

PIONEER NEWS

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2/1st — 2/2nd ANZAC ACTIVITIES 1995

Following upon the success of the 1994 changes of the venue for the Reunion and date of the Annual Meeting the Committee have agreed to follow the same format as outlined below.

WREATH LAYING — Monday, 24th April

The Wreath Laying Service will be held at 7.30 p.m., on Monday, 24th April and the assembly point will be on the corner of Martin Place and Pitt Street, G.P.O. side at 7.25 p.m., and will place wreaths at the Cenotaph at 7.30 p.m.

This is the first of our activities to show "Australia Remembers 1945-1995".

ANZAC DAY MARCH — Tuesday, 25th April

The forming up will be the same as previous years for both units — 2/1st in Phillip Street, head on King Street and rear of 6th Division. 2/2nds in Phillip Street near Martin Place and rear of 7th Division. Both banners will be displayed at their respective assembly points. Please check city newspapers for any change in the assembly points.

ANZAC REUNION — Tuesday, 25th April

The Anzac Day Reunion Dinner will be held at the Occidental Hotel, 43 York Street, Sydney. After the march, board the train at Museum Station and travel to Wynyard Station. Proceed up the escalators to York Street — turn right

into York Street towards Central — travel to the first street (Erskine Street) and the hotel is on the south side corner. Enter from York Street into the hotel foyer.

PROCEDURE on entering the foyer:

1. NAME TAGS — Bob Lake/Geoff Finlay.
2. MEAL COST — of \$11.50 to David Herron/Ray Law.
3. ENTER LIFT — and proceed to 1st Floor and be seated at the table. (Tables near the lift will be reserved for 2/2nds, who march with 7th Division and arrive late.)
4. REFRESHMENTS — from the bar. Beer: Middy \$1.50. Schooner \$2.00. Jug \$5.60.
5. LUNCH SERVED — at 12.45 p.m. Roast beef or chicken, vegetables, buttered roll. Waitress will serve to a table of ten.

ANNUAL MEETING — Friday, 26th May

The Annual Meeting will be held on Friday, 26th May, at the Redfern R.S.L. Club, corner of Redfern and Gibbons Streets, Redfern, at 1.00 p.m. and a cordial welcome is extended to all members to attend.

2/1st-2/2nd PIONEERS, W.A.

BY President LEN PREEDY

We had a good attendance at the November meeting as follows:

Jack and Joan Monger, Jean Lyford, John and Ethel McDougall, Millie Hunt and friend Elizabeth from Geraldton, Josie Outridge from Boyup Brook, Bob and Norma Sefton from Safety Bay, Jack Stewart, and Neal MacPherson.

On talking to Josie Outridge she said she knew Bob Jarvis when he worked at the Shell Depot, North Perth, and that she also knew the late Ray Woods. I wish I could find out where Bob is these days.

Correspondence received was as follows:

Curly Warne of Northam wrote a long letter about old times and some of his boat rides. Curly, do you know anyone who remembers a chap named Lyford who was in the "I" Section, as his widow, Jean, would like to hear from anyone who knew him? Hazel and Bill Sutton, of Wongan Hills, with a letter to say Bill is feeling better. Ray Chantry with a phone call to say all is well. A phone call from Dorothy Lyon, who was in hospital, to say she was shortly to go home. Ted was managing at home as chief cook and bottle washer.

Had a phone call from Max and Peg Herron from Sydney in September, just for a visit (I thought) while on tour of Western Australia. We were able to get a few of our locals to meet them for lunch at Anzac House. I was totally surprised when Max presented me with a Life Membership Certificate on behalf of the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Battalion Association. For me it was a great honour and I shall treasure it. I would like to thank Bill Jollie and his Committee. With Peg and Max came Jack and Marj Kerslake and it was great to have you with us. Thank you Jack for the photos of our gathering — they were great.

After the meeting Joy and I had two weeks holiday at Busselton, travelling with South West Coachlines, which was a good trip and can recommend them. Early in our stay I saw George McNess's son-in-law who passed the word to George who came in to see us. George still enjoys his golf and has his handicap down and it was great to have a chat.

Thanks to all those who gave donations at the meeting and also to those by mail.

I read with interest in the Pioneer News of Jack and Maisie Kempnich's visit to the West — nice to hear we have won some friends and a pat on the back for our Premier.

We missed Norm Le Cornu and Jack Murray at the meeting, but hope to see you next meeting on 17th March, 1995.

Thank you to all those people who sent us Christmas cards — from Joy and myself, kind regards.

AUSTRALIA REMEMBERS

The key national ceremonies in the programme are:

April/May, 1995 — AIF Pilgrimage to New Guinea.

April 25, 1995 — 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Battalion Anzac Day March and Reunion.

May, 1995 — RAAF-VE Day Pilgrimage to Europe.

July, 1995 — Pilgrimage to Borneo.

SYDNEY MARCH

On Saturday, 12th August, to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of V P Day will be conducted by the N.S.W. Branch of the R.S.L. Commencing at 9.00 a.m. the route and assembly areas will be the same as that of the Anzac Day March.

V P DAY COMMEMORATION SERVICE

Will be held at the Cenotaph, Martin Plaza, Sydney, at 11.00 a.m., on Tuesday, 15th August, 1995.

ATHERTON TABLELANDS, QUEENSLAND

50th V P Celebrations Committee have arranged a week-long programme from 12th to 19th August, which includes — Official Welcome — Church Service — Victory March — Old Time Concert — Maize Festival and Procession — Race Meeting — Old Time Military Ball and two free days to visit camp sites.

Accommodation is available at Atherton, Herberton, Tolga, Malanda, Yungaburra and Ravenshoe.

Queensland Rail have arranged block bookings on the Sunlander Rail services from Brisbane to Innisfail on 8th and 10th August and return 21st and 24th August (coaches from Innisfail to Atherton). Reservations to be made and paid by 8th April. Contact by phone, Group Bookings Officer — (07) 235 1308. Ansett Australia is the domestic carrier and are offering discount fares (up to 50% or better) — contact by phone 008 810 532.

Further information and registration forms from: 50th Victory Pacific Day Celebration Committee, P.O. Box 573, Atherton, Queensland 4883.

"I DIDN'T KNOW THAT"

Is a book being written by Vera Bradley and will be on sale early this year. The subtitle is "Cairns and Districts, Tully to Cape York 1939-45, Service Personnel and Civilians" and contains a whole chapter on the 6th, 7th and 9th Divisions stay on the Atherton Tablelands.

The book contains 450 pages, with hundreds of photographs as well as maps and unit locations. Anyone interested in obtaining a copy may write to the author, who will advise when available and cost — Mrs V. G. Bradley, 46 Mansfield Street, Earlville, Cairns, Queensland 4870.

SICK PARADE

BILL HOFFMAN 2/1, of Kyogle, was in Brisbane Hospital for a brain tumor operation and after a period of convalescence is now in Kyogle Court which is a Masonic Home in Kyogle.

"SNOWY" DODD 2/2, of Tuncurry, was in the Sydney Eye Hospital in January for an operation on the removal of his eye after an infection. He was visited by Ray Levy and Bob Ginnane. He is now home and progressing well.

GEORGE WALKER 2/1, of Culburra, went into Shoalhaven Hospital, Nowra, on February 18 with heart and lung problems, and is now home having to take things very quietly.

IVOR GARNON 2/1, of Charmhaven, was in Lady Davidson Home at Turrumurra in December and transferred to War Veterans Home at Narrabeen. Here he was visited by Jack Pearce and Jack Kerslake.

ALBERT BROWN 2/1, is now residing at War Veterans Home at Narrabeen and was visited by Jack Pearce, Jack Kerslake, Bob Lake and Dick Blakeney. Joe Barker is also at the home and was visited by our hospital visiting team as above — who Bill Tasker sincerely thanks for carrying out this task on his behalf.

BILL LEWIS 2/2, of Carlton, was in St George Hospital, Kogarah, for a by-pass operation in February and was soon recovering at home.

LES BRITT 2/1, of Witfield, Queensland, came down to have a knee operation and was in Community Hospital at Hurstville. Les sent regards to all Pioneers.

NEWS ITEM

● After finalising the accounts for the 1994 Wagga Reunion, the organisers, Ian Willmore and Bill Lewis, found they had a surplus of \$300. After discussion they decided to make this a donation to the Sun-Herald Toy Fund.

In reply the Chairperson of the Fund thanked them for the donation and stated that the main aim of the Fund has been to provide every child who is either in hospital or a children's home over Christmas with a present on Christmas morning. Over the 73 year history of the Fund this objective has always been maintained.

● Jim Hall, 2/1st, of Kyogle, is one of 13 people on a short list of "community heroes" who may appear on a new series of phone cards, and has been nominated by readers of Cumberland Group as an "Aussie battler" committed to his community and deserves to have his photo on the \$5.00 phone card. We wish you well, Jim.

MAIL BAG

Editor: BOB LAKE

Another issue of Mail Bag, the first for 1995, so will wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year and good health to all.

REG ARMSTRONG 2/2, Coonabarabran, with the news that 1994 was not a good one for them. His wife Coralie was taken ill early in the year and spent a few days in hospital, then Reg had a fall and finished up with broken ribs. Still feels the loss of Jim Field and Coralie keeps in touch with Kathleen from time to time. Reg was sorry to hear Larry Robson was not the best and hope he's feeling a lot better. The rain has been a blessing in their area and their tanks are filling, even weeds are enjoying it. Both send their best wishes, with special mention to the paper wrappers. Also mentions that Eric Lindsay 2/2 is keeping well and up and about. Hope 1995 is a better year, Reg.

CYRIL AMIES 2/1, Thornleigh, with Christmas greetings from he and Doris and lots of news of their doings over the past year. They spent over two months touring Europe, the United Kingdom and Ireland. Certainly travel is enriching, spoilt only by long plane flights. Daughter Wendy did a wonderful job organising their 50th wedding anniversary in April and April this year will be another red-letter date as Cyril turns 80. Doris keeps busy as Secretary of her bowling club. Cyril has been unable to play lately as he had an operation for an aneurysm on the lower part of his aorta in November, which was a success. Last report from Doris was that he was doing well. Keep smiling and best wishes to you both.

BERT BEATON 2/2, Casterton, Victoria, per pen of wife Olive, with Christmas greetings to all and how they are always pleased to receive the News and read of the doings of those friends they made at the reunions. Bert is still keeping well after a total hip replacement a few years ago and they manage on their property with the help of family and contract labour when needed. Olive has a ride-on mower, has a few acres of natives of all sorts, and endless supply of water, so enjoys her gardening, with the family to help quite a lot. They enjoyed Maisie Kempnich's article on the coach trip they did to the Northern Territory and Western Australia, and passed on her congratulations to her on the write-up. Olive and Bert had a trip to Cairns last year and hopefully this year are going to Adelaide, Alice Springs and Darwin and back down the east coast. Feel too old now to motor, so find an organised trip easier and they don't get lost!!!! All the very best to you both.

GORDON BELL 2/2, Tumburumba, with an apology for non-attendance at Wagga, but was in hospital for surgery and there for 17 days. He is now on the road to recovery, but has a while to go before he can resume normal activities. Sends his regards to all with a special mention to H.Q. and D Company.

MARJ BOYLE, widow of Keith 2/1, Moama, with a letter and return thanks card in reply to our expressions of sympathy on Keith's death. (The letter arrived too late for inclusion in the November issue Marj.) Keith had a pretty trying time over the last months of his life, but Marj was able to be with him all the time. Sorry that distance kept us from being any help to you in your troubles, but you were with us in thoughts. Keep your chin up and good luck. Marj mentions the loving support she had received from the local community and is still being cared for lovingly. All the best and keep in touch.

AILEEN CALLAWAY, widow of Fred 2/1, Wahroonga, with a letter of thanks to the Association for all the help and support that was provided to her and the family during Fred's illness. She would especially like to thank Bill Tasker for his Eulogy at Fred's funeral which was informative and very emotional. Her family felt very proud of Fred's achievements in so many theatres of war. Many thanks Aileen and our best wishes to you and the boys.

JACK COATES 2/1, Umina, with two newsy letters since last News and says he's in the clear for a while with hospitals. Had a bad trot last

year for several months and spent a lot of time in Concord and Hornsby. Lex has also had a trip to hospital in the last few weeks for nose problems and finished up with two black eyes, swollen nose and a broken tooth. Hope you are on the mend, Lex. Jack missed the last Rats meeting at Gosford, but will be at Toukley, he hopes, for next meeting. Says as far as he knows the Gosford folk are all well, must assume Harry and Glad Hamer and Bluey and Edna Miller are O.K. Bluey's sight is very bad and Edna reads the paper to him every day. The Millers celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in October and Edna calculates her years of marriage "to be two life sentences and a half" but said they're not likely to get divorced now. Best wishes to them on their anniversary. Jack and Lex have just returned from Narrabri visiting family and said hello to the "ghosts" at Greta on his way past. Hard to believe its now 54 years on. Hopes to be in Sydney for Tobruk Sunday at Five Dock, otherwise will see everyone on Anzac Day. Thanks for the cheque and all the news, Jack, and best wishes to you and Lex.

ALLAN CRUTE 2/1, Woolgoolga, per pen of wife Beula, with a newsy letter to the Herrons for Christmas. Says she and Allan are both well at the moment and she has almost regained full use of her wrist after her operation. They are always saddened to read the Last Post and reading of so many of the Pioneers passing away. Particularly mentioned Jim Field and asked that they be remembered to Kathleen. They had Joyce and Eric ("Bombo") Reynolds to visit just before Christmas and said it is always great to see them. They were both very impressed with Maisie Kempnich's article on their Northern Territory — Western Australia trip, and said it sounded super. Good to hear from you both, keep well.

TOM CHRYSTALL 2/1, Larras Lee, with a letter and a cheque for the Treasurer. He received a letter from Alf Bentley, in Western Australia, recently to say that he and Pat were coming over, after the swimming titles in Perth, for Anzac Day in Sydney, and looking forward to the visit. Said he should be so fit he might swim across the Bight — not as quick but much cheaper. Tom says he has had a bit of knee trouble, but says it's nearly as good as new and he should soon be able to go back to work. He hopes to call on John Hayden when next in Orange, and expects John is getting in trim to marshal the Anzac march in Orange again this year. Closes with best wishes to all.

JOHN DOWD 2/2, Wagga, with a short note for Christmas and a cheque for the Treasurer. He enjoyed the two days at the Wagga Reunion and said the Chapel and Pioneer Door well worth seeing. Sends best wishes to all for the coming year.

BILLIE DYNON, widow of Frank 2/1, Mona Vale, with a donation to funds and says she enjoys reading the News even though she doesn't know a lot of the people, but it reminds her of Frank. She enjoyed Maisie Kempnich's article very much as Billie herself has done a couple of trips to Kakadu, Ayers Rock and the Bungle Bungle, and the article brought back memories. Her trip wasn't as comprehensive as the Kempnich's, but most informative and enjoyable. Sends her best wishes to all Pioneers for a healthy and happy year.

NORMA FITCH, widow of Harold 2/1, Rydalmere, with a card and best wishes to all for the coming year. Many thanks for the donation to funds and all the best.

SAM GARDINER 2/1, Oak Flats, with a cheque for the Treasurer and with regards to your wife's question as to why the Pioneers seem to have greyer hair than most of the Second World War troops, could it be that we have more worries. Sam has had a bit of eye trouble and has been placed on the Prince of Wales waiting list for another eye graft. Good luck, Sam, and look after that good eye.

