

PIONEER NEWS

Phone 9759 5491

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

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2/1st -2/2nd ANZAC ACTIVITIES 1997

The programme for these activities remains the same as last year, except that the time of the Wreath Laying has been brought forward to commence at 4 pm.

WREATH LAYING - Thursday, 24th April

The Wreath Laying Service will be held at 4 pm on Thursday, 24th April and all members are to assemble on the corner of Martin Place and Pitt Street on the G.P.O. side at 3.50 pm and will march off at 4 pm. Banner bearers will lead the march to the Cenotaph where wreaths will be placed.

Please note the change of time from 7.30 pm to 4 pm. The Committee decided on this change with the view to attract a larger attendance.

ANZAC DAY MARCH - Friday 25th April

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

ANZAC REUNION - Friday, 25th April

The Anzac Day Reunion Dinner will be held at the Occidental Hotel, 43 York Street Sydney. Members may board 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 Occidental Hotel is on the south side corner. Enter from York Street into foyer.

Procedure on entering foyer:

1. NAME TAGS issued by Geoff Finlay.
2. MEAL COST of \$13 paid to David Herron and Ray Law.
3. ENTER LIFT and proceed to 1st Floor and be seated at table. (Three tables will be reserved for the 2/2nds who march with the 7th Division and arrive late.)
4. REFRESHMENTS from bar or served is beer: Middy \$1.60, Schooner \$2.10, Jug \$6.50, Glass wine \$2, Soft drink \$1.00.
5. LUNCH SERVED at 12.45 pm. Roast beef or chicken, vegetables, buttered roll. Waitress will serve to tables of 10.

ANNUAL MEETING - Friday, 23rd May

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday, 23rd May at 1 pm at the Redfern RSL Club, corner of Redfern and Gibbon Streets, Redfern. A cordial welcome is extended to all Pioneers to attend.

LAST POST - "We Will Remember Them"

ERIC LINDSAY 2/2 of Coonabarabran passed away on 19th October after suffering a massive stroke.

The local RSL formed a guard of honour at the church and cemetery. The Eulogy and Ode were given by the RSL President and the Last Post and Reveille were rendered by a member of the local band.

In his report Reg Armstrong 2/2 stated the church was packed with relatives and friends as Eric was very well known and respected by the community. On behalf of the Association, Reg extended our sympathy and in appreciation a return thanks card has been received from widow Norma and family.

BERN REINERS 2/1 of Corryong, Victoria, passed away at Corryong District Hospital on 26th November at the age of 74 years, after a long fight from a tumour.

He was laid to rest in the Corryong Lawn Cemetery with which he had a huge involvement in its early development. The RSL service, with thirty members forming a Guard of Honour, was led by President Bill Saxton and coffin bearers were family members - Brian, Lex, Trevor and Kevin Reiners.

Bern was a member of No. 1 Platoon (Signals) with Max Herron and during their service together and since the war have been great friends.

Regular visitors to Bern when he was in Royal Melbourne were fellow Signal Platoon members Eric Causer and Jack Comerford, and Bern was quite thrilled to have a chat.

A sympathy card from Welfare Officer, Bill Tasker, was sent to Mona expressing the sympathy of all Pioneers and in return we have received a Return Thanks card from Mona and her family. She also wishes to thank all Pioneers for their kindness and concern for Bern through those last terrible months.

TIM LOOBY 2/1 of Gunnedah passed away on 8th December, after a long battle with cancer of the prostate and the liver.

Tim was in the stock and station business from 1950 until he retired in 1984.

He is survived by his widow May and family to whom we extend our sincere sympathy.

JACK MORGAN 2/2 of Wagga passed away

on 30th December from a burst aneurism of the aorta.

Apart from a period of fifteen years spent in Adelaide after the war, Jack was a Wagga resident and was well known by many people in the community. He worked on Day Care and Meals on Wheels to name two of his caring deeds. He was a member of the Wagga RSL Sub Branch and was awarded Life Membership for being a member of fifty years.

Jack has been an ardent Association supporter, having assisted in the running of the two Wagga Reunions held in 1982 and 1988. He also assisted in the two Reunions connected with the Kapooka Chapel.

The service was held in the Wagga Crematorium Chapel with three hundred people in attendance. The Eulogy was read by RSL Branch Vice President with servicemen from Kapooka Army Camp carrying out the sounding of Last Post and folding of the flag.

