlooked that Japan actually entered WW2 when it invaded the British colony of Malaya 45 minutes before it bombed the American naval base at Pearl Harbour. In the battles that followed the Allies experienced for the first time the ruthless efficiency of the Japanese Imperial army. They'd been portrayed as short, bespectacled soldiers who couldn't shoot straight and were cast as monkeys by the virulent racist propaganda. That

propaganda didn't do the British Empire troops who were confronting them any favours. Their commanders in particular totally underestimated the Japanese and never recovered.

It's fascinating on a political level. In 1942 European colonial powers dominated Asia; the French were in Vietnam, the Dutch in Indonesia, the Americans in the Philippines and the British in India, Singapore, Malaya and Burma. Japan was surrounded by colonials and wanted some territory of their own. They despised the white colonials and claimed they wanted to liberate a billion people in SE Asia. In hindsight we can see that was a sham and what they really wanted was a giant mine and a farm. But ironically by their actions they did liberate millions of people from colonialism. After the war, all of the old colonies collapsed and these countries claimed their independence. The fall of Singapore was the catalyst that triggered the end of Empire in the region and resonated worldwide.

It's also fascinating on a racial level. The white colonials in Singapore thought themselves superior to their subjects. They brought in huge numbers of Chinese and Indian workers who then outnumbered the indigenous Malays creating an undercurrent of discontent. Their colonies were ripe for revolution. The Japanese invasion lit the fuse. The Malays collaborated with the Japanese, the Chinese were torn between defending Singapore and wanting to turn the colony into a Communist state and the Indians saw it as an opportunity to expel the British from India. The superior colonial attitude infected the British Empire army too. It was shot through with racism. Indians officers and troops were slighted by British officers. Their loyalty dissolved, they were more interested in freeing India from the British than defending Singapore from the Japanese, half of them changed sides. The Australians and British didn't gel as a fighting force and neither performed consistently well in battle. It was a recipe for disaster and that is exactly what ensued. Singapore fell in just 70 days, humiliating the British in the eyes of the Asian subjects. Their Empire was seen to be smoke and mirrors. Australia was left exposed and turned to America and was finally forced to go it alone on the world stage.

I was fascinated on a human level too. There were 5 million people caught up in this terrifying battle that was often fought through cities. Multiple thousands upon thousands were killed. It seemed like a hugely complicated story to tell but once we cracked the code we saw it was all inter-related – the battle, the politics, the racism, the ethnic tensions all played out and jointly determined the outcome.

Most of all I wanted to make this series because the fall of Singapore was a hugely significant event in our history. It heralded the beginning of the end of the British Empire, it changed South East Asia forever and made Australia face the reality of going it alone on the world stage.

***Don Featherstone can be contacted on + 61 414 389 119***

# FACTS ABOUT SINGAPORE 1942 END OF EMPIRE

- Churchill called the Fall of Singapore the worst disaster of British arms since the surrender at Yorktown in 1781.
- Nicknamed the “Gibraltar of the East”, Singapore was the major British military base in South East Asia
- Singapore on the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula was a largely uninhabited island until Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles arrived in 1819. He convinced the local Sultan to allow the British East India trading company to set up a trading port there. Soon Singapore and the fertile Malayan peninsula to its North became the jewels in the Crown of Britain’s East Asian colonies.
- The Chinese were a very large component by 1900 they were about 70% plus of the population of Singapore itself.
- Britain was not the only colonial power in South East Asia in 1941. The Netherlands, France and America also had colonies there.
- The Japanese assault on Malaya and Singapore was led by General Tomoyuki Yamashita who commanded the 25<sup>th</sup> army a force of 70,000 troops. He became known as ‘the tiger of Malaya’.
- In 1931 Japan short of raw materials it invaded Manchuria.
- In 1938 signed an alliance with Nazi Germany.
- In April 1941 British General Arthur Percival was appointed Commander of Singapore’s mixed bag of 140,000 British Empire troops.
- On December the 2nd British signals intelligence intercepted Japanese orders. The Imperial army was heading towards Northern Malaya.
- On December the 6th an Australian air force bomber flying out of Kota Bharu spotted a large Japanese fleet steaming towards the Malayan coast.
- In the early hours of Sunday 8th December 1941 Japan entered World War 2 when it invaded the British colony of Malaya.
- Forty five minutes later its air force bombed the American Naval Base at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii.
- 1,000 British sailors perished when the Japanese air force sank the British ships The Prince of Wales and The Repulse on December 10<sup>th</sup>.
- For much of the Second World War the British had to deploy fifty battalions of infantry for internal security duties in India.
- On New Year’s Day 1942, in a move that saw Australia for the first time question its 150-year-old ties with the mother country, Prime Minister John Curtin turned to America for support.
- Two Australian anti-tank guns knocked out the eight Japanese tanks at Bakri on January 18<sup>th</sup> 1942.
- The Royal Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders was the last battalion to cross the causeway from Malaya to Singapore Island and they piped themselves across.
- On Sunday the 15th February more than 100 years after the British had raised their flag over Singapore Percival surrendered unconditionally.
- Singapore the bastion of the British Empire fell in just 70 days
- It was Japan’s greatest victory and Britain’s worst defeat in World War 2.