BEAU HANNAFORD 2/1, Umina, with a cheque and change of address after some 67 years in the Punchbowl area, with his wife of some 47 years. Having both passed the Use By Date he decided to make the effort to move on, and found a place at Umina that suited his needs. Has had some trouble with his legs and difficult to walk far, but come Anzac Day they'll get me to the reunion wherever it is held. Good boy, Beau, see you on the 25th.

RAY HARRIS 2/2, Ballina, with a sub for the Treasurer and says he hopes to make next Anzac

Day with Ken Wilson and Kev Raward. Hope you are feeling a lot better, Ray, and are able to make the trip to Sydney.

LEO HEALEY 2/1, Mentone, Victoria, with a card to the Secretary with a new address. Had been for a trip up to Gosford to visit a brother who has since passed on and special mention "to look after that ankle, Max, too many mountains and too many jungle tracks, all catching up on you". Best wishes to yourself and Mercia.

PAM HERRICK, daughter of George Bates 2/1 deceased, Caringbah, with a letter to Peg and Max expressing thanks for their letter to her on their return from Western Australia. Pam has sent some photos of last Anzac Day, says she must have been guided by God as she took a full roll of film of her dad and his mates. She does not know very many of the blokes, but Max and some of us will and Max has already placed them in the Pioneer album. Both she and her mum were off to Newcastle for Christmas and later to Bundeeena to set up camp for a week. The break will do them both good. Good luck, Pam, and keep the chin up.

BLUEY HUCKER 2/2, Victoria, with a sub for the Treasurer and his regret at not being able to attend the Wagga Reunion. His intentions were good, but unable to get there. However, he still gets satisfaction from the News. Your new address has been noted, Bluey, and best of luck.

ALLEN JENSON 2/1, Rydalmere, per pen of good wife Joan, thanking Max for writing to Allen. He was at Lady Davidson, but they only kept him there as long as they had to and they forced Joan to find a nursing home, Fernleigh Nursing Home, West Ryde, where he is being well looked after. Allen can now walk a little on a frame, with the help of three sisters. Best of luck to you both and keep smiling.

DON LINTON 2/2, Tuncurry, with a nice letter to the Editors for the great job they do in producing such a newsy paper which keeps us in touch with all our widely scattered mates. Also offers praise for the well organised Wagga Reunion. It was good to meet old mates again and also to meet the P.O.W.'s. who are a great lot of fellows and helped to make the weekend a success. Unfortunately Don won't be able to make the Anzac Day march, but will be there in spirit. Best wishes and many thanks for the donation to funds.

DORRIE LONG, widow of Bob 2/1, Sutherland, with a letter and photo, also a cheque for the Treasurer. The photo was taken in the early fifties before the march, and Dorrie has marked Lofty Barlow, Arthur Murphy and Bob. Max would probably know most of them and will place the photo in the Pioneer album. Have a good year, Dorrie, and best wishes from all Pioneers.

"MAC" McKIBBIN 2/1, Ballina, per pen of his daughter, Janet McCoy, with the news that her father had recently moved into the Ballina Ex-Servicemen's Hostel from the Gold Coast. The address is P.O. Box 350, Ballina, and her father would enjoy hearing from any Pioneers living in the area, or were able to visit. "Mac" has not been well since having his hip replaced for the second time two years ago. This has restricted his movements, but still has a good sense of humour. He has been living with Janet at Lennox Head until his place came up at the Hostel. Janet says she enjoys having him close as he will be able to participate in the Anzac Day celebrations with her son, Peter, who, to his grandfather's "dismay", is a "blue orchid" in the Air Training Corps. She says her dad gets a lot of pleasure from sharing Army life with him. Many thanks for your letter, Janet, and for the cheque enclosed.

TOM MORGAN 2/2, Forster, with a thank you for the Pioneer News and he says that as his memory is slipping (join the mob) the names in the paper help to jog it along. He and his wife, Mary, are hoping to have a short trip to Western Australia early in the new year by train, and expecting it to be a lot more comfortable and quicker than the old troop trains. Thanks for the kind remarks about the News and those who continue to keep the Association alive and for your cheque. Best wishes "Splinter", keep well.

HARRY MOWBRAY 2/1, Queensland, with a Christmas card and said how much he enjoyed Anzac Day, 1994, but won't be able to make it this year. Also glad to receive the News, especially to read any news of the Kyogle crowd. Was sorry to read of Bill Hoffman's illness and hopes he is now improving.

DON McCLELLAND 2/2, Bundaberg, enclosed a cheque for this year, thinks he paid 1994 (you did, Don) and says how he enjoys the News. Sends his kindest regards and wishes all good health in the coming year.

TOM MCGUINNESS 2/1, Laurieton, with a donation to funds and says he gets a lot of pleasure from reading the News. Tom was sorry to hear of Pat Noonan's death, he was a good bloke and quite a character. Closes with best wishes to all and "keep the News coming".

GEORGE MURPHY 2/2, Mitcham, Victoria, Secretary of the 2/2 Pioneer Association in Victoria, with a letter telling of the good time at Wagga. He was sorry that the Herrons could not make it and hopes that the operation on Max's ankle was successful. We attended the funeral of Vic Whiteley's wife recently and have to report Max was walking with a stick and plaster up to his knee, but limping along O.K. All the best to you George. Keep well.

JEAN MCINTYRE, widow of John 2/2, Warrimoo, with a Christmas card and says she is still keeping well and sends many thanks for the job the Committee do in keeping the "flag flying". Best of luck, Jean, and keep fit in 1995.

BERT NEASBEY 2/2, Davistown, with a thank you for the News and a cheque for the Treasurer. He also thanked Max for passing on his name and address to 2/2nds in Victoria. Closes with best wishes to all and the very best for the future.

GWEN STRODE, sister of Keith Jones 2/1, K.I.A. Balikpapan, with a Christmas card wishing all Pioneers the very best for 1995, and a sub for the Treasurer. Many thanks, Gwen, and all the best.

PETER PEILE 2/1, Caringbah, per pen of wife Erika, with a newsy letter and a donation to funds. Peter's sight is now all but total, can't see rain, colour or television, he just listens to the sports shows, but can keep up with his gardening. Family are all well and celebrating anniversaries — she and Peter 40 years coming up in April. Mentions that she wondered what she had let herself in for when Peter came home from a meeting with a great tear in his wedding pants after trying to help save two bottles of beer belonging to "Tich" Turnbull (8 Platoon).

ROY PARRETT 2/2, Queensland, with a card for Christmas and a donation to funds. Sends his best wishes to all and says it's good to receive the News, and thanks the Committee for the good job they are doing.

BERN REINERS 2/1, Corryong, with quite a long letter to Max and Peg and a cheque for funds. Bern hopes that Max's operation was a success and that he is able to gallop about again (hardly galloping) but at least he is getting about without pain. This year the Reiner family gave Bern and Mona another mystery flight for their birthdays, this time with two nights accommodation as well, and ended up at the Novotel Resort at Maroochydore, and they really enjoyed it. All their family are well and kept busy with work and school activities. All the very best to you both and your good wishes have been passed on to the Kerslakes.

FRED SCANES 2/1, Cooma, with a welcome letter and a donation to funds. Tells of the country their way looking good and mushrooms popping up everywhere — goes well with a nice steak. Fred was pleased to hear Allan McInnes was keeping well, he had been talking to Allan's sister recently and she mentioned he was going on a trip shortly, so Fred took it from that that Allan was O.K. (Special regards from Max to his old tent mate.) All the best Fred and who knows, the Lotto win may go to Cooma one day.

HARRY SPREADBOROUGH 2/1, Queensland, with Christmas greetings and a cheque for the Treasurer. Harry attended the Christmas break-up for the Rats and Nev Woodham, Harry Mowbray and John Keegan were also there. Ken Franks is also a member, but not at the party. Like everyone else, Harry said he was complaining about the heat and the drought, even though only 21kms from the city do not get the rain Brisbane does. (Trust by now you have been lucky, as the rain seems to have been pretty widespread.) Harry says with the celebrations for the 50th Anniversary of war's end coming up, he hopes something will happen at his end of the globe, but as the 15th August is right in the middle of the Brisbane Exhibition. It might be hard to get some show of interest. Closes with best wishes

to all and "most importantly — to let the moths out and get financial for another year".

TED WILCOX 2/1, Taree, with another change of address. It was too cold at Oakdale and he had a bad landlord, so decided to go to Taree where he has a flat on his own. He can now eat what he likes, when he likes, and with a bit of luck might make Sydney for Anzac Day.

● That's all the Mail Bag for this issue. Vic Whiteley had the misfortune to lose his wife on the 11th February, 1995. She was a good woman and a good friend to Joan and I, and that applies to all who knew her. Our sincere sympathy goes to Vic and his two sons, Chris and Neil, Neil's wife Joanna and grand-daughter Dylane.

TOUR OF TOBRUK AND EL ALAMEIN

In October, 1992, a party of World War II veterans, with their family and friends made an historic pilgrimage back to Egypt to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of El Alamein. Some of the veterans travelled to Libya to honour their mates who fell at the Siege of Tobruk. This tour was undertaken by Jack and Kathleen Tooker (2/1st Pioneer). The tour was written up by Kath Tooker and this is her story.

— Editor, Max Herron

We left Sydney by Singapore Airlines on 13th October and after booking in each person was presented with an orchid buttonhole. There were 154 people taking part in the tour including two doctors, two nurses, two tour escorts, three Defence Force journalists and a video cameraman. The 2nd Military District Band entertained us for an hour and a detachment of troops arrived to line our route and applaud our departure through Customs.

After taking off, the captain welcomed us aboard and announced that as a tribute to the occasion the plane would pass over Martin Place and the Cenotaph. Our flight to Singapore took us over Lightning Ridge, Mt Isa and Darwin, then over Jakarta and the Java Sea.

Arriving at Changi Airport, Singapore, we had quite a long wait before leaving on another flight for Dubai, on the west coast of Saudi Arabia in the Persian Gulf. It is a port in the country called the Trucial States. It was still dark and the sight of Dubai as we flew in was like looking down on fairyland, an orderly array of glistening lights as far as the eye could see, indicating I think the prosperity of this oil rich country.

While the plane was being refuelled we were allowed into the terminal to look at the duty free shops, with armed guards on the entrances. Goods were very expensive — like pure gold and diamond watches, one priced at \$65,000. We were still there at 3.00 a.m. with the temperature 25 degrees. Eventually we left Dubai heading for Cairo and another meal. We had eaten four meals from 3.00 p.m. Tuesday until 11.30 a.m. Wednesday (Sydney time).

We arrived in Cairo at 5.00 a.m. local time and eventually got to the El Borg Hotel on Gezira Island. It was a long ride through the city and there was some evidence of an earthquake which had taken place the day we left Sydney, but from the look of the buildings the city appeared old and derelict anyway. Following breakfast we were off for a trip down the Nile, upon a floating restaurant. Time for a rest later, as we were all feeling tired after the long trip and time changes.

Next morning we were off to see the Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx, a very inspiring sight, before lunch at the Pyramid View Hotel. From here we went back to look at the old city of Memphis, the Alabaster Sphinx and the ruins of Ptah Temple. Before returning to Cairo we had time to also see the step Pyramids of Zoser, the Serapeum, the Tomb of Ty and the burial chamber of Ounas. Names we had heard and read about, but never dreamt we would see together.

Jack wasn't feeling the best and I had a rash which seemed to be getting worse, so had the doctor prescribe some treatment, as we were to start our tour the following morning en route to Tobruk and El Alamein.

We made an early start next morning for Mersa Matruh, four coaches in all and led by General Broadbent in a jeep flying the Australian flag. This

was to continue for the whole tour until our return to Cairo. We followed the road towards Alexandria, but before Alexandria we branched north-west and then eventually west along the Mediterranean seaboard. For many miles from Alexandria the land was under cultivation, mainly figs, olives and crops. Before Mersa Matruh this ceased and from then on the country, as far as the eye could see, was just sand and stubble. Our overnight stay was at the Miami Hotel, which was quite good but certainly not up to Aussie standards. The room was good and we had a restful night.

Jack tried to make a call to Australia Allover, but this was a story in itself. There was no way he could make the gathering assembled around him understand that all he wanted to do was make a reverse charge call to this well known Australian programme. They could not speak English, except for a few words, reverse charge calls were unheard of, so they parted, Jack back to the hotel and the crowd in the telephone exchange left to reflect on the foolish foreigner. Jack also had a ride in a donkey cart to the shopping centre, such as it was, to get a film for the camera. Four of them went in this little cart, with a young boy at the whip, and although progress was slow they returned safely, with the film, and all with sore backsides.

— LAKEY

Will close with keep healthy and lots of good luck, at this time of our lives we need that more than ever. So keep sober, keep the chins up and see you all on Anzac Day.

— LAKEY

Jack tried to make a call to Australia Allover, but this was a story in itself. There was no way he could make the gathering assembled around him understand that all he wanted to do was make a reverse charge call to this well known Australian programme. They could not speak English, except for a few words, reverse charge calls were unheard of, so they parted, Jack back to the hotel and the crowd in the telephone exchange left to reflect on the foolish foreigner. Jack also had a ride in a donkey cart to the shopping centre, such as it was, to get a film for the camera. Four of them went in this little cart, with a young boy at the whip, and although progress was slow they returned safely, with the film, and all with sore backsides.

Mersa is quiet, not with the blare of horns which go on all day and night in Cairo. There were many unfinished buildings on the outskirts, mostly houses. They were finished to a flat roof with reinforcing rods sticking up into the air and there the building finished. Perhaps at some future date another floor will be added. The shops were grubby with meat hanging outside, also fruit, and monster packets of OMO at the doorway. At stops like this we did get some washing done.

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ROMMEL'S MUSEUM — MERSA

The following morning we left Mersa for Tobruk and the first stop was at Rommel's Museum, just outside the town. This originally was a cave excavated during the days of the Roman Empire and used as a store for grain and other crops. General Rommel noted that the old cave was in a well protected area of the harbour and decided it would make an ideal place for his temporary headquarters. After the war the locals gave it the name of Rommel's Cave and in 1977 the local administration decided to convert it into a museum. Manfred Rommel, son of the Desert Fox, donated some of his father's personal effects, along with maps and photographs. Today, the museum is a reminder of the war in North Africa and a tribute to a great soldier.

Off to the money exchange then for some Libyan dinars. We were told not to take much of this currency into Libya, nor any alcohol, as being a Moslem country it is forbidden. We eventually left after lunch on the 330km trip to Tobruk.

The country between Mersa and our next stop at Bardia was very flat, with few buildings and lots and lots of rubbish. There were a few more olive and fig trees, patches of grain fields, and small settlements with adults and children playing games, goats under makeshift shelters and some bedouins about.

We stopped for petrol at Bardia, where an old wind-up Armstrong pump was still in use. On to Salum and then up the Halfaya Pass, something like our Bulli Pass. We had a police escort from Bardia to the border and getting through the Egyptian post took ages. All passports had to be

(continued overleaf)

checked and all video cameras registered for re-entry. There were dozens of vehicles piled high with baggage spread out everywhere waiting to be checked — they could have been there for days. At last we were through and then came the great uncertainty — the Libyan border post — an unknown quantity knowing Libya's relationships with the outside world — but this only took a few minutes.

It was a long drive to Tobruk but we arrived safely and escorted by Libyan police to our hotel. We were pleasantly surprised with our hotel — Hotel Masirah in Al Jamahirya — not far from the harbour or the town. It was modern and of high standard, reception and dining rooms beautiful and bedrooms nice and large.