We are grateful to Daphne and John Dowd for sending the details and for extending sincere sympathy to the family.

HARRY ALLAN 2/1 of St Marys passed away on 9th January at the age of 87 years. The funeral was conducted at Eastern Creek Crematorium and was attended by Welfare Officer Bill Tasker and Roy Levy.

Sincere sympathy was extended to widow Muriel and family on behalf of the Association by Bill Tasker.

In attendance were representatives from St Marys Bowling Club and the Poppy Service was carried out by the St Marys RSL Club.

KEN COLLIER 2/1 of North Essendon, Victoria passed away on 16th February, aged 72 years, and the funeral was held on 21st February at Melbourne. Sympathy was extended to the family by the Secretary. We are grateful to George Murphy for giving us the details.

COLIN STRACHAN 2/1 of Gosford passed away in hospital at the age of 91 years and the funeral service was held at the Palmdale Crematorium. Sincere sympathy to his widow Florence and family.

KOKODA TRACK MEMORIAL WALKWAY

An article appeared in the November issue of Pioneer News describing the Kokoda Memorial which is dedicated to the men and women who served Australia during World War II. The Walkway is an 800 metre track from Rhodes Station through parkland to Concord Hospital. It is proposed that various stations, identified as places of significance will be established.

A sponsorship for each battalion is \$3,000 and for this amount the name of the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion will be featured on a plaque situated at the station named Imita Ridge.

The Association, being an organisation to serve both the 2/1st and 2/2nd Pioneer Bns, cannot be called upon for support, so a Kokoda Committee has been formed consisting of Steve Clarke, Bill Jollie, Max Herron and Vic Whiteley, in order to raise the money for this plaque. We are now pleased to report that our objective, thanks to the overwhelming generosity of so many 2/1st members, has been reached. As the Imita Ridge plaque has been over-subscribed, we are exploring the possibility of obtaining an extra plaque to be placed in the Rose Garden at the Walkway entrance. We will report progress of this venture in future issues.

2/1-2/2 PIONEERS W.A.

Here we are again almost at the end of another year. I don't know about anyone else, but it has just flown by to us.

At our November get together we had: Joan and Jack Monger (good to see you again Jack after your stay in hospital), Mili Hunt (who came all the way from Geraldton), Ethel and John McDougall (John isn't the best these days, but he battles on), Hugh Sorley (good to see you again Hugh), Jack Stewart (his usual bright self), Neal MacPherson (thank you for taking us both ways Neal) and Len and I of course. Thank you all for coming out on such a terrible wet and windy day, winter really went out with a bang. Apologies received from J. Murray, Bob and Norma Sefton (Bob was sick with the flu). We missed our good friend Norm Le Cornu, hope you are OK Norm.

Our grateful thanks to the following for their kind donations: M. Hunt, J. Outridge, J. Murray, J. Monger, J. Stewart, N. MacPherson, H. Sorley, J. McDougall. We received letters from Josie Outridge, nice to hear from you Josie, Jack Murray apologising for not coming, he can't manage the bus these days and a letter early on from our good friend Mili.

It was great to have a visit from John Jefferies, Victoria, with his wife and daughters. I think he covered a lot of ground while over here. It is good to have a visit like that, brings you all a bit closer and helps to keep in touch.

We went to Busselton for two weeks but had to cut our visit short. Len had one of his "little strokes". There is no place like home when you are not well. Len did speak to Ted and Dorothy Lyon on the phone, they both seem well. George McNess came in for a visit, that was good. He and Len had a good old chin wag. They were only saying they had not noticed anything about Percy Scholz in the News and lo and behold in the News that has just arrived, there is his name. George has been in the Busselton Hospital with breathing problems.

Just like to congratulate Peg Herron on the good job she did with the "Mail Bag" in the last edition of the News. Good to hear Max is coming on OK.

We offer our sincere condolences to all of you who have lost loved ones during this year.

Thank you to everyone for the kindness during the year and we wish everyone good luck for the New Year.

Kind Regards to all - JOY and LEN PREEDY

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

The first issue of Mail Bag for 1997 and many thanks to all those who sent Seasons Greetings to the Association and to Max and I personally. Do hope you all enjoyed a happy time with your family and friends and trust the coming year will be good to all, especially healthwise. Now on to the letters.

