



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Objection 10

John Lyon

2 pages

SUBMISSION OF OBJECTION TO PROPOSED NAME OF SUBDIVISION OF
BULLWINKEL – ADVERTISED 15 JUNE 2024

I object to the proposed name of the Electoral Division of Bullwinkel.

I acknowledge the worthiness of naming an electoral division somewhere in Australia in honour of Lieutenant Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel AO, MBE, ARRC, ED. The Media Release on point, however, makes no reference to her Western Australian connections or, moreover, to her nexus to the proposed new division.

I agree with the proposal to honour a female war hero who provided critical health care in and near Sumatra in World War II. I suggest, with respect, that a woman with strong connections to the area the subject of the proposed subdivision be considered. That person is my surgeon Aunt, Dr. Marjorie Jean Lyon, O.B.E.; MB, B.S.; M.R.C.O.G; F.R.C.S. (Edin.). She was selected from over 4000 proposed entries by the Australian Bicentennial Authority as one of 200 Unsung Heroes and Heroines. In 1946 she had been awarded the O.B.E. by the King for her work. The following are extracts from her entry in the Australian Dictionary of Biography.

LYON, MARJORIE JEAN (1905 – 1975), surgeon and prisoner of War, was born on 13 February 1905 at Northam, Western Australia, fourth child of Australian-born parents Patrick Pearson Lyon, Barrister, and his wife ... Marjorie attended Northam State School and Methodist Ladies College, Perth, where she was twice dux. She won the Dagmar Berne prize in the year that she graduated from the University of Sydney (MB., BS., 1928). ... On 30 July 1937 Lyon joined the Malayan Medical Service. She was stationed at Johore Bahru in January 1942 at the time of the Japanese advance. Ordered to Singapore, she joined her English friend Dr. Elsie Crowe at the general hospital and took charge of a shock ward. When evacuation orders were received, she embarked in the *Kuala* with Crowe and other personnel. Bombers sank the vessel near Pompong Island in the Lingga Archipelago, injured herself, Lyon swam one-quarter of a mile (400m) to the island, treated Crowe – whom she had saved from drowning and cared for the wounded. Days later she, Crowe and others were rescued by the ship *Kafuku Maru (Krait)* and taken to Sumatra. Although the arrival of the Japanese was imminent, Lyon chose to remain as a prisoner of war. She assumed medical responsibility for approximately 50 British and 2500 Dutch women and children, initially located at a Salvation Army hospital, then at a Catholic monastery and later at a gaol. Finally, the internees were moved to a jungle camp at Bangkinang ... due to her unstinting care and rigorous measures, the camp recorded only 160 deaths. Despite being only 5ft 1 in. (155cm) tall, she 'gave the Japanese hell. She was always demanding medicine and getting slapped for asking'. Crowe was impressed with Lyon's integrity and by the way she

regarded 'each and every patient' as 'sacrosanct'. After the Japanese had surrendered, Lyon was evacuated to Singapore. Lady Mountbatten met her there and described her as 'an outstanding woman doctor ... whose work ... will make history, and controlling the Japanese and seeing that they carried out her orders!' Dr. Lyon was appointed O.B.E. in 1946. She practised with the Malayan Medical Service until 1950. Following a brief period as a private specialist, she joined the Western Australian Schools Medical Services in 1951. She retired in 1970. She died in March 1975 at Nedlands.

What makes Marjorie a more appropriate woman to have the electorate named in her honour are the facts that she was born in Northam, the heart of the proposed subdivision, went to school there and that her family lived there for 60 or so years practicing law.

Significantly, she visited every school in the electorate checking on the health of children for about 20 years. In 2017 the Middle School of M.L.C. Claremont was named in her honour. Marjorie went to school there after her primary schooling at Northam State School. The Northam High School, where one of her brothers later went to school was not built when she was a teenager.

I will be happy to provide any further information needed. I have recently published her War Time Diaries (600 pages) written daily in the prison camp. I am happy to provide a copy.

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