

**83783 LAC JACK WONG SUE OAM, DCM**  
**12 Sep 1925 – 16 Nov 2009**

**Jack Wong Sue**, OAM, DCM also known as **Jack Sue** was a prominent Chinese Australian from Perth, Western Australia. Jack was born in Perth in September 1925 to an unauthorised Chinese immigrant Wong Shiu See and an Australian mother, Mary Magdalene Clements; his parents had him christened Jackie Wong Sue,

Jack served in several different capacities during World War II from 1943 to 1946. Most notably as a member of the elite commando / special reconnaissance unit "Z Force" behind enemy lines in Borneo, Z Force was officially known as Z Special Unit.

World War II took on a more sinister footing after Japan had entered the conflict by bombing Pearl Harbour in 1943 and the Japanese Imperial Army marched through South East Asia almost unchallenged. Their army crushed Malaysia, Singapore and all other smaller islands in the Southern Pacific region at will. Following the outbreak of the War in the Pacific, and although he was only 16, Wong Sue was unfairly given a white feather, a symbol of perceived cowardice sometimes presented to men of military age in wartime. In spite of his age, Wong Sue was able to join the Norwegian Merchant Navy by claiming to be 18 and forging his parents' signatures.

Following many hazardous wartime voyages on merchant ships, Wong Sue returned to Australia and attempted to join the Royal Australian Navy when he turned 18. Jack claimed that he was rejected as a result of racism, due to his Chinese descent. Although the Australian armed services did not have an official policy which rejected non-white applicants, there is evidence that discrimination did occur. On 25 September 1943, Wong Sue joined the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), and became a crew member on RAAF crash rescue boats.



Because of his Asian appearance (second from left) and fluency in the Malay and Chinese languages, Wong Sue was approached to join the Allied intelligence/commando unit, Z Special Unit. Jack was quick to agree and he spent a lot of receiving jungle warfare

training at Fraser Island, Queensland and advanced jungle training in the Cairns area. The Special Forces Reconnaissance Unit was the predecessor of the current Special Air Service Regiment, Based in the western suburbs of Perth.

During 1945, Wong Sue was among members of Z Force who landed in Borneo, as part of Operations Agas 1 and Agas 3. Groups of five to 25 commandos carried out surveillance, sabotage, attacks against Japanese forces, and were instrumental in training native Bornean resistance forces. Wong Sue served behind enemy lines in Borneo for six months and while operating in Borneo, he witnessed the mistreatment of Allied prisoners of war by the Japanese Army at the infamous Sandakan camp, in North Borneo. Wong Sue was also well aware of the failure of Allied military leaders to assemble and execute plans for any rescue operations before all but six of the POWs died, as a result of the Sandakan Death Marches. In his book *Blood on Borneo*, Wong claims that Z Force were responsible for the deaths of 1700 Japanese and the training of 6000 Bornean guerrillas.

Wong Sue was discharged from the RAAF on 21 January 1946; some historical data sources allege Mr Sue was a RAAF Officer who was seconded to Z Special Unit, an allied intelligence and commando unit which operated behind enemy lines in South-East Asia during World War II, whereas AWM history recognizes that he was a 'Z' Force Unit Sergeant in the Borneo theatre. His service records tell us that he is officially recorded as a RAAF Leading Aircraftsman (LAC) on discharge. After returning to Perth he became a prominent businessman, owning a Dive Shop in the Perth suburb of Midland. He was also an author, a consultant to the Australian Defence Force, a guide for tours of Borneo and a musician who performed with bands in Perth for about 60 years. As a civilian Mr Sue went on to instruct SAS soldiers in jungle warfare and later formed the Z Special Unit International Incorporated - an association for members of the unit. His published works include two books published circa 2001: a memoir of his military service, *Blood on Borneo*, and a collection of anecdotes regarding a 'jinxed' American war ship wreck, *Ghost of the Alkimos* which sank off WA's coast in 1963. Wong Sue was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia, "For service to the community, particularly through the preservation and recording of military and maritime history.

Mr Sue was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) in 1950; the citation read that he had displayed "***leadership, gallantry and cold blooded courage of the highest order***". Jack also awarded the United States Submarine Combat Insignia. This award is a uniform breast pin worn by officers and men of the United States Navy's Submarine Service who have completed war patrols.

In 2006 Mr Sue was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to the community, especially to the preservation and recording of military and maritime history.

A proud Australian Jack Wong Sue passed away in a Perth hospice, aged 84, on 16 November 2009.

**Lest We Forget**