GLADYS ALLEN, widow of Jack 2/1, Mackay, with a long family letter to Vic Whiteley apologising for not writing sooner – said she's afraid too much thought these days and very little action. However, she enclosed a cheque for the Pioneer News and always looks forward to reading the paper when it arrives. There was plenty of family news for Vic and she certainly sounds a very busy grandmother. Keep up the good work, Glad, and many thanks for the cheque.

BOB ADOLPHSON 2/2, Mornington, Vic., with a donation to funds and best wishes for 1997. Bob says he doesn't recognise many of the names that are in the Mail Bag, but enjoys reading the articles nevertheless. He has been to a couple of our reunions, at Gosford and at Wagga when the 2/2nd Pioneer memorial door was dedicated. Bob was in C Coy., 2/2, and was with "Williams Force" in Burma and Siam. Good to hear from you Bob and thanks for your kind wishes.

CYRIL AMIES 2/1, Thornleigh, with plenty of news – per his new toy, a computer – and says it's a real challenge. He and Doris are busily mastering Internet and keeping in contact with overseas friends. Says one is never too old to learn. Through her mail on Internet, daughter Wendy met up with her future husband, and the Amies now have a new son-in-law.

Cyril and Doris have had plenty of tripping around, an overseas trip to meet up with relations and other friends, and time in Adelaide and lovely parts of Victoria. The garden still keeps Cyril busy and Doris is taken up with secretarial work at bowls and bowling. Doesn't look as if there's much time for your new toy.

Both send their best wishes to all and hope 1997 will prove to be a good year for the Pioneer family.

DON ANDERSON 2/1, Merimbula, with a sub for the News and best wishes to all. Always pleased to receive the paper and read of the doings of former 2/1sts, especially D Coy.

REG ARMSTRONG 2/2, Baradine, with a letter informing us of the death in October of Eric Lindsay 2/2. Unfortunately the paper was already at the printer when your letter arrived, Reg, but Max will report same in this issue's "Last Post". Thank you for your attendance at the funeral and for extending the Association's condolences to Norma and their family. Best wishes to both you and Coralie and keep well.

ROBYN BELL, Harkaway, Vic., daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1, with copies of some of her father's photos and a 1941 Christmas menu from the sergeant's mess in Palestine. Many thanks, Robyn, and they will be added to our Pioneer memorabilia. Glad you received the note re the late Hamilton Lamb and that it will fill in a few more gaps in your dad's army life. Also thanks for the copy of the letter from the Dubbo Historical Society, they seemed very happy with your photos of Dubbo Camp.

Good to hear you enjoyed the Wagga reunion and we look forward to seeing you in Sydney for Anzac Day and hopefully the Lismore reunion.

JACK BERTRAM 2/1, Hamilton, with some kind words to the editorial staff of the News, which was very much appreciated.

Jack was interested in Steve Clarke's reporting of the Kokoda Track Walkway and enclosed a welcome donation to start the fund rolling. He was certain that the 2/1st must have their memorial plaque and hoped that all 2/1 Pioneers would support the appeal. He says the Pioneers have not been recognised for their efforts and unless we promote ourselves, nobody else will. One of his biggest disappointments was the lack of recognition of the part the 2/1sts played in the defence of Tobruk, as we do not rate a mention on the

Nation's memorial in Canberra, nor are we accorded any in most of the official accounts. Hopefully we must ensure that we do get a plaque on the Kokoda Track Walkway.

Good letter, Jack, thanks for the donation which will be acknowledged in due course and hope to see you Anzac Day.

ALF BENTLEY 2/1, Yokine, W.A., with a few lines from the West and his best wishes. He had a visit recently from his old mate Gordon Chrystall from Larras Lea in N.S.W. who had come over to the West with his son, Ralph, with a load of air conditioning ducts. They managed to fit in a pleasant BBQ and, of course, a few "coldies". Alf had not seen him since the 1993 reunion in Sydney. He also speaks by phone to Nev ("Bindi") Moane from North Curl Curl and says it's nice to have a yarn.

Alf also had word last month that Bob Pawley of the Tank Attack platoon had passed away at Port Macquarie.

He and Pat still do a fair bit of swimming and Alf has just resigned as Club President.

Hopes to be in Sydney for Anzac Day and sends best wishes to all from both Pat and himself.

