

PIONEER NEWS

Phone: 759 5491

Official Organ of 2/1 and 2/2 PIONEER BATTALIONS ASSOCIATION

Per Annum: \$5

Registered under the Charitable Collections Act, 1934-41 — Certificate No. 10462

Printed by Principal Press, 19 Grey Street, Carlton

Correspondence: MAX HERRON, Hon. Sec., 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Bn. Assoc., 3 Enoggera Road, Beverly Hills 2209

Treasurer: VIC WHITELEY

Editors: R. LAKE and M. HERRON

President: BILL JOLLIE

Vol. 41, No. 1

APRIL, 1996

Welfare: BILL TASKER, phone 718 6658

2/1 — 2/2 PIONEER LISMORE REUNION

The Reunion held on Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th March was organised by the N.S.W. Northern Rivers Branch of the Association and they are to be congratulated on producing a most successful gathering.

Visitors began arriving on Friday, 8th March, by train, plane and car. The people who made the longest journey were Maureen and Doug Waters by train from Adelaide. Those travelling by train from Sydney were welcomed by Ken Wilson and his transport section and were soon being delivered to places of accommodation in the area. After unpacking, visitors and hosts assembled at the Lismore R.S.L. for drinks and meals in an informal and friendly atmosphere. Those seen involved in these activities were Maureen and Doug Waters, Kevin Haward, Jack Allison, Roy Levy, Snowy Dodd and Allan Olson, who had arrived by plane earlier from Adelaide and had been enjoying the hospitality of Ida and Ken Wilson. Saturday was a free day until the Wreath Laying Ceremony and many took the opportunity to have a look around Lismore. Toss and Bill Robertson were able to spend some time with relatives.

WREATH LAYING CEREMONY

This most important part of the weekend's activities was carried out at 5.00 p.m. at the Soldiers Memorial. The religious service was conducted by the Reverend Peter Playstead, Presbyterian Minister at Lismore, who is also a Chaplain at the RAAF Base at Amberley.

The ceremony was conducted by Ray Harris and John Le Cornu was in charge of the public address system. Wreaths were laid by Roy Dopel, President of the Lismore R.S.L., Ken Wilson, Bill Robertson and Rita Trefoni.

Ken Wilson recited the Ode and the Last Post and Reveille were sounded. Following the singing of the Royal Anthem and Advance Australia Fair the ceremony was concluded with the Reverend Playstead pronouncing the Benediction.

THE REUNION DINNER

On arrival at the Lismore R.S.L. Club, members were issued with printed name tags by Secretary Betty Carter and fees collected by Treasurer Ron Cross.

After the Master of Ceremonies Ray Harris called on the gathering to be seated, he asked Padre Peter Playstead to say Grace. Ray then introduced the guests at the Official Table as follows: Reverend Peter and Marilyn Playstead, Joan and Roy Dopel, R.S.L. Club President, Ida and Ken Wilson, Branch President, Toss and Bill Robertson, Sydney Association Vice-President (representing President Bill Jollie), and Mark and Dorothy Foster.

The Toast to the Queen was proposed by Allan Olson, President of the South Australia Branch and the Toast to the Guests by Ken Wilson. In response Roy Dopel thanked the Executive on behalf of the guests and went on to speak of the role of the Pioneers in all wars.

Ken Wilson then spoke on the formation of the Northern Rivers Branch and said how pleasing it was to see an attendance of 80 people to their first Reunion. Treasurer Ron Cross then proposed a Toast to Departed and Absent Comrades. Ken then called on Bill Robertson to say a few words, as he represented the parent Association. In his address, Bill went back to 1948 when the Association was formed on a suggestion by Mrs Lilla O'Malley Wood (who founded the Ladies Comforts Fund during the war) and of the many happy occasions the two units have come together at the numerous reunions organised by the Association Executive over many years. Formal proceedings completed, the gathering were then called forward to partake of an excellent meal.

Later in the evening Dorothy Foster, who had made the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Banner for the Northern Rivers Branch, came forward and presented the banner to Ken Wilson. Ken then asked Reverend Playstead to dedicate the banner before it was carried around to be admired by the visitors.

The raffle of a pewter mug, donated by Allan Olson, mounted with both 2/1-2/2 colour patches, was won by Harry Mowbray and Ernie Lunn won a portable radio.

At the conclusion of the dinner, groups sat about talking and recalling the good old days together. It was great to catch up on old mates and news of the doings of each other — all told, a very enjoyable night.

BALLINA BARBECUE

By 11.00 a.m. on the Sunday morning, the Pioneers and their ladies had assembled at the Ballina Ex-Servicemen's Home Complex for a barbecue and the 70 who were in attendance were in good spirits after their Lismore Reunion. After a warm welcome by Peter Morris, Complex Manager, some of the visitors were taken on a tour of the Home by 2/1 "Mac" McKibbin, who is one of the residents. The staff were very friendly and caring and the home seems to be well looked after and a great place to spend declining years.

The barbecue lunch was cooked and served by three ladies, staff of the complex, and was really enjoyed by the visitors. Fortunately the tables and chairs were undercover, as there were a few showers during the lunch, but this in no way dampened the spirits of the visitors.

The carton of beer which was raffled was won by Rita Trefoni, who re-donated it and it was subsequently won by Doug Waters from S.A.

All too soon it was time to say goodbye and it was suggested that another reunion be held in August, 1977, if it can be arranged. To all Northern Rivers Branch Members a big thank you for a job well done — it was really enjoyed by all of those who were fortunate to be able to attend.

REUNION JOTTINGS by Peg Herron

On the Sunday night after the barbecue, a party of 2/1-2/2 members met at the Ballina R.S.L. and enjoyed an hour or two of good company. Roy Levy, Snowy Dodd, Don and Val Crawford, Noeline McEvoy, Laurie Kelly and Roy Jardine were later joined by Marj and Jack Kerslake and Peg and Max Herron. Two 2/1sts (no names no pack drill) left their motel in a taxi for the club, without their key, and could not remember where they were staying. Marj Kerslake and Max finished up driving them around until they recognised their motel. (Next time fellas take a compass). A good evening and a lot of fun.

The following day the Kerslakes and Herrons drove up to Byron Bay to see some "near relatives" of the Kerslakes, Pat and Ken Webber, and on the way back called in to see Jack and Olive Richards 2/1st at Lennox Head. Jack is recovering from head surgery and has to take things quietly. Olive has also been in hospital with back problems, but they were both battling on and glad of a visit.

We stayed a couple of days in Kyogle and called to see Bill Hoffman 2/1 who is in Kyogle Court Aged Home — and it is really home away from home. He has improved a lot in health and sends his best wishes to all.

Also had lunch with Jim Hall 2/1 on his property and we really enjoyed our visit. Jim's saddlery and leather work is first class and we

rather overstayed our visit. Many thanks Jim, for a most interesting day.

Our daughter-in-law Lynn (David's wife) is a Kyogle girl, so we also found time to visit her mum, Emily Downes, and spent an enjoyable day with her sister, Joan, and husband Maurice Powell, on a picnic day up to The Loop to watch the trains on their way to Brisbane winding around the mountain. A remarkable sight. The country around the area is really green and we thoroughly enjoyed our visit.

We called to see Flo and Jack Shearman 2/1 on our way to Casino but they were out — hope you found the note on the door, Flo.

A great few days, amidst good company.

ANZAC ACTIVITIES 1996

WREATH LAYING — Wednesday, 24th April

This very important Service will be held at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 24th April, and all Members are to assemble on the corner of Martin Place and Pitt Street, on the G.P.O. side at 7.25 p.m. and will place wreaths at the Cenotaph at 7.30 p.m.

ANZAC DAY MARCH — Thursday, 25th April

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 — 2/2nd in Phillip Street near Martin Place and rear of 7th Division. Both banners will be displayed at their respective assembly points. Check newspapers for changes in assembly points.

ANZAC REUNION — Thursday, 25th April

Occidental Hotel, 43 York Street, Sydney, is the venue for the Anzac Day Reunion Dinner. Board the train at Museum Station, after the march, and travel around the loop to Wynyard Station. Proceed up the escalator to York Street, turn right into York Street towards Central, walk along to the first street which is Erskine Street and the hotel is on the south side corner. Enter from York Street into the foyer.

Costing will be: Meal \$12 per head. Refreshments — Beer: Middy \$1.50. Schooner \$2. Jug \$6. Service to tables.

ANNUAL MEETING — Friday, 7th June

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday, 7th June, 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 Pioneers to attend.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Comrades in Arms,

Putting pen to paper is easy, once you know the words and what to say. I know at this stage of our lives we all have a cross to bear and some of us are bearing it better than most.

This letter is another census taken to try and get as many as possible to the next Anzac Day March. You do not have to march or drink too much, just try your best to be there at the Occidental Hotel.

Like they say, some people carry their age well, others have to hire a truck, so if you have no truck, hire a relative for a bit of help and meet mates of yesteryear. This applies to any "D" Company that are out there somewhere — must be a few of you still alive and kicking.

As space is limited in the Pioneer News I will move on to give others a chance. So, as they say, the roving hand having written, now moves on and the ball is now in your court, just try and do your very best and be there. George Tolmie, this applies to you but leave your tape recorder at home. (Regards to Kathy and son.) Best wishes to Jack Lamerton, George Walker and all other Pioneers not enjoying the best of health.

Age does weary us all, and the years do condemn — just keep your chins up, if that is all you can keep up.

JIM GRAY 18 Pln "D" Company.

MAIL BAG

Editor: BOB LAKE

The first issue for 1996 — boy are we getting old. However, I think if we grow old gracefully we'll get along O.K. Things are much the same down here at Lakes, plenty of complaints but no one listens. We will not be at the Lismore show, too many commitments — have a grandson's wedding on that day so must attend. Costs a fortune too, have to hire a monkey suit for the occasion, but look forward to seeing most of you on Anzac Day. First things first, I have been asked by Gordon Finlay to mention the couple who run the motel in Walcha, so will do that in the first letter.

BRUCE and ELAINE AITCHISON, of the Walcha Motel, with a card to Gordon for Christmas and that their best wishes be passed on to the 18 Pioneers, wives and widows who some four or five years ago had a week in Walcha doing one of their bus trips. It was a very good week and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Bruce and Elaine treated us like kings and each of them in turn drove the coach and gave us a great time. Since that trip some have passed on, all have got a bit older and I don't think we could do it again. Glad to hear from you, Bruce, and pleased to know that we are still remembered by you both. Thank you for your good wishes, they are heartily reciprocated by all of us down here. Our best wishes also to Jason.

CYRIL AMIES 2/1, Thornleigh, per pen of Doris, with a newsy letter and greetings for Christmas and the New Year. They have been doing plenty of travelling and as Doris says "a life of variety and activity". Cyril turned 80 in April and following this they set off to the Red Centre where they increased their knowledge of the early history of the Overland Telegraph Line and the Flying Doctor Service. They were astounded at the size of both Uluru (The Rock) and the Olgas. Some time was spent with family members in Brisbane and Caloundra and they sandwiched in a few games of bowls and time in the garden. Doris had a trip to Japan and had a very pleasant time with her host family. They were also off to White Cliffs to renew association with a former teacher friend who had settled there. You've certainly had a busy year, folks, and as you say there is so much to see in our own country. Closes with best wishes to all for 1996.

ROBIN BELL, daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1, with a card for Max and Peg and a thank you for the address of Noel Grant. Robin hopes to be in Sydney for Anzac Day and hopes that Margaret and Sam Lewis will be back by then. Closes with best wishes to all from Bruce and herself.

LES BRITT 2/1, Cairns, with a sub for the Treasurer and a greeting card to all for Christmas and the New Year.

ARTHUR BROWN 2/2, Albion Park Rail, with a change of address and his best wishes to all Pioneers, especially Don Coy, 2/2nds. Hope your new move to the retirement village is all you would want it to be.

JACK COATES 2/1, Umina, with a long letter and plenty of news from the home front. Jack has had a lot of heart problems in the last few months and spent some time in Gosford, Concord and Prince Alfred hospitals. Was grounded until Christmas and slowly recovering — says he owes the medicos his life and the "Bloke Upstairs" has granted an extension. Good to hear that, Jack. Jack and Lex celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in October and celebrated with 120 friends and relatives from Balmain days and around the globe. The whole affair was catered for splendidly, hired tables, chairs, marquee, even a Port-a-Loo. Our best wishes to you both for the happy occasion. Jack also sent along a newspaper cutting from "The Land" with an article on Jim Hall 2/1, of Kyogle, which made interesting reading. Jim who has just turned 79 is one of the very few remaining specialists to make everything from a saddle bag right through to a complete outfit. Jim is passing on his craft to young people and he has plenty of them who call in to "Greenwood", not far out of Kyogle, to

watch Jim work. Many thanks for the cutting, Jack, and keep well. All the best to Lex.

RON COYTE 2/1, Wentworthville, with best wishes to all for the New Year and a cheque for the Treasurer. Ron has had a couple of trips to hospital in the last few years, a carotid artery operation and some prostate problems, but all now seems to be well. Says he is so much better off than some and is sad to see age and health taking its toll of our members. Closes with best wishes to all for the coming year.

ALLAN CRUTE 2/1, Woolgoolga, per pen of wife Beulah, with a long personal letter to Peg and Max, so I will just pick the eyes out of it for some news for the troops. Both Allan and Beulah are well at the moment — Beulah has had a couple of operations on her hands, but is O.K. They have been busy in the garden — doing away with annuals and putting down woodchips to try and save work. They spent quite a few months in Parkes during the year as their only son Denis had a heart attack and they were on hand to help out and mind the children. Denis eventually had a triple by-pass in Sydney and is now back at work on light duties. Good to hear everything is going along O.K. They had intended attending the meetings in Lismore for the newly formed North Coast Pioneers, but had to cancel both times on account of Denis. However, are hoping they may make the reunion in March. Beulah mentions that she and Allan had paid a visit to Macksville to see Joyce and Eric Reynolds just before Christmas and spent a couple of hours with them. Both Beulah and Allan are still involved in the Red Cross, Beulah as President and Allan the Treasurer, and Beulah is heavily involved with the local V.I.E.W. Club and their local retirement village. I reckon you want to retire and take up cross-country running — you would get more rest that way. All the best to you both and keep fit.

NORMA FITCH, widow of Harold 2/1, Rydalmore, with a card of greeting for Christmas and a sub to the Treasurer. Many thanks for your kind message, Norma, and best wishes to you and your family.

JACK FOLEY 2/2, Horsham, with a donation to funds and the news that his legs have been giving him trouble for the last couple of years. He has had two operations for artery trouble, but hopes all is well now. Closes with many thanks for the Newsletter and greetings to all members.

TOM GAISFORD 2/2, Balwyn, with a note to say thank you for the Pioneer News and enclosing a cheque for funds. While naturally a 2/2 trooper, he is also interested in the doings and activities of many of the 2/1sts he met at the Kapooka Reunion and Dedication. Closes with best wishes to all Association members and congratulates those who are responsible for a most interesting and newsy Newsletter.