- The Fall of Singapore saw the beginning of the end of Britain's global empire. Within a decade of war's end, Asian independence movements would see the creation of new republics, including Malaysia and Singapore in 1957.
- About 80,000 British, Scottish, Australian and Indian troops became prisoners of war, joining the 50,000 troops taken by the Japanese in the Malaysian campaign.
- Feb 17<sup>th</sup> 1942 some 20,000 Indian troops deserted the British Indian army to fight alongside the Japanese.
- On the 19th of Feb 1942 Australia was attacked for the first time when Japanese aircraft bombed Darwin killing over 250 people.
- Once the Japanese established control in Singapore they renamed the city "Shonan - Light of the South" and established their Southern Army headquarters there, using its magnificent port facilities to base sections of the Imperial Fleet.
- August 6, 1945 the Americans dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. 3 days later another was dropped on Nagasaki.
- On August 15<sup>th</sup> Japan surrendered unconditionally.
- On February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1946 General Yamashita executed for war crimes.



BIOGRAPHIES OF PARTICIPANTS

VETERANS



**Arthur Kennedy (Australia)**

Arthur was a Gunner with Australian 2/15th Field Regiment at the battle of Gemas in Malaya.



**Jack Varley (Australia)**

Last living officer from the 2<sup>nd</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Jack was awarded a Military Cross for his conspicuous gallantry in the leadership of his platoon under constant heavy enemy fire and showing complete disregard for his own personal safety in the infamous battles at Muar, Bakri and Parit Sulong.



**Charlie Edwards (Australia)**

2nd 19th Regiment. Edwards was captured in Malaya and ended up in Pudu Prison KL. He was then transferred to Thai Burma Railway until 1943 when he was moved to Japan to work in the coal mines and ship yards. He witnessed the atomic bomb go off.



**Finlay McLachlan (Australia)**

Finlay was a Argyll & Sutherland Highlander. He fought in Malaya and Singapore during WW2.



**Jim Boyle (Australia)**

Boyle worked as ground crew and as a tail gunner with 8th squadron at Kota Bharu in Northern Malaya.



**Alistair Urquhart (UK)**

Urquhart was conscripted into the British army in 1939, at the age of 19, and stationed at Fort Canning in Singapore. He spent three and a half years as a Japanese prisoner of war. While working on the Burma railway Urquhart suffered malnutrition, cholera and torture at the hands of his captors. In 2010, Urquhart published 'The Forgotten Highlander: My Incredible Story of Survival During the War in the Far East', an account of his experiences.



**Gordon Smith (UK)**

A medical student who joined the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders in Singapore in 1941 and as a platoon commander fought in Malaya. Wounded and captured, he was able to develop and use his medical skills in difficult circumstances as a prisoner of war in Pudu Gaol, Kuala Lumpur and in ROW camp hospitals in Thailand.