MARJ BOYLE, widow of Keith 2/1, Moama, with a card for Christmas and a kind donation to funds. Good to hear from you again, Marj, and hope your health problems have sorted themselves out – you've certainly had a pretty torrid time the last year or two. How you find the time to run the Meals on Wheels, seven days a week from Moama, handicapped as you are, is nothing short of a miracle. Keep up the good work and our very best wishes to you for the coming year.

LES BRITT 2/1, Cairns, with a cheque enclosed with a Christmas card and best wishes to all Pioneers from the Far North.

ANNE BURNS, widow of Arthur (Scotty) Burns 2/1, Wagstaff Point, with a donation to funds and her thanks for the News which she looks forward to receiving. Your letter arrived too late, Anne, for inclusion in the last issue.

Your congratulations are passed on to Jack Griffiths on his receiving the O.A.M. in last year's Honours List – a well deserved award. Jack and "Scotty" served in Tobruk together. Good to hear from you again, Anne, all the best for the coming year.

CLAUDE CAMPBELL 2/1, Inverell, with a cheque for Treasurer and apologies for leaving it so long to pen a few lines. (We'll forgive you, Claude, even if you did have to get Dot to finish it for you). An original B Coy. at Greta, Claude went to H.Q. Coy. when the unit was in the Quarry in New Guinea.

He has not been in the best of health the past few months after a trip to Armidale Hospital and now on a strict no bending, no nothing, orders and in trouble most of the time for not carrying out "routine orders". They had to give their car away a couple of years ago and have to resort to cabs for travel. Still at 83, mate, you've done well, so let someone else have the worry of driving you about.

Claude was saddened to read of the passing of Bob Lake and others well known in the unit. A lot of water has gone under the bridge since the war years. Mentions that there are only two other 2/1sts left in Inverell – Tom Caine (C Coy) and Jack Purcell (B Coy). (Incidentally, Claude, Tom Caine is not on our Pioneer mailing list.)

Do hope you can make the Lismore reunion in September, will be good to see you and Dot again. In the meantime, keep well and our best wishes.

JACK COATES 2/1, Umina, with three letters since last Mail Bag and a donation to funds. Jack has had his share of health problems since the reunion in Wagga and has spent varied times in both Gosford and Brisbane Waters Hospitals. Early December had unstable angina resulting in five days in hospital and instead of watching ER on the TV staged one of his own. Home again until a few days before Christmas when he was admitted to have a pacemaker fitted and discharged on Christmas Day. Jack missed the Rats Christmas luncheon at Tuggerah and their January meeting, but reports that "Bluey" Miller and Harry Hamer are OK and still battling on.

He also missed out on his family trip to Narrabri, but Lex was able to make the journey with strict instructions to wave to the Pioneer ghosts at Greta as she passed through.

Many thanks for the copy of "Wheels in the Storm", Jack, and it will be placed in our Battalion library to be shared around if anyone is interested in reading same. It is based on a Jewish ASC unit serving in Tobruk and Jack says it makes good reading for any old Desert Rat. (Max has written to thank you for the book and, on my behalf, many thanks for the stamps. Have been a little snowed under with family home from overseas for three months and not much spare time for letter writing).

Best wishes for your 80th birthday on 4th February, trust you were able to celebrate. All the best to Lex and yourself and hope to see you Anzac Day.

ALLAN CRUTE 2/1, Woolgoolga, per pen of wife Beulah, with Season's Greetings to all and said she and Allan were very sad to read the Last Post and to read of the deaths of Bob Lake, Max Law and Jim McDonald from Tuncurry. Beulah asked that their sympathy be passed on to Joan Lake and family in their sad loss. They were also sorry to hear of the death of Allan's old Sig mate, Bernie Reiners, and were sending a note to Mona.

Allan and Beulah had a trip to Macksville recently and had a few hours with Joyce and Eric Reynolds, 2/1, over lunch. Both were as well as can be expected and enjoyed the visit.

The Crutes had a card from Edna Marshall of Glen Innes, widow of Jack 2/1, for Christmas and were pleased to hear from her. Edna is 84 and had just had a major operation for gallstones and hernia and is doing well. They try and visit her when they pass through Glen Innes, also the Campbells at Inverell. (We have a letter in the Mail Bag from Dot and Claude – the first for many years – so they are still in the land of the living.)