CEREMONY AT TOBRUK

After early breakfast next morning there was much to see and do. We left for the Tobruk Cemetery at 9.00 a.m., men wearing their medals. Wreaths were to be laid, one from the Naval Association and one from the Rats of Tobruk Association. Following this ceremony we went our own ways wandering along the rows and rows of headstones, not only taking in the beautiful layout of the cemetery, but looking for the stones of men of our own unit. Jack was able, with my help, to find several of the men of the Pioneer Battalion. The 2/17th Battalion men and friends with them on the tour held a ceremony at the grave of John Edmondson, V.C. We also visited the German, Italian, Polish and Acroma cemeteries. All have headstones to an Unknown Soldier. The German Memorial is in a beautiful spot with a commanding view of the harbour. It is in the form of a fortress and from the top battlement is a wonderful view of the countryside.

That afternoon we headed west along the Derna Road, stopping first at the Knightsbridge Cemetery for the British Forces and then on to the Derna Road perimeter area, looking south to the escarpment which followed the course of the road and north, within a few hundred yards, the start of Wadi Schel. Little of any evidence remained of the war apart from a few lengths of barbed wire.

From here we went to the perimeter on the El Adam Road, the Easter battle zone. Here remained the tank traps on either side of the road running east and west and still very much as they were. There is one weapon post surrounded by a tank trap just west of the road which Jack said had not altered and was still intact. Here Jack searched for some sort of souvenir but none to be found.

The next day out to the Bardia Road sector, where again the tank traps were still intact. Looking south-west from the road and forward of the traps was looking out in the direction of "Normie", north to the coast is Wadi Zeitum and on the east side of it, just off the road, still exists what Jack believes to be the weapon pit Z 78. Here again we searched for souvenirs and I picked up a casing of an Italian cartridge.

We also went on to the Fig Tree, which according to the sight of grown men jumping up and down, was of great importance. The tree looks just as it did all those years ago when the cave underneath was used as a Regimental Aid Post and Headquarters. Because of its prominence in the landscape, it was used as a reference point by both German and Allied Forces. In the distance looking south-west we saw a small mound on the horizon. This we were told was either Forbes Mound or The Pimple. There are 200,000 people in Tobruk, children attending school 8.00-12.00 in the morning and 2.00-4.00 in the afternoon.

BARDIA, THEN EL ALAMEIN

Left for our visit to El Alamein the following morning, with our police escort again to Bardia. We passed many *Gum Trees*, with flowers growing along the roadside. Small villages popped up occasionally and the soil in this area is brown and sandy. There were a few fruit trees, mostly fig and olives, but the olives were hard and had no flavour and the figs small, seedy and dry. We spent about 45 minutes on the lovely shore at Bardia and wandered along the rocks, before heading once more for the border posts. As before, through the Libyan border with no problems, but a long time getting back into Egypt. Leaving the border we pushed on to Halfaya Pass and down to sea level where we stopped at the Halfaya-Salum Allied War Cemetery.

Trouble occurred with one of the coaches at this point and it was a long slow trip to Mersa Matruh, where we arrived at 6.00 p.m. This was to have been our lunch stop. It was 11.00 p.m. before we arrived at El Alamein and our Aida Motel. We were the first to make use of it and with work still going on there were a few problems, but nice and comfortable. It was to be "our home" for the next six days.

By now my rash looked a mess, from my face to the top of my legs, and eventually my ankles. The medical team were stumped, but as I said I was in good health they considered it would clear up in time.

Next day was a day to be filled in as we wished. Spent our time sitting by the pool and resting. At night we were summoned to the conference room and given an hour long briefing as to the Alamein theatre and action of the Australian forces.

We left early next morning to see the memorials of both sides of the battle at Alamein, our first stop being the Allied Cemetery, which was laid out the same as in Tobruk. By now German, Italian and South African veterans were arriving for the Commemorative Services on the 25th October and there was a South African Service in progress led by a Scottish piper. We passed the Military Museum and on to the German Memorial, a large fortress — like stone building similar to the one in Tobruk. In its courtyard was a magnificent central bowl and around the walls inscriptions to the fallen. We went back to the Italian Cemetery which had the words "Lacking in luck but not in valor" on its obelisk. Returning we passed stones to the side of the road depicting the lines of both Allied and German minefields.

The following day was for a rest and shopping and most were tired after the long day and the heat and sat around the pool. At night we were to be introduced to the Ambassador to Cairo, also Senator Rae and others. Rae had his pipe in his mouth all the time, not even removing it to speak.

The morning of the big day of the Commemoration finally arrived at both the German and Allied War Cemetery. Churchill had said "Before Alamein we never had a victory, after Alamein we never had a defeat." The commencement of the

German Service was at 9.30 a.m., and there were thousands of people in attendance — civilians, service personnel, those of high positions such as the Duke of Kent, the English Prime Minister, the son of Field-Marshal Rommel, clergy of all denominations and others. The service was conducted in German, apart from prayers in English.

From here we went to the Allied Cemetery where another service was held, assisted by the Duke of Kent, the English Prime Minister and others. Wreaths were laid by the Duke, on behalf of the Queen, the Prime Minister, Ambassadors, Veterans' Associations, and a representative of the Republic of Egypt. Music was by the band of the 1st Battalion Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment. The ship's company of H.M.S. Argonaut assisted throughout the service. The ceremony concluded at 12.30 p.m. and dignitaries moved amongst the people. I was able to shake hands with the Duke of Kent, as he moved through the crowd.

From here we all made our several ways home, some to travel miles, some to return to ships or to fly off. This day we will never forget and one we would not have missed. It will be recorded for years to come, and for all to see.

We had come to the end of the tour and it was time to head back to Cairo before flying on to Singapore where we planned to have a few days before going home. Cairo is a city of 16 million people and very noisy and hot. We arrived late in the afternoon to our hotel, within walking distance of the airport. This hotel was up to the standard of those we have in Australia.

All good things must come to an end, so on 28th October we took off with Singapore Airlines heading for Singapore. We spent a few days here on two of our included tours, visiting the island of Sentosa and the following day into Malaysia and up the west coast to Kukup, a small fishing village. It was amazing to see how the people in other countries live.

We arrived home on 2nd November, tired but happy after a wonderful trip and very rewarding, the memory of which Jack and I will carry with us for the rest of our lives.

— KATH TOOKER

LAST POST — "We Will Remember Them"

ALEX McCALLUM 2/1, of Tumut, passed away in August, 1994, while in a nursing home at Tumut and was buried in the Wagga Lawn Cemetery. He was among the first intake at Greta Camp and in the Middle East showed his adaptability by working on bulldozers, road graders, tar road making machines and tractors. These were positions he occupied in civilian life with the Main Roads Department. In the desert and in the Tobruk siege Alex drove the water cart "Gunga Din"

JOHN ASHTON CHAPPLE 2/1, of Clayton, Victoria, passed away on 14th September and the funeral was attended by members of the Clayton R.S.L. Sub Branch. Thanks to George Murphy for the details.

FRED CALLAWAY 2/1, of Wahoonga, passed away on 2nd December while residing at the War Veterans Home at Narrabeen. He had been visited here on numerous occasions by Bob Lake, Jack Kerslake, Jack Pearce and Dick Blakeney. The service was conducted in the Chapel at the Lady Davidson Convalescent Home at Turramurra. Fred served on the Committee of the Association from 1954 to 1959 holding the positions of Secretary and President. President Bill Jollie was in attendance and extended to wife Aileen and sons Greg, Trevor and Martin the sincere sympathy of all Pioneers. The funeral then proceeded to Northern Suburbs Crematorium.

CLIVE (CASEY) BROWN 2/1, of Kingsford, passed away on 5th September at St Vincents Hospital and the funeral was held at Eastern Suburbs Crematorium and was attended by Frank Gillian, Perc Penrose and Bill Tasker, who gave the Eulogy.

RAY LAWRENCE 2/1, of Kogarah, passed away on 15th January, 1995, and the funeral at Woronora Crematorium was attended by Frank Gillian and Bill Tasker, who gave the Eulogy, and spoke of Ray's role as a staunch Committee member in the years of 1960-1970. Kogarah R.S.L. carried out the "Poppy" service.

JAMES MILLER FAIRLIE 2/2, passed away on 12th December, 1994, and we are grateful to Bill

Lewis for supplying the details. In 1992 Bill and Frank Cheal visited Jim at his home and were made most welcome. A sympathy card from the Association was sent to Mrs Fairlie and in return she had sent a sincere thank you card.

"MUFTI", Victoria, following supplied by Eric Causer. T. M. Kearney 2/1, Victoria; J. A. Chapple 2/1, of Clayton; J. M. Benfield 2/2, of Mildura; G. A. Chrystie 2/2, of Yea.

"REVEILLE" issue of January/February with the following: NX10562 - M. H. Andrews 2/1; NX86258 - W. J. Aubrey 2/1; VX72058 - F. R. Dodd 2/2; SX9590 - K. B. Kidd 2/2; NX88298 - A. K. Klaus 2/2; NX25964 - W. B. Murray 2/1; WX14976 - E. M. Williams 2/1; NX25412 - N. McGill 2/1; WX19044 - D. K. Bray 2/2; WX2419 - J. H. Lee 2/2.

PEG WHITELEY 2/1, of Riverwood, wife of Treasurer Vic, passed away on February 12, at St George Hospital, Kogarah, after treatment for lung cancer. The funeral on 16th February was held at Woronora Crematorium and conducted by Padre Stan Morton, Salvation Army Major. In attendance were 18 Pioneers and their ladies, Rats of Tobruk Association and represented by Vice President Roy Jardine, Riverwood Legion Club represented by Norman Kenny and associates, 1st Peakhurst Scout Group represented by Reg Ward, Ron James and Charles Burgess. Peg has been a staunch Association supporter over the years and has greatly assisted Vic in his role as Treasurer. Peg was always there when needed and like Vic and his family we will all miss her greatly. To Vic, sons Chris and Neil and daughter-in-law Joanna, we extend our sincere sympathy in their sad loss.

JOHN TREVETHICK'S 2/1, wife passed away in December, 1994, and we extend to John our sincere sympathy.

NORMA DAISY LOWE, partner of Clemm McDonald 2/2 (deceased), passed away on 23rd February at Port Macquarie. Norma was a regular attender of our Country Reunions and when living in Sydney always accompanied Clemm to the Wreath Laying Service and Annual Meeting.

PIONEER NEWS

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PIONEER ANZAC FUNCTIONS 1995

WREATH LAYING CEREMONY

Eleven Pioneers attended the Wreath Laying Ceremony on 24th April with Jack Tooker doing an excellent job as Marshal. The unit banners were carried by Jack Kerslake 2/1 and Roy Levy 2/2. Wreaths were placed on the Cenotaph by John Gilchrist, representing the Association and Robin Bell, daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1 representing the Ladies Auxiliary.

John Gilchrist recited the Ode to the Fallen and buglers from a Maltese unit nearby, sounded the bugles for Last Post and Reveille.

ANZAC DAY MARCH

Another Anzac Day has come and gone with the march through the streets of Sydney being a very moving spectacle. It really was stirring to see the crowds of onlookers cheering so much as the troops passed by, and together with so many children, waving "our Flag", with so much enthusiasm. It gives one a thrill to see the young people being keen to pay homage to their forefathers who fought and died so that we could have a free nation.

Leaders of the 2/1 were John Gilchrist and Bill Jollie while the 2/2nd leaders were Allan McInnes and Padre Jock Steele. Banners were carried by Tim Lloyd 2/1 and Andrew O'Neill 2/2 while our National Flag was carried with pride by Ray Law 2/1 and Mark Neasbey 2/2.

ANZAC DAY REUNION

Our "Australia Remembers" Reunion was held at the Occidental Hotel in York Street and using the \$1100 grant by the Veterans Affairs Department and an Association subsidy the members were treated to a free luncheon. In reply to the Veteran's Affairs grant, letters of thanks have been sent to the Honourable Con Sciacca, MP, and to the "Australia Remembers" Task Force at Canberra.

REUNION TABLE TALK

Vic Whiteley carried out the duties of bagman for subscriptions from the 2/1st prior to the march while Russ Harrison was bagman for the 2/2nd members. All were very generous with their subscriptions to the Association funds, both at the March and Reunion.

As soon as the Pioneers arrived at the Occidental the amber fluid began flowing. Healthy thirsts had developed after such a warm days march and the efficient bar and table service soon had drinks being delivered to the tables.

The general feeling concerning the meal was that of being very satisfactory and not much was left on the plates. There were 112 Pioneers at the Reunion with country areas being well represented and some visitors as far away as Western Australia — Alf Bentley 2/1 from Yokine, Jack Stewart 2/1 from Floreat Park. Queensland visitors included Don Barraclough, Bert Beasley, Bob McGregor, Nev Woodham and Phil Cramsie.

The formal proceedings were in the hands of Bill Jollie, President, and after making a few announcements he called on Patron John Gilchrist to address the gathering who particularly thanked the members for their attendance and went on to speak of the "Australia Remembers" program.

From other country areas it was pleasing to see so many were in attendance including Wal Page, Jim Gray, Jack Griffiths, Max Wilson and Jack Hore-Lacy. Ray Harris, Nev O'Connor, Snowy Dodd and Ken Wilson showed shrewdness by booking accommodation at the Occidental Hotel for their stay in Sydney. Frank Locane, Tibby Martin and Matt Elliott travelled from the South Coast. Alec George, Kevin Rayward and Wal Coe came from the northern areas and Pat Egan from Canberra.

"A" and "B" Companies 2/1st were well represented at Ted Jensens table with Jack Kerslake, Jack Pearce, and others enjoying the proceedings nearby. It was pleasing to see Bill Lewis recovering well after his operation. His table included Ian Willmore, Pat Collins, Jack Henderson, Gary Iredale, Jack McDonagh and Gavin Todd. Another table had a number of 2/1st Pioneers including Bill Tasker, Perc Penrose, Laurie (Three Course) Kelly and Roy Jardine.

The Committee table saw the solid workers of the day enjoying themselves including Gordon and Geoff Finlay, Max and David Herron, Bob Lake and Ray Law.

Jack Alison, Bill Hodges, Jim Gray and Jack Glover were with another group tucked away in a corner and nearby was a table with George Nichols, Dick Chalmers, Frank Gillian, Alec George, Sid Moore and their mates. Roy Levy, Vince Longmore and Don Crawford were another group with Bob Lee thereabouts. Also noticed Bert Neasbey with son Mark.

Doug Shearston was as usual assisting Vic Whiteley collecting subscriptions both at the March and at their little table near the bar. Let us hope they had a good day.

The decision to hold our reunion at the Occidental Hotel has been well received and general satisfaction with this venue being expressed by many of the members present.

— Reported by RUSS HARRISON

NORTH COAST NEWS

• On Saturday, 3rd June, a barbecue was held at the home of Ida and Ken Wilson 2/2 in Lismore and was attended by Ray and Ruby Harris, Nev and Betty O'Connor, Ossie and Betty Carter and Kevin Rayward.

All agreed it was a very enjoyable afternoon and have arranged to have a get-together and dinner every third month, and the next one will be held on Saturday, 5th August, at the Alstonville Bowling Club. In addition to those present as above, Jack and Betty Crouch and Ray and Nancy Robins will also be present. If there are any other Pioneers interested just contact Ken Wilson at 9 Rosedale Square, Lismore 2480, phone (066) 21 4762.