DON GALVIN 2/1, Gloucester, with a cheque for the Treasurer and says how he enjoys the News and hopes to receive same for many years to come. (We hope so too.) Don speaks of the Johan-de-Witt, she was definitely lost at sea later in the war. Just when and what she was doing I do not know. Sends best wishes to all and continued success with the News.

BILL GAMBLE 2/1, Chermiside, with a long letter and a welcome donation to funds. Mentions that V.P. Day in Queensland was well attended with plenty of bands, children and waving flags along the route of the march and altogether a day of celebration and reflection. After the surrender in Borneo, Bill travelled on the "Gascoyne" to Celebes where he joined the 2/16th Battalion, and was based in the picturesque town of Watampone. It was the unit's job to ship the Japs out and to supervise the resettlement of the Dutch — this was hindered somewhat by the fact that the Indonesian Independent Group were hostile and difficult to get on with. During this time Bill had some strange jobs in the way of duty, one of these being to crack a safe taken from Japanese Headquarters. It was a large safe and after travelling to Makassar, about 200 miles away, to pick up the explosives, he transported it to a rice field on the edge of town. Bill said he must have been a little heavy-handed, when the smoke cleared the door was hanging free but instead of bags of Banjarasin diamonds and Japanese secret files all the safe contained was a cash box, with a key, and a receipt. What a bummer, but it was all good experience. Closes

with best wishes for Christmas and the New Year and says to keep up the good work on the News.

TOBY HALE 2/1, Kyogle with a sub for the Treasurer and makes the statement he's definitely not a letter writer. However, says the folks in Kyogle are all well — often sees Jack Shearman and Jim Hall — Jim is still busy with his saddle and harness making. The country has had some good rain, so Toby hopes to get a few vegies to grow. Has given up his show fowls as he's getting too old and they were a lot of work getting them ready for show purposes. Toby keeps good health although a bit slow walking about. Closes with best wishes to all Pioneers and a special cheerio to Max and Peg.

JOHN HAYDEN 2/1, Orange, per pen of wife Wyn, with an apology for not writing earlier and sending their donation to the News. Wyn has been having carpal syndrome surgery on both wrists and we hope by now you are A1. Otherwise she and John keep good health, but time is catching up. John is 80 years young and he and Wyn were married 55 years in November. (You don't get that long for murder these days). They were married on John's embarkation leave and it's hard to realise how quickly those years have passed. They have a happy family life and plenty of grandchildren to keep them busy. Both Wyn and John worry about the future for the young ones growing up — what is ahead for their generation. It seems to be such a sad and troubled world everywhere. Thanks for the photo of John leading the march in Orange last Anzac Day — Max will put it in the Pioneer album. Many thanks for your kind wishes and special hello to Bill Jollie.

PAM HERRICK, Caringbah, daughter of the late George Bates 2/1, with a sub for the Treasurer and her best regards to all those Pioneers and wives she met when she took her dad to our Gosford Reunions. Glad you are keeping in touch, Pam, and although all getting a bit long in the tooth are happy to be in touch with the daughter of "Noisy" Bates. Trust Dot is keeping well — all the best to you both.

IAN HODGE 2/1, Evans Head, with a cheque for the News and his best wishes for the wonderful job the editors do in putting it together. Does not meet any Pioneers in his locality and so far has not been able to attend any of the North Coast meetings. Still, as he says, he's still alive and kicking — turned 70 last August — so one of our younger brigade. Closes with best wishes to all.

BERT HUTTLEY 2/2, Bloomsbury, North Queensland, with a cheque for the Treasurer and a run-down on the V.P. Day celebrations up north. The Brisbane to Cairns troop train stopped enroute on 10th August and met by the local school children, about 40 with their teachers, and many adults. Bert and a couple of his army mates were also there. The kids got a great kick out of seeing the old steam engines and the wooden carriages. People up and down the line travelled on it for several kilometres and it proved very popular with the young ones. On 12th August the ex-service fellows marched and after a local service at the Memorial, Bert said they were treated to a sit down meal at the local R.S.L. Hall, with community singing to follow of all the wartime favourites. The Guest of Honour was Lieutenant-Colonel Ron McGarry of the 2/26th Battalion, 8th Division. He was no stranger to many Pioneers who were P.O.W's. More celebrations continued on V.P. Day with the local schools from Proserpine, Cannonvale, Hamilton and Hayman Islands putting on a concert — all this took place in Proserpine, where Bert is a member of the local Sub-Branch. He sends best wishes to all Pioneers for a healthy, happy New Year.

GORDON KILLION, ex-RAAF, Baulkham Hills, who is on our mailing list, with best wishes for the New Year and a donation to help with the printing of our News. Many thanks, Gordon, and our kindest regards.

HENRY LISTON 2/2, Glen Innes, with a short note to say at 84 he's too old and too far away to attend our functions, but he enjoys getting the News and enclosed a cheque to keep it rolling. Says to keep up the good work and passes on best wishes to all.

GEOFF LLOYD 2/2, South Australia, with a note to say they had met with Frank and Barbara Cheal in Melbourne in October and spent a day with them. Frank has had a broken leg, and

had to have it reset. Geoff also spoke to Roy Fisk — the first time in 50 years — and had been to Puckapunyal for the Dedication of the Memorial and met a lot of Victorian Pioneers. Geoff had also met up with Russ Harrison who gave them lots of news of the Sydney boys. He sends very best wishes from Ronnie and himself for the New Year.

JAN MORGAN, widow of Steve 2/1, Ashfield, with a cheque to funds and to say how she enjoys reading the Pioneer News. Jan has had a spell in hospital but now back on keel again and says although she will always miss Steve we that are left have to get on with living. Closes with best wishes to all. Keep well, Jan.

HARRY MOWBRAY 2/1, Queensland, with a sub for the Treasurer and the news that he and Dot will be at the Lismore Reunion in March. They are then off to the U.S. and Canada in June for five weeks. They are both well, although Harry had a bout of shingles recently but is O.K. again. Sends best wishes for the New Year and looking forward to seeing some of the "south of the border" Pioneers at the Reunion. All the best old mate.

DON MCCLELLAND 2/2, Bundaberg, with a sub for 1996 and best wishes. Many thanks.

PAT MacFARLANE, widow of Ron 2/1, Blacktown, with a short note with her sub for the paper and Christmas greetings to all. Thanks, Pat, hope you are keeping well. All the best.

JEAN McINTYRE, widow of John 2/2, Warrimoo, with Christmas wishes to all the Pioneer folk and those who keep the News coming. Good to hear from you, Jean, keep well.

JOHN McKNIGHT 2/2, Dundas, with his sub and the news that he is keeping in good health. Sorry about your car accident, John, and hope you weren't injured. Can always get a car fixed — good job it was insured. Sorry to hear Mrs Byrne is in a nursing home and hope she continues to keep well. Trust to see you as usual on Anzac Day — until then best wishes.

PETER PEILE 2/1, Caringbah, per pen of wife Erika, with the news that Peter is much better after his by-pass last year and still enjoying his garden. Many thanks for the donation and your good wishes for 1996.

RITA PRITCHARD, widow of Darcy 2/1, Currawong, with a cheque for the Treasurer and says how she still looks forward to the News and reads it with great interest. The names bring back memories of Darcy's old mates. Rita says that like others she must be getting old as it is a long time since she last wrote. However, no news is good news, so keep well Rita and write again sometime. All the best.

FRED RATCLIFFE, son of the late Jack 2/1, Picnic Point, with a thank you to Max for back copies of Pioneer News and that he was able to borrow the Battalion book "The Pioneers" from Hurstville Library. He found it very interesting to follow the Battalion's activities and although Fred mentions that he knew his father was wounded by a booby trap at the time Tobruk was captured, he was at last able to read where and what was being done. (All the notes were taken from the Battalion war diaries in Canberra.) You have been placed on our mailing list, Fred, and will receive three copies of Pioneer News yearly. This letter was just too late for our November issue. Good to hear from you.

BERN REINERS 2/1, Corryong, with a long newsy letter to Max and Peg with a lot of family news and best wishes to all for Christmas and the New Year. Bern has had a hip replacement, lots of discomfort having to lie on his back to sleep for six weeks — sore back, sore bum and sore heels as a result — but no pain since. Says operations a wonderful talking point, beats talking about the weather. At a recent dinner he and Mona attended there were five who had either hip or knee operations so you can imagine the time they had. Mona happened to mention that all she had to do for Bern was to help him put on his left sock. One chap said he didn't need any help, he had a piece of fencing wire with a hook on the end and pulled his own socks on. Yes, said his wife, there isn't a pair of socks in the house that isn't full of holes. Glad to hear all the family are well. Bern, I guess you miss Mandy, Chris and the children after their move to Perth, but that will be another port of call for a holiday. Very best wishes to you and Mona, keep fit.

BRUCE RICH 2/1, Narrandera, with a cheque

for the Treasurer and says that it should keep him financial for a few more years. Best regards to all.

JACK RICHARDS 2/1, Lennox Head, per pen of Olive, with a note to Vic Whiteley correcting the error of the missing cheque. However, all is well now, Olive, Vic has rung me and as I am now doing the Mail Bag, it has been corrected and up to date. Keep sober and best wishes.

BRYAN SMALLHORN 2/1, Armidale, with a good excuse for being late with his sub, but says he won't bore us with the details. Sends his best wishes to all and keep sober.

HARRY SPREADBOROUGH 2/1, Alexandra Hills, with his best wishes to all for a healthy and happy New Year and says that it's good to look out on some greenery instead of red dirt after the years drought. He and Jean were going to Port Macquarie by coach for Christmas, someone else can do the driving and they will watch the scenery. Good thinking, Harry. Healthwise they are doing alright for a couple of "oldies", although Harry's blood problems had cropped up again and needed treatment. However, the doctor had assured Harry he should be hanging around the place for another couple of years. Sorry your Pioneer News did not arrive in its wrapper, had lots of trouble previously but thought we had it beaten last issue. However, Max has sent you another copy. Hope your local RATS break-up dinner was a good day and you were able to meet up with all five Pioneers in your sub-branch, trust you kept them in order Sergeant-Major. You make apologies for your typing, however, Peg Herron re-writes this copy and I feel sorry for her. One time I was quite a good writer but now it's shocking. Closes with best wishes to all.

CEC SLOGGETT 2/2, Gunnedah, per pen of his wife May, with the news that she has to do the writing while Cec is next door helping a friend fix a damaged roof. They have been getting terrific storms up there lately and don't like to leave the home for too long. She and Cec are both keeping well and may get along to the Lismore Reunion. Cec is still bowling and has a win on the odd occasion. Send their best wishes to all and a special hello to Maisie and Jack Kempnich. Thanks for the cheque for the News and all the best for the New Year.

GWEN STRODE, sister of the late Keith Jones 2/1, K.I.A. at Balikpapan, with a donation enclosed and quotes she is always pleased to read news of Keith's mates in the 2/1. He often talked of the good days they had on leave. All the best to you, Gwen, good to hear from you again.

BILL THIELE 2/1, Port Hughes, South Australia, per pen of good wife Betty. Just as well some of these fellas have wives to write their letters, or we would never hear from them. Betty says Bill was diagnosed with the "Big C" last year, but after radiotherapy has been given the all clear. Good news, Bill, and I hope you keep well. They have been living in their holiday home, which Bill built several years ago, at Port Hughes, which is on the Yorke Peninsula in South Australia, for the last two years and enjoying a much quieter lifestyle. Says it beats city life and the rat race. Bill hasn't had much time for fishing, but does have the odd game of golf, though only during winter in their part of the world. Many thanks for the donation, Bill, and our best wishes to both Betty and yourself.

DOUG TURNER 2/1, Kingscliff, with a short note to say that he had received our card for Christmas and enclosed a cheque for the News. Doug also passed on the news that his wife, Gert, had passed away two years ago and is finding it hard being left on his own. He is not much good at writing letters, he always depended on Gert to do that for him. He has a problem too with his hearing, has a hearing aid but they are no good in crowds, so he does not go to the clubs or hotels very often. Now and again he sees Lloyd Butcher, who like the rest of us has a few aches and pains, but otherwise doing well. Also hears occasionally from Len O'Connor, the last time he rang they were going on a bus tour to the Sunshine Coast. Keep well, old mate, don't take so long to write again.

DICK WAKELY 2/2, Merewether, with a note thanking Max for sending him the back numbers of the Pioneer News and enclosed a cheque for the Treasurer. He is grateful for the time and effort that goes into the Association and sends all his best wishes for the coming year.

MAVIS HALL, daughter of our late Patron, Lilla O'Malley Wood, with a letter to Max and Peg from

her retirement village in Narromine. She is keeping well and does not get to Sydney very often. The country around Narromine has been badly affected by the drought, but the recent rains should bring some relief. Good to hear from you, Mavis, keep well and do keep in touch.

DON ANDERSON 2/1, Merimbula, with a note to say all is well and sends regards to all Pioneers. Wishes to thank all the workers who produce the Pioneer News as he looks forward to each issue.

NEV WOODHAM 2/1, Cleveland, Queensland, with a letter giving the Secretary a change of address, as he has moved into a unit with flat walking distance to the shops, bus and train, also close to bowls and R.S.L. Club. Nev has taken on the Secretary's job at the Redlands R.S.L. Sub-Branch and is still Secretary of ROTA so has quite a bit to keep him out of mischief. The Redlands Services Club is about to be rebuilt and hopefully to be finished by Christmas. Nev has been keeping in touch with Bill Chisholm who has not been very well with lung complications. (Nev and Bill joined up together on 3rd June, 1940.) Bill and Joyce will celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on the 2nd March — heartfelt congratulations to you both for the "big day". Good to hear from you, Nev.

COL MITCHELL 2/2, Surry Hills, Victoria, with, as he says, a belated cheque to funds. He enjoys reading the News and George Murphy, Secretary of the Victoria 2/2nds keeps him posted on all matters of importance. Says it is good to read the doings of his diminishing circle of friends — diminishing not from disagreement but from passing years. Many thanks for your cheque, Col.

NORM LE CORNU 2/2, Nollamara, Western Australia, with a change of address and a donation to funds. Norm was sorry to hear of the passing of Bob Lee — says he had lunch with Bob and Joan when they visited the West. He always looks forward to the Pioneer News and sends his best wishes.

ROY MCGREGOR 2/2, Rothbury, with the news that he and Marion are well, despite passage of time. The number of "greats" is steadily increasing, making family gatherings somewhat on the numerous side. Sends his regards to all and many thanks to all those whose efforts bring them the Pioneer News. Best wishes, Roy, and thanks for the donation.

GIL SHORT 2/2, Caringbah, with his sub and apologies for his non-attendance at the Anzac Reunion this year. Has had a bad year with illness and cannot walk very far. He also mentions that he had been to visit Max Law who is still in John Paul Village. Hope 1996 will be kinder to you, Gil.

• That concludes the Mail Bag for this issue. Once again, Peg, sorry about the writing (you're forgiven Bob seeing you are such a nice bloke), there's not much else to say. Nothing much doing regards football — I'll probably get a bit more enthusiastic as it progresses. Lots of good wishes and keep sober. **LAKEY**

BILL ROBERTSON—90 YEARS

On Monday, 20th November, 1995, Pioneers and ladies attended a luncheon at the Combined Services Club to celebrate the 90th birthday of Bill Robertson.