**Tom McKie (UK)**

Tom was a Gunner with the 155th and at one stage after the battle at Slim River he was separated from the Regiment and met up with and joined some Gurkhas. He then experienced at first hand the effectiveness of a rifle and bayonet at close quarters



## Teikichi Gohara (Japan)

48th Infantry Regiment, 12th Division, then transferred to 9th Company (3rd Battalion), 56th Regiment of 18th Division. He joined the landing operation at Kota Bharu in Malaya on December 8th 1941, fought against British, Indian and Australian garrisons, where a lot of Japanese were killed on the beach, and then fought in Mersing and Kuantan before attacking Singapore. After the fall of Singapore, he was assigned to be a guard at a prison camp for Chinese guerrilla suspects for a short time.



## Yoshio Takeda (Japan)

Yoshio Takeda started in the 48<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment and was then transferred to Sakaki Unit in Kwantung under the 18<sup>th</sup> Division. He was hit by mortar at Bukit Timah and lost his arm.



## Ryoza Kawate (Japan)

3rd Company of 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment (5th Division). Ryoza Kawate was a truck driver for a communication unit in the company. He was not frightened as he was a truck driver at rear area, supplying ammunition etc to the frontline. Describes scary aerial attack while driving his truck. Witnessed Sook Ching beheading.



## Minoru Honda (Japan)

Fought as a navy fighter pilot in World War 2 and fought in the skies above Singapore flying the deadly Zero aircraft that were so effective throughout the pacific War. The battle for Singapore was his first engagement as a navy fighter pilot. He later fought over New Guinea, Guadalcanal, Iwojima and the Japanese mainland. His kill score was 15 confirmed.



## Yoshiaki Iwasaki (Japan)

Fought as a navy fighter pilot in World War 2, part of the Mihiro Air Squadron, under the 22nd Air Flotilla stationed in the French Indochina. He bombed Singapore and the Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse. His bomb hit the flight deck of the Repulse. After the war he became a rescue helicopter pilot, and also became a pilot of Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda.

## CIVILIANS



## Sheila Bruhn (Australia)

Sheila was born in Ipoh Malaysia to an Australian father and Malaysian mother. She was 17 when war broke out. Her family fled to Singapore where they thought they would find safety but instead Sheila arrived during the bombings. Sheila and her parents went to Changi Prison as civilian internees where she remained for 26 months. She and her family were later moved to Siam Rd POW camp where her father died. In 1994 Sheila published "Diary of a Girl in Changi", a memoir that she started writing in prison.



## Othman Wok (Singapore)

Post-war Singapore Malay community leader that played a major role in Singapore's race relations. He worked as a lab assistant for Japanese during occupation.



## **Roy Muthiah (Singapore)**

Roy was 9 years' old when the Japanese first bombed Singapore, and witnessed the Japanese bombers during the air raids. After the war, he became a trainee pilot in 1950 with the RAF/Malayan Auxiliary Air Force. When after two years of training, he was told he was too short to be a fighter pilot, he left to join the Singapore Royal Artillery, and was a gunner at Fort Siloso, one of the batteries built by the British to defend the harbour. He is the last known survivor who served at Fort Siloso.



## **Harold Speldewinde (Malaysia)**

After the first bombs fell in Penang, 17 year old Harold joined the Straits Settlements Volunteer Force (SSVF) and was assigned to E Company. The SSVF was a military reserve force in the Straits while they were under British rule. Harold recalls rotting bodies in the streets of Penang as civil order broke down and the British evacuated. Harold was given the job of helping British civilians escape to Singapore once Penang had fallen to the Japanese.



## **Chye Kooi Loong (Malaysia)**

He witnessed the Battle of Kampar in Malaysia. He was 12 years old when war broke out in his hometown. In 1977, Chye started researching the British Battalion who fought in Kampar. Seven years later, his book, *The History of the British Battalion – Malayan Campaign – 1941-42*, was published.



## **Catherine Munnoch (UK)**

Catherine was 8 years old and living in Singapore during the war. Her father was an Argyll soldier. She remembers being sheltered by her Chinese Arma during the bombing of Singapore.