• Ken Wilson, in a letter to the Secretary, wished to congratulate the Executive and Committee for the excellent Anzac Day 1995 Reunion at the Occidental Hotel. Because Ray Harris, Kevin Rayward, Neville O'Connor and Ken enjoyed themselves so much they have talked Ossie Carter into joining them and they will all book in for accommodation at the Occidental Hotel on Anzac Day 1996. The Association have already made a booking for Thursday, 25th April, 1996, for the function room.

• Ray Harris, Kevin Rayward and Ken Wilson will be attending the Reunion in Adelaide in August being conducted by Allan Olson.

JACK PEARCE — 90 YEARS

On 10th May a group of 2/1st Pioneers gathered after the Rats of Tobruk Meeting to wish Jack Pearce a happy 90th birthday. Padre Stan Morton representing R.O.T.A. spoke highly of Jack's contribution towards the Association and called upon Jack to cut his birthday cake.

Pioneers present were: Roy Jardine, Morrie McEvoy, Jack and Marj Kerslake, Bob and Joan Lake, Max and Peg Herron, Perc Penrose, Vic Whiteley, Cec Peake, Marea McKay and Jack and Val Pearce.

SYDNEY MARCH, 12th AUGUST, 1995

Both Units, 2/1st and 2/2nd, to form up together in Phillip Street, outside Leagues Club, between Martin Place and King Street, at 8.45 a.m.

NORTH COAST PIONEERS

On Sunday, 10th September, at 10.00 a.m., a meeting for all 2/1st and 2/2nd Pioneers on the NSW North Coast will be held at the Lismore RSL Club, 1 Market Street, with the intention of forming a branch of the Sydney based Pioneer Association, just the same as has been carried out for years by Len Preedy for W.A. and Allan Olson for S.A. A cordial invitation is extended to all wives to also attend.

The main item on the agenda will be to discuss and formulate plans to conduct a Pioneer Reunion at Lismore or Ballina in the near future.

Even if you cannot attend the meeting we would welcome your suggestions and any further information you seek may be obtained by contacting either of the convenors listed below.

All 2/1st and 2/2nd Pioneers on the North Coast from Macksville to Brisbane have been sent a circular on this subject, so we ask members to spread the news and if they know of anyone not receiving the circular to notify the convenors.

Notification of attendance to the meeting would be appreciated by the below mentioned by 31st August. KEN WILSON, 9 Rosedale Square, Lismore 2480, phone (066) 21 4762. RAY HARRIS, 36 Antrim Street, Ballina 2478, phone (066) 86 7725.

SICK PARADE

JACK LAMERTON 2/1, of Liverpool, was in hospital in April and could not attend the Anzac Day Reunion. Bill Tasker contacted Mrs Lamerton and found they had sent Jack home before he got around to visit him. Many thanks to son Harry for letting us know the details.

JACK CLAYPOLE 2/1, of Matraville, spent some time in hospital in May and was visited by Bill Tasker, but is now at home recuperating and going on walks to regain his strength. Marj and Jack Kerslake also visited Jack at home in June.

GEORGE "SNOWY" HEMMINGS 2/1, of Leichhardt, was in Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in May and was visited by Bill Tasker and Vic Whiteley.

MAX LAW 2/1, of Kareela, is still in the Heathcote Nursing Home and has been visited by Jim Gray, Bill Tasker, Ron Callaghan and George Nichols.

LEN PREEDY 2/2, of Perth, spent some time in hospital in July for a kidney operation, but is now at home under the care of wife Joy. Please accept our best wishes Len for a speedy recovery.

NEWS ITEM

• Eric Causer 2/1, Sig. Pln. of Macarthur, Victoria, contacted the Secretary in May and stated they had a good Melbourne Anzac Day with the weather being excellent — the spectators in big numbers and a great roll-up of marchers.

Eric was at a gathering after Anzac Day March and also in attendance was Leo Healey (Sig. Pln.) who was looking in much better health than in previous years. Leo sent regards to all members of the Signals Platoon 2/1. Eric was also in touch with Jack Comerford (Sig. Pln.) who is now assisting his daughter in the making of pine furniture. Many thanks Eric, for all the news from down under.

• Bill Anderson 2/1, of Beresfield, contacted the Secretary with the news he had recently seen Don Crooks who sent regards to all Pioneers.

Bill does not get around so much now as his health is not good after having an operation to remove one of his lungs, and now the old arthritis keeps him crippled up. Thank you Bill for your kind words.

MAIL BAG

Editor: BOB LAKE

First issue since Anzac Day and always plenty of letters. Actually I should not bother with the letters but should just concentrate on my football team. On top of the competition with twelve straight wins and going great, but I shall take pity on my readers and get on with the job.

FRED ALWAY 2/1, Victoria, with a thank you for the News and says not much news to pass on. Spends most of his time fishing on Port Phillip Bay and having a few beers at the local RSL. (What a good way to pass the day, Fred). Will be marching, as usual, with the 2/2nds in Melbourne and still keeping in reasonably good health, for which he is thankful. Wishes all the mob the best for Anzac Day and will be with them in spirit.

DON ANDERSON 2/1, Merimbula, with a letter of thanks for the News and expresses appreciation to all who help to keep the show on the road. Says to keep up the good work and sends his best wishes.

REG ARMSTRONG 2/2, Coonabarabran, with a few lines to let us know that he won't be able to make it for Anzac Day again this year. His 89 year old legs have retired from marching and, as Reg says, he has to go along with them. Reg mentions that Eric Lindsay 2/2, also of Coonabarabran, is keeping very well, takes things quietly of course, but has made a remarkable recovery. It is good to see him up and about. Coralie is keeping fairly well and sends her regards to Peg and all the "girls". I like that "girls" (more like old boilers). Did not mean that, Peg, just could not resist it. Thanks for the donation, Reg, and all the best to you both.

BOB BALLY 2/1, Western Australia, with a cheque for the Treasurer to catch up with funds. Says that when Bob Brewster was alive he had no worries, but since his passing Bob is a bit lax in the things that count. Wishes all the very best to all Pioneers with a special mention for A Coy and hopes for many more years of good fellowship together.

PHIL BARNETT 2/2, Altonville, with a cheque for fees and quotes "it is great to get Pioneer News and keep up with the goings on." A big thank you to the city cousins for keeping the country cousins so well informed. All the best, Phil.

MAVIS BLANCH widow of Joe 2/1, Beaudesert, with her subs and says she still gets a lot of happy and sad memories from the News. She was off to Kyogle over Easter for the School Centenary, as all her family went to school there. (Believe from all reports, Mavis, it was a great success.) Mavis also went to Perth late last year, flew over and did a coach tour of 18 days before returning on the Indian Pacific. Son Bill met her in Sydney and they had a couple of hours at Mascot before she flew off to Brisbane. She still keeps up her charity work and plays bowls to keep fit. Did not get to the Rats' Christmas luncheon at Ballina this year, so have not seen any Pioneers for a while. Wishes everyone a great Anzac Day and says to tell Lakey his Manly team are going well. Max has passed on your letter to Vic, Mavis, and we all send you our good wishes and keep sober.

FRED BROOKS 2/1, Taree, with lots of praise for those who give so much of their time and energy to keep the paper going and he can't get the wrapper off quick enough when it arrives to read of the boys of 2/1. Says he's afraid he's one of the selfish ones, he and Gwen have built up their own little empire, now numbering 26, and they have moulded their lives around their family. They all love music and are mad fishermen, but says old age has caught up and has pretty well confined him to barracks. Sometimes some of the family take he and Gwen to the club or dance where they have been hired to "make the noise", but he just sits and listens — thinks of the days when they used to make Fred Astaire look silly. However, he can still hobble over to the bar for a beer and hobble back, only to be reminded that he's now two over his doctor's quota. Good to

hear from you, Fred, keep well old mate and best wishes.

COLIN CAMERON 2/1, Campbelltown, with a note per pen of wife Jean. She encloses a cheque for the Treasurer and says Colin is now confined to a wheelchair and wishes all his mates the very best for Anzac Day.

FRANK CAULFIELD 2/2, Benalla, with his "annual rental" (as he calls it) and the news that he had been down to Melbourne for the Anzac March and Reunion. Once again Colonel John Williams led the March, at 91 he is a marvel. Frank is also going down for the annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine on 18th June. His daughter-in-law's father died last year (he was an original 2/2nd Pioneer and a P.O.W.) so Frank's 10 year old grandson claims he's the only nipper in Melbourne to have had two Pioneers for grandfathers. Frank is taking him along with him to the Shrine. Closes with best wishes.

BRUCE CHAMBERS 2/2, Turrumurra, with a cheque for subs and best wishes for Anzac Day. Bruce will be in Forster for Anzac Day. He was sorry to read of the passing of Fred Callaway, Peg Whiteley and John Trevelthick's wife. Good luck, Bruce, and keep sober.

JACK CLAYPOLE 2/2, Matraville, with a sub and letter to say he is much better at present, has had four by-passes and is now able to walk around the streets twice a day. While in hospital he had a visit from Clem Cook and has had phone calls from him, Sam Lewis, "Snowy" Hemmings and Jack Kerslake and Jack and Marj Kerslake have been to see him at home. Jack says "Snowy" Hemmings is out of hospital, but is on oxygen all the time. Sammy Lewis taped the March and sent it to him — Jack says it was like old times. Good luck, old mate.

JACK COATES 2/1, Umina, with his usual newsy letter and a donation to funds. Things have been busy around the local traps and Jack has missed the last two Rats meetings because of other commitments. He presumes the Hamers and Millers are OK at the moment. He and Lex have been busy with outings — a trip to the Power House Museum and lunch at Hornsby RSL, where he met up with Alan Stutchbury 2/1. Alan has been President for three years, and sends best wishes to all. Also sent some stamps for Peg. (Many thanks Alan.) Jack and Lex also had a visit to see "Hello Dolly" at Her Majestys and it was a full house and great show. Says what a great trouper Jill Perryman is. Jack has also had a few trips to Concord recently and had several tests, all bad, but the vascular people have ruled out any more operations as too risky. Thanks for the copy of the "Newcastle Rodent", Jack, and the Irish mum's letter. Hope to publish same when space permits — good for a laugh. Jack says Manly going great guns — his Balmain "Tigers" have fallen on evil days, but may be better days ahead. All the very best to you both, keep well and thanks for your newsy letter.

RON COYTE 2/1, Wentworthville, with a cheque for the Treasurer and his best wishes to all. Ron says in our age group we have to contend with ill-health and problems, but will still be there when whips are cracking. Ron compliments the Committee for the job they are doing and says keep up the good work.

REG CRANWELL 2/2, Salisbury, South Australia, with two letters both enclosing subs, so we will let you off next year — many thanks — and your house number has been altered on our records, so as not to give the postie any hiccups. Reg did not march on Anzac Day on account of leg problems, but made the Reunion and had a great day. Says it's always good to hear how some of the "old boys" are getting on.

VINCE CULLEN 2/1, Peakhurst, per pen of wife Eva, with a letter to the Editors. Vince is doing well after his fall last year — he gets gout now and then but it doesn't stop his non-stop gardening chores around the house, and neighbours homes as well. He's a bit hard to shift from the home, so Eva and her two daughters took off for 10 days to Perth where they hired a car and had a lovely time. They really enjoyed their trip, people so friendly and staff on buses and trains so helpful. Closes with best wishes to all and a big "hello" to Maclean Pioneers — not too sure if very many are still around.

ALBY DEAN 2/1, Shepparton, enclosed a cheque with his letter and says he and his wife are both keeping good health. The doctor puts

most of their complaints down to old age and Alby agrees with him. Their local RSL Club has had the "pokies" for two years now and already it has doubled in size, there's no doubt the extra funds make a difference. Closes with best wishes and regards to all members.

DAVE DENNY 2/1, Lismore, with a donation to funds and a lot of news. Was off to Barrabra for a reunion of his wife's family and expect 200 to attend — no TV in those early days. After the reunion they were heading for Lightning Ridge and hoped for a bit of fishing in the Namoi or Castlereagh Rivers — if there is any water in them. Says he's had a lot of ups and downs with his health, but has nothing but praise for the Veterans' Affairs people for the way they have looked after him. Dave also enclosed a very interesting article from the local paper on Ted McBride — has known Ted for many years and did not know he was a 2/1 Pioneer. He was one of the 600 men that enlisted from the Kyogle area in one day, which must be a record. Ted, now 82, a former champion axe-man still lives in the Kyogle district. Ted's community work earned him an Order of Australia medal and he's very proud of the fact that he's a Justice of the Peace. Good letter, Dave, the newspaper article is too long for the News, but well worth reading. Closes with best wishes to all.

JOHN DOWD 2/2, Wagga, with a cheque for the Treasurer and the news that Daph reads the newsletter to him on its arrival. Anzac Day at Wagga was a lovely day, close to 20 degrees, and Jack Morgan, Dud Staniforth and John were in the March — although Jack and John were in a jeep and a cab respectively. The newspaper cutting on the day made good reading, John, many thanks and best wishes to you and Daph.

RON EDWARDS 2/1, Victoria, with a contribution to the News and a big thank you for its continued publication. Says unit members certainly owe a debt of gratitude to all who unselfishly give of their time to provide and maintain the paper for all to read. Thank you, Ron, for your kind remarks — we'll endeavour to keep up the good work.

HELEN EVANS, Miranda, daughter of the late Jack McGahey 2/1, with the news that her mother Rebecca had passed away recently and Helen was wondering if she could still receive the Pioneer News. Both her parents were in the services, Jack in 2/1, and her mother in the WAAF. Max has already been in touch with you, Helen, and placed your name on our mailing list. Welcome aboard, and our sincere sympathy in the loss of your mum.

STELLA GRANGER, widow of George 2/1, Schofields, with her usual donation to funds and her best wishes for Anzac Day to the Pioneers. Many thanks, Stella.

NOEL HIBBARD 2/1, Meadowbank, with a donation to funds and the news that he has been in and out of Concord since last August with emphysema. He was, at time of writing, in Linburn Nursing Home in Burwood until he improves in health and can go home. Hope you are feeling better, Noel, take care.

PHILL JACKSON 2/2, Dongara, Western Australia, per pen of wife Yvonne, with a donation to funds and a special message to Harold Ramsay and Bob Evans. Says to tell them he's still battling on. It's great to hear news of old mates and says he'll never forget the good and bad times they all spent together.

BILL JOHNSON 2/1, East Bentleigh, expressing his feelings to be part of the Association that has such a history. Bill was a reinforcement to the unit just prior to embarkation to Moratai and Balikpapan and says some of the names elude him but the memories remain. Bill and his wife Mavis spent Anzac Day with Don and Dora Anderson of Merimbula (Don being an old mate in D Coy) and all four enjoyed the social activities afterwards. Bill mentions that he has "thrown in his hat" for the trip to Borneo — hope you have good luck in the ballot as the Association has had no notification at time of these notes. Thanks for your donation, Bill, and good health in the coming years.

JACK KEMPENICH 2/1, Fingal Bay, per pen of Mais, with a sub for the News and lots of news from their part of the country. They have sold their caravan at last and it was good to get it off their hands after not being used for three years.