The gathering, organised by Bill Lewis, Allan McInnes and Ian Willmore, was a very happy and enjoyable one and all in attendance voted it a huge success.

Allan McInnes was Master of Ceremonies and on behalf of all Pioneers he wished Bill a very happy birthday and presented him with a 2/2nd Pioneer plaque made by Allan Olson of South Australia and a framed photo of the Kapooka Chapel Door from Ian Willmore. A lovely sheaf of flowers was presented to Bill's wife Toss.

Telegrams of congratulations from the Government were read to the gathering as were birthday cards from various people and organisations including one from the Association on behalf of all members and from George Murphy on behalf of all 2/2nd Pioneers in Victoria.

Bill served with both units — in Tobruk with the 2/1sts and was transferred, after returning from the Middle East, to the 2/2nd Pioneers when they were reformed at the Kapooka Army Camp.

Congratulations Bill on having reached your 90th year and all Pioneers wish you well.

SICK PARADE

ROY LEVY 2/2 was in Strathfield Private Hospital in December for a triple by-pass operation and is home now, and going along quite well.

TED WILCOX 2/1 spent a few days for treatment in December at Port Kembla Hospital.

ALBERT PITT-OWEN, Padre of 2/1, has been having leg problems of late and not getting around as well as he likes. He was visited in December by Cyril and Doris Amies.

BILL JOLLIE 2/1 spent time in Canberra Hospital after suffering a slight stroke, but fortunately he has recovered, and is now waiting for an operation on his knee.

MAX LAW 2/1 is still in the John Paul Nursing Home at Heathcote and was recently visited by Bill Tasker, Ron Callaghan, Peg and Max Herron. George Nichols visits Max every Sunday, but has been in hospital himself in January.

JACK TOOKER 2/1 had a fall at the local shopping centre in January and fractured a bone in his right leg so is laid up for a while. He was visited by Steve Clarke.

BOB GINNANE 2/2 was in Campbelltown Hospital in February for a knee replacement and was visited by Roy Levy and Don Crawford. At the time of writing Bob was convalescing at home under the watchful eye of wife Nell.

WAGGA WAGGA REUNION

**TUESDAY 1st AND
WEDNESDAY 2nd OCTOBER, 1996**

In response to many requests, another reunion has been arranged for Wagga Wagga in October.

Details are as follows:

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1:

Arrive Wagga Wagga.
Dinner at R.S.L. Club 6.00 p.m.
Cost of dinner plus incidental expenses \$25.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2:

Morning Service at Kapooka Soldiers' Chapel.
Lunch — Barbecue at Uranquinty Hotel — 12.00 noon.
Cost about \$12.50 per head.
Evening — Buffet meal at R.S.L. Club at member's cost.

ACCOMMODATION:

Members to arrange own accommodation. There are many motels and a caravan park. CLUB, ASTOR and PARK Motels provided a 10% discount in 1994, and you should discuss this when booking.

TRANSPORT:

A bus will be available to Kapooka and Uranquinty and return to Wagga, or you can take your own vehicle. (But beware the breathalyser.)

BOOKING FEE:

\$12.50 per person, payable with application. (For catering and other arrangements we need to know numbers as soon as possible.) Make cheques, etc., payable to IAN WILLMORE, P.O. Box 387, Vaucluse, N.S.W. 2030.

These details will be confirmed, and any changes notified in the July issue of Pioneer News.

NARRABEEN BARBECUE

On Monday, 14th December, 1995, a barbecue was organised by the Rats of Tobruk Association for their members at the Narrabeen War Veterans Home.

Resident 2/1st Pioneers in attendance were Joe Barker, Sid Kent and Albert Brown, while visiting Pioneers were Vic Whiteley, Peg and Max Herron, Marj and Jack Kerslake, Roy Jardine, Cec Peak, Val and Jack Pearce.

The meal of sausages, rissoles and salad was an excellent one and thoroughly enjoyed by all. The amber liquid and soft drinks flowed quite freely, and all members enjoyed their chatter about present doings as well as the past.

The Executive and Committee of the Rats of Tobruk Association have been thanked for the effort and money they put into the preparation and serving of the barbecue.

NEWCASTLE CUP — 1936

By JACK GRIFFITHS 2/1

Each year I see Tom Wallace 2/1 at the Newcastle Cup but not so September, 1995, as I was in hospital and Tom did not attend because he slipped on his back step and broke his foot, two days before. Reporting on this brought to my mind an interesting anniversary which took place recently.

Tom rode the winner of the Newcastle Cup in 1936 and the horse was "Tapestry" which started at 8/1. At the time, Tom was apprenticed as a jockey to Don Lewis from Sydney who was one of the top trainers of that period and was a legend as far as trainers are concerned. The percentage payment for the winning ride was eighteen pounds (old money). Eat your heart out Mick Dittman and company.

Tom has been made an Honorary Member of the Newcastle Jockey Club and was their guest at a Pre-Cup Luncheon, before he broke his foot. This year will be a big one for him as it will be the 60th Anniversary. Tom now lives at Wallsend and had two brothers with him in the 2/1st Pioneers — Jack, who lived at Belmont and Len, who hailed from Riverstone, and regrettably both are deceased.

B Coy 2/1st — BALIKPAPAN

Ron Murray 2/1, of Hill End, approached the Secretary last year to say he had a Japanese flag which had been autographed by his mates in B Company while at Balikpapan with the suggestion he would present it to the Singleton Army Museum.

This follows upon our request in the 1994 issue of Pioneer News for Pioneer memorabilia needed at the museum. Many thanks Ron for your list of names of the B Company 2/1st Pioneers which appear on the flag, as follows: L. R. Andrew, Dick Beros, Clem Bunter, Norm Bouffler, Ron Callaghan, D. W. Crooks, Ron Coyte, Ross Dagger, A. E. Dean, A. M. Emerson, J. T. Evans, B. Fitzgerald, John Gibson, A. Gillard, R. A. Hamblion, R. Hobley, Ron Irwin, E. Jenson, P. J. Leahy, D. E. Lewis, W. J. McKibbin, W. Morrow, T. Nicholls, J. L. Osborne, A. H. Parrott, F. A. Pracy, V. Royle, L. Seymoor, A. E. Stockwell, G. Swain, D. J. Venville, T. Wall, D. Watson, R. C. Watson, R. L. Murray.

LAST POST

— "We Will Remember Them"

JAMES JACKSON 2/2, of Port Kembla, passed away peacefully in Port Kembla Hospital on 26th June, 1995, after a long illness. His wife, Mary, wrote and gave us the details and passed on thanks for sending the Pioneer News to James, who looked forward to receiving each issue and catching up on all the news. To all the family we extend our sincere sympathy.

ALLAN STUTCHBURY 2/1, of Hornsby, passed away on 26th October, 1995, and because it was a private funeral we were not represented. We thank brother Frank, who was also in the unit, for the details.

JACK "BLUEY" MOXEY 2/1, of Miranda, passed away on 26th October, 1995, at Calvary Hospital at the age of 78 years, after a sudden heart attack. The funeral service was attended by Steve Clarke, Vic Whiteley, Max Herron and Bill Tasker, who gave an excellent Eulogy on Jack's life with the 2/1st Pioneers. The R.S.L. Poppy Service was given by Ed Knight, Welfare Officer of Miranda R.S.L. to which Jack belonged.

Steve Clarke was Platoon Commander of 12 Platoon, B Company, when Jack was the Platoon Sergeant, and over the years had always asked Jack how he was faring with his rose growing, as he had taken out a lot of prizes, even at the Easter Show.

Bill Tasker extended to wife Joan and family the sincere sympathy of all Pioneers.

BETTY HARRIS, of Aberdeen and wife of Clive 2/1st, passed away on 7th January after a very short illness. It came as a very big shock to Clive and his family and they are missing her terribly. Betty and Clive came down to the March on 12th August, 1995, and joined us at the Occidental Hotel afterwards and she was in good health and spirits, with full intention of attending the Lismore Reunion.

A letter of sympathy has been sent to Clive, expressing our sympathy to all the family.

BILL WRIGHT 2/1, of Wyoming, passed away on 24th January at the age of 81 years and the funeral service was held at Palmdale Crematorium and conducted by Reverend Colin Spragg with the Poppy Service and Eulogy given by President R. Sturgeon of the Gosford R.S.L. Sub-Branch. The Chapel was packed with Bill's friends.

Pioneers in attendance were Sam Lewis, Jack Coates and Harry Hamer, who was kind enough to act as driver to Jack.

Bill served in B Company, 13 Platoon, in the Middle East, New Guinea and Balikpapan, where he was in the patrol that released the Indian Prisoners of War.

Sam Lewis extended the Association's sympathy to Bill's two sons and daughter.

FRED "YORKIE" SCANES 2/1, of Cooma, passed away in January at the age of 79 years. Our sympathy is extended to sons Robert, Phillip and families.

FRED MATTHEWS 2/2, of Whalan, passed away on 17th February while in hospital. The funeral was at Pinegrove Cemetery. Bill Tasker extended sincere sympathy to the family of three sons and daughter.

"MUFTI", Victoria, following supplied by Eric Causer of Macarthur: T. Ryan, Morwell 2/1; W. G. Staples, Preston 2/2; H. J. White, Reservoir 2/2; J. R. Gluyas, Altona 2/2.

"REVEILLE" issue of November-December, 1995, with the following: NX24998 — A. J. Cameron 2/1; NX69492 — G. Hemmings 2/1; NX88550 — E. J. McCourt 2/1; NX77820 — L. S. Spruce 2/2; VX71630 — J. R. Swanson 2/2; NX53024 — A. K. Weymark 2/1; NX88361 — T. R. Bye 2/2; NX18821 — W. N. Saunders 2/1.

2/1st PIONEER BAND MACE

The Committee are grateful to Jim Hall 2/1, of Kyogle, for donating the Band Mace to the Association and it is their intention to have it formally handed over by Ann, daughter of Jim, to Patron John Gilchrist prior to the Wreath Laying Service on Wednesday, 24th April.

Each year the Mace will be paraded in the march to the Cenotaph at the Wreath Laying Service in memory of all Band members who paid the Supreme Sacrifice — thank you Jim Hall.

CUT OUT — Fill in particulars - WAGGA REUNION

Surname:

Known Name:

Ladies Name: Phone: Unit:

Address:

TICK: Dinner ☐ Kapooka Service ☐ Uranquinty Barbecue ☐

Farewell Buffet ☐ Kapooka/Uranquinty Trip: Bus ☐ Own Car ☐

Booking Fee: \$12.50 per person enclosed.

Payable to Ian Willmore — NOT the Association

P.O. Box 387, Vaucluse, N.S.W. 2030

PIONEER NEWS

Phone: 9759 5491 Official Organ of 2/1 and 2/2 PIONEER BATTALIONS ASSOCIATION Per Annum: \$5

Registered under the Charitable Collections Act, 1934-41 — Certificate No. 10462

Printed by Principal Press, 19 Grey Street, Carlton

Correspondence: MAX HERRON, Hon. Sec., 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Bn. Assoc., 3 Enoggera Road, Beverly Hills 2209

Treasurer: VIC WHITELEY

Editors: R. LAKE and M. HERRON

President: ALLAN McINNES

Vol. 41, No. 2

JULY, 1996

Welfare: BILL TASKER, phone 9718 6658

1996 PIONEER ANZAC FUNCTIONS

WREATH LAYING SERVICE

On 24th April, 14 Pioneers and eight ladies attended the Wreath Laying Service at the Cenotaph, with Bill Tasker doing the job as Marshal. Prior to the commencement Ann Healey, daughter of Jim Hall 2/1, presented Patron John Gilchrist with the 2/1st Band Mace on behalf of her father. In reply John thanked Ann for the presentation and paid tribute to Jim who had looked after the Mace for so many years.

The Unit Banners were carried by Roy Jardine 2/1 and Bert Neasbey 2/2. The 2/1st Band Mace was proudly carried out in front by Jack Tooker. The wreaths were placed on the Cenotaph by John Gilchrist representing the Association and Ann Healey on behalf of the Ladies. The Bugle Calls were carried out by our ever faithful Aub Brasier, after John Gilchrist had recited the Ode to the Fallen — a very moving service.

ANZAC DAY MARCH

Once again a nice sunny day with a bigger crowd than ever lining the Sydney streets. Jack Tooker marshalled the 2/1st with 62 in attendance and Russ Harrison marshalled the 2/2nds with 32 in attendance. Leaders of 2/1 was John Gilchrist and 2/2 was Jack Allison. Banner Bearers were 2/1 Tim Lloyd and 2/2 Andrew O'Neill. The Australian flags were proudly carried by Ray Law 2/1 and Mark Neasbey 2/2.

Once again the 2/1 were led by the 60 strong City of Sydney Youth Band and they were terrific — some members saying they kept going the full distance only because of the band. The 2/2nds are still trying each year to line up a brass band.

ANZAC DAY REUNION

The Reunion at the Occidental Hotel saw an attendance of 109 members including minders, and the hotel staff are to be congratulated on their excellent service. The meal, at \$12 per head, was really good and enjoyed by all. A letter of thanks has been sent to the hotel, also making a booking for 1997. Apologies for non attendance were received from Ken Oliver, Bill Jollie, George Walker, Jack Lammerton and George Tolmie.

REUNION TABLE TALK — by Russ Harrison

Vic Whiteley, assisted by Doug Shearston and Russ Harrison collected the subscriptions and as usual the members were very generous. Collection of lunch fee, and handing out of name tags were in the capable hands of Olive Finlay, David Herron, Ray Law, Geoff Finlay and Bob Lake. The official proceedings were kept to a minimum by John Gilchrist, who acted as Chairman in the absence of Bill Jollie. John's address was appreciated and received generous applause.

Jack Stewart, from Perth, travelled the longest distance and Queensland visitors included John Hunt, Don Barraclough, Bert Beasley and Phil Cramsie. Long distance travellers were Alec George, Ron Murray, Ted Wilcox in a wheelchair with son as minder, Jack Griffiths, Jim Miller, John Coates and Harry Hamer.

Representing the N.S.W. North area was Ken Wilson, Nev O'Connor, Snowy Dodd, Kevin Rayward, Wal Coe, Tom Morgan, Ossie Carter, while Pat Egan travelled from Canberra. It was pleasing to see Ivor Garnon at table five in earnest conversation with Jack Kerslake seated alongside and also in attendance was Jack Pearce and Bill Tasker who had the misfortune to have his car stolen the night before while attending the Wreath Laying Service.

At table seven were a group of "D" Company chaps — Jim Gray, Bill Hodges, Pat Murphy and son Bill, who were in earnest conversation with ex "D" Company Max Herron, while at table two were Ian Willmore, Bill Lewis, Jack Henderson, Garry Iredale, Bert and Mark Neasbey, Vince Longmore, John McKnight, Don Crawford and Jack Allison. Roy Levy was there too, with tales

of high drama during his visit to Lismore. Visitors from the South at table one were Frank Locane, Matt Elliott, Tib Martin and Tom Wood. Bill Robertson was roaming from table to table doing his rounds.