## **HISTORIANS**



## **Sir Max Hastings**

Hastings was educated at Charterhouse School and University College, Oxford, which he left after a year. He became a foreign correspondent and reported from more than sixty countries and eleven wars for BBC television and for the *Evening Standard* in London. After ten years as editor and then editor-in-chief of *The Daily Telegraph*, he returned to the *Evening Standard* as editor in 1996 until his retirement in 2001. He received a knighthood in 2002.



## **Dr Peter Stanley**

Stanley was appointed Head of the Centre for Historical Research in early 2007. He is best known as a military social historian and was principal historian at the Australian War Memorial for 20 years.



## **Paul Ham**

Sydney based author and historian, Paul Ham has written the bestsellers, *Kokoda* and *Vietnam: The Australian War*. Since 1998, Paul has been the Australia correspondent for *The London Sunday Times*, covering politics, business and current affairs. He has a Masters degree in Economic History from the London School of Economics.



## **Brian Farrell**

Farrell is an Associate Professor in the Department of History at the National University of Singapore. A Canadian, Farrell's special areas of study are: WWI and the British Empire, post war imperial defence strategy & the failures of commanders and troops on the ground & successes of the Japanese during WW2.



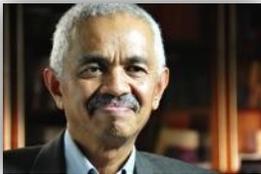
## **Dr Ernest C.T. Chew**

Associate Professorial Fellow in the University Scholars Program, National University of Singapore. He holds the BA Honours and MA in History from the University of Singapore, and PhD from the University of Cambridge. Since 1970 he has lectured at the University of Singapore and then NUS in such areas as modern South and Southeast Asian history; imperial expansion, colonial administration, and decolonization; military and diplomatic history (including great military commanders, and the American way of war); and the history of Singapore.



## **Hiromi Tanaka**

Tanaka is a former Professor at the Defence Academy of Japan specialising in World War II and Japanese naval history. Tanaka is a specialist on POW issues and has published a several books on the topic. He is one of the most highly recognized historians on WWII and POW issues in Japan.



## **Abu Talib Ahmad**

Talib is Associate Professor in the School of Humanities at the Universiti Sains Malaysia. Talib's research interests are the Japanese occupation of Malaya and the social history of twentieth-century Malaysia.

## BIOGRAPHIES OF KEY PRODUCTION PERSONNEL

## Don Featherstone – Writer / Director



Don has made over forty highly regarded documentaries across many genres including history, music and arts, science, sports and social. His films include; *Kokoda* the WW2 battle of the Kokoda Track, *The One Percenters* - the Milperra biker shootout, *The Beach* - beach culture in Australia, *The Maitland Wonder* - boxer Les Darcy, *An Imaginary Life* – author David Malouf, *Difficult Pleasure* painter Brett Whiteley and the seminal TV Drama *Babakuieria*.

Don has won many major international awards including; Best Documentary Hot Docs, a Banff Rockie, a Chicago Gold Hugo, a Chicago Gold Plaque, Best Arts Documentary San Francisco, Special Jury Prize San Francisco, U.N. Media Peace Prize, three New York Silver Awards, 'Outstanding Achievement Award' IECF Hi-def Festival Tokyo, a BAFTA nomination and an International Emmy nomination.

His work is well known internationally having screened on networks including; BBC, ITV, CBC, Ovation USA, WNET, Canal 22 Mexico, ZDF, Bravo USA, BSkyB, UK Performing Arts, RAI, NHK, RTE, LA Sept, YLE Finland, SVT Sweden, DRS Germany, TEVEL Israel, NOS Netherlands, Iran Broadcasting Corp., TV2 Iceland, HRT Croatia, Rep. Of Kazakstan TV, Cablehogar Argentina, Vargas Panama, POLTEL Poland, Czech TV, Tele Madrid Spain, ETV South Africa etc etc..

Don, who is a graduate of the Swinburne Film & TV School, has also made films on staff for the BBC's documentaries department, London Weekend Television's current affairs department and the prestigious arts series 'The South Bank Show'.