Says they will now be able to get away up the northern rivers to see Jack's brothers and perhaps a trip to Canberra now and then. They would like to do another trip back to the West sometime, but waiting until the Indian Pacific gets its facelift completed — sometime this winter-spring. Jack is still a lucky, healthy 83 who can fill in his days without Maisie's help. He's always in the garden or walking the beach. Mais says she has a 15 year old joint which she doesn't want to have renewed, so she's not placing any more stress on it than necessary. They both attended Larry Robson's funeral but did not know anyone except Pioneers. Jack Griffiths and Jack Bertram were there, but neither could stay after the service because both Esme and Jean were not very well. Mais closes with best wishes to all and quotes that they look forward to anyone who has time for a visit. Won't promise anything folks, but next time we are at Lemon Tree we will try and pop in on you both — and you did not mention what a great team I've got at the moment!

ERN JAMISON 2/1, Gladesville, per good wife Jean, with an apology for Ern not writing as he had just had an operation on his eye. Hope everything is fine and results of operation satisfactory. Ern enclosed a cheque for the Treasurer and a special hello to Jack Claypole, plus all the boys in 14 Platoon. As you will have read in earlier letters, Jack has been in hospital with a by-pass and is now on the mend. Take care, Ern, just make sure you are able to see him next time round. Closes with best wishes to all and many thanks for your words of praise to Max and the team.

ERNIE LUNN 2/2, Dubbo, with a cheque for subs as he did not attend the March in Sydney this year. He marched at Walgett where he knew so many from previous occasions, and he had joined the army from there. Em attended the funeral of Harry Sullivan 2/2, but was disappointed at the number of ex-servicemen in attendance. Tries to attend the funerals of any returned men in the town, even if unknown to him. Well done, Ernie, we could do with a few more like you and I'm sure it is appreciated.

RON MURRAY 2/1, Hill End, with a donation to funds and his apology for not making Sydney for Anzac Day. Ron has had it pretty rough this year with the drought, but at time of writing it was raining heavily and more to come. (Why don't you dig for a bit of gold, Ron?) He will be down in August for the V.P. March and hopes to see a good roll up. The Pioneers will be at the same pub, so with luck may see you there or at the March.

BOB McTAGGART 2/2, Rockhampton, with a newsy letter and a sub for the Treasurer. Says he's a bit late with his thanks for the wonderful reunion in Gosford, but better late than never. Bob has been a bit of a traveller in his lifetime, travelling all over Australia for thirteen years, but never made Cape York until last year when he took a tour by coach, plane and four-wheel drive and covered it all, including Thursday Island. Has also been to England, Ireland, Scotland, Isle of Skye and Hong Kong. Why don't you stay home occasionally, Bob, and where did you get all that money? Has also been to China and had a walk on the Great Wall. After all this excitement, all he does now is play indoor bowls and occasional game of cards. Gawd you must be bored stiff!!! Thanks for the letter Bob, look after yourself and keep sober.

NELL LAUGHREN, widow of Ted 2/1, Nambour, with her usual letter of good wishes for Anzac Day, and says her thoughts will be with us all. Sits glued to the TV and really enjoys the March. Age is catching up with Nell, lots of arthritis, no more driving and not confident enough to travel on her own any more. John and Mollie Hunt call on her whenever in the area for a chat, and she misses the yearly party at the Hunts which was much appreciated by all. Nell Davenport is still in a nursing home at Redcliffe. Nell conveyed her loving sympathy to Vic Whiteley and family on their sad loss — says dear Peg was always there. Many thanks, Nell, I'm sure Vic will appreciate your kind thoughts.

JACK MCGREGOR 2/2, Shortland, with a cheque for the Treasurer and says that he and Dot are holding out against all odds. Passes on best wishes to all the blokes that are still able to pioneer on.

JOHN MCKNIGHT 2/2, Dundas, with a quick note that he is still going OK and has a yearly check-up. Enclosed a cheque for the Treasurer and sends his best wishes.

BERN REINERS 2/1, Corryong, with a long and mostly personal letter to Max and Peg, but I will pass on the bits of news of interest to the troops. Says he and Mona were very pleased to see David and Lynn Herron again on their trip to Victoria recently and to catch up with all the news. Was sorry the Victorian weather couldn't have been kinder to them. Has not seen the sun since they left and plenty of snow on the hills. Perhaps a long cold winter coming up. Bern and Mona talked about coming over for Anzac Day, but couldn't make it because of family visiting, Victorian school holidays, and Bern not being too mobile with arthritis in the ankle and hip (join the mob Bern). The doctor has recommended a hip replacement and he will know shortly if it means an operation in the near future. Don't complain about the weather down there, Bern, it's on 9° here at the moment. Sends his regards to all he knows and hopes we had a great Reunion.

CHARLES RICHARDSON 2/2, Queensland, with the news that he attended the local Wynnum RSL for the Anzac Day Service and his son Paul and son-in-law Adrian went along to keep him company — and saw him home, no doubt. Charles mentioned that 2/1sts who were in Tobruk would be interested to know that the chap sitting opposite him at lunch was in the Essex Regiment when they took over from the Pioneers when we were evacuated from Tobruk. He came to Australia in 1949 and he and Charles were able to swap a few yarns. Sends his regards to all and a cheque for the Treasurer.

DOUG SHEARSTON 2/1, Forster, with a note to say he was happy to have been able to be with us on Anzac Day and a pleasure to be of assistance to Vic — especially with such good results. Praises the work of the Committee, especially those who keep the Pioneer News going, and says he feels like kissing the postie when the paper arrives. I'm sure Roma would have something to say about that Doug!!! Thanks for your help and look forward to seeing you again next year. Max and Peg hope to see you at Cronulla in October. Best wishes to you both.

BONNIE SNUDDEN, wife of the late Cec 2/2, Dubbo, with a letter telling of the passing of Barbara Baird (wife of the late Wally Baird 2/2) in a nursing home in Dubbo on 14th April. Barbara was 89 years old and a very pleasant lady and a joy to know. Those who came in contact with her would feel enriched by her simplicity and gentleness. Dubbo had a very moving memorial service on Anzac Day followed by an induction of 14 young men into the services, who were then taken to Kapooka (they'll be sorry). Good to keep in touch with you, Bonnie, and many thanks for your letter. Keep well and take care.

JEAN STAFFORD, widow of George 2/1, Noraville, with a thank you for the receipt of Pioneer News and a cheque to keep it solvent. Your good wishes for Anzac Day are appreciated, Jean, and we hope you are keeping well and able to still enjoy life.

JOHN TREVETHICK 2/1, Lane Cove, with a thank you to Pioneer News, Stan Jones, Cyril Morahan, Steve Clarke and Bill Doney for the calls on the death of John's wife. His own health is fair after a double hip replacement (a huge success) and the normal aches and pains of the aged (I can't say that long word John). Also enclosed a cheque which John said was long overdue and quotes "the Arabs used to say if you kick an ass in the arse often enough, it will eventually get the message." Max has written to you John regarding the Pioneer history book, sorry about that but as Lakey says MARLISH — no books.

BARBARA WILLIAMS former wife of the late Geoff Williams 2/1, Queensland, with her usual good wishes for Anzac Day to both 2/1st and 2/2nds. Barbara's sister, Pat, was the wife of Dr Jim Goding of 2/2 Pioneers and a POW in Java. Barbara herself served overseas with 2/7 A.C.H. All the best to you, Barbara, and our thanks for your good wishes. We had a great day.

MAX WILSON 2/1, Stockton, with a thank you to our Secretary for sending the Association badge. Max is having trouble at the moment after

a new plastic kneecap operation he had some 16 months ago and the doctors do not know what's wrong. Your new address is noted, Max, and we hope your knee problem will soon be solved. Best wishes, keep smiling.

DONALD WRIGHT 2/1, Camp Hill, with a thank you for the Pioneer News which he looks forward to receiving. Also enclosed a cheque to help with its production. Many thanks, Don, and kind regards.

• That concludes my issue of the Mail Bag. Quite a good issue and by the time Max gets this lot he might resign as my writing is getting worse. Must close with "Manly to Win", twelve straight wins and doing it easily. I just can't help boasting about it.

Keep sober — LAKEY

NEW GUINEA/BORNEO TRIPS

On 7th April correspondence was received from Veteran Affairs, Canberra, stating there would be two pilgrimages sponsored by the Government, as follows.

1. New Guinea Pilgrimage would involve 120 veterans travelling by cruise ship and visiting Port Moresby, Milne Bay, Oro Bay (Buna, Gona, Sanananda) and Lae with side visits to Kokoda, Bita Paka and Wewak — 29th June to 11th July, 1995.
2. Borneo Pilgrimage would involve 25 veterans and would travel by air to Jakarta, Balikpapan, Tarakan, Sandakan, Ranau, Kota, Kinabula, Labuan and Singapore — 6th July to 16th July, 1995.

On 13th April correspondence was received from Veteran Affairs stating they had received two 2/1st and two 2/2nd applications — two from Victoria and two from NSW which would go into a ballot.

On 5th June, Roy Levy 2/2, of Revesby, NSW, was notified direct by Veteran Affairs that his name had come out of the ballot for New Guinea. Roy went on 29th June and we wished him bon voyage.

On 16th June correspondence was received from Veteran Affairs which included letters to be sent on to the other three applicants, stating their nominations were not successful and that Veteran Affairs hoped they would understand, that since they received 2,000 nominations, it was always the case that only a very small percentage could be included.

V.P. DAY SYDNEY MARCH

A March, to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of V.P. Day will be organised and conducted in Sydney by the NSW Branch of the RSL.

The March will be held on Saturday, 12th August, 1995, commencing at 900 a.m. and the route will be the same as that on Anzac Day March.

Those eligible to march are only persons who have served during World War II and were — (1) A member of the Australian Defence Force. (2) An Allied Veteran. (3) An Australian Mariner or an Allied Mariner.

Both the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion and the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion will form up together in Phillip Street, outside the Leagues Club, between Martin Place and King Street at 8.45 a.m. The Executive have agreed on the two units marching together and carrying the two banners, because numbers attending are expected to be lower than Anzac Day. According to the RSL there will be no TV coverage.

After the March, members may proceed to Museum Station then to Wynyard Station and walk to the Occidental Hotel for a get-together with drinks and biscuits and cheese. This will be on the SECOND FLOOR, not the First Floor as is usual on Anzac Day. The "Vendetta" Naval Association are holding their Reunion in our room on the First Floor — somehow they beat us to the booking. It will be a casual affair and not a sit down dinner.

President Bill Jollie has personally invited Lieutenant-Colonel Adrian Buckley to attend, as he was the Commanding Officer 2/1st Pioneer Battalion from 1944 to 1945. The President would like to see as many Company Commanders as possible attend.

BON VOYAGE — ROY LEVY 2/2

On Thursday, 29th June, a public farewell was given by the Veteran Affairs, "Australia Remembers" Task Force to the 117 veterans, chosen by ballot, who were boarding a Russian cruise ship bound for Papua New Guinea.

Peg and Max Herron attended, as guests of Roy Levy 2/2nd, in the VIP area on the forecourt of the Sydney Cove Passenger Terminal. They enjoyed the entertainment by the Andrew Sisters, James Blundell, Francine Redstone, Darren Paul and the ladies of the Rinuna Dancers dressed in their PNG costumes.

Following the entertainment, Brian Bury of 2UE, introduced the Honourable Con Sciacca, MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and the Prime Minister, Paul Keating, who both spoke highly of the exploits of the Australian servicemen in World War II and wished them all a happy and pleasant voyage.

It was a very moving spectacle to see the white cruise ship pulling slowly away from the terminal with thousands of streamers flying to and from the ship — the veterans lining the ship's side — the hundreds of spectators on the terminal waving supplied flags and the military band on board playing tunes such as "Till We Meet Again" — "Auld Lang Syne" and the "Maori Farewell". The sailing ship "Bounty" led them out of the harbour and was a very spectacular sight.

COLONEL DAVIS, D.S.O., M.C.

We are grateful to Cooma "Express" for using the following extract from their 18th April issue, concerning Lieutenant Colonel Clayton Davis, D.S.O., M.C., who was Commanding Officer of the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion from March, 1944, to June, 1945.

Local grazier, Peter Davis, grandson of Lieutenant Colonel Davis, pieced together his grandfather's rise from private to Lieutenant in the First World War. It was in the battle of the Somme where Lieutenant Davis suffered his first casualty when a bomb exploded two yards from his head, lodging fragments in his neck and shoulder.

From research, it was revealed that Lieutenant Davis was recommended for a Victoria Cross medal, when he led his platoon against heavy machine gun fire and captured the enemy position, taking many prisoners. Despite being wounded he returned to combat duty after ten days. The award was eventually amended to the Distinguished Service Order.

At a later stage Lieutenant Davis suffered further injury with shrapnel wounds to both arms and legs when a nearby explosion temporarily paralysed him and he was then sent back to England for recuperation.

He returned to the trenches in 1917 and spent a long time in action. He received a further award, the Military Cross, by again leading his unit to eliminate an enemy machine gun position.

After the war Clayton Davis became a solicitor and re-enlisted in World War II as an officer and was soon promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. He became Commanding Officer of 1st Australian Engineering Training Battalion at Kapooka, NSW, and was transferred in March, 1944, to Commanding Officer of 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion. He succeeded Lieutenant Colonel Lang who had been transferred to Buna Sub-Base Area.

Colonel Davis served with the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion at Tarakan and Balikpapan but was evacuated home sick in June, 1945, when he handed over to Major E. F. Aitken.

After the war Lieutenant Colonel Davis became Chairman of the War Pensions Tribunal and died in 1957 at the age of 68 years. He was buried, with full military honours in Cooma Cemetery.

In his talk to Cooma Probus Club, Peter Davis, grandson of Clayton Davis, was thanked by Probian Noel Carter for his painstaking research on his grandfather and added that Lieutenant Colonel Davis was his father-in-law.

NEWS ITEM

• The traditional V.P. Day Commemoration Service will be held at the Cenotaph, Martin Plaza, Sydney, at 11.00 a.m., on Tuesday, 15th August, 1995.

2/1st-2/2nd PIONEERS, W.A.

By President LEN PREEDY

We had a much better roll-up at our March meeting which was very gratifying. Had an apology from Bob and Norma Sefton of Safety Bay as Bob had been in hospital with leg problems and having difficulty with transport, so hope you are improving Bob.

In attendance were Jack and Joan Monger, John and Ethel McDougall, Norm Le Cornu, Beth Lee, Jean Lyford, Niel MacPherson, Hugh Sorley and Jack Murray who we are pleased to see after being on the sick list. Niel MacPherson brought along photos of some of his travels, and they were very interesting, especially to see the names of some of the Pioneers on the Honour Board in the War Memorial in Canberra. Niel put in an apology for the future as he is off travelling again.

It was pleasing to receive letters from Tom Williams 2/1 formerly of Northampton, now Geraldton, telling that his twin brother had passed away in November after a long illness. Tom said that while he was in the "Misery Quarry" at Moresby his brother was at Milne Bay. Another letter was from the widow of Preston Wright, who had died recently. Preston had been in the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion then later transferred to the 2/11 Battalion.

Nice to hear from Mili Hunt and as she is going on a trip to Europe soon for three months we wish her a happy and safe trip. Another letter was from Lin Wilson about his travels from his unit in Leederville where he says he picks up his metal detector, locks the door and is off. Lin turned eighty recently, and set off up north across Queensland and saw the Stockmans Hall of Fame at Longreach, then south to the black stump and across to Birdsville, Innamincka, Broken Hill, Port Augusta, Nullarbor and home, and had a wonderful trip — no doubt about it, our Pioneers are a tough breed.

Had a phone call from Tom Morgan, who was in my Company. He was in the west travelling and brought greetings from Snowy Dodd and Bob Ginnane.