Thanks to early table allocations by Vice President Gordon Finlay, everyone was comfortably seated and even had room to fit in. As the Reunion drew to a close, the pipers and drummers of Sydney Thistle Band entertained the assembly with a selection of marches, airs and laments. Those without Scottish blood in their veins thought it would have been better for the band to have performed at Gosford, but those with the blood of Highlanders surging, thought the programme was far too short. There was general agreement that it was a very good performance.

ASSOC. PRESIDENT RESIGNS

At the Committee Meeting in March Bill Jollie found it necessary to resign as President of the Association because of health problems.

Bill was elected President at the Annual Meeting in April, 1988, and then in November, 1988, he was presented with his Life Membership Award. In those eight years he has presided at all meetings as well as acting as Chairman at all Country Reunions. In addition to these tasks he has acted as Marshal at each Anzac Day March for the 2/1st. Then at the Anzac Day Reunion Dinner he has taken on the role of Chairman and ensured everything ran smoothly.

For three years up to 1987 Bill assisted in the writing up of the history of the 2/1st Pioneers for their book "The Pioneers" and spent a lot of time with Gordon Osborn, Editor, at the War Memorial in Canberra, collecting data from the Unit diaries.

In a letter to Bill, on behalf of the Executive and Committee, the Secretary stated Bill had been a most conscientious President as well as a good friend to all Pioneers, and is to be heartily thanked for the assistance and advice readily given at all times — all Pioneers Bill, wish you well and thank you for a job well done.

JACK GRIFFITHS — OAM

With the announcement of the Queen's Birthday Honours it was pleasing to see the name of Jack Griffiths 2/1 as a recipient of the Order of Australia Medal.

According to an article in the Newcastle Herald, sent to us by Jack Bertram, it came as a complete surprise to Jack when he was told he had been nominated.

His dedication to the Rats of Tobruk Association, Newcastle Branch, since 1947 and of recent years being President of the Branch was a contributing factor in Jack being awarded the OAM as well as his services to the welfare of veterans.

In addition Jack has also served as President of the Gallipoli Legion Club since 1981 and has been on the Club's Executive for 40 years. He was the first President of the Club who was not a Gallipoli veteran.

As Chairman of the Newcastle Australia Remembers Committee Jack played a key role in organising the end of World War II 50th anniversary celebrations last year.

For the past ten years Jack has been Vice President of our Association and in 1990 he was awarded Life Membership in recognition of his outstanding service to the Association for taking on the role of Master of Ceremonies at all our Country Reunions.

On behalf of the Executive of our Association a letter of congratulations has been sent to Jack as all Pioneers will agree he is a very worthy recipient. Congratulations Jack from all Pioneers.

PIONEER BRANCH REPORTS

NSW NTH. COAST BRANCH — by Ken Wilson

The Annual General Meeting of this Branch will be held on Sunday, 25th August, at 10.30 a.m., Lismore R.S.L. Club, and a cordial welcome is extended to all Pioneers. Main points on the agenda will be election of Office Bearers and to finalise arrangements for a Reunion to be held in Lismore, August 1997.

In May, 13 members had a dinner at the Ballina Bowling Club and there was another get-together in Lismore on 6th July.

Betty and Ossie Carter were both on the sick list recently but now on the mend. Charles Richardson went into Greenslopes Hospital for a back operation on 28th May.

WESTERN AUST. BRANCH — by Joy Preedy

First of all, sincere apologies for not sending out a news sheet after our November meeting — we were both on the sick list. Many thanks to the following who were in attendance and made donations — J. Outridge, A. Cousins, W. Sutton, N. Macpherson, D. Hobley, R. Sefton, N. Le Cornu, J. Monger, J. Stewart, J. Murray and T. Lyon.

We received an invitation to the opening of the new Army Museum in Fremantle and as we were unable to attend we thank Jack Stewart for representing the Association.

We went to the opening of the Hall and Garden of Remembrance behind the Chapel at Hollywood Private Hospital, where Len had major surgery.

The March meeting saw in attendance Jack and Joan Monger, Norma and Bob Sefton, John and Ethel McDougall, Norm Le Cornu, Neil Macpherson and Hugh Sorley. Apology from Jack Stewart. Many thanks to Neil for taking us to and from town, and also thanks to all those people who sent cards and rang when Len was sick — much appreciated.

We have sent a donation of \$25 to the Army Museum. In the "West Australian" before the elections there was a photo of four Kalgoorlie people, and one of them was Fred "Pee Wee" Craig who looks very fit. Do you ride the bike you are holding Fred?

John Jeffery of Yea, Victoria, wrote to thank Len for some information, and congratulations John on your good work for Legacy and R.S.L.

At our meeting on 19th July, Jack Monger and Norm Le Cornu celebrated their birthday. Len joins me in sending kind regards to all Pioneers.

OFFICE BEARERS 1996

At the Annual General Meeting held at Redfern R.S.L. Club on 7th June the following Office Bearers were elected for 1996.

President: Allan McInnes. **Patrons:** John Gilchrist 2/1 and John Williams 2/2.

Vice Presidents: Bill Robertson, Gordon Finlay, Russ Harrison and Jack Tooker.

Secretary: Max Herron. **Assistant Secretary:** George Walker. **Treasurer:** Vic Whiteley. **Welfare Officer:** Bill Tasker. **Reporter:** Russ Harrison. **Editors:** Max Herron and Bob Lake. **Trustee:** Tom Crossman.

To the new faces on the Executive — Allan McInnes, Russ Harrison and Jack Tooker, we say thank you for accepting your nominations.

We also welcome on to the Committee, new members Jack Allison and Don Crawford.

SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

With subscriptions 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, Honorary Secretary, 3 Enoggera Road, Beverly Hills, N.S.W. 2209.

MAIL BAG

Editor: BOB LAKE

Issue number two of Mail Bag for this year, 1996, and just let me boast a little, at the time of going to press, Manly is on the top of the ladder with 22 points, with only one loss for the season.

REG ARMSTRONG 2/2, Coonabarabran, with a welcome letter and a change of address to Baradine. After suffering a couple of blackouts earlier in the year, Reg was advised by the doctor not to drive, so surrendered his licence. However, after attending the doctor regularly, his licence has now been re-issued. Good to have "wheels" again, Reg. He and Coralie have sold their big property in Coona and bought a small two bedroom granny flat in Baradine, with no more weeding the garden and mowing the lawns. Many thanks for the donation, Reg, and hope you both settle down in your new home. Closes with best wishes to all.

ROBERT BALLY 2/1, Balga, Western Australia, with a cheque for the News and said he was sorry to hear Bill Jollie had not been in the best of health. Bob says he does not see many of the blokes in W.A. and his private life does not correspond with the doings of the W.A. Branch. However, does enjoy the News and all the tit bits in it.

ALBY BARTON 2/1, Gulgong, with his best wishes for Anzac Day and a cheque to keep the News going. Doubts whether he will be marching in the local Gulgong parade this year as the old legs are not the best. Was pleased to receive the last issue of the News, especially the write-up from Fred Ratcliffe about his dad, Jack. Alby knew Jack well and still visits his wife, Rose. She had suffered a stroke in April, 1996, and latest reports were that she was improving. Closes with best wishes from Gwen and himself and lots of good health in 1996.

DICK BLAKENEY 2/1, Narrabeen, with a sub for the Treasurer and a few notes on Pioneers at the War Vets Village. Sid Kent is well and has gone to Canberra to visit relatives and sends his best for Anzac Day. Joe Barker was in good health at the time Dick wrote, but has since passed away. Albert Brown engaged in musical activities and enjoys the concerts and outings. He was at the March and Reunion. Dick sends his congratulations on another fine Reunion function and said it was a credit to all concerned. Thanks, Dick, for your kind remarks, and all the best for 1996.

PHIL BARNETT 2/2, Alstonville, with his annual subs and comments that he was pleased to see Bill Robertson made 90 — years of good living no doubt. Sends kindest regards to all those who keep the Association going.

MAVIS BLANCH, Beaudesert, widow of Joe 2/1, with a newsy letter and a cheque for Vic. Says it was good to see so many old friends turn up for the Lismore Reunion and enjoy one another's company. Mavis has just returned from a Probus trip to Port Macquarie and is amazed how the town has grown in latter years, over 26,000 people there now and lots of Victorians retiring there. Mavis comments on the football season and quotes "Bob can give a cheer or two for Manly." Have already done that, Mavis, and they are doing well. Hope they can keep it up. Closes with best wishes to all and hope the "boys" have a great Anzac Day.

JACK BRYANT 2/1, Coraki, with a welcome donation to funds and the news that he and Aileen are keeping well. He is still able to roll a bowl and hold a middy. Hopes to see a lot of us in Wagga in October if all goes well. Closes with "note the address, have been here 17 years so about time to change it." Only a visitor, Jack, Lakes have been at this address for 40 years, probably die from there too. All the best.

COLIN CAMPBELL 2/1, Campbelltown, per pen of wife Jean, with a sub for the News and says that Colin will not be able to attend the Reunion again this year. He gets up in a wheelchair now and again, but even to get in and out of same is a struggle. Wishes all a good Anzac Day. Kindest regards to you both — hope things will improve.

BRUCE CHAMBERS 2/1, Turramurra, with a welcome cheque to Vic and his best wishes to Lakey and Bill Jollie. Bruce had a good Anzac Day — turned 77 on the day — and still able to play golf twice a week. Good for you, Bruce, hope you are able to keep it up for many years to come.

JACK COATES 2/1, Umina, with a long newsy letter, as usual, and a donation to funds. Also sent along a copy of "The Rats Remain" for Association archives — Jack's tribute to Greg Norris, killed during the Siege of Tobruk — for which we thank you Jack. (Many thanks also, Jack, for stamps and first day covers, very much appreciated — Peg.) Jack has had another trip to hospital for an op. for a shoulder problem and it will be at least four to six months healing, still in a sling and giving the pain killers a hammering. Still he hopes to make the 80 not out next February. He and Lex have their youngest grand-daughter Tamara from Narrabri staying with them. She is doing a nursing course in North Sydney and commutes to Sydney each day. Jack says Lex is a tower of strength with all his problems. Both he and Lex hope to make Wagga in October all going well and look forward to catching up with the "gang" again. Jack has not seen anyone from his area lately, but says "Bluey" Miller and Harry Hamer were O.K. as far as he knew. Also was glad to hear the "Prince of Sar-Majors" Harry Spreadborough was still going strong. Keep well, Jack, and once again many thanks for the book. Hope to see you both in Wagga. Kindest regards.

ALBERT DEAN 2/1, Shepparton, with a cheque for funds and the news that Anzac Day was very quiet for him as his wife, Kathleen, was recovering from a back operation and he was number 1 cook and carer. Was able to attend the Dawn Service however. Sends his best wishes to all Pioneers and we hope your good wife is now well on the road to better health.

JOHN DOWD 2/2, Wagga, per pen of wife Daph, with a letter and newspaper clipping of all the doings at Wagga on Anzac Day. He and Jack Morgan travelled by VAD vehicles, carrying veterans no longer able to march. Also says many thanks for the News, which Daph reads to him, and he enjoys it very much. Enclosed a cheque for the Treasurer and wishes everyone good health in the coming year.

JOHN FLOOD 2/1, Penrith, with an apology for non-attendance on Anzac Day but the memories will be flooding back. He really appreciates the work the Association is doing in publishing the "News" and wishes us well for the big day. Thanks for the sub, John, and our best wishes.

JACK FRENCH 2/2, Victoria, with a change of address, still in Victoria, and a donation to funds. Says it's good to receive news of the various functions and old friends and says to keep up the good work. Change of address noted, Jack, and thanks for your good wishes.

STAN GOULSTON 2/1, with a note to John Tooker and a copy of an article in Sydney Legacy Bulletin re Legacy widows and Anzac Day. Each year the City Council allocates an area in George Street for 200 Legacy widows and each year these women and some children gather to cheer the marchers, especially the units in which their late husbands or fathers served. Over the past few years, the police and fire brigade units have been paying the widows a compliment by issuing an "eyes right" salute as they pass the Legacy Widows Banner, and Stan suggests that we could follow suit. This will be brought to our Committee, Stan, and we thank you for your kind thought.

JACK GRIFFITHS 2/1, Mayfield, with a letter to Max telling us that he had found another Pioneer, Roy Andrews, and says "if there is any reward for his effort you can consider it donated back to Association funds." Roy wrote to Griffio because of an article in the Newcastle Herald on the ROTA Day in Newcastle. He recognised Jack from the photo in the paper and was able to make contact. There was also a very good photo of Jack Pearce in the paper — he and wife Val had driven up from Sydney to represent the N.S.W. Branch of ROTA. Roy was only a youngster of 18 in Tobruk and in D Company. After the Battalion came home on the "Westpoint", Roy left the Unit and finished up as a paratrooper. After the war he did a rehabilitation course and became a civil engineer, eventually landing in Muswellbrook as manager of Bayswater Colliery. His name has been entered on the mail list for future copies.

The museum are out of luck in regard to our Battalion history, Jack, as there are no more copies available. Glad to hear your health is on the improve and it was good to see you on Anzac Day. Our best wishes to Esme.

PAT GAVIN Secretary of 2/1st Anti-Tank Regiment Association, sent along a copy of a letter received from Dorrie Long, widow of Bob 2/1, telling of Bob's meeting in Palestine on Christmas Day, 1940, with Dorrie's brother Sergeant Arthur Light of 2/3rd Anti-Tank. It was the only time their paths crossed before both returned to Australia. Many thanks, Pat, for the news, we do hear from Dorrie now and again and good to see she is still keeping well.

ERN JAMISON 2/1, Gladesville, with a cheque for the Treasurer, per pen of wife Jean, and the news that Ern is O.K. again after a stint in hospital. He had stones in the bladder and Ern said he must have swallowed all the sand in the Western Desert to have stones that big, or the stones from that bloody quarry. Ern sends a special hello to Jack Claypole and hopes he is keeping well. Also many thanks to the Committee for the good work they do to keep members in touch. How about getting someone to bring you along to the Anzac Reunion next year, Ern. There's a lift at the hotel and quite a lot of the "old boys" bring a minder. We can assure you of a good day.

JACK KEMPENICH 2/1, Fingal Bay, per pen of wife Maisie, with a newsy letter as usual. They could not make the Lismore Reunion because of Maisie's hip and leg trouble, but hopes they may be able to make the 1997 show. Thanks May and Cec Sloggett for their kind wishes and hopes to meet up again one day. Both are always pleased to get the paper and to read the news, good and sad, and are really grateful to those who keep it coming. Lakey thanks you Mavis for good wishes for the Sea Eagles, on the top of the table at the moment, so can't do better than that. Both send their best wishes to all the "boys" for Anzac Day — those who can and those who can't get to the march — and it's good to see it being acknowledged more by the younger folk these days. All the best to you both — keep fit and good fishing, Jack.

JUNE KERR, Narrabeen, widow of Ken 2/1, with a cheque for the Treasurer and many thanks to Max for sending her back-copies of Pioneer News. June served with 2/9 A.G.H. in Morotai and now lives in the Connie Fall Hostel at the R.S.L. Village in Narrabeen. Keep well, June, and best wishes.

FRED KILLEN 2/1, Warners Bay, with a donation to funds and the news that he has been on the sick list after a heart operation. Has slowed him down a bit, but O.K. again now. Not much to write about, but looks forward to the News and wishes everyone the best of health.

KIM LATHAM, Elanor Heights, daughter of the late Jack Howie 2/2, with a letter thanking us for the News. Often sees the names of some of the men she recalled her father speaking of. Thanks for your donation, Kim, and good to hear from you.

NELL LAUGHREN, widow of Pat 2/1, Nambour, with a cheque for funds and says time is spinning fast for her at 80. Would have loved to have been able to attend the Lismore gathering as she spent most of her youth at nearby Bonalbo — names and places very dear to her. Nell doesn't drive anymore and doesn't feel safe travelling alone. Sends her very best wishes to all for Anzac Day and will be with us all in spirit — time brings lots of memories and those who have passed on feel so near and dear. Our best wishes, Nell, good to hear from you again — keep well.

JACK MCGREGOR 2/2, Shortland, with a donation and says he and Dot are giving the "late" seventies a pretty hard nudge. Was pleased to read the report of the Lismore Reunion and to see some names he hasn't seen for a while. Sends his best wishes to all for a great Anzac Day.

BOB McTAGGART 2/1, Queensland, per pen of daughter Diana, with a cheque for funds and the news that her dad has been staying with her for a couple of months owing to Bob's ill health. Bob hopes to get back to Rockhampton shortly with (as he says) his delayed wings. The paper will be sent care of your daughter as asked, Bob, old mate.

JACK MORGAN 2/2, Wagga, with a few dollars for the News and to say how he and Evelyn enjoyed the Lismore Reunion. Also had a good Anzac Day in Wagga, a large number marching and good crowds lining the streets. Dudley Staniforth didn't make it to the march, had car trouble just as he was ready to leave, but Jack and John Dowd attended the march and the dinner at the R.S.L. Club. Hope to see you at the Reunion in October.

RON MORLEY 2/1, Victoria, with a welcome sub and the news that he has not been in the best of health the last few years. Had an operation for bowel cancer, gall bladder removed and has just had a triple by-pass, so hopefully Ron your health may improve this year. Your good wishes passed on to all and take care.

HARRY MOWBRAY 2/1, Queensland, at the moment holidaying overseas with wife Dot. We received a card from California — Harry says 109 degree heat and too hot to move. They spent two days in Hong Kong, before going on to Wales, Cheshire and Edinburgh (cold as charity) and then on to California for a month. They were going for a trip to Las Vegas for a few days and hoped to win a fortune (expecting is half the fun). Sends best wishes to all from he and Dot.

WAL PAGE 2/1, Cudgen, with a cheque for the Treasurer and best wishes for Anzac Day. Wishes he could be down for the day, but just a little too far to travel. All the best, Wal.

BERN REINERS 2/1, Corryong, with some cash for funds and a request for a Front Line medal. This has been fixed up, Bern, and pleased to see it arrived safely. As reported elsewhere in the paper, Bern has been in Melbourne for brain surgery and at time of going to press was still there having radiotherapy. Our good wishes, Bern, our thoughts are with you, and love to Mona.

ERIC REYNOLDS 2/1, Macksville, with the news that he and Joyce have decided not to move from their home in Macksville, as they had intended. After a lot of thought and talk, they called the idea off. They have been there for 20 years, so reckons too old now (Eric is 81) to make a move. Wise move, old mate, it's not as easy as when you are younger. Glad you enjoyed Anzac Day, even if quiet. All the best to you and Joyce.

RAY SMITH 2/1, Glen Iris, with two letters seeking information on the Battalion, which he joined in 1944 on the Tablelands before going to Balikpapan. Ray said he realised he knew very little of the history of the Unit and would like to know more of the Battalion's campaigns. Max has been in touch with you, Ray, and we are sure you will find the information he sent you of great interest. Good to hear from you after so many years and thanks for the donation, it all helps to keep the News alive.

BONNIE SNUDDEN, widow of Cec 2/2, Dubbo, with a thank you for the News which she receives regularly and keeps her in touch with old friends. Bonnie resides in a Legacy Village in Dubbo and tells of the legattees of her village who have major surgery and as soon as they are on their feet up and into their jobs. Thanks for your donation, Bonnie, and all the best for the coming year.

MICK TASSELL 2/1, Hay, with his usual newsy letter and a cheque towards the paper. Thanks, Mick, you have made our day — all those pages of writing must give you writer's cramp.

GEORGE TOLMIE 2/1, Canley Heights, with a letter of apology for non-attendance on Anzac Day, which he spent visiting his old mate Jack Lammerton who has not been well the last few years. George was shocked to read of the passing of "Yorkie" Scanes — in every way a thorough gentleman. Also hopes good mate George Walker is fit and well again and that Jimmie Gray tries to behave himself. Closes with best wishes to all of both units of our Association.

JOYCE WALKER, wife of George 2/1, Culburra, with a note of thanks to all Pioneers and their wives who have made calls about her health in the last months. Things are going better for her the last few weeks and she and George hope to be well enough to attend the Wagga Reunion in October.

TOM WALLACE 2/1, Rankin Park, encloses a cheque for the Treasurer and will send some more when he backs a winner. He also mentions that he was made an Honorary Member of the Newcastle Jockey Club mainly through the efforts

of Jack Griffiths, who kept reminding the Club that Tom had ridden a Cup winner and was still alive. Tom thinks it was granted to him mainly to keep Griffo quiet (a good bloke our Jack). Says Jack admits to slowing down since his brush with the Grim Reaper, although as Tom says Griffo would still finish in front of some of the horses he backs. A good mate — we couldn't agree with you more.

DICK WAKELY 2/2, Merewether, with a donation to funds and best wishes to all Pioneers for good health and happiness. Makes special mention to the Executive Officers for their sterling efforts on behalf of their members. Also pleased to hear Bob Ginnane had his lost medals returned to him courtesy of Sergeant Thewliss of the RAAF and informed Bob if he sent him the sergeant's address he had some memorabilia that may be of interest to him. You will have already received this, Dick, and many thanks for your interest.

RON WEBSTER 2/1, Bass Hill, with a cheque for the Treasurer and kind words for the Committee and their dedication over so many years. Ron had a fall in Pitt Street dislocating his left shoulder, plus a badly swollen left hand, and has been having physio for four months. However, on the mend now and said much to be thankful for. Sends his best wishes to all.

BARBARA WILLIAMS 2/7th A.G.H., Queensland, with a note to say how pleased she was to read the account of Roy Levy's pilgrimage to New Guinea as part of the "Australia Remembers" programme and of the service held on the spot where the "Centaur" was sunk in 1943. Brings back many memories of her life in the services and her marriage to Captain Geoff Williams of 2/1, who has now passed away. Sorry the print can't be enlarged, Barbara, we always have so much news and to enlarge the size of the paper is too costly. Says her old eyes at 83 years young aren't what they used to be. Barbara is involved in researching the effects of the atom bomb in South Australia and on the Monte Bello Islands off the coast of Western Australia, and believes there were hundreds of servicemen and their families who developed cancer and died as a result of radioactivity. No compensation has been paid or any acknowledgement made to them or their relatives. Good luck in your research and our best wishes.

JACK SHARP 2/2, Gooramab, Victoria, with thanks for sending the Pioneer News for so long and apologies for not writing more often. Many thanks Jack for your nice donation to funds — that certainly puts you in front for a few years to come. Jack looks forward to reading of the fellows he knew so well during the war. He was in B Company originally and then A Company in the reformed Unit. He states there are not many 2/2nds in his area now, although originally there were close to 20 in and around Benalla. Occasionally he sees Sam Wright, Eric Hooper, Frank Caulfield, Fred Tubb of Euroa and Stumpy Rae of Violet Town. Sam Wright has not been well since losing his wife some time ago. Jack is in good health and still in the same place from where he joined the Army. He usually attends the 2/2nd Reunion in Melbourne each year. Sends best wishes to all Pioneers.

ROBYN BELL, daughter of Leo Morris 2/1, deceased, contacted the Secretary in July to say she had a wonderful day on Anzac Day — lunch with the "girls" at the Hilton was terrific and then afterwards at the Occidental with her father's mates of the war. She said it was great to talk about the Army days with Sam Lewis, Bob Lake, Vic Whiteley and many others. She had some good photos of the march and at the Occidental so would send them to Sam Lewis and others. Many thanks for your call — it was nice to hear from you.

JOHN COATES 2/1, Umina, with a second letter to tell about a cutting from the news sheet of the 2/3 Battalion — "Chocolate and Green". It mentions of a battle in Korea where Major "Wings" Nichols was detached to the 7th Cavalry. John said it would have been our Harry Nichols who won the M.C. in Tobruk; when on a patrol with "Bluey" Moxey and Phil Pitman and Bluey Evans who was awarded the M.M.

• That concludes the Mail Bag for this issue, not much to tell you from my end. It's always good to hear from you all and I can only say keep sober, good health and happiness.

— LAKEY

ASSOC. NEW PRESIDENT

At the Annual General Meeting on 7th June, Allan McInnes was elected as President of the Association following upon the resignation of past President Bill Jollie.

It has been the policy of the Committee to alternate the position of President between the two Units, so Allan takes on the role for the second time. He was President from 1959, having taken over from Fred Callaway 2/1, and then served a record of fifteen years until 1972 when he moved up to the Gold Coast. He was then succeeded by Mick Dodson 2/1, who served as President for twelve years until his death in 1984. Mick was succeeded by Bob Dixon 2/2, who in turn handed over to Bill Jollie 2/1 in 1988.

Allan was awarded Life Membership of the Association in 1979 after he returned to Sydney from the Gold Coast. Over the years he has not only been a staunch Committee man but he has been involved in other segments of the Association such as delegate to 7th Division Association, and was also on the 2/2 Committee which wrote up the short history of the 2/2 Pioneer Battalion, published in the Pioneer News, 1992 to 1994.

He was also a force behind the 2/2nd Committee which was formed to draw up plans and specifications for the 2/2nd Pioneer colour patch to be engraved in glass on the entrance door of the Kapooka Chapel at the Wagga Army Camp, which was officially opened in October, 1992. In addition he has also been on the Committee which organised the 1993 Wagga Reunion and also the Committee organising the Wagga Reunion this year.

We are grateful to Allan for accepting the position of President and wish him well.

WREATH LAYING 1997

At the Annual General Meeting it was proposed by Max Herron and seconded by Roy Jardine that the time of the Wreath Laying Service on 24th April, 1997, be changed from 7.30 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. It is to be hoped the early start will see a larger attendance at this very important and moving service.

Accordingly a letter has been sent to the Custodian of the Cenotaph applying for the new time slot.

2/1 PIONEER HISTORY

The 2/1st Pioneer Unit history "The Pioneers" was published in 1988 and within two years was sold out, so copies are no longer available.

Of late there have been numerous calls from grandchildren in particular, for a record of their grandfathers role in the war. For this reason, we appeal to anyone out there who has inherited a copy from a deceased member to let us know if they wish to sell it back.

We already have two people who would be willing to pay the cost of the book plus postage.

Contact Max Herron, 3 Enoggera Road, Beverly Hills, N.S.W. 2209; telephone: 9759 5491.

CUSTODIAN 2/2 BANNER

Owing to health problems, Roy Levy has had to relinquish the job of looking after the 2/2nd Banner and arranging the purchase and carriage of the two wreaths for the Wreath Laying Service.

He approached Don Crawford to carry out this task and Don readily agreed to take over. Thank you Don — we appreciate your acceptance.

LAST POST

— "We will Remember Them"

JOE BARKER 2/1, of Narrabeen War Veterans Hostel, passed away on 10th June and the funeral at Northern Suburbs Crematorium on 14th June was attended by Bill Tasker, Vic Whiteley, Albert Brown, Jack Pearce and Roy Jardine. Dee Why R.S.L. carried out the Poppy Service.

"MUFTI", Victoria — following supplied by Eric Causer of Macarthur — E. L. Gray 2/2, Frankston; L. G. Pentland 2/2, Preston; J. C. Skipper 2/2, Cheltenham.

"REVEILLE" issue of April/May with the following: M German 2/1; D. E. Hill 2/2; J. Morrison 2/2; G. H. Topley 2/2.

A TIME TO REMEMBER

These are the official figures of Australian enlistments and casualties, so far as figures are available, in the two World Wars.

FIRST WORLD WAR: 416,809 enlisted in the First AIF (these figures included the Australian Flying Corps who had Army ranks). 324,000 served overseas. Deaths from all causes were 61,720. Wounded (all Services) 155,000. No figures available for RAN enlistments, but 199 died.

SECOND WORLD WAR: There were 691,400 men in the AIF and the Militia. Deaths were 26,097. Wounded were 66,533 (all Services). Deaths were 2,208 in the RAN, 11,061 in the RAAF. Prisoners totalled 8,184 against Germany (265 died), 22,376 against the Japanese, of whom 8,031 died in captivity. There were 45,800 men and 3,100 women in the RAN, 189,700 men and 27,200 women in the RAAF.

(Source: Hansard, House of Representatives, February 1, 1995.) It has been stated that in the Second World War one person of every four (of those able to work or serve) was in either the Armed Services or war production.

WAGGA WAGGA REUNION

**TUESDAY 1st AND
WEDNESDAY 2nd OCTOBER, 1996**

Final details of the Wagga Reunion are as follows:

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1:

6.00 p.m. — Dinner at R.S.L. Club. Cost of dinner plus incidental expenses \$25 per person.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2:

10.30 a.m. — Coach departs R.S.L. Club for Kapooka Army Camp.

11.00 a.m. — Service at Kapooka Soldiers' Chapel.

12 noon — Coach departs Kapooka for Uranquinty.

12.30 p.m. — Barbecue at Uranquinty Hotel. Cost \$12.50 per person.

6.00 p.m. — Buffet meal at R.S.L. Club at member's cost.

ACCOMMODATION:

Members to arrange own accommodation. There are many motels and a caravan park. The CLUB, ASTOR and PARK Motels provided a 10% discount in 1994, and you should discuss this when booking.

TRANSPORT:

A coach leaving from the R.S.L. Club to Kapooka and Uranquinty and return to Wagga, or you can take your own vehicle. (But beware the breathalyser.)

BOOKING FEE:

\$12.50 per person, payable with application. (For catering and other arrangements we need to know numbers as soon as possible.) Make cheques, etc., payable to IAN WILLMORE, P.O. Box 387, Vacluse, N.S.W. 2030.

SICK PARADE

BILL JOLLIE 2/1 was operated on for a knee replacement on 24th April, then later was sent to Lady Davidson Hospital at Turrumurra for therapy. Visited by Marj and Jack Kerslake, Peg and Max Herron, Steve Clarke, Jack Tooker and Russ Harrison.