Both Allan and Beulah are keeping well. Allan has a few problems, but OK as long as he is careful and watches what he eats. They are both still very active in Red Cross, but have to stand down from their offices at their next A.G.M. meeting to get some new blood in the top jobs.

All the very best to you both and hope you are able to make the Lismore reunion in September.

VINCE CULLEN 2/1, Peakhurst, with a sub and best wishes to all Pioneers, especially HQ Coy. Enjoys receiving the News and reading of old mates.

DAVE DENNY 2/1, Lismore, with a note to say he and Joyce enjoyed their trip to Wagga for the 2/2nd reunion and are now looking forward to the Lismore "do" in September. Dave also turned 80 with a big family surprise party last year and apart from a bit of arthritis has little to complain about. Gets most of his pleasures these days from gardening, "fishless" fishing and outings to the club on Friday nights. Says he gets well looked after (take a bow Joyce), but does his share loading the dishwasher after every meal. Big deal!!

On their way home from Wagga they stayed in Sydney for a week and visited the Kokoda Walkway at Concord. It was amazing and hopes by now it is more advanced.

Many thanks from Max for your good wishes – he is well and truly off the crutches and doing fine. Hope to see you both in Lismore later in the year.

JOHN DOWD 2/2, Wagga, with a donation to funds and a report on the passing of good friend Jack Morgan. This is reported elsewhere in Last Post, and was a great shock to his many friends. Copies of the News will be sent to his daughter, Christine, and his partner Evelyn Booth, when published. Many thanks to Daphne for writing the note, as John has macular degeneration of both eyes and finds it difficult to read what he writes. Our best wishes to you both.

ALAN DUNSTONE, 2/4 Pioneers, with good wishes for the Festive Season to all 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneers and special wishes to Allan McInnes. Thanks, Alan, and all the best to your Committee and Members.

NORMA FITCH, Rydalmore, widow of Harold 2/1, with a sub for the treasurer and her best wishes to all for a healthy and happy 1997. Good to hear from you, Norma.

GRACE FOWKES, Wentworthville, widow of Dick (Snowy) 2/1, with a card for Christmas and a donation to funds. Grace enjoys reading the

News and is hoping to obtain a copy of the 2/1st history from one of the local libraries.

(Latest report is that she is able to get one transferred to her own library and was looking forward to reading same). Best wishes, Grace, and thanks for the donation to funds.

JOSIE GIBSON, Dungog, widow of John 2/1, with a card and best wishes for the coming year. Also sorry to hear about Lakey – a nice chap and will be missed. Josie says Jack was sick for some time, but passed away very quickly in the end. He enjoyed receiving and reading the News. Our best wishes to you Josie, and Max is doing well after his hip replacement.

SAM GARDINER 2/1, Oak Flats, with a donation to the treasurer and the news that John Thirlby, ex-sigs 2/1, had passed away. John was a brother to "Tiny" Thirlby 2/1 who passed away in 1988. "Tiny" was a member of the Unit football team and was well known in the battalion. Sam had seen the notice in the local paper, but unfortunately too late to attend the funeral.

Sam has been in and out of hospital late in the year with cataract and cornea graft operations and the Dr was pleased with the results at last check-up. Hope the latest reports are good.

Sorry your July '96 News went missing and Max has posted you on a copy.

Thanks for your good wishes to all Pioneers, also the 9th Training Crew from Dubbo, and hope the eyes continue to improve.

JIM GRAY 2/1, Warrawong, with a letter of good wishes to all Pioneers and their families for the coming year.

He makes a further plea to all who are physically able to try and attend the march and reunion on Anzac Day. Numbers are thinning and he realises that a great number are just not capable of getting to the "starting line", but with help could perhaps make the reunion at the Occidental in York Street.

In regard to the 2/1st members you mention in your letter, Jim, "Tiny" Chapman is no longer with us and Jack Charters and Ted Cox not on our mailing list, so have no idea of their whereabouts or if they are still alive. There's no doubt as you get older how your mind does go back to those army days and recall faces and names of old mates. Sadly so many have passed on, but memories remain.

Your phone number has been noted, Jim, and will be passed on to Bill Tasker along with your regards.

Closes with best wishes and hopes we have a good roll up for Anzac Day.

BRIAN GUHL 2/1, Floreat, W.A., with a cheque for funds and his best wishes. He periodically sends funds to local W.A. Branch, but on this occasion Len Preedy suggested he send half to Sydney.

Brian says he looks forward to receiving the News and has regular contact with Jack Stewart of the 2/1sts. Although so many years have passed, he enjoys reading and recognising some of the old names from H.Q. Coy., particularly the I Section.

Good to hear from you, Brian, write again some time.

STUART HALDANE 2/2, Preston, Vic., with his best wishes for the coming year and a sub for the treasurer. Says he's been remiss in sending on his dues, but hopes he's now in front. (No comments from the treasurer, Stuart, so that's a good sign). He was interested to read the report on Colonel Williams' move to the Gold Coast and says it was a wise move to take up residence with his daughter. Stuart said he was a great person to have served under during his time with 2/2 Pioneers. We are sure that there are many who will agree with you on that score.

Stuart is keeping fairly well, he says, for a 2/2 and trusts all 2/1 endeavour to do the same. Closes with kind regards to all.

BEAU HANNAFORD 2/1, Umina, with a cheque (as he says) for Vic's lousy bag. We are sure Vic won't care what it's called, as long as it's full. That's our treasurer!!

Beau and wife, Jean, have settled in well in their new surroundings at Umina and are enjoying the environment where the pace is slow, no rat race, and where people still have time to pass the time of day. Good to hear, Beau, as so many folks these days change

homes late in life and spend years regretting the move.

He was very sorry to learn of the passing of Max Law – the first person to introduce himself at the Moore Park Barracks and shake his hand and they remained good friends during and after their army service.

The disbandment of the 2/1sts after the war saw Beau and Max the only two sergeants left with 160 points. That didn't amuse Max one bit and was backed up with some choice words about the army and the point system.

Beau and Jean are standing up well to ravages of time, although Beau fractured a shoulder in a fall which is now almost as good as new.

Good to hear from you and all the best to you both – hope to see you Anzac Day.

CLIVE HARRIS 2/1, Aberdeen, with a short note and a welcome donation to funds. Clive is leading a pretty quiet life since Betty passed away and still misses her very much. He has not seen any of the old crowd for some time, but I guess there are not many in your neck of the woods. All the best, Clive, and hopefully you may be able to make the next Lismore reunion.

JOHN HUNT 2/1, New Farm, Qld., requesting the new address of Bert and Claire Beasley. Max has written and given this to you and hopes to see you both in April. All the best.

GLORIA HUTCHINSON, Caringbah, widow of Bill 2/1, with a "little something" for the Pioneer News and says – just love it. Good to hear, Gloria, and hope you continue to find it good reading. Have not forgotten your Pioneer badge, keep going to send it by mail, but haven't got round to it. Hope you may be able to once again join the "girls" on Anzac Day for lunch. Will be in touch with you shortly.

LEO HEALEY 2/1, Mentone, Vic., with Season's Greetings to all and his donation to funds. Was saddened to hear of the death of Bern Reiners, ex-sigs 2/1, Leo remembers him well and in high regard. Passes on kindest regards to all 2/1sts.

JACK KEMPNIH 2/1, Fingal Bay, once again per pen of trusted wife and secretary, Mais. (She deserves more money, Jack). Good to hear from you again and many thanks for your kind remarks, it's nice to know now and again that your efforts are appreciated.

Mais and Jack are off on another of their holiday trips early in March taking in Melbourne, flying to King Island for a week (festival week on Island), back to Melbourne, over to Adelaide for a week and then home on the Indian Pacific. Guess all this will depend at the moment on how badly the washaways have affected the railways. Anyway, good luck and hope everything goes according to plan.

Fisherman Jack is quite dejected. He laid off fishing while the crowds were about over the holidays, and plenty of fish about, and thought he'd get cracking when the people went, but the fish went with the crowd. Mais says he'll be itching to get back into it once they get home.

Jack has been busy painting the outside of the house, which has also been held up by the rain. Says he's going to get someone to do it next time as he hates painting.

They both are glad to receive and read the News when it comes, but saddened by the loss of so many fellas and wives. They hope those who are able will enjoy their day on 25th April, even though it will bring sadness to many. Both send their regards to all the friends they have met over the years and hope to see a few more at the Lismore reunion – date already marked on their calendar.

Thanks for the donation to funds and once again did appreciate your kind thoughts. Keep well and hope to see you in September.

JUNE KERR, Narrabeen, widow of Ken 2/1, with a thank you note to all concerned with the excellent luncheon gathering at the Vets Village at Narrabeen organised by the Rats of Tobruk. June is in the Connie Fell Hostel in the Village and appreciated the opportunity to attend with several other Pioneers and their wives. Also thanks for your kind remarks on the Mail Bag, June, and glad you enjoyed reading it. Best wishes, keep well.

GORDON KILLION, Ballina, with a change of address from Baulkham Hills, and both he and his wife Shirley are looking forward to a dip in the briny and toes in the sand. Hope you are enjoying your changed lifestyle and many

thanks for the cheque for the News. The paper will be mailed in due course to your new home. Kindest regards to you both.

JOYCE LAW, Kareela, widow of Max 2/1, with a cheque for the News and Season's Greetings to all. Joyce sends a big thank you and really appreciated all the kindness shown to Max over so many years. Do hope you keep in touch now and again and trust you have a wonderful holiday in the States. Our warmest regards to you and the family.

DON LINTON 2/2, Tuncurry, with a card wishing all Pioneers the Compliments of the Season and expressed sincere appreciation to those who produce the Pioneer News and to the committee who do a great job. Best wishes to both Nancy and yourself Don, perhaps may see you in Lismore come September.

DORRIE LONG, Sutherland, widow of Bob 2/1, also with a card for Christmas to all 2/1sts. Says age is catching up and she's fast slowing down. A lot of us are suffering from the same complaint, Dorrie. Best wishes for the coming year.

MAY LOOBY, Gunnedah, widow of Tim 2/1, with a letter to say that her husband had passed away in December after a long battle with cancer. Tim was in B Coy. May said Tim never wrote to the Pioneer News, but assured us that when it came it was the first thing he opened and read from cover to cover before looking at the other mail. They were never able to make any of the reunions, even though some were close, but circumstances didn't permit. Thank you for your letter, May, our sincere sympathy to you and your family.

GEOFF LLOYD 2/2, Highbury, S.A., with Christmas greetings to all from Adelaide. His wife, Ronnie, who has not enjoyed the best of health for many years, has had a good year for a change. She has great spirit, although with her many problems her doctor did say (in Geoff's words) if he was a vet and she was a horse he would have to shoot her (just as well you aren't a horse, Ronnie). Good to hear you are feeling better and hope the arm is now mended. Geoff and Ronnie still have two of their family in Melbourne – Michele and Paul have just moved and Paul goes shortly to Victoria Barracks as a Major. Lance and Deidre are expecting their fourth child – a tenth grandchild for Ronnie and Geoff. Thanks for your good wishes, keep well.

HARRY MOWBRAY 2/1, Thornland Qld., with some cash for the treasurer and Christmas greetings to all Pioneers and their families. He and Dot have just returned from their latest overseas trip including the States, England, Wales and Scotland. Also had a visit to Adelaide and met up with Doug Waters 2/1 and had two "good" sessions with him. Says it's good to call on old Pioneers.

Harry sends his deepest sympathy to the family of Max Law and to Joan Lake and her family – sad to see so many old friends passing on each year.

Closes with best wishes to all and hopes to see a good roll up at Lismore.

TOM MORGAN 2/2, Forster, with best wishes for the coming year to all and praise to all Committee who keep the Association going. Says as an ex-18 Pl. D Coy member he feels so useless when he receives so much pleasure from the News and says he feels it's a great honour to be able to attend on Anzac Day and various reunions. Tom is surprised how many Pioneers have called and kept in touch over the years and says it's wonderful so many mates take the trouble, especially when he was in and out of hospital.

He was pleasantly surprised to receive a visit from Jack Morgan and his companion Evelyn Booth for a couple of days before Christmas. They had travelled up from Wagga and they were able to get together with Snowy Dodd 2/2 for lunch and a few drinks. It must have been a shock to you, Tom, to hear Jack had passed away late in December. He will be sadly missed.

Thanks for the donation to funds, Tom, and your good wishes to the Association Committee.

GEORGE MURPHY 2/2, Victorian Hon.-Sec., with a card for Christmas and best wishes to the Sydney Association. George conveyed kindest regards to President Allan and his

Executive, his own personal greetings and all the best for a happy and healthy 1997.

PAT MCFARLANE, Blacktown, widow of Ron 2/1, with a donation to funds and is still very happy to receive the News regularly. Apologises for lateness of sub, but had a fall recently and had been going backwards and forward to the doctor. Hope you're fully recovered, Pat, and keep well in 1997.

KEN MORGAN 2/2, Dorrigo, per pen of his daughter Dorothy Foster, who wrote to inform us of the death of her dad's brother, Jack Morgan of Wagga. Thank you, Dorothy, for your letter and you will note that an obituary notice is listed under Last Post elsewhere in this issue. Our sincere sympathy to your dad and we hope he is now fully recovered from his trip to Wagga Hospital caused by the trip to and stress of Jack's funeral.

Copies of the News will be sent to Evelyn as requested and kindest regards to your father. Many thanks for your donation to funds.

JOYCE MCGREGOR, Bradbury, widow of Bob 2/1, with a change of address. Joyce's long-time home at Kingsgrove was bought by the R.T.A. as it was in the path of the extension to the M5 Freeway. She made the move to Bradbury in the same street as her daughter, Jill, and is settling in well. Joyce has a few health problems and feels happier with family close by. All the best, Joyce, from all your old friends and keep in touch.

JOHN MCKNIGHT 2/2, Dundas, with his annual sub and best wishes. John spent a week in Concord Hospital recently for a check-up and reports he is in good health.

JEAN MCINTYRE, Warrimoo, widow of John 2/2, with Season's Greetings and a cheque for the Treasurer. Many thanks, Jean, and your kind regards passed on to everyone.

NEVILLE O'CONNOR 2/2, Tintenbar, per pen of wife Betty, with best wishes to all for the coming year. Bet said Neville took ill on the way home from the reunion in Wagga and had a pacemaker put in in late November. Head scans show he has had a slight stroke sometime and has to take things very carefully. Better do as your nurse orders, Neville, and get yourself fit for the Lismore reunion. All the best to you both.

ROY PARRETT 2/2, Scarness Qld, with a cheque for the Treasurer and his best wishes. You certainly won't suffer from writer's cramp, Roy, so how about a longer note next time.

ERIC REYNOLDS 2/1 Macksville, with greetings to all and to say how sorry he was to hear of so many good mates passing away each year. He and Joyce have just returned from a trip to Trafalgar in Victoria where their daughter Alison and family live. It is only a small town, but they really enjoyed their visit. Good to see you still getting around, Eric, and our best wishes to Joyce and yourself.

GEORGE SAUER 2/1, Lower Mitcham, S.A., with Season's Greetings to all and a few words of appreciation to those who keep the News going. Many thanks, George, for your kind thoughts.

BRYAN SMALLHORN 2/1, Armidale, with Christmas greetings to all and a sub to keep our Treasurer happy. Good to hear you had been in contact with Claude Campbell of Inverell and were able to spend some time together. We had not heard from him in years, but did have a letter recently which appears elsewhere in Mail Bag. He and Dot are hoping to make the Lismore reunion. All the best, Bryan, perhaps you could keep that date in mind, too.

HARRY SPREDBOROUGH 2/1, Alexandra Hills Qld, with best wishes to all for the Festive Season and a "little something" to keep Vic happy. Do hope you and Jean are now recovered from your car accident and able to get out and about. All the best.

GWEN STRODE, Yagoona, sister of Keith Jones 2/1 K.I.A., with Season's Greetings to all Pioneers and a donation to funds. Many thanks, Gwen, keep well and good to hear from you again.

MAVIS SMITH, Bathurst, widow of Noel 2/1, also with greetings to all and best wishes for good health in 1997. Thanks for your sub, Mavis, all the best.

BILL THIELE 2/1, Port Hughes, S.A., per pen of wife Betty, with a donation to funds and best wishes for the coming year. Betty says Bill has been cleared from his prostate cancer and

is very well at present. He has taken up grass bowls for the summer and still plays golf during the winter months. Hope your health keeps on the up and up, Bill, and our best wishes to you both.

DICK WAKELY 2/2, Merewether, with a sub enclosed with his Christmas card and many thanks to those who keep the News coming. Passes on his best wishes to all Pioneers for a healthy and happy 1997. Thanks for the donation, Dick, keep well.

MAX WILSON 2/1, Stockton, with a change of address for