Since our last meeting four of our number have answered the final roll call: "Mac" Williams 2/1, Geraldton; Ken Bray 2/2, Mt Hawthorn; Don Lee 2/2, Warwick; Preston Wright 2/1, Eaton. Our sincere condolences to all the families.

Thanks to the following for their kind subscriptions — Lin Wilson, T. Williams, Mili Hunt, N. Le Cornu, J. Murray, J. Monger, J. Lyford, N. MacPherson and J. MacDougall. Our next meeting is 21st July so we wish you all the very best from Len and Joy Preedy.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From MARK NEASBEY, son of Bert 2/2

Dear Max,

I am compelled to write to you and thank you and other members of the Association for the welcome you extended to me at the Anzac functions. The evident pleasure that my father derived from being reunited with you all after 50 years proved delightfully contagious as I had a wonderful time as well. I was pleased to have been able to support his desire to join in the Anzac functions and to accompany dad to the evening's Wreath Laying and Dawn Service, which I found very moving events and clearly well supported by the public. (It's a pity the Prime Minister couldn't see fit to share the moment with us all!)

I was made to feel even more welcome when asked to carry the Australian Flag for the 2/2nds for the Anzac Day March. I was indeed proud to do so! The Reunion luncheon added to my state of well-being as each and everyone of you made me as welcome as any veteran member of the Battalion. The limited time I had with you has helped to bring home to me confirmation that the experiences shared by you all so many years ago has forged in you a genuine regard for your comrades and your fellow man in general. I hope that I can continue to exhibit a similar outlook and that my memory proves as reliable in another 30 years!

We, who have not had to experience such demands, can never fully appreciate the sacrifices made on our behalf, but we can help

to ensure the events and contributions made are not forgotten nor diminished as to their importance to us as a nation. I hope to be a part of next year's Anzac ceremonies with you and look forward to meeting with you at the Annual General Meeting on 26th May at Redfern.

When dad found out about the Association and indicated his desire to march with you, I was moved to pen a poem, a copy of which I laid with the wreath on the Cenotaph.

Kind Regards, MARK NEASBEY

LAST POST

LARRY ROBSON 2/1, of Waratah, passed away on 25th March at the age of 72 years. The funeral was at Wescott Chapel at Stockton and was well attended by his many friends and representatives from numerous organisations.

Pioneers present were Jack Griffiths, "Slim" Wilson, Jack Bertram and Jack and Maisie Kempnich. Albert Henderson, 2/3rd Pioneer, who is on the administration side of Wescott Nursing Home where Larry resided was also present.

Waratah-Mayfield RSL conducted the military portion of the service with a large number of their members in attendance.

All those present spoke highly of Larry and the good work he had performed in his life. Jack Griffiths on behalf of the Association extended to the family, sincere sympathy.

DES MARTIN 2/2, of Wodonga, passed away on 13th April after a serious by-pass operation. We are grateful to Pat Collins 2/2, who was in the same platoon as Des, for passing on the information. He also extended our sincere sympathy to the son of Des.

VICTOR "TROOPER" JONES 2/1 passed away on 12th April after suffering a severe stroke. His funeral service was held at Wallsend and Pioneers in attendance were Jack Griffiths and Jack Bertram and Rats Reyn Keats, Lloyd Teale, Ron Foley and Allan Gallagher.

The RSL Service was conducted by the President of Wallsend RSL Sub Branch, and the Eulogy was delivered by Jack Griffiths.

STANLEY CLIFFORD BROWN 2/1, of Reservoir, Victoria, passed away suddenly on 12th April and we thank George Murphy for passing on the details.

HERB WILSON 2/1, of Thornton, passed away on 10th May and the funeral was conducted at the St Josephs Church and then proceeded to the East Maitland Cemetery.

The Eulogy was given by Herb's daughter and his nephew and an excellent address by Jack Griffiths, who was attending with Jack Bertram.

ERIC GUTHRIE 2/1, of Chester Hill, passed away on 14th May and the funeral at Leppington was attended by Bill Tasker who extended the sympathy of the Association to the family.

CLARRIE LAKE 2/1, of Mullumbimby, passed away on 6th June and the funeral conducted at the Mullumbimby Cemetery was attended by R. Harris, D. Walker, N. O'Connor, O. Carter and K. Wilson.

The Eulogy was delivered by Ken Wilson. Thanks to Ken for supplying the details.

"MUFTI", Victoria, supplied by Eric Causer: M. J. Naylor of Beaufort

"REVEILLE" issue of May/June: NX53414 — E. C. Rutter 2/1; NX88980 — H. R. Sipple 2/1; VX20010 — H. K. Stewart 2/2.

ALEX CAMERON 2/1, of Maclean, passed away on 21st June at the Ex-service and Community Care Complex at Ballina. Thanks to Ron Cross, who is on the Board at the complex, for notifying the Secretary.

TED McCOURT 2/2, of North Ryde, passed away on 1st July and the funeral took place at Northern Suburbs Crematorium, which was attended by Russ Harrison and Bill Tasker.

SUBSCRIPTION DUE

With subscription send news of your family and happenings. Letter to contain name and address, Battalion (2/1 or 2/2) and Company. All correspondence to: MAX HERRON, 3 Enoggera Road, Beverly Hills, NSW 2209.

SYDNEY MARCH, 12th AUGUST, 1995

Both Units, 2/1st and 2/2nd, to form up together in Phillip Street, outside Leagues Club, between Martin Place and King Street, at 8.45 a.m.

PIONEER NEWS

Phone: 759 5491

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Welfare: BILL TASKER, phone 718 6658

AUSTRALIA REMEMBERS MARCH AND REUNION

The march, to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of V.P. Day, was held in Sydney on Saturday, 12th August with an attendance of 55 members from the two units. This was the first time the two units marched together and it was a great sight to see the two banners alongside each other. It was pleasing to see a good attendance of spectators along the route and especially to see so many young people waving the Australian Flag.

The leader of the march was Colonel John Williams, 2/2nd Pioneer, Association Co-Patron, with support from Bill Jollie and Allan McInnes. Three Venturer Scouts from 1st Narwee carried the two Banners and the Australian Flag, and the band was the City of Sydney Youth Band.

After the march the Executive had organised a Reunion at the Occidental Hotel in York Street and the Association put on biscuits and cheese

for the members which was appreciated by all. Mark Neasbey, son of Bert, shouted two rounds of drinks for the whole mob for which we thank you Mark for your fine gesture.

President Bill Jollie spoke of how we still remember all those who have passed on and said they will be in our minds forever. He called on Roy Levy to say a few words on his Pilgrimage to New Guinea and summing it up Roy said it was a great trip.

Bill Tasker sent along his apologies as he was in Lady Davidson Hospital while John Gilchrist apologised for not marching as he had a foot in plaster, but enjoyed the get-together at the Occidental.

Long distance attenders were George Murphy and Don Hose from Melbourne and Bert Woodhouse of Perth.

LAST POST — "We Will Remember Them"

LAURENCE "BUB" SPRUCE 2/2, of Fairfield, passed away suddenly after suffering a heart attack on 21st June. The funeral service was held at Pine Grove Crematorium and was conducted by Bruce Short, President of Fairfield R.S.L. Club. Our sympathy is extended to Mrs Spruce and family.

EVE CULLEN, wife of Vince 2/1, passed away from a brain haemorrhage on 27th June. We are grateful to Owen Mills who was a school friend of Eve's from Maclean for passing on the sad news. Eve was the daughter of Edmund Day who died of wounds in Tobruk. Please accept the sympathy of all Pioneers, Vince.

HEADLEY EVANS WARNE 2/2, of Northam, Western Australia, passed away on 27th July in the Royal Perth Hospital after a short illness. The funeral was held on 3rd August with a number of Northam R.S.L. members attending and participating in the service. Reciting the Ode to the Fallen and playing the Last Post, was carried out by the R.S.L. Many thanks to Neil Warne for these details.

Headley had been looking forward to participating in the Australian Remembers Celebrations but missed out by a few weeks. He was aged 86 years and married Freda (deceased 17th June, 1995) in 1940. They had four children, Ken, Neil, Carol and Rex and to these children and their families we extend our sincere sympathy.

DONALD WILLIAM CROOKS 2/1, of Mayfield, passed away on 9th August at the Mater Mercy Hospice, Waratah, after a 14 month battle with cancer. His funeral service was conducted in the North Chapel, Beresfield Crematorium and the Eulogy was delivered by the Reverend Paul Robertson and the R.S.L. Service was conducted by Mr Gil Smith, President of Beresfield R.S.L.

In attendance were 2/1st Pioneers — Jack Bertram, Tom Penfold, Ivan Pepper and Bill Anderson, with apologies from Jack Griffiths for not attending as he was in hospital.

Reverend Paul Robertson sought permission from the family to use the story of Don at local schools as part of the V.P. Day Remembrance celebrations, which the family considered a great tribute. To all of Don's family we extend our heartfelt sympathy.

TOM BYE 2/2, of Toongi, near Dubbo, passed away on 31st August in Dubbo Hospital, and the funeral on 5th September was attended by Ernie Lunn 2/2, of Dubbo. Expression of our sympathy was sent to Tom's son by Bob Ginnane.

BILL SAUNDERS 2/1, of Bingara, passed away in September. Thanks to Roy Jardine for details.

ALLAN "BABE" CRANE 2/1, passed away on 7th September aged 74 years. The funeral

service was conducted at the South Chapel of the Northern Suburbs Crematorium.

BOB LEE 2/2, of Concord, passed away on 24th September from a heart attack whilst on the green playing bowls. The funeral service was conducted by Chaplain Robert Hayes and the Eulogy was given by the Concord R.S.L. President. Bob was 17 years old when he enlisted and passed away at the age of 70 years.

The funeral was private, but Joan requested that the Association be represented. Russ Harrison and Roy Levy attended and extended our sincere sympathy to Joan and her two daughters, Robyn and Adrienne.

GEORGE "SNOWY" HEMMINGS 2/1, of Leichhardt, passed away on 22nd July at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital where he had been frequently visited by Bill Tasker and Vic Whiteley.

The funeral service was held at St. Andrews, Summer Hill, and then on to Rookwood Crematorium and Pioneers attending were Frank Gillian, Sam Lewis, Vic Whiteley, George Nichols, Dick Chalmers, Don Sprouster and Perc Penrose. Welfare Officer Bill Tasker read the Eulogy and Sam Lewis read the Poem — "The Digger".

Sincere sympathy was extended to Mrs Hemmings and her family of four daughters and two sons by Bill Tasker.

Editor's Note: The following poem, written by Sandra Hemmings, daughter of George, is dedicated to all Pioneers:

OUR COUNTRY'S BEST

We can never imagine the horrors they saw
Our brave young men, when they marched into war

They were our best, our finest young men
So many would never come home again
Yet for those who returned, so long ago
Grew a bond of comradeship few ever know
There's so few of them now, all those wonderful men

Who came from an era we'll not see again
They remember so well, though not young any more

All their comrades, who fell on some far away shore.

Now another has fallen, from the finest we had
His mates called him "Snowy", we called him "Dad"

His mates who are left, were there to the end,
To honour and farewell their comrade and friend
We all watched with pride as their poppies they laid

As they stood tall at attention while the Last Post was played

Before the last one is gone and is laid to his rest
We say God Bless you all, you were our Country's Best.

THE "LOST MEDALS"

In 1950, Bob Ginnane 2/2 lost his original campaign medals. In August, 1995, he was contacted by George Murphy, Melbourne Secretary, advising that a Sergeant D. Thewliss of the R.A.A.F. was trying to find out the history of the owner of a set of medals he had purchased in a Ballarat shop in 1993. Sergeant Thewliss is a medal collector, and presuming the owner was deceased had contacted Army Records to see if they could give him particulars of a Robert Patrick Ginnane.

Contact was made with Bob and Bob's daughter contacted Sergeant Thewliss and between them they arranged a "swap", he to receive Bob's replacement medals.

Together with Nell, daughter, son and daughter-in-law Bob travelled to the East Sale R.A.A.F. Base where the C.O. of the Base, Group Captain Jeff Day, presented him with his original medals. Later they were given a guided tour of the Base and were lucky enough to see the "Roulettes" at practice. Photographs were taken and refreshments provided at the home of Sergeant and Liz Thewliss.

Bob says if he could get those medals to talk he would have a follow-up story. Perhaps whoever found them in 1950 took them to Melbourne for the Cup, did their money and "popped" the gongs for their fare home.

PIONEER BRANCH REPORTS

SOUTH AUST. BRANCH — By George Sauer

On 13th August we held our Australia Remembers Celebration at Keswick Army Barracks, Adelaide and the activities began with a ceremony at the monument to all Independent Companies and Z Force members.

Following this the members were invited to a luncheon in the Sergeants Mess where the Guest of Honour was Brigadier J. G. McKinna. Visitors from interstate were Ken and Ida Wilson, Kevin Raward and Noel and Jean Grant. The mess was beautifully decorated in purple and white, together with a lovely menu and programme. To sum up, a great day was had by all.

WEST AUST. BRANCH — By Len Preedy

In attendance at the July meeting were: Joy Preedy, Beth Lee, Jack and Joan Monger, Ethel and John McDougal, Norm Le Cornu and Jack Stewart. Apology from Len Preedy in hospital.

Regretfully we record the passing away of: Ken Kidd 2/2, E. R. Lee 2/1; H. E. Warne 2/2 and Jean Lyford, Pioneer Widow.

We wish Len Preedy a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing him at the next muster.

NSW NTH. COAST BRANCH — By Ken Wilson

Our inaugural meeting was held at Lismore R.S.L. Club with an attendance of 27 members. A Working Committee was formed of Peter and Dot Priest, Jack Shearman, Kevin Raward, Ray and Nancy Robbins, Don and Mona Barraclough and Nev and Bet O'Connor.

The Executive elected were: Ken Wilson, President; Ray Harris, Vice President; Betty Carter, Secretary; Ida Wilson, Assistant Secretary; Ron Cross, Treasurer.

A Committee meeting was held on 15th October with an attendance of 19 members with the main business dealing with plans for a Reunion to be held at the Lismore R.S.L. on 9th March and Ballina on 10th March, 1996 — full details contained in the Pioneer News insert.

NEWS ITEM

• Bill Jollie, President, would like to extend Seasons Greetings to all members and their loved ones, with the hope that all have a happy Christmas and healthy New Year.

PILGRIMAGE TO NEW GUINEA

The following article has been compiled from notes supplied by Roy Levy, 2/2 Pioneers, and documents issued by the Veterans' Affairs "Australia Remembers" Committee to all members of the Pilgrimage. We also gratefully acknowledge extracts from the booklets written by Dr. Richard Reid, Historian of the Australian War Memorial.

On Thursday, 29th June, 1995, a public farewell was given by the Veterans' Affairs Task Force to the 117 veterans, chosen by ballot, and war widows who boarded the Russian cruise ship Mikhail Sholokhov from the Sydney Passenger Terminal. After entertainment and farewell speeches by the Hon. Con Sciacca, Minister for Veterans' Affairs, and Prime Minister Paul Keating, the cruise ship left Sydney Cove with the veterans lining the ship's decks and hundreds of spectators waving flags and the military band on board playing "Auld Lang Syne" and the "Maori Farewell". A very stirring sight. After several weeks of preparation, medical examinations, etc., the great day for the veterans had arrived.

The ship left Sydney Heads at 1.00 p.m. en route to Brisbane where further veterans were to embark from the Queensland area. The first day, Friday, was spent getting used to shipboard life, lifeboat drill (as a requirement of Maritime Law) and meeting the many vets and carers who were making the trip.

Just before 5.00 p.m., 10 miles east of Moreton Island, a very moving ceremony took place on board ship at the exact location of the wreck of the hospital ship "Centaur", hit by a torpedo fired by a Jap submarine on 14th May, 1943. On board were 74 crew of the Merchant Navy and Australian medical personnel, 65 medical staff (including 12 Army nurses) and 193 men of the 2/12th Field Ambulance heading for a tour of duty in New Guinea. So quickly had the Centaur sunk that there was no time to send off a distress message and of the 332 who sailed from Sydney only 64 survivors were found clinging to rafts and debris. The 2/12th Field Ambulance had virtually been wiped out and Sister Ellen Savage was the only nursing sister to survive. For her inspiring example on the rafts she was awarded the George Medal. Recent salvage diving in the area has revealed the Centaur's exact location on the ocean floor, the ship is in two pieces, clear evidence that the blast of the torpedo tore it apart. The Ode for the Commemoration Ceremony was delivered by a merchant seaman whose ship, Kalingo, was sunk some months before the Centaur by another Japanese submarine in these same waters.

The ship berthed in Brisbane in the early hours of Saturday, 1st July, and the Queensland veterans joined the ship. Later the veterans and the Tri-Service Honour Guard and Band were collected from the ship and taken in jeeps and buses to Eagle Farm Racecourse for lunch and official departure ceremonies hosted by the Minister of Veterans' Affairs. It was then back to the ship which sailed at 2.00 p.m.

Sunday was a quiet day and enabled the veterans to have a rest after the excitement of the last few days. At night they were entertained by a wonderful concert party featuring Enzo Toppano, Lorrae Desmond and Ugly Dave Gray, which was just magical.

The following morning a moving ceremony was held just off Townsville to commemorate those who had sacrificed their lives in the Battle of the Coral Sea on 7/8th May, 1942. For Australia, those days in May were amongst the most crucial of the war, as on the outcome of this naval engagement hung the fate of the garrison of Port Moresby. The U.S. aircraft carrier U.S.S. Lexington was sunk in the battle with 216 American sailors paying the Supreme Sacrifice. That evening the 1 R.A.R. Band treated the passengers and crew to a wonderful hour of brassy music, featuring the tunes of Glen Miller and old wartime songs.

The sheltered waters of the Barrier Reef were now left behind and the swell was making the ship pitch and roll and the decks and lounges were emptier than usual.

Port Moresby was reached at last on 5th July and even early in the morning it was very hot. Both 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneer Battalion men will

remember well their first sighting of the grass covered rolling hills surrounding the harbour of Port Moresby — from there the 2/1 up the Kokoda Trail to Imita Ridge and the 2/2 moving by air to Tisli Tisli and then on to Nadzab and the advance on Lae. The veterans disembarked and embussed for the drive past Murray Barracks and Jackson Airfield towards Bomano War Cemetery. Port Moresby these days is not a pretty place. Established properties are everywhere surrounded by tall security fences, topped with rolls of razor wire.

Bomano Cemetery is an oasis of beauty and the rows of white headstones with surrounds of neatly trimmed lawns and huge shade trees stretch down the gentle slope of the hillside. The ceremony here was extremely moving and afterwards the veterans moved amongst the graves looking for familiar names. Roy found the graves of his former Commanding Officer of the 53rd Battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel K. Ward and Lieutenant Roley Logan, both of whom were killed together on the Owen Stanleys. It was a very emotional moment.

Afterwards they were taken to the Australian High Commissioner's home for lunch and a few beers. He has a big home on the hill overlooking the harbour at Port Moresby — a really beautiful spot. By 1.45 p.m. they were back on board ship and by 2.00 p.m. they were once more on their way.

Early next morning they were steaming through the mist enshrouded islands off the tip of Milne Bay. The dark jungle runs down the steep mountainsides, right to the water's edge, and for some the first glimpse of the forbidding area of which much has been written. Finally Alatau Harbour came into view and it was difficult to identify this peaceful little breakwater with the battle that marked the southern most point of Japan's military expansion.

After landing we were taken by bus to the Sacred Heart Cathedral at Alatau where a brief service was held to unveil three stained glass windows honouring members of 2/12 Battalion who had fought so valiantly in the defence of Milne Bay.

Into the buses again for a short ride to Turnbull Airstrip where a memorial has been built to mark the end-point of the Japanese advance. The Commander of 76 Squadron, Squadron Leader Peter Turnbull, R.A.A.F., operated his Kittyhawks from Milne Bay, leading one strafing mission after another. He was killed on one of these missions and he was buried under a cairn of stones at the edge of the Number Three Strip, now called Turnbull Strip in his honour. The success of the operations at Milne Bay were due in no small measure to the untiring efforts of the men of 75 and 76 Squadrons.

D Company of 2/1 Pioneers will have cause to remember their 12 months tour of duty at Milne Bay — the loss of their ship, M.V. Anshun, which was shelled and sunk by the Japanese at the Gilli Gilli wharf on the night of their arrival, fortunately with no loss of life, but losing most of their equipment and personal gear — and the defence of the perimeter of Number Three Strip.

From here the veterans returned through Alatau for the final ceremony at Milne Bay. This was at the memorial to Corporal John French, 2/9 Battalion, who was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery at Goroni Creek. It was a very simple and moving ceremony.

Next morning the ship docked at Oro Bay and the party of veterans split up, some to fly to Kokoda and others to Buna and Gona. Roy elected to go with a small group to Kokoda. Before departure a service was held at Poppendetta Airstrip where they were given a tumultuous welcome by the Papua New Guinean villagers, more than 2,000 lining the streets. The service was once again a very moving one.

At the conclusion of the service, those going to Kokoda were taken to Girua Airstrip for their flight. This took about 15 minutes from takeoff and buses picked up the vets to take them to where the service was to be held. Upon arrival they were led into the service arena to the cries of "Oro kaiva" (welcome) and a lei placed around their necks. The veterans made a lap of honour before the cheering crowds, which included

soldiers of the Papuan Infantry Battalion. Veterans' Affairs Minister, Con Sciacca, was led into a swaying and chanting group of traditionally dressed villagers, where he was decorated with flowers and a head-dress. The veterans were then taken by the hand and shown to their seats. This was very moving and most of the vets could not control their emotions.

Of all the places in which Australians fought between 1939 and 1945 the name of this small Papuan village of Kokoda has never been forgotten and many families in Australia will always be grateful for the lives of husbands and sons who were saved by the courage and solicitude of the native stretcher bearers and carriers of Papua New Guinea. No-one who took part in this service could fail to be overcome by emotion and the flight back was rather a subdued trip. The ship sailed at night for Lae.

It was raining next morning when the ship berthed and the broad mouth of the Markham revealed itself by the steady stream of brown water emptying into the harbour. Two groups of veterans left for Wewak and Madang and those who remained were keen to go to Lae War Cemetery to seek out lost comrades. Roy had elected to go to Lae, an area in which the 2/2 had been heavily involved during September, 1943, and he was anxious to go to the cemetery to locate the graves of some 2/2 Pioneers whose names he had seen on an honour roll list on board ship.

They were Lieutenant R. B. White and Privates T. F. Byrne, H. M. Eddy and W. L. J. Green. The only graves he could find were those of VX73001 H. M. Eddy (the 2/2 Pioneer welter-weight boxing champion) and VX73079 W. L. J. Green. He took photos of these, but failed to find the grave of VX72657 T. F. Byrne. The name of NX69757 Lieutenant R. B. White was in a Memorial Panel. Roy laid a poppy on the 2/2 graves he located and said he was very emotional when he found the panel containing the name of Russ White and tried to imagine how he might have looked if he were alive today. As a personal favour to Peg Herron, Roy also laid a small posy of poppies, with the purple and white ribbon of the Pioneers, on the grave of her cousin NX31941 Lieutenant Clive Roper of 2/3 Pioneers, who was killed at Sattelberg and later interred in Lae War Cemetery.

The ceremony at Lae was an unforgettable finale and the wreath laying a very moving spectacle as a steady stream of veterans laid their individual tributes, and in the stillness that followed the Last Post the silence was complete.

The pilgrimage had come to an end and the veterans were now all back on ship for the return to Cairns and the flight back to their homes. The last night on ship a Veterans Variety Concert was held and there were some very good entertainers amongst the veterans. Roy was one of the N.S.W. vets who took part — he sang "A Letter to Mum" to the tune of the "Mountains of Morne". Later a farewell show was given by Ugly Dave Gray, Lorrae Desmond and Enzo Toppano.

The thanks of all who took part in the pilgrimage must be extended to the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Minister, Con Sciacca, for making it possible. Tribute must also be paid to Admiral Neil Ralph, Tour Co-ordinator; Dr. Graeme Killer, in charge of the medical team; Dr. Geoff Pryor, Official Artist; Pam Barnard, Pilgrimage Co-ordinator; the team of carers, Army, Navy and Air Force personnel; and 1 R.A.R. Band, under Music Director Captain Scott Laycock, which had been selected to accompany the veterans.

It was an unforgettable experience, and Roy wishes to thank the Executive and Committee for his nomination.

SICK PARADE

BILL TASKER, our Welfare Officer, has been in and out of hospital since late July with pain from a damaged vertebrae — first at Canterbury Hospital, Concord and then Lady Davidson. Over this time he has been visited by numerous Pioneers and wishes to thank all members for their visits and get well cards.

Bill is now at home resting, but is not yet back on the job as he is still undergoing treatment.

MAIL BAG

Editor: BOB LAKE

Another Mail Bag and last for the year. I have to say not a very good report from me — my Manly team was flogged in the final of the football by Canterbury and I don't think a team could ever play that badly again. Sob, sob!!! On with with show, no more moaning.

GLADYS ALLEN, widow of Jack 2/1, Mackay, Queensland, with a cheque for the Treasurer and the news that she lives handy to her two daughters and four grandchildren, all grandma's favourites. Gladys has been a widow now for 27 years and this year the War Graves Commission placed a plaque in the War Cemetery at Rookwood — you can't rush these things. Good to hear from you, Glad.

ALF BALLARD 2/2, Monterey, with a note and donation and says he is not available for Anzac Day or reunions. He has had four operations in 12 months on his legs and has to use a four pronged walking stick. Closes with best wishes to all and good luck.

ANNE BURNS, widow of "Scotty" 2/1, with a thank you for still sending the paper and a donation to funds. Anne does not remember many of the names, but finds it a link with "Scotty" and looks forward to same.

GEORGE CATCHPOLE 2/2, Northgate, Queensland, with a cheque and his first letter to the Association. He says he has never written before as he is tied up with the 2/2nds in Victoria and has been President of Nundah/Northgate R.S.L. for 23 years. George served in the militia before the war in a signal unit and was rejected from joining the A.I.F. because of varicose veins. However, he had an operation and was finally accepted for service in August, 1941. Served in an Anti-Tank Training Battalion for several months in various camps in Queensland, before finally being posted to 2/2 Pioneers in New Guinea. Served with the unit in Balikpapan before being discharged and enjoyed his stay with the unit — says they were a good battalion. At present George is more or less an invalid with bad knees and gets around with a walking frame, but otherwise not in bad shape. Good to hear from you, George, thank you for your good wishes and write again sometime.

ERIC CAUSER 2/1, Macarthur, Victoria, with a cheque for funds and the news that he and Doff had just returned from four weeks holiday, most of it around Longreach in Queensland. He spent half the time on a station and it was a great experience. Did some pig and 'roo shooting and a couple of days woolclassing — in general being a jackaroo. The property was over 40,000 acres with paddocks of 4,000 acres — a bit different to the local area he lives in. Eric was in Brisbane for the V.P. March on 15th August, but did not see any Pioneers — he rang John Hunt, 2/1, but he wasn't going. Says it was a big crowd and he finally marched with a Victorian unit, 2/31st Battalion, of which he is also a member. All the best to your both and keep fit.

PHIL CRAMISIE 2/1, Buderim, Queensland, with the news that he had received his Pioneer News wrapper, but no paper. Quite a few others had the same problem, Phil, but Max hopes to rectify the fault in this issue. He has posted you another copy. Phil sends kindest regards to the mob and thanks to the Committee for a job well done.

BETTY CREASY, widow of George 2/1, Portland, with a cheque for funds and says the weather in her part of the State had been very cold at time of writing. Pipes were frozen and temperature down to —4 degrees. You can have that kind of weather on your own, Bet. All the best and keep well.

RON CROSS 2/1, Ballina, with a donation for funds and news of the outcome of the meeting of 2/1 — 2/2 Pioneers in their area. Ron has accepted the position of Treasurer and a report of the meetings is printed elsewhere in this issue. Thanks for your letter, Ron, and your phone calls.

VAL BLACK, widow of "Dora" 2/1, Evans Head, with a welcome donation and says how she still enjoys reading the News. Has not been

able to attend too many of the Rats luncheons lately due to lack of transport and bad back and legs. (Join the mob, Val). Evans Head had a big day for V.P. Day with a parade and plenty of entertainment — she has never seen so many people in the town. Sends best wishes to all and a big hello to Lahey.

LIONEL FULLARTON 2/2, Orbost, Victoria, with a sub for the Treasurer and his thanks for the Pioneer News which he finds very interesting. Was especially interested in the story of Colonel Davis in the last issue. Was also pleased to see Ron Edwards 2/1 was still writing to the Association and Lionel would be pleased to hear from him again one day. Glad you were able to solve the mystery of the photo, Lionel, just a coincidence that the names were the same. Making contact with a widow some months ago, Lionel found on checking her late husband's papers that he had served on Tarakan and Balikpapan with 2/2nd Pioneers. His name was Tasman Miller — he had lived in Melbourne but on retirement moved to Nowra, and then Orbost where their daughter lived. He died here at 80 years of age and perhaps someone in the Association may have known him and see this. You had notified us of the passing of Jack Brown 2/2 and pleased to hear his widow was granted the War Widow's pension. Lionel also mentions that Fred Lay 2/2 has just returned from three weeks tour to Western Australia, not bad for a 92 year old and a marvel for an ex-Burma Railway P.O.W. Sends his best regards to all and thanks for the job we do on the Association.

STAN GAVAN 2/2, Greystanes, with a short note thanking us for the Pioneer News and a sub for 1995. Says now and again a name "rings a bell".

JACK GRIFFITHS 2/2, Frankston, Victoria, with a very short note — it read "Yearly sub — Jack Griffith". Many thanks and you certainly won't suffer from writer's cramp, Jack. All the best.

JACK GRIFFITHS 2/1, Mayfield, now back on deck after his three weeks in hospital after a heart problem. His heart specialist says he has made a remarkable recovery but Jack has been left with a couple of legacies — says he is "now in the slow lane, but still on the train even though it may be in the last carriage". Good to hear, mate, and hope you continue to improve. Jack was pleased to receive many visits, cards and phone calls from 2/1 Pioneers and members of ROTA, which goes to show that mateship formed in adversity so many years ago is still pretty strong. Did appreciate the visits of Jack Bertram, Roy Jardine, Vic Whiteley and Jack Pearce, also Tom Wallace of Wallsend, and phone calls from Fred Wheaton and Claude Campbell. Being rather short of space this issue, Jack, we will hold over the racing news of Tom Wallace for the next issue, but hope he is now recovered from his broken foot. Sorry to hear you missed all your "Australia Remembers" functions, Jack, and hope they were a huge success. Keep well and take care, all the best to Esme and yourself.

JIM HALL 2/1, Kyogle, per pen of daughter Ann Healey, writes that all the family were home at Kyogle recently and Jim asked Ann to write on his behalf. Jim is in excellent health and still runs his leather and harness business and too busy to write (so he said). He sends his best regards to all and still has two sisters and three brothers whom he sees regularly. Both his daughters Marg and Ann are married, and Marg has two children. Good to hear from you Jim, and many thanks for the donation.

IRENE HEMMINGS, widow of "Snowy" 2/1, Leichhardt, with a letter telling us of the passing of George and that it was a very moving service at the church at Summer Hill where they were married. Both Sam Lewis and Bill Tasker were two of the Pioneers that she knew at the funeral but there were others whom she had heard George speak of. Irene would like to continue to receive the News as both she and the children like to read it. Copies will be sent as usual, Irene, and best wishes to you and your family from all Pioneers.

CHARLIE HENRY 2/2, Bodalla, with a sub for the Treasurer and the news that all are well at present. He had a hip operation early in the year at Concord, and although it slipped out two weeks after the op is now doing well. Brother Bill is in the Shangri-La Nursing Home, 107

Carrington Avenue, Hurstville, and would appreciate some visitors if anyone is in that area.

JACK HUMPHREY 2/1, Casino, with a long letter and the news that he had recently met up with Ted Vaughan 2/1 — after 50 years they had lots to talk about, and very hard to remember times and places. Last year Jack went on a driving trip with his daughter to collect a species of spider she was studying for Sydney University and the Australian Museum of Natural History. The trip took them to Western Australia, from Esperance to Shark Bay, collecting spiders which they sent back by air to the museum, and they then travelled on to the Flinders Ranges in South Australia. Some 12,000 kilometres, so a long trip. Jack and his wife also went on a trip to the Northern Territory. They flew to Alice Springs, which Jack had not seen since 1941 — what a difference — before making a flight over the Rock, the Olgas, Lake Amadeus and Kings Canyon. They then went by coach to Katherine Gorge and the Ord River Dam, by boat to Kununurra and flew over Lake Argyle and the Bungle-Bungles before flying to Darwin for the return flight to Sydney. At the moment Jack is "batching" — his wife has flown to Western Australia to see the wildflowers, etc. Despite having to look after himself as he has large cysts on both kidneys, Jack manages to trip about a lot, as can be gathered from his letter. Closes with best wishes to all and tells Max Herron to look after himself and keep up the good work.

SID KENT 2/1, Narrabeen, with a sub for the Treasurer and the news that Albert Brown, Joe Barker and Dick Blackeney are all known residents in the War Vets at Narrabeen with him. Sid says they are pleased to have had visits from Bob Lake, Jack Pearce, Roy Jardine, Laurie Kelly and Jack Kerslake. Keep well, Sid, and best wishes.

ARCH LEIGH 2/2, Rockhampton, with a first letter to the Association. He has not been to any of our functions, but enjoys the News. Arch goes to Melbourne on Anzac Day where he has lots of mates and was in Brisbane for the P.O.W. Dinner on V.P. Day. Many thanks for your sub and all the best.

DON LINTON 2/2, Tuncurry, with a letter saying that he and Nancy had recently been on a trip to the Central Coast to see their family and on the way had called to see Dick Wakely, who has been having his share of troubles for some time. Dick was a Platoon Commander in C Company 2/2 and transferred to Beach Group at Trinity Beach. He has not been receiving the News for some time, so Max has mailed him back numbers for the past four years. Will keep him in reading for a few hours. Thanks for your kind wishes for the V.P. Day March, Don, we had a good day and enjoyed the pub afterwards.

CLIVE MEEK 2/1, Glen Innes, per pen of good wife Maisie, with a sub for the Treasurer and the news that they will be taking part in the local "Australia Remembers" activities. Closes with best wishes and a thank you for a well presented Pioneer News.

OSSIE MCCURTAYNE 2/1, Laurieton, with a donation to funds and some notes that Max will use when space permits. Lahey's writing is a bloody sight worse than yours, Ossie, but I'm glad to see you are still able to take a little "nourishment" — there is nothing like a wee droppa rum to take your mind off your troubles.

JOYCE MCGREGOR, widow of Bob 2/1, Kingsgrove, with a note thanking us for Pioneer News — always sad to read "Last Post" and see so many familiar names. Shed a tear when she read about Peg Whiteley and Fred Callaway — old pals of years gone by. Glad Max's ankle operation was such a success and he is now free of pain. Joyce claims that these days she is talking to herself quite often — the cat can't answer back. Lovely to hear from you Joyce, look after yourself and keep sober — be good, be careful and if you can't do either, buy a pram. (That's Lahey.)

ROY MCGREGOR 2/2, Maitland, with welcome letter and a donation to funds. Says he is getting used to being an amputee, like getting to know places where access is possible, or to take a book to read in the car if it's not. Your letter was just too late for the July issue, Roy, but you know we will always come up to scratch at a later date. Your kind regards are passed on to all, keep well and good to hear from you.

TOM McGUINNESS 2/2, Laurieton, with a sub for Treasurer and the news that a knee operation in late October may enable him to get about a bit more — perhaps even a trip to Sydney. Hope it will be a success, Tom, and good luck.

JACK NORTON 2/1, Warners Bay, with a newsy letter, not all good, but that's the way it is. Jack has certainly had his share of trouble over the years and has spent a long time both in Concord and Lady Davidson Hospitals. He had cancer 18 years ago in his throat and had to travel to Concord every third Wednesday for eight years before getting a clearance. His wife died some 12 years ago and his three sons and a daughter live far away which means he lives alone and copes pretty well under very trying circumstances. The big blow came six years ago when he couldn't swallow or drink anything, which meant his social life was gone, no R.S.L. clubs or any kind of entertainment because the doctors operated again and inserted a tube through which he is fed four times a day by the Hunter nurses. The food is in tins similar to a vanilla milkshake, but full of nutrition which keeps him alive. (Some of us *think* we have troubles Jack.) Jack finds time to mention Jack Griffiths' heart problems — you've got enough on your plate without that old mate, but I'm sure "Griffo" would appreciate your thoughts. Closes with best wishes and a very substantial sub which he said should keep him financial for a while. All the best of luck, Jack.

LES PATTERSON 2/1, Port Macquarie, with a note apologising for lax payment of subs, so enclosed same with best wishes. Says he can't march any more, but will try and make the Reunion next year. His wife has not been well, but happily has recovered and looking forward to seeing more of our lovely country. Twice round Australia has not dimmed her love of travelling. Max has noted the address of Ken Harrison and he will be posted future issues of the News. Closes with best wishes for the V.P. March in Sydney.

JOY PREEDY, wife of Len 2/2, Western Australia, with a letter reporting that Len was out of hospital and doing as well as could be expected after the removal of his kidney. Has to take things quietly and gets frustrated. The lousy weather they have been having in the West hasn't helped, no chance of getting out in the sun. Joy expresses great appreciation for the treatment Len received at Hollywood Repat (now gone private), in a room on his own and nurses are great. Also received a second letter from Joy telling of a wrapper of Pioneer News, but no paper. Sorry about that Joy, quite a few arrived like that, but Max has taken steps to rectify the problem. Hope Len is still progressing favourably and has had a good report from the doctors. Our kindest regards to you both.

JACK PRICE 2/1, Harden, with a short note and a substantial cheque for the Treasurer — made Vic's eyes light up. Jack is still battling on and keeps good health most of the time. Norma looks after him pretty well and keeps him in line, so no problems that way. Closes with best wishes to all and says he looks forward to the News.

ERIC REYNOLDS 2/1, Macksville, with a sub to Treasurer and the news that they had the family over from Victoria on holidays, nice to see them but no fun with five or six extra people in your house. He and Joyce are looking at some retirement flats at Nambucca Heads, they have been in Macksville for 19 years and now find the big yard hard to cope with. Eric has turned 80 and Joyce not far behind. Hope you won't have to wait too long to sell your house. Anzac Day went off very well and so did the march and get-together on V.P. Day. Glad you and Joyce enjoyed the luncheon at the Macksville R.S.L. for "Australia Remembers" and hope Joyce is now well and keeping you in line. All the best to you both.

CHARLES RICHARDSON 2/2, Queensland, with a letter saying Brisbane was busy with "Australia Remembers" celebrations. We watched the main parade through Brisbane on TV, and it was a good coverage. Don't know that anyone from Sydney attended the meeting at Lismore, but we have had letters from them and from all reports it went off well. We told them we would support them in every way, and you'll find a write-up on the meeting in this issue. Sends best wishes to all.

JOE ROBERTSON 2/2, South Australia, with another letter telling of a missing Pioneer News. Max sent another on 10th August, 1995, so hope that one arrived safely. The South Australia Pioneer Association were holding an "Australia Remembers" Reunion at Keswick Barracks on 13th August and a luncheon in the Sergeants Mess after a wreath laying service. Hope you had a good day. Thanks for your donation, Joe, and best wishes.

JACK SHEARMAN 2/1, Kyogle, with a short note and another substantial donation — Whiteley will be able to visit New Zealand if this keeps up. Jack hopes everyone is still able to take a little nourishment and apart from a few aching bones all are well at Kyogle. All the best to you and Flo from the "gang" down here.

VIVIENNE SMILEY, daughter of "Paddy" Macgillcuddy, late Colonel 2/1, with a card expressing her thanks for the Pioneer News which is sent to her regularly. Good to hear from you again, Vivienne, and many thanks for the sub enclosed.

GEORGE SMITH 2/2, Kingsford, with a letter notifying a change of address — reckons this should be his last as he's had three other moves since he retired eight years ago. All the best in your new unit.

HUGH SORLEY 2/2, Canningvale, Western Australia, with a donation for the Treasurer and a thank you for the News. Says it's always good to receive and hopes that we can continue to keep it going. Sends regards to all Pioneers.

DUDLEY STANFORTH 2/2, Wagga, with a sub for the Treasurer and news that he had just returned from three weeks on the Sunshine Coast and although the weather was great it wasn't warm enough for swimming. He had a couple of mates with him, so the time passed quickly. Dudley sends best wishes to Doug Scott and Gordon Bell and was pleased to read in the last news that Jack Morgan and John Dowd were still soldiering on. He hopes to see them soon.

GWEN STRODE, sister of the late Keith Jones 2/1, with a note to Max thanking him for a letter he had sent to a family member just after Keith was killed in action in Borneo and which has come into Gwen's possession recently. Max's letter has put Gwen's mind at rest with events that happened 50 years ago. She also has a Japanese money note with a lot of signatures on it and the names are still quite plain. Closes by saying she enjoys reading the News and sends best wishes to all.

CHAS URWIN 2/2, Wye River, Victoria, with apology for late payment of sub and says he enjoys reading the Pioneer News when it arrives. His eyesight is not the best and not too mobile, but did manage to attend the V.P. Day celebration at Lorne R.S.L., in conjunction with Lorne School. Vividly remembers 15th August, 1945, in Balikpapan — it was his 28th birthday — what a welcome birthday present. Sends best wishes to all.

RON WEBSTER 2/1, Bass Hill, with sub for funds — says he arrived late on Anzac Day and completely forgot about "chipping in". Ron speaks of his daughter, Pamela, with a lot of pride. She is a Major in the Salvation Army and after 17½ years of overseas postings has now been posted to the Army's Training College. Pamela was a qualified accountant and looked after the finances of the Army in Papua New Guinea, in Ghana and Kenya in Africa. Son, Stanley, is in charge of the computer section of the Army Headquarters in Sydney and plays in the Sydney Congress Hall Band. Ron says he and his wife have much to be thankful for. Sends his best wishes to all and his thanks to all on the Committee for their wonderful work over so many years. All the best to you and your wife — keep well.

DAVID WALKER 2/1, Bomaderry, with a short note to say he had a visit from Ivor Garnon and his brother Dan and his wife recently and was very pleased to see them. Best wishes, and many thanks for the donation to funds.

NEV WOODHAM 2/1, Thornlands, Queensland, with a newsy letter from the Sunshine State. Still has a crack about the football, but I can take it. They (Manly) were beaten by a better team on the day. Nev says it was good to see the old blokes again on Anzac Day, especially Bill Chisholm and son Paul. They have been corresponding at bit lately, although

Nev says he's no letter writer. It was good to see the troops returning to New Guinea and Borneo, must have been an eye-opener for them. The Redlands Sub-branch of ROTA has five Pioneers on the books — Harry Spreadborough, Harry Mowbray, John Keegan, Ken Franks and Neville himself — not a bad roll call. Ken has not been for a while with cataract problems, but is hoping to get back after surgery. The local R.S.L. had a visit from Beaudesert Bowling Club recently and Mavis Blanche was among the group. She looks well and keeps fit. It is now nine years since Joe passed away. Closes with best wishes and may be down again next year. Kindest regards to you both.

TEMPLE WOOD 2/2, Terrigal, with a cheque for funds and a note to say many thanks for still sending on the Pioneer News. It is with sadness that he reads the Last Post and then remembers that it is now 50 years "down the track". He regrets he's not able to take part in any of our activities, due to many knee and hip problems, but is fortunate in being able to live with his daughter in pleasant surroundings. Wishes the Association and all its members the very best for the coming Festive Season.

JACK BERTRAM 2/1, Hamilton, is to be thanked for his letters keeping us informed of the progress of Jack Griffiths and other Pioneers in the Newcastle area.

• That concludes the Mail Bag for this year, so on behalf of all the Committee I would like to wish all Pioneers, their wives and families all the best for Christmas and the New Year, and above all good health in the future. The more I think of my football team, the more I say not worth a bloody stamp!!!

Good luck — keep sober. LAKEY

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In this year that Australia Remembers 1939-1945, no doubt many of you will remember that 50 years ago at this time both Battalions were preparing for the landing at Balikpapan, Borneo, along with other units of the 7th Division which culminated with the Japanese surrender being signed at the 2/1st Headquarters on 10th September, 1945.

Since the last Annual Meeting, two Committee meetings have been held and the Executive appreciate the interest taken by members concerned. Anzac Day went off exceptionally well, the weather was kind, the attendance was good and the band music was very much appreciated.

The luncheon at the Occidental Hotel was first class. One hundred and twelve members partook of the meal which was free to members, thanks to the generosity of the Department of Veteran Affairs which contributed \$1100. This gesture was very much appreciated. Our Patron, John Gilchrist, spoke very convincingly in respect of the occasion. It was great to see a couple of members from Western Australia in attendance in the personages of Alf Bentley and Jack Stewart, whilst Phil Cramsie, Neville Woodham and Bert Beasley from Queensland helped to swell our numbers.

Your Treasurer, Vic Whiteley, will no doubt impress you with the "Finance Report" for which he must be commended. As usual Bill Tasker and his helpers have again done a wonderful job in their visitations to those members sick in hospital and attendance at the many funerals of those who have passed on. During the year under review many of our members have passed on — your Committee was depleted by the deaths of Peter Craig and Pat Noonan together with the wife of our Treasurer, Peg Whiteley. To all the families of those departed we offer our deepest sympathy.

The "Pioneer News" continues to be the lifeline of the Association. I must say though, that the cost of printing and postage is becoming prohibitive and the Association relies entirely on the contributions received from members. So in this year that "Australia Remembers" also remember the Association and the untiring work of the Editors, Max Herron and Bob Lake. A vote of thanks also goes to the Wrapping Committee without whose assistance we would not receive the News.

President **BILL JOLLIE**