DAN SPROUSTER 2/1 collapsed on Museum Station after the march on Anzac Day and taken to St. Vincents Hospital. Visited by Frank Gillian and Bill Tasker, then sent home on 29th April.

JACK LAMMERTON 2/1 now confined to a wheelchair so cannot get around much anymore. Visited by George Tolmie on Anzac Day so both sent their apologies for non-attendance at the Reunion. Jack sent regards to all Pioneers.

CEC PEAK 2/1 in hospital in May and although now home is not in good health.

"BLUEY" MILLER 2/1 had a slight stroke in May and spent a few days in Brisbane Waters Hospital.

BERN REINERS 2/1, of Corryong, Victoria, went into Royal Melbourne Hospital for brain surgery in May and was visited by fellow Signal Platoon members Jack Comerford and Eric Causer on numerous occasions. Bern is still in Melbourne for treatment. Best wishes to you Bern and Mona from all Pioneers.

KEN OLIVER 2/1 in hospital for prostate operation in April and apologised for non-attendance on Anzac Day.

COLONEL JOHN WILLIAMS 2/2 spent some time in Lidcombe Hospital in June and was visited by Bill Tasker and Vic Whiteley, who said John looked very fit considering he is now 92 years of age. We thank "Snowy" Anderson of Victoria for letting us know the Colonel was in hospital.

JOHN COATES 2/1 was admitted to Hornsby Hospital in May for an operation on his shoulder and Lex rang to say he is recovering well after the operation, and now at home.

PADRE ALBERT PITT-OWEN 2/1 was in Picton Queen Victoria Hospital in May and was then going into respite care. Many thanks to his wife Peg for keeping us informed.

BROTHERS, BATTLERS AND BASTARDS

This is the title of the book written by Arthur Pearson which is an autobiography of his life from the time he migrated to Australia at the age of 15 years, covering his six years of wartime activities and up to the present era.

He served as an original member with the 2/5th Infantry Battalion in the Western Desert, Greece, Syria, Milne Bay and Wau to Salamua. On his return to Australia he attended an Officers Training Course at Woodside, South Australia, and received his commission as a Lieutenant. He was then posted to the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion and joined "C" Company, in command of 13 Platoon and served at Morotai and Balikpapan.

Readers will find the book of his reminiscences very interesting and fascinating. The book, personally signed, can be obtained at booksellers or by writing to A. E. PEARSON, 6 KANE COURT, MAROOCHYDORE, QLD., enclosing cheque or money order for \$39.95 p.p.

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

It was with regret that I found it necessary at the March Committee Meeting to resign as President. Although reluctant to do so, I found it necessary because of health problems. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Executive and Committee members for the fine support they have given me over my eight years as President.

Since the last Annual Meeting it is sad to read in the Pioneer News that 43 of our members have passed away — this includes those reported in Reville and Mufti. It is pleasing to hear that the recent Wreath Laying Service saw an attendance of 14 Pioneers which shows We Remember Them.

Over the past 12 months we had two Committee Meetings with excellent attendances. The march to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of VP Day was held in Sydney on 12th August with an attendance of 55 members from both Units. This was the first time the two Units marched together and it was a great sight to see the two banners side by side. After the march the Executive had organised a reunion at the Occidental Hotel, where refreshments were served and greatly appreciated by all.

We were fortunate to have two members selected for the pilgrimages to New Guinea and Borneo as part of the VP celebrations. Roy Levy 2/2 made the trip to New Guinea and Allan Olson 2/2, President of the South Australia Branch, flew to Borneo. Both reported a truly wonderful experience.

The recently formed Northern Rivers Branch held a Reunion for both Units at Lismore and Ballina in March, 1996, and they are to be congratulated on a most successful gathering.

It has been reported to me that the 1996 Anzac Day March was very well attended by both Units and that the Reunion Dinner at the Occidental Hotel was most successful with an attendance of 109 members. Because I was in hospital for a knee replacement on 24th April, I extended my apologies for non-attendance.

Once again the Executive team have carried out their various tasks in an excellent manner — Vic Whiteley looking after our finances, Max Herron as Secretary, Bob Lake as Co-editor with Max producing the Pioneer News, which keeps all our members together. Then of course there is the Pioneer News wrapping team — Olive and Gordon Finlay and Peg Herron — who do a wonderful job posting out the News. Allan McInnes who acted as Delegate to the 7th Division, Bill Tasker who carried out his duties as Welfare Officer visiting the sick and attending funerals when necessary, also Jack Coates who looks after the hospital visitations in the Gosford area.

In conclusion I would like to extend my best wishes to the incoming President and I shall be happy to give him my full support at all times.

— **BILL JOLLIE**

PIONEERS BECAME AIR FORCE

On watching Channel 2, Sydney ABC, on 28th March, 1996, one could not help but end up by saying — the 2/1st Pioneers have become part of the Australian Air Force. This came about in a programme of 90 minutes called "Warriors of the Sky" which was a history of the RAAF and the growth of aviation in the 20th century. It featured many interviews with prominent Air Force personnel and displayed the various types of aircraft, as well as scenes of air battle, particularly relating to the 1939-45 war.

It was very good viewing and fully retained my attention to the "box". However, one of the segments concerned hardships and tribulations, which were met from time to time in the course of duty. Lo and behold to my amazement (apparently to support the spoken word) up bobs on the screen, John Gilchrist, 2/1 Pioneer, and his merry Number 5 Platoon men, manhandling the 25 pounder gun towards Imita Ridge, Kokoda Track. This was illustrated on pages 101 and 103 of the Unit history book "The Pioneers".

Journalist David McNicoll in the April issue of "The Bulletin", was very critical of the ABC's documentary and particularly mentioned how inaccurate it was in parts.

Reported by **STEVE CLARKE**

CUT OUT — Fill in particulars - WAGGA REUNION

Surname:

Known Name:

Ladies Name:

Phone: Unit:

Address:

..... Postcode:

TICK: Dinner ☐ Kapooka Service ☐ Uranquinty Barbecue ☐

Farewell Buffet ☐ Kapooka/Uranquinty Trip: Bus ☐ Own Car ☐

Booking Fee: \$12.50 per person enclosed.

Payable to Ian Willmore — NOT the Association
P.O. Box 387, Vacluse, N.S.W. 2030

PIONEER NEWS

Phone 9759 5491

Official Organ of 2/1 and 2/2 PIONEER BATTALIONS ASSOCIATION

Per Annum: \$5

Registered under the Charitable Collections Act, 1934-41 - Certificate No. 10462 Printed by Principal Press, 19 Grey Street, Carlton

Correspondence: MAX HERRON, Hon. Sec., 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Bn. Assoc., 3 Enoggera Road, Beverly Hills 2209

Treasurer: VIC WHITELEY

Editor: M. HERRON

President: ALLAN McINNES

Vol. 41 No. 3

NOVEMBER 1996

Welfare: BILL TASKER, Phone 9718 6658

KOKODA TRACK MEMORIAL WALKWAY

Members Rita Trefoni (widow of Noel), Bill Jollie, Bill Tasker and Steve Clarke attended the official opening of Stage 1 Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway by The Hon Bruce Scott, M.P., Minister for Veterans' Affairs on Thursday, October 3rd, 1996 at 10.00 am at Rhodes (Rotary) Park, Rhodes.

This Memorial is dedicated to the Men and Women who served Australia during World War II. The Walkway, an 800 metre track from Rhodes Station through parkland to Concord Hospital, was conceived by Mr Alan Kinkade, the former General Manager of Concord Repatriation General Hospital as one of Concord Hospital's contributions to the "Australia Remembers" campaign.

The centre-piece is a striking series of granite walls on which famous photos of the Kokoda Track have been sandblasted.

The actual ceremony, which lasted 1½ hours, was very well attended with full seating provided, well organised and medals and decorations being worn. Included in the service were addresses given by representatives of related bodies, hymns, band playing, piper playing "Flowers of the Forest" with the highlight being the unveiling of the granite Memorial Plaques by the Government Minister, and the necessary participation by clergy of all denominations.

Naturally, there were many media personnel in attendance and we were approached by

certain reporters to give interviews. As a result, in the evening TV news, Channel 9 camera showed Jollie and Clarke in their seats listening to the speeches, ABC Channel 2 showed the three of us looking at the "Golden Stairway" memorial plaque with the voice of Bill Jollie saying, "I've walked that staircase twice, once going up and once coming down". Also Channel 10 showed a "shot" of Bill Tasker when he took a stroll along a walkway - this was unbeknown to us.

This exciting development is a marvellous and most worthwhile project and deserves all the monetary assistance it can muster. There is a rather large amount of work yet to be done, particularly with the long walk-way. It is proposed that along this walk-way, various stations identified as places of significance will be established.

The Kokoda Memorial organising committee are hoping that all battalions involved would be able to support them by taking up a sponsorship of a station. Of course, the station relative to the 2/1 Pioneer Bn. is Imita Ridge. The station "Myola" is already completed, showing a plaque including the name of the 2/33 Infantry Bn. A sponsorship costs \$3000. Unfortunately it is impossible for the Association to provide any funds. Accordingly this is an appeal to anyone out there in the Pioneer World who can donate this sort of money.

Reported by STEVE CLARKE

KAPOOKA REUNION - WAGGA WAGGA

Visitors to Wagga Wagga on 1st/2nd October came by train, coach and private vehicles from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, some as early as Sunday. Eventually there were 75 present by Tuesday. Those who travelled the furthest were Perce Scholz and his daughter June Dreese from Hervey Bay.

The reunion dinner was held at the RSL Club on Tuesday evening. In accordance with the Pioneers' reputation for being rough and tough and hard to please and more particularly for being men of few words, Allan McInnes was the only speaker and kept his address short but to the point. He was able to announce that the entire Executive of the 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneer Battalions Association were present, as well as representatives of the North Coast (NSW) branch, the 2/2 Pioneer Battalion (Victorian) Assoc. and the South Australian Pioneer Battalions Association.

Arrangements for the reunion were in the hands of Bill Lewis, Allan McInnes and Ian Willmore with assistance from Jack Morgan in Wagga Wagga. Due to illness Ian was not able to attend.

The loyal toast was drunk, and that being the close of the formal proceedings, an enjoyable meal was served.

The buzz of conversations continued as old mates talked about old times with the familiar "do you remember when", "What happened to Bluey, Lofty, Shorty and many others" and all the other topics as memories flooded to mind.

By 10 pm proceedings had begun to quieten down and the evening drew to a close.

On Wednesday morning the visitors assembled at the Soldiers' Chapel at Kapooka Camp. An address was given by Colonel David Buchanan, C.O. of the Recruit Training Battalion outside the Chapel beside the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion Memorial Plaque set in the garden. The plaque was officially dedicated in a service conducted by the Rev. Phill Anderson, the Camp Chaplain.

The visitors then moved to the Protestant Chapel which forms part of the main chapel. There was much interest shown in the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion Memorial door. The service, conducted by the Chaplain, then followed during which prayers were led by Allan McInnes, Roy Levy, Allan Olsen, Bob Philpots and Tom Brabin. The Ode was recited by Bill Robertson and was followed by the Last Post.

On completion of the service, the visitors moved to the Urquinty Hotel for a barbecue. The cooks did their best to lay down a very good smoke-screen but a breeze eventually got up and the smoke soon cleared away.

Sausages, steaks and salads were served, followed by apple pie, fruit salad and cream washed down by various vintages and cold beers. The old Urquinty pub has that rugged country atmosphere and is an ideal venue.

By 2.30 pm the visitors commenced the move back to Wagga Wagga. Those without their own transport were most appreciative of the services of Corporal Shields and her 50-seater modern army coach which picked them up in town and returned them to their accommodation after the barbecue.

The day's activities concluded with the visitors eating their evening meals in various locations in town and there were reports that some had decided to call it a day, have their meals in their motels and hotels, and have an early night.

Next day, Thursday, saw the final farewells and departures. By noon the railway station had been occupied by those awaiting trains to Sydney and Melbourne as a successful reunion came to an end.

Reported by RUSS HARRISON

SEASONS GREETINGS

President Allan McInnes, on behalf of the Executive and Committee would like to extend Seasons Greetings to all members and their loved ones with the hope that they have a happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

VALE - BOB LAKE

While in Manly Hospital for treatment of a breathing problem, Bob Lake, 2/1 of Brookvale, passed away on 14th September at the age of 76 years.

The funeral at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium was conducted by Chaplain Stan Morton who is the Padre for the Rats of Tobruk Assoc. He was assisted with a reading by daughter Gail and a poem by grand-daughter Jane.

In attendance were sixteen Pioneers and Welfare Officer Bill Tasker read the Eulogy. The Poppy Service was carried out by Dee Why RSL. Bill Tasker gave details of Bob's Army Service as follows: 1941 - Western Desert and Tobruk. 1942-43 New Guinea. 1945 - Balikpapan. Association service as follows: 1946 - joined Association Committee. 1963 - Appointed co-editor Pioneer News. 1976 - Granted Life Membership of Association. 1966-1993 - Organised the refreshments for each Anzac Day Reunion.

In his Eulogy Bill Tasker extended thanks to the many people in attendance representing the Rats of Tobruk Association (Gordon Hughes, Secretary), Dee Why RSL Club, 2/1st and 2/2nd Pioneers and in particular Vice-President Jack Bertram from Newcastle. There were many Pioneer ladies also present.

He also extended sincere sympathy on behalf of the Association to Joan and daughters Gail and Eileen and son Bill and their families. He stated Bob's loss would be greatly felt by the Committee and we all mourn the loss of a great man.

From Joan Lake we have received the following note: "We would like to express our thanks to all of you for the beautiful floral tributes, cards and letters which you have sent during our sad time. The letters and cards will be treasured always. Once again our gratitude for all your support."

PIONEER BRANCH REPORTS

WESTERN AUST. BRANCH by Len Preedy

Attending our get-together in July were Norma and Bob Sefton, Norm Le Cornu, Ethel and John McDougall, Joan Monger, Jack Stewart, Len and Joy Preedy. Apologies were received from Jack Monger and Jack Murray.

Letters were appreciated from Bob Bally and Mili Hunt and thank you to the following for their welcome donations:

R. Bally, R. Chantry, M. Hunt, J. McDougall, Bob Sefton, N. Le Cornu, J. Stewart and J. Monger.

The meeting passed a vote of thanks to our Associations in Sydney and Melbourne for their continued support in sending their newsletters, which is very much appreciated.

NSW NTH COAST BRANCH - by Ken Wilson

At the Annual Meeting of the branch on 28th August the election of office bearers resulted as follows: President: Ken Wilson; Vice Presidents: Ray Harris, Dave Denny; Secretary/Treasurer: Ron Cross.

Treasurer's report showed a credit of \$1,000 and that an account of \$27 for postage be approved.

It was moved that the date for the next Reunion be held on 13th/14th September, 1997 and the format be the same as the 1996 Reunion and venue be Lismore.

SOUTH AUST. BRANCH - by George Sauer

While in Sydney in August George rang the Secretary and reported they had a very good Anzac Day. Was pleased to have march with them Dr Ian Painter of Holland who is the son of Doug Painter, 2/1st Pioneer.

Because of only a short stay, George was going to contact Pioneers by phone and in particular Bill Jollie and Steve Clarke.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

Issue number three of Mail Bag and the last for the year. Possibly most of our readers may not know that Bob Lake (Lakey) passed away in hospital in September after 33 years as Mail Bag editor and his humour and writings will be sadly missed. A good friend and a great mate to all who knew him. Sadly he did not live to see his beloved Manly team victorious in the Rugby League grand final, but I am sure he would have been "up there" cheering them on.

For the last few years, since Bob's stroke, I have been assisting him with the Mail Bag, so the Executive have asked me to carry on for the time being and I shall do my best to keep up the good work. So on to the letters.

FRED ALWAY 2/1, Beaumaris, Vic., with a donation to funds and some kind words to those responsible for the news. Fred reads it with great interest and always looks forward to its arrival. It is 18 years since his wife passed away, but has a close family who keep in touch. Not close in distance though, one son in Sydney, a daughter in the Territory and another in Queensland. One thing, Fred, you have a big choice of holiday States to choose from. He sends his warmest wishes to all Pioneers.

"SNOWY" ANDERSON 2/2, Aspendale, Vic., with some dollars for the kitty, and passed on the news that Colonel John Williams 2/2 is at the moment staying with his daughter Janine at Bundall. He was very pleased to have some of the "boys" visit him while he was in Lidcombe Hospital.

Good to hear from you "Snowy" and to see you and the family at the Wagga reunion recently.

ROBYN BELL, daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1, Harkaway, Vic., with some very good photos of the 1996 wreath laying and Anzac Day march for the Association's album. Robyn has been busy arranging respite care for her mother, not easy when she lives in Victoria and mum in Wollongong. However, Robyn took the opportunity to go to Wagga for the reunion before going on to get her mother settled in the nursing home. Good to see you again.

On the last visit to Wollongong, she called into the Picton Repat. Hospital to visit Padre Albert Pitt-Owen, 2/1. Although not very well, he seemed pleased with her visit and she was able to show him some photos of the unit marching on Anzac Day. Peg Pitt-Owen assured Robyn that his friend, Dr Stan Goulston 2/1, keeps in touch regularly.

Thanks for the photos, Robyn, and hope to see you again next year.

JUNE BIRRELL, widow of Bob 2/1, Mudgee, with a donation to funds. June has been a widow now for over 20 years and having no family she always enjoys the news and doings of other Pioneers and their families. Says Bob was a "day boy" when he first enlisted in the district in which we now live, and served in both 2/1 and 2/2. Thanks for the donation, June, keep well.

GEORGE CATCHPOLE 2/2, Northgate, Qld, with a long newsy letter and a cheque for the treasurer. Is always pleased to receive the news and finds it very informative. George is still house-bound after a knee replacement operation going wrong after infection, necessitating another operation, when the specialist had to fuse the knee. Says he can walk with the help of a frame and not in any pain, sleeps well, so that is some consolation. He was in plaster for seven months, but can now get out on occasions.

George has been President of Nundah-Northgate Sub-Branch for about 23 years and happy in the job. It is only a small branch as most of the members have passed on. With a grant from the Australia Remembers Committee they were able to update their memorial in Buckland Park and had a dedication ceremony which he was able to attend with the help of a borrowed wheelchair from the local Red Cross.

All the best, George, and trust the coming year will bring better days.

FRANK CAULFIELD 2/2, Benalla, enclosed a photo of the Melbourne Anzac Day march with his "rental" for the coming year, and said he gets good value for his money. He spent a great time down in Melbourne for Anzac Day, but missed Colonel Williams leading them this year on account of ill-health. At 92 he has been (in Frank's words) a fair dinkum marvel, and will be missed if unable to make the trip south each Anzac Day.

Frank and his wife Betty keep in good health – Betty and their daughter Lorraine had a trip to Bali in July and wanted Frank to go along, but he said one trip to nearby Borneo 50 years ago was enough for him. Reckons he's the homing pigeon type.

Thanks for the photo, Frank, and best wishes.

RICHARD "SNOW" COBBLE 2/1, West Ballina, with a donation to the paper, which he looks forward to receiving. Reading of the research by Barbara Williams (ex-wife of the late Geoff Williams 2/1), into the effects of the atom bomb at Maralinga, "Snow" said he served there for eight months in 1956/57 and witnessed four explosions. He sent along some interesting information for Barbara, which Max has sent on to her. As a result of his time there, Richard had developed melanoma, but Vet. Affairs were reluctant to accept, but picked up the "tab" for island service. Plays golf twice a week, lawn bowls twice a week and at 72 says he has no complaints. Was 18 when he was in Milne Bay, as he had put his age up to join, so one of our young brigade. He mentions he is still looking for Rupert Wade of B Coy. and hopes someone may know of him. He is not on our lists.

BETTY CREASY, widow of George 2/1, Portland, with a cheque for funds and, at the time of writing, the weather in her part of the country very cold and windy. She thought it a very good idea to have the wreath-laying service earlier on Anzac Eve, as many older folk do not like travelling at night.

She has been in contact with Bill Hoffman 2/1 of Kyogle quite often by phone and he is keeping well and always ready for a chat. Thanks for the news, Bet, and keep well.

ARTHUR DAVIS 2/1, Granville, with a welcome donation and says he looks forward to receiving the news. He rang Ken Oliver 2/1 after the last issue and they had a good yarn. He has been receiving radiation treatment for vocal cord problems earlier this year and we trust the treatment has been successful.

BILLIE DYNON, widow of Frank 2/1, Mona Vale, with a letter of thanks to the Association for still sending her the news. She really enjoys reading it and often sees a little news item of someone she knew or Frank had told her about.

She had recently been on a coach trip to Canberra and said she was fortunate to be able to spend a few hours at the War Memorial. Billie had not been there for years and was amazed at all the wonderful improvements that had been made in that time. She was very impressed with Dr "Weary" Dunlop's memorial which she thought was wonderful.

Closes with best wishes to all and was sorry to hear of Bill Jollie's illness and hopes his knee operation was successful and he's well again. Thanks for the cheque, Billie, and keep in touch.

BILL FALLON 2/2, Barraba, with a welcome donation for the treasurer and some news of himself and family. He and his wife are still living in Barraba since Bill sold his soldier settlement block in 1984. Their daughter Kay (who turns 50 this year) and her husband Tony have a whitegoods business in Port Macquarie (a good spot for you to have a holiday). They recently had a visit from Bill Lewis 2/2 and his wife Shirley as they were travelling through to Queensland. Since retiring have been to New Zealand, Tasmania and travelled around Australia, so not letting the grass grow under their feet.

Bill sends his best to all Pioneers and his thanks to all who keep the paper coming each issue.

GRACE FOWKES, widow of "Snowy" 2/1, with some kind remarks about the news and her congratulations to those responsible. Her late husband, Dick, was an early enlistment in 2/1, and Grace has been trying for some time to find

a copy of the 2/1 book "The Pioneers", but with no luck. She has grandchildren who are interested and has asked Max if he would be kind enough to add her name to the list of people waiting on a copy to become available. Grace, there are copies in the public libraries at Liverpool and Fairfield, so you may be able to borrow a copy to read until such time as a copy becomes available. In the meantime have added your name to the list. Best wishes and keep well.

KEN FRANKS 2/1, Waterford, Qld, with a short note and cheque for subs. All is well and he sends special greetings to Ivor Garnon who was in the 2/1 band with him.

JACK FRENCH 2/2, Belmont, Vic, with a change of address from Highton to ensure the paper keeps coming. He appreciates the job the editors do and sends his best wishes.

TOM GAISFORD 2/2, Balwyn Vic, with a welcome cheque and his apologies for not being able to join in the Wagga reunion owing to the ill-health of his wife, and his inability to undertake the long car trip. However, he trusts that the reunion was as successful as the last one at Kapooka which they enjoyed immensely. From the report elsewhere, Tom, you will see it was a good show and enjoyed by those who were able to make the trip. Perhaps better luck next time.

STAN GAVAN 2/2, Greystanes, with a few lines to say thanks for the news, which he always finds interesting, and enclosed a cheque to keep it coming. Sends his best regards to all.

BOB GINNANE 2/2, Leumeah, with a letter and card to Max with best wishes on Max's recent hip replacement – says he had heard that Max had become a "hippy" and sent best wishes for a speedy recovery in time for the 2000 Paralympics. Many thanks, Bob, for the card.

His wife Nell has had a spell in hospital with bowel problems, but is slowly getting back on her feet. Bob says apart from housemaid's knee he is coping OK and has a lady from Home Care coming in each fortnight to help clean up and do some ironing. However, the day before the lady is due, Nell has Bob washing and cleaning the house (can't have her coming to a dirty house says Nell).

Best wishes to you both and hope the New Year brings you the best of health.

JACK GRIFFITH 2/2, Frankston, Vic, with a brief note and a cheque. Says he's doing O.K. with Home Help. You certainly won't get writer's cramp, Jack, but good to hear from you.

RICHARD HOOK 2/1, Lambton, per pen of wife Barbara, with a donation to funds and the news that Richard can't get about very much as he has lost his eyesight – apart from that he is in good health. They have just returned from Queensland after celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary with their family and had a wonderful time. Congratulations to you both on the happy event.

Both look forward to the news which Barbara reads to him and says to keep it coming.

JOHN HUNT 2/1, New Farm Qld, with another letter in regard to the 2/1st history. John has a copy for loan purposes and said it might be a good idea to publicise the fact in this issue giving his address: 4/25 Mountford Rd., New Farm 4005 Qld – phone (07) 3358 4349 – and he could arrange for a loan. This would make it available to more people. Perhaps a good idea for your State, John, but postage charges a bit high for interstate borrowers.

In early August John and Mollie-Jean paid a call on Nell Laughren at Nambour and said she was her usual bright self, but once again age catching up. Good to hear news of you, Nell. They also had a visit from Jean Spreadborough and she says Harry 2/1 is slowly improving after their bad car accident earlier in the year. No matter how careful on the road it is always difficult to allow for those who ignore red lights. It must have been a rather traumatic experience for Jean, and we hope they are soon on the mend.

John and Mollie-Jean were off to Longreach on the train in late August and were looking forward to the trip.

Thanks for the letter, John, and the news from sunny Queensland. Kindest regards to Mollie.

PHILL JACKSON 2/2, Dongarra, WA, per pen of wife Yvonne, who reads the news to Phill when it arrives. He would like to send a special cheerio to Colonel Williams and any fellas that knew him in D Coy. Phill was on the Burma Line and in Japan.

JACK KEMPNIH 2/1, Fingal Bay, once again per pen of good wife Maisie, with a long newsy letter. (Soon have to charge him secretarial fees Mais). They were very pleased to read of the award to Jack Griffiths of the OAM and mentioned they had seen him at Jean Bertram's funeral and offered him their best wishes. They were sorry to hear of Jean's passing and it was a beautiful service, which showed the love and affection in which Jean was held in the family and neighbourhood.

Mais also passed on the news of the death of Jim McDonald 2/1 in July and mentioned that Jack was asked to speak at the memorial service in Forster as Jack had known Jim as a young lad. They had joined up together in the Pioneers and had consecutive numbers.

Both were sorry they wouldn't be able to make the Wagga reunion, but had already made arrangements to go to Lismore, all being well, and had booked to go to Norfolk Island in September. Never mind, perhaps you'll be able to make the reunion at Lismore in September 1997.

Trust Jack's hands have improved since the carpal tunnel op. (which Mais said were from too much fishing). All the best to you both and your kind regards to all the old soldiers and good wives have been passed on.

JOHN MCKNIGHT 2/2, Dundas, with a letter to Bill Lewis 2/2 apologising for not being able to attend the Wagga reunion, and thanking him for the refund of his deposit. John has tinnitus which was caused by driving tractors and trucks for a living and it brings on other problems. He originally came from Coolamon, 20 miles north of Wagga, and would have liked to have made the reunion to perhaps see some old friends who are in poor health. Never mind, John, better luck next time.

DON MURRAY 2/2, Tinonee, with a donation to funds and to say how much he enjoyed the Lismore reunion. In particular he would like to thank the local man and his wife who, on the Sunday afternoon, took Don and Maureen and Doug Waters of S.A. on a tour of the district, including Byron Bay, which was very much appreciated. Don cannot remember their names, but asked that we pass on his sincere thanks.

Don has problems driving his car, as he has lost the sight in his left eye, but he plays social bowls most afternoons and it keeps him out of mischief and has made some good friends.

Keep well, Don, and hope to see you at the next Lismore reunion.

PETE PETERSON 2/2, Broulee – a change of address from Merimbula and some funds to the News.

Pete sends regards to all Pioneers, especially C Coy 2/2, and says it's good to receive the newspaper and read of my mates of yesteryear.

JACK PAINTER 2/1, Narrandera, with a cheque for the treasurer and apologies for being late in doing so. At time of writing they were having lots of rain and cold weather down there, but guess things will have improved by now. You will have read from the News that Max Law passed away in August, a big loss to his friends and the Association. Jack sends his best wishes to all Pioneers – good to hear from you again.

JOHN PITMAN 2/1, Boomi, with a welcome letter and a donation to funds. Sorry your letter arrived too late for inclusion in July issue. John mentions that he has also joined the hip replacement club, along with Bern Reiners, and feels ten years younger. (Max has also joined the "hippy" club too and says it's nice to be free of pain.)

They are having a wonderful season out their way, a change from the last four or five years, so we hope that things continue to improve.

John really looks forward to receiving the news and says the editors do a great job keeping it going. Sends his best wishes to all Pioneers, especially the Sig. Platoon.

BERN REINERS 2/1, Corryong Vic., with a couple of long letters to Max in recent times,

lots of it personal, as they were good mates in the Sig. Platoon and have remained firm friends since the war finished. Bern has been undergoing radiotherapy, says it's no great hassle, but very tiring. While in hospital in Melbourne was visited frequently by Jack Comerford, also Eric Causer, (both fellow sigs.) and they have kept in touch by phone since he returned to Corryong.

Bern and Mona had a trip to Perth to visit daughter Mandy and family recently. Flew over as driving the car is now out of the question. However, takes things a day at a time and as paper was going to press was once more in local hospital. Do hope you're home again Bern and feeling better – I'm sure you get lots of care from Mona, and a wonderful family. Take care, mate, and our very best wishes.

ERIC REYNOLDS 2/1, Macksville, with a cheque for Vic and the news that he and Joyce are both well and had got through the winter months without any colds or the flu. The weather had been cold in Macksville, but that didn't stop the grass from growing.

Eric was sorry to see from last issue that Jack Lamerton, D Coy, was in a wheelchair and hopes he's on the mend. Also sent his best wishes to Ron Webster, George Walker, George Tolmie and Bill Hodges. Says the years are fast catching up with all of us.

He and Joyce had a visit from daughter Alison and family from Victoria a couple of months ago on their way to Cairns and enjoyed their company for a few days. How the grandchildren are growing.

Sends his best wishes to all for the coming Festive Season and hopes the New Year will bring lots of good health.

JACK RICHARDS 2/1, Lennox Head, per pen of wife Olive, with a cheque for the treasurer and the news that Jack is now going into hospital every three months for a check-up for his cancer problems. The urologist is keeping a close eye on his problem, and apart from that he is not too bad.

They had a letter from Noel recently (presume you mean Noel Schomberg) and he is "grounded". Had a fall in May and broke his knee-cap, so has his sister looking after him. Hope things are on the improve, Noel.

Olive says the weather at Lennox Head is perfect at the moment and the spring flowers are lovely. They sent kind regards to all.

PERC SCHOLZ 2/2, Torquay Qld, with his apology for lateness of sub., but had struck a bad patch of ill-health and had not got round to writing letters. However, he is still driving his car and hoped to be able to make the trip to Wagga – not by car though as he didn't think he could drive that far. (He did make it to Wagga and seemed to be enjoying himself).

Perc passed on best wishes to Bill Robertson for hitting the 90 mark – says must be good living. (You're right there, he's quite a remarkable man). Also passed on his congratulations to Allan McInnes on being elected our new president and knows he will do a good job, also pleased to see Reg Armstrong was improving healthwise.

Anzac Day at Torquay this year was the biggest to date. Perc missed the previous two years – was in hospital last year and unable to make the grade after an operation the previous year.

VIVIANNE SMILEY, daughter of the late Colonel Macgillicuddy 2/1, Gruyere Vic., with a donation to Association funds and her thanks for continuing to send the News. Your letter arrived too late, Vivienne, for inclusion in the July issue.

HARRY SPREADBOROUGH 2/1, Alexandra Hills Qld, with a long newsy letter with details of a bad accident in which he and Jean were involved a couple of months ago. Harry says Jean was driving when an "old duck" ran her car through a red light at an intersection and clobbered Harry on the passenger side. Jean had three ribs broken while Harry had four ribs and his collarbone broken and a lung punctured, so were very shaken up after the smash. However, the doctors tell them they should be back to normal by Christmas (whatever normal will be).

Harry sends his congratulations to Jack Griffiths on receipt of his OAM and says it's always a thrill to learn of the success of one of the old battalion.

In regard to your query regarding "The Rats Remain", Jack Coates has presented one to the Association, but I think copies are pretty hard to come by. If we hear of a copy becoming available we shall let you know.

Harry apologises for not being able to make Wagga this year – too far to travel as age creeps on. The weather up north has been very cold this winter, says for we thin-blooded types it's the coldest they have felt for many years. Hasn't felt so cold since he spent a winter in Kapooka.

Closes with best wishes to all old friends and lots of good health in the future. Do hope both you and Jean well on the road to recovery.

DUDLEY STANFORTH 2/2, Wagga Wagga, with a cheque for the News and says he will be sorry to miss the reunion in Wagga. He had the opportunity to go for a trip to Darwin and down the west coast to Perth. Couldn't pass up a trip like that, Dudley, but you missed a good show. Sends all the best to all Pioneers.

GEORGE THUELL 2/2, Miranda, with a first letter to the News and a donation to funds. He enjoys reading the paper and keeps good health. Keeps himself fully occupied, being a past president of the local Lions Club and with 16 grandchildren never has a dull moment. Sends his best regards to boys of 5 Pl., H.Q. Coy., and says he still likes to sink a few ales. Good to hear from you, George.

CHAS URWIN 2/2, Wye River Vic., with a sub. for the treasurer and his thanks for the Pioneer News. Says there is always a name or two that brings back memories of the good old days. Was pleased to read in last issue of Jack Sharp of Benalla, they were in the same platoon in A Coy. in the reformed unit – a fine young fellow – like all Pioneers.

Chas lost his wife last December after 57 years of marriage, a great mate, but says he is very fortunate to have many wonderful memories and they were both always very proud to be part of their great battalion.

COLONEL JOHN WILLIAMS, O.B.E., 2/2, Sefton, with donation towards the News, and a note saying he is at the moment staying with his daughter on the Gold Coast, as his doctor won't let him return to his home. He extended many thanks to Roy Levy and Bill Tasker for calling to see him whilst in hospital. Do hope your health is improving, John, and we send you our very best wishes.

TED WILCOX 2/1, Unanderra, with a change of address from Dapto (Ted has had more removals than Grace Bros.) The Dept of Veteran Affairs have supplied him with a motorised wheel scooter, which will help him to get about more easily. Good for you, mate, keep well, and be careful.

• That concludes the Mail Bag for this issue and, before closing, Max would like to thank all those who rang and sent get-well cards on his recent trip to hospital for a hip replacement. They were very much appreciated.

To all Pioneers, their wives and families all the very best for the coming Festive Season and lots of good health in 1997.

Good luck and keep smiling.

SICK PARADE

HARRY SPREADBOROUGH 2/1 of Qld was in Greenslopes Hospital in August with lung and spleen problems following a car accident. Thank you Harry Mowbray for supplying details.

ROY LEVY 2/2 spent a few days in Concord Hospital in August to have a replacement pacemaker put in to improve his breathing.

RON CALLAGHAN 2/1 had a hip replacement operation at Concord Hospital on 15th August and was visited by Bill Tasker.

TOM WOODS 2/2 was operated on at Concord Hospital in August for appendicitis.

FRANK LOCANE 2/2 was in Nowra Community Hospital for a knee replacement operation.

VIC WHITELEY 2/1 was in St George Private Hospital on 28th August for a prostate operation.

JACK KERSLAKE 2/1 was in the Sydney Adventist hospital on 16th September for a prostate operation.

SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE – Send news of your family and happenings to MAX HERRON, 3 Enoggera Road, Beverly Hills.

SYMBOLISM — by JACK BERTRAM

We cordially acknowledge the following article produced in "The Rodent" the newsheet of the Rats of Tobruk, Newcastle Sub Branch, and written by Jack Bertram 2/1st Pioneer.

We are very much influenced by symbols today as people have been down through the ages. Symbols convey ideas, ideals, information and instruction and as such are very much part of our lifestyle. Australia has several readily recognisable symbols — our wattle, our flag, our colour, our anthem and our coat of arms. These represent us as we are and although some people become sentimental over them, they are subject to change or extinction. Soon also our proud emblem of the Rat will join other extinct symbols as the need for its use will have passed.

My thoughts on symbolism arose from a remark a friend made, that to me was ambiguous. He stated: "Whether we become a republic is of small concern to me but I won't stand any mucking around with the flag". This displayed a lack of understanding as how can we have our flag as the flag of a republic and also, what does my friend envisage for a republic? There are many types of republican systems and many types of heads of republics. This apathy disturbs me as we don't know where we are going. We stand, or our children stand to lose, all the freedoms we have fought for.

ENVY OF ALL OTHER COUNTRIES

We have been fortunate to have lived our lifetime in a country where freedom of speech and freedom of fear has been our way of life, a country that is the envy of all other countries, one in which oppressed people of all nations have migrated forming, in recent years, a most cosmopolitan population. We have existed and flourished, guided by a constitution that although containing imperfections gives us the freedoms we have enjoyed and which through the foresight of our founding fathers requires a referendum carried by a majority of citizens and a majority of four States to alter it.

Reverting back to the flag, it came into being just after the Commonwealth of Australia was proclaimed consisting of the flag of the Mother Country plus seven pointed stars representing the States and the start of the Southern Cross. Since its inception, the colour has been changed to become blue, not the red we had grown to recognise. If we leave the present system we must lose the 'Union Jack', it being the symbol of the reigning monarch and belong to Britain. Symbolism as it advanced became the basis, the fascinating science of heraldry through which a family, a country or an institution, can trace its history.

The flag or standard as it is called is part of this science and subservient to its rules.

As a lad each morning at school our flag was raised, we dutifully reciting, "I pledge allegiance to my flag and Country and the principles for which they stand, one brotherhood undivided with liberty and justice for all". These sentiments as a youngster I appreciated but as I grew older they appeared a little flawed, they were good if you are a white person. They don't apply to the original owners, the aboriginals — and women are certainly disadvantaged. Fortunately in recent years many changes for the disadvantaged have been effected. Our present style of Government allows for these changes.

Australia, during our lifetime, has been a wonderful country, a style of living that is the envy of the whole world and one we voluntarily fought for. Let us not lose it by an apathetic approach to the current push for a republic. We should know what a republic is, what type it would be, what sort of leader — a President or a Junta; the attitude of the States, whether we should maintain States or just be one Commonwealth, whether we would continue the luxury of seven Parliaments who would decide the selection of a President or a Committee, would we be able to maintain our defence against invaders, who would control the armed services. These are some of the questions we need to be familiar with if we don't want to succumb to the blandishments of super salesmen (politicians) — Let us be vigilant

LAST POST

JEAN BERTRAM of Hamilton, wife of Jack 2/1, passed away in hospital on 6th July and the funeral service was held at Scots Kirk, Hamilton, on the 9th. The church was packed with family and friends, as Jean was a great worker for her church and was held in high esteem by all who knew her. Jack Griffiths, Maisie and Jack Kempnich attended the service and extended sincere sympathy to Jack and his family.

A return thanks has been received from Jack thanking the Association President, Executive and all Pioneers for their condolences.

JIM McDONALD 2/1 of Tuncurry passed away on 11th July and a memorial service was held at the Tuncurry/Forster RSL Club. The President read the Eulogy and Jack Kempnich spoke to the gathering of his long-time association with Jim and of Jim's army service with the 2/1 Pioneers. We are grateful to Maisie Kempnich for supplying the above details and the Association's sympathy was passed on to Jim's wife, Cynthia.

LEN SMITH 2/1 of Nelson Bay passed away on 10th July at the age of 78 years and the sincere sympathy of the Association was passed on to his wife, Eileen. Len was a Warrant Officer with the unit.

CEC PEAK 2/1 of Seaforth passed away on 20th July and the service was conducted at St Keiran's Church, Manly Vale, on 24th July.

Eleven Pioneers were in attendance to pay tribute to their staunch Committeeman as well as Gordon Hughes, Secretary, Rats of Tobruk Association. The Poppy Service was carried out by the Balgowlah RSL while Welfare Officer Bill Tasker read the Eulogy.

JOHN (LUKE) GREEN 2/1 of Narrabeen passed away on 16th September while in Mona Vale Hospital.

KEN BOWDEN 2/1 of Balgowlah passed away on 15th September and was privately cremated.

JOHN GIBSON 2/1 of Dungog, a stretcher-bearer in the unit, passed away early in October. Our thanks to Doug Shearston for the information.

VALE — MAX LAW

On 20th August, Max Law 2/1 of Kareela, aged 74 years passed away at the John Paul Village nursing home at Heathcote. After suffering a stroke in 1989 he was paralysed down the left side and was confined to a wheelchair for the next six years.

The funeral at the Woronora Crematorium was conducted by Father Hugh Murray who was a close family friend. He was assisted by son Craig, son-in-law Greg and grand-daughter Rebecca.

The Eulogy was read by our Welfare Officer Bill Tasker who gave details of Max's army service as having served in the Middle East, New Guinea and Balikpapan. He also spoke of Max's colourful career with the Association as follows: 1953 — Secretary; 1957 — Co-editor with Frank Cheal in producing the first issue of Pioneer News; 1959 — presented Life Membership; 1960 — Moved to Adelaide for business reasons and acted as reporter for Pioneer News. 1980 — Returned to NSW and carried on as reporter; 1985-1990 — Welfare Officer for Association; 1986-1988 — Wrote three chapters of the 2/1st unit history "The Pioneers", the main highlight being his chapter on the battle at Tempadoeng where he was a sergeant of "B" Company.

Many Pioneers visited Max at Heathcote, including regulars Bill Tasker, Ron Callaghan, Jim Gray, Peg and Max Herron and George Nichols who was a most constant visitor — a mighty effort George.

Bill Tasker on behalf of the fourteen Pioneers present extended sincere sympathy to wife Joyce, children Craig and Karen, son-in-law Greg and grandchildren Rebecca and Ryan. Quite a few Pioneer ladies were in attendance.

From Joyce Law we have received the following note: "We sincerely thank you all for your kind expressions of sympathy in our recent sad bereavement. Your kind thoughts and beautiful flowers were very much appreciated. We thank you all, especially for your long friendship, help and assistance which Max enjoyed so much."

COLONEL WILLIAMS MOVES TO GOLD COAST

We gratefully acknowledge the following article taken from the Bankstown "Torch" newspaper of 16th October and supplied by Roy Levy, 2/2nd Pioneer.

There are not many properties with the distinction of having been built and lived in by Australian war heroes, but 41 Proctor Street, Sefton, is one of these homes.

The former residence of Colonel John Williams OBE, was auctioned on site at 41 Proctor Street, Sefton along with the vacant land next door at 39 Proctor Street by Raine and Horne Bankstown on October 26.

The story of this home begins in 1930 when it was first built by Col Williams to take his young bride Sylvia Walker of Auburn after their marriage in October of that year. It was to become the family home from that moment on.

John and Sylvia were active members of Auburn Methodist Church, and all his life, John has been active in helping his fellow man, church and community.

John joined the Militia before World War II and moved through the ranks.

"He enlisted in the AIF in 1940 and served in the Middle East with the 2/17th Bn and 2/15 Bn, before, with rank of Lt Colonel, appointed to command 2/2 Pioneer Battalion. He was returning to Australia in 1942 to serve in the North, but diverted to Java.

"Together with the rest of the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion he was captured by the Japanese and taken P.O.W.

"He was appointed an officer of the Order of the British Empire for outstanding action and leadership in Java.

"In March, 1942, on the Java Burma Thailand Railway, he commanded the "Williams" forces and greatly helped the morale of the men who served under him in the three harrowing years that followed.

"Colonel Williams was discharged in 1946 but recalled to the army to give evidence at war crimes trials in Japan.

"The years in Burma left a lasting effect on him and his concern for the men he commanded, leading him to be active in the NSW Prisoners of War Association, including president for 20 years.

"He helped establish the Federal body and also served a term as Federal president of the Ex-POW Association of Australia."

Col John Williams, a life-long member of Chester Hill-Carramar RSL Sub-Branch and Club, was also involved with the Auburn Club and Cumberland Baseball Association being its patron for many years and only relinquishing the position in his nineties because he believes in active involvement.

Mrs Williams died four years ago and after 66 years in this home, Colonel Williams has moved to live with his daughter, Janine Graham on the Gold Coast.

His older daughter Merilee Secombe lives on the Central Coast.

His friends in Sefton and surrounding areas will dearly miss this respected citizen but wish him good health and happiness in a warmer climate.

WAGGA REUNION FINANCE

The following is a report submitted by Bill Lewis of the organising committee: "Eighty persons registered for the Reunion of whom three were unable to attend for health reasons, leaving 77, most of whom attended all activities. Total receipts were \$2,800 disbursed as follows:

RSL Club	\$1,702.50
Uranquity Hotel	\$912.50
Donation to Soldiers Chapel	\$147.50
Refund of deposits	\$37.50
	\$2,800.00

WREATH LAYING — 1997

Custodian of the Cenotaph has confirmed the date and time of the 1997 Wreath Laying Service: 4 pm on Thursday, 24th April, 1997 at the Cenotaph.