## Andrew Ogilvie – Executive Producer, Electric Pictures



Andrew Ogilvie has been working in the television industry for more than 25 years. He established Electric Pictures in 1992 and is a highly skilled and experienced Executive Producer who has produced numerous documentary programs for broadcasters around the World.

Andrew's most recent production credits include: *The Secret History of Eurovision*, a 2 x 1 hour documentary about the biggest live music show on the planet, *A Royal Romance*, *Skin Deep*, *Surviving Mumbai*, *Addicted to Money*, *The Great Escape: The Reckoning*, *Skippy - Australia's First Superstar*, *Cracking the Colour Code*, *The Hunt for HMAS Sydney*, *Gallipoli Submarine*, *Bom Bali*, *Submariners*, and *The Winners' Guide to the Nobel Prize*.

## Trevor Graham- Executive Producer, Electric Pictures



Trevor Graham has worked as a writer, producer and director of documentary in the Australian film industry for more than 20 years.

Trevor's documentaries have been screened and broadcast nationally and internationally. He has made co-productions and commissioned works for Channel 4 and the BBC (Britain), WGBH (America), ARTE (France/Germany), AVRO (Netherlands), SBS and ABC TV (Australia). He has won two Australian Film Institute (AFI) Awards for Best Documentary and numerous other national and international film and television awards. In 1997, *Mabo - Life of an Island Man* won the AFI Award, was nominated for a Logie and won both the prestigious NSW Premier's History Award and the NSW Premier's Award for Best Screenplay.

## Ned Lander- Executive Producer, Electric Pictures



Ned Lander is an Electric Pictures east coast Executive Producer based in Sydney. He and Trevor Graham share the responsibility for the management of the Electric Pictures Sydney office. He is an independent filmmaker of award winning drama and documentary, was an SBS Senior Commissioning Editor Factual and then General Manager SBSi, responsible for Australian commissioning across all genres. He was the Commissioning Editor of landmark projects for SBS such as the *First Australians* and the ratings winning *Who Do You Think You Are*. As an independent, Ned produced

Rachel Perkin's first feature film *Radiance* - Winner, AFI Best Actress. He directed and produced *50 Years of Silence* - about the first European woman to speak out as a "Comfort Woman" - which was broadcast in over 30 countries and won a Logie and the AFI Award for Best Documentary.

## Lawrie Silvestrin – Editor



Lawrie has worked as a drama and documentary picture and sound editor and post production supervisor for more than twenty five years. During that time he has been nominated for three AFI Awards and a Golden Reel Award - winning an AFI Award for Best Sound Editing.

His documentary credits include *Jandamarra's War*, *The Great Escape: The Reckoning*, *Skippy: Australia's First Superstar*, *The Hunt for the HMAS Sydney*, *Cracking the Colour Code*, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, *The Black Road*– Editor and Co-Writer (Winner of Best Documentary and Best Film 2006 Mumbai International Film Festival, AFI Nomination Best Editing), *Give Me A Break*, *Submariners*, *Bom Bali*, *Stories from a Children's Hospital* – Editor and Co-Writer, *Snakebuster*, *Aussie Animal Rescue 2*, *Shipwreck Detectives 1&2*, *Selling Australia* - Editor and Co-Writer, *Playing the Game*, *Painting Country*, and *Paying for the Piper* (AFI Nomination Best Editing).

Lawrie's drama credits include the feature films *Justice*, *Blackfellas* and *Babe* as well as over twenty television drama series and telefeatures.

He has a number of documentary writing credits and has conducted courses for AFTRS and the WA Screen Academy. As well, he lectures and administers the post production strand of the Advanced Diploma of Screen at Central TAFE.

## Jim Frater- Director of Photography



Jim Frater has over 20 years experience in the film and television industry. Jim has travelled widely throughout his career, filming in locations such as Mexico, Chile, England, USA, France, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.

In 1995, Jim left Australia to work as a freelance cameraman/director in London. While in London he worked for some of the world's major networks, including BBC, CNN and NBC. It was here he learnt to work under various, and often hazardous conditions. In 1997 he returned to Australia, and in 2000 he set up Steadi-vision Australia.

He currently works with a number of Australia's top production companies and television networks as a cinematographer, steadicam operator and director of photography. Jim's wealth of experience is evident in the high quality work he produces.

Jim's Career Highlights include *Surviving Mumbai*: 1 hr docu drama for ABC, WNET, Discovery, History Channel; *The Great Escape: the Reckoning*: 1 hr docu drama for ABC, Channel 4, History Channel; *Animal X, Series 3*: 10 x 1 hour documentary series for Animal Planet; *The Shark Net*: steadicam operator- Telemovie for ABC; *The Circuit, Series 2*: 2<sup>nd</sup> unit DOP, Drama series .

## **PRODUCTION COMPANY PROFILE**



### **ELECTRIC PICTURES**

Electric Pictures is one of Australia's most respected independent producers of factual programming. We are a committed team that is well regarded for producing high-end content for the international market.

Our productions range from quality series to one off specials over most genres including Science, History, Travel and Adventure, to the Arts, Human Interest and Current Affairs. We have extensive experience with co-productions and have established co-pro relationships with UK, French, and Italian Independents.

Over the last 18 years Andrew Ogilvie, founder and CEO, has built the company reputation worldwide, working with respected broadcasters including ABC, ARTE, AVRO, BBC, Channel Four, Discovery Channel, History Channel, NHK, National Geographic, NDR, PBS, RTE, S4C, SBS, Sky, and ZDF. Andrew currently sits on the Council of the Screen Producers Association of Australia, and was a former Chair of the Australian International Documentary Conference.

The Electric Pictures group includes a high definition post-production facility, Colourbox, and a distribution company, EP Independent. Electric Pictures recently opened a Sydney Office led by, Executive Producer, Trevor Graham. Trevor has a background as Commissioning Editor with SBS, and Series and Executive Producer with the ABC. We have also recently opened an office in Toronto headed by Executive Producer, Andrea Quesnelle. Andrea has been with the company for a number of years in Perth and will now develop co-production opportunities in Canada, and the company's client base in the USA.

In 2009 and 2010 Electric Pictures was voted one of the Real Screen Global 100 – a list that celebrates the companies making the best work in non-fiction film and television.

Contact: Andrew OGILVIE

Tel +61 8 9339 1133

Fax +61 8 9339 1183

ao@electricpictures.com.au

KEY CREDITS

Produced by



Produced in association with



Produced in Association with ScreenWest and Lotterywest



A National Documentary Program



CREDIT LIST

Directed and Written By	DON FEATHERSTONE
Executive Producers	TREVOR GRAHAM NED LANDER ANDREW OGILVIE
Editor	LAWRIE SILVESTRIN
Director of Photography	JIM FRATER
Production Designer	EMMA FLETCHER
Costume Designer & Military Advisor	IAN SPARKE
Original Music	ASH GIBSON GREIG
Visual Effects	MIKE DUNN PHIMEDIA

Narrated By	COLIN FRIELS
Production Manager	ROSE GRANDILE-PIZZI
Researchers	ROBYN BERSTEN RONALD HEE HAJIME MARUTANI
Archive Researchers	GREG COLGAN NATASHA HARRIS
Production Coordinators	REBECCA KELLY DEANNE STRATFORD
Online Editor & Colourist	DEAN EDWARDS COLOURBOX VIDEO POST PRODUCTION
Sound Editor	GLENN MARTIN
Sound Post Production	RIC CURTIN CURTIN PRODUCTIONS

© 2011 Electric Pictures Pty Ltd, Screen Australia and ScreenWest Inc.

## **DISTRIBUTION DETAILS**

### **INTERNATIONAL BROADCAST SALES**

#### **PARTHENON**

Parthenon House  
5 Station Approach  
Chorleywood Hertfordshire  
WD3 5PF  
Tel; +44 (0)1923 286 886  
info@parthenonentertainment.com

### **DVD & DOWNLOAD DISTRIBUTION:**

#### **EP INDEPENDENT**

33 Canning Highway,  
East Fremantle WA  
AUSTRALIA  
Judith Cockburn-Campbell  
Tel: +61 8 9339 1133  
jc@electricpictures.com.au