



Tanjung Kalian (Muntok Lighthouse)

The Journey of Vivian Bullwinkel A Nursing History Study Tour

6–19 February 2027



Australian
College of
Nursing



**JON BAINES
TOURS**

Level 4
ACTIVE





A nurse's uniform in the Muntok Peace Museum on Bangka Island

For decades, the full truth of what happened on Bangka Island went untold.

Eighty-five years ago, twenty-one Australian Army nurses were murdered on Radji Beach, following the sinking of the Vyner Brooke. Vivian Bullwinkel was the sole survivor. For years afterward, she was forbidden to publicly speak of everything that happened on that terrible day.

This tour, led with the Australian College of Nursing (ACN), starts in Kuala Lumpur and then takes the path those nurses took down the Malay Peninsula, through Malacca and Singapore, to Muntok on Bangka Island. Along the way, you'll visit the hospitals where they served, the sites connected to their evacuation, and the places that bore witness to their captivity and deaths.

In Muntok, you'll attend the commemorative service and join the Walk for Humanity, an act of remembrance held on the beach in front of the memorials. This journey is an opportunity to deepen your understanding of the nurses' service and sacrifice, to honour their memory, and to help ensure their story continues to be told in full.

THIS TOUR IS CLASSSED AS:

Level 4 | Active



Longer and fuller days. Significant levels of walking, covering longer distances, requiring very good fitness and mobility.

Tour Leader

Group Captain Kath Stein FACN is President of the Australian College of Nursing, a highly respected senior nursing leader with more than three decades of experience across Defence and civilian healthcare settings.

Kath joined the Royal Australian Air Force in 1991 and, following graduation from Curtin University, began her clinical career at Fremantle Hospital. She has since served in health environments across New South Wales, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland, with extensive operational experience through exercises and deployments in Australia and internationally.

Her career has spanned clinical, operational and strategic leadership roles, including health planning at Headquarters 395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing and senior policy and governance roles across Defence. She has served as Commanding Officer of Joint Health Unit Northern New South Wales and Director of Defence Force Nursing, and currently



leads national service delivery as Director of National Operations within Defence Health.

Kath brings a deeply personal connection to the Bangka Island pilgrimage through her Defence service and her enduring respect for the legacy of Lieutenant Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel and the 21 nurses massacred there. A proud nurse and Fellow of the ACN, she feels privileged to lead this tour – a journey honouring their courage and legacy, and exploring its lasting impact on the nursing profession.

Tour manager

Dr Jo Grey graduated from the UQMS in 2001 and gained her Fellowship of the RACGP in 2006. A “late starter” in medicine, she first trained as a Registered Nurse at St John’s Hospital in Hobart while serving as a Reservist in the Royal Australian Corps of Signals, later working as a Charge Nurse in Melbourne and teaching at Lincoln/LaTrobe University. She was sponsored through medicine by the ADF, serving as Regimental Medical Officer at 2nd Health Services Battalion, where her interest in tropical medicine began. Jo went on to complete postgraduate studies in Public Health, Infectious Diseases and Tropical Medicine.

Having travelled to over 70 countries across all seven continents, Jo regularly accompanies



medical students and expedition groups to remote destinations. She runs a travel medicine clinic in Launceston.

Itinerary 6–19 February 2027

B = Breakfast **L** = Lunch **D** = Dinner

1 night Kuala Lumpur – 2 nights Malacca – 3 nights Singapore
– 2 nights Jakarta – 5 nights Bangka Island



Day 1: Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)

B D

(Sat, 6 February)

Am: Arrive and transfer to the hotel.

Pm: Welcome dinner.

Day 2: Kuala Lumpur / Malacca

B L D

(Sun, 7 February)

Am: Drive to Malacca and board a cruise on the **Malacca River**, which in its heyday was the main artery of trade for Malacca, when the city was bustling with traders from all around the world.

Pm: After lunch visit the **Baba & Nyonya Heritage Museum** which illustrates the way of living of the Peranakans at the end of the 19th century, a unique blend of the east and the west. Transfer to the hotel and check in.

Eve: Dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 3: Malacca (Mon 8 February)

B L

Am: Enjoy a **historical tour of Malacca** including visits to **St. Peter's Church**, the oldest Christian Church still in use in Malaysia, the **Cheng Hoon Teng Temple**, and see the largest **Chinese Cemetery** outside of China. Continue to

the famous gateway "**Porta de Santiago**" and "**Red Square**," the salmon pink Dutch administrative building which today houses the Malacca Museum and government offices.

Pm: After lunch visit the **Australian General Hospital**, now known as **Malacca General Hospital**, where Lieutenant Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel commenced her overseas WWII service in September 1941.

Eve: At leisure

Day 4: Malacca / Kluang / Johor Bahru / Singapore

B D

(Tues, 9 February)

Am: Full day's drive to Singapore via Kluang. **The Mengkibol Estate** in Kluang was a rubber plantation offering an insight into Malaysia's colonial plantation heritage and where the 2/4 Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) was located in January 1942. Continue to **Johor Bahru** and visit **Hospital Permai**, which has a significant wartime history. It served as the base for the 2/13 & 2/4 CCS, treating Allied battle casualties during the retreat towards Singapore. Late afternoon crossing into Singapore and check in to the hotel.

Eve: Dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 5: Singapore (Wed, 10 February)

B

Am: Visit **St Patrick's School** which was used as a hospital prior to the fall of Singapore in February 1942 by 2/13 Australian General Hospital and **Oldham Hall**, a Methodist boarding school converted into a hospital base by the 2/10 AGH. Visit **Changi Prison and Museum** with artefacts telling the story of POWs interned in Changi prison camp during the Japanese Occupation. A few of the original barracks buildings remain today, along with the entrance gate and wall of the original Changi Gaol.

Pm: After lunch continue to **St Andrew's Cathedral** which was used as a temporary hospital by the Australian Field Ambulances when war was declared and where the remaining Australian Nurses gathered before going Keppel Harbour to board the SS Vyner Brooke. There is a plaque dedicated to the 41 nurses who didn't survive the war. Visit the **Former Ford Factory**, where the British Army forces surrendered to Imperial Japanese Army forces on 15 February 1942 after the Battle of Singapore. The exhibition presents the events and memories surrounding the British surrender, the Japanese Occupation of Singapore, and the legacies of the war. Return to the hotel and at leisure.

Eve: Take the train to **Raffles** and enjoy a Singapore Sling in the Long Bar.

Day 6: Singapore (Thurs, 11 February) B

Am: Visit **Alexandra Hospital**, formerly the **British Military Hospital** and the primary military hospital for the British Far East Command in Singapore. It was the site of a WWII massacre of British staff and patients by the Imperial Japanese Army during the Fall of Singapore in February 1942. Nurses were evacuated from the Alexandra Hospital on SS Kuala before the massacre.

Pm: Meeting with the **Singapore Nursing Association**.

Eve: At leisure.

Day 7: Singapore / Jakarta (Indonesia) B D
(Fri, 12 February)

Am: Fly from Singapore to Jakarta. On arrival, transfer to the hotel and check-in.

Eve: Dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 8: Jakarta (Sat, 13 February) B D

Am: Day in Jakarta to visit the old hospital and meet the **Indonesian National Nursing Association**.

Pm: Visit the **Commonwealth War Graves Site**, a peaceful memorial area honouring Commonwealth soldiers who lost their lives during past conflicts, as well as 8 Australian Army nurses who died as prisoners of war following the sinking of the SS Vyner Brooke. This is an opportunity to pay your respects at the site where they have been laid to rest.

Eve: Dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 9: Jakarta / Bangka B D
(Sun, 14 February)

Am: Fly to Pangkalpinang, Bangka Island. On arrival transfer to the Yasminstar Hotel.

Pm: At leisure

Eve: Dinner at a local restaurant.



Malacca, where Lieutenant Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel commenced her overseas WWII service at Australian General Hospital

Day 10: Bangka Island

B D

(Mon, 15 February)

Am: Tour Muntok and visit **Menumbing Hill** where President Sukarno, the first President of Indonesia, was exiled by the Dutch. The house where he lived is now a very impressive museum.

Pm: Visit **Muntok Peace Museum**, which highlights Muntok's wartime history showcasing stories of peace, remembrance, and local heritage. Attend a service commemorating the internees in the camps, including AANS nurses.

Day 11: Bangka Island

B

(Tues, 16 February)

Am: Visit **Tanjung Kalian (Muntok Lighthouse)**, a significant landmark in a historical coastal area featuring memorials including the **Vivian Bowden Memorial** (2023) and the **Australian Army Nurse's Memorial** (1993), where the commemorative service takes place.

Pm: Join 'The Walk for Humanity' – a walk for peace on the beach in front of the memorials, wading into the water in tribute to the nurses and scattering petals in remembrance.

Day 12: Bangka Island (Wed, 17 February)

B

Am: ACN visit to **Radji Beach Headland Memorial**, a historical site connected to wartime remembrance.

Pm: Visit **Muntok General Hospital** followed by a visit to a local school* (*the school visit is still being planned and the times may change.)

Day 13: Bangka Island

B D

(Thurs, 18 February)

Am: **History Walk of Muntok**, retracing the Nurses and other internees' steps from **Muntok Pier** onto **Customs House**, where hundreds of survivors were first held and processed. Continue to **Muntok Cinema** and **Coolie Lines**, where the nurses were brought after being captured, the **Indonesian Red Cross site**, and the Japanese Commandant, **Captain Seki's House** in **Muntok Peace Park**.

Pm: Finish at the **Vivian Bullwinkel Gallery** in the **Tinwinning Museum**, learning of the sinking of the Vyner Brooke and Vivian Bullwinkel's courage and survival. At leisure.

Eve: Farewell dinner.

Day 14: Bangka Island

B

(Fri, 19 February)

Am: Depart to airport for onward connections.





A traditional Malay fishing village (top); Singapore skyline; Muntok Peace Museum; The Vyner Brook at dock in 1932 (above)

The cost of the tour sharing a room is AUD \$5,860

The cost of the tour with a room to yourself is AUD \$7,224

The cost includes:

- 13 nights' accommodation in 4-star hotels, and in more remote areas the best accommodation available
- The services of tour leader, ACN President Kath Stein, and tour manager, Jo Grey
- The services of local English-speaking national guides throughout
- Comprehensive briefing notes
- A full programme of tours and specialist visits as per the itinerary
- Breakfasts daily and other meals as indicated on itinerary
- All transport, including flights from Singapore to Jakarta, Jakarta to Bangka Island,
- All admission fees, tips and taxes
- A per person donation to the ACN Foundation

The cost excludes

- International flights and transfers on arrival and departure
- Meals not mentioned
- Drinks with meals
- All optional excursions, tours and visits; all personal extras such as porterage, laundry and inoculation fees; travel insurance and visas

NB: All itineraries are subject to change according to local conditions.

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Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur (top); Commonwealth War Graves Site, Jakarta (credit: Commonwealth War Graves Commission) Changi Chapel, Singapore; Clarke Quay, Singapore (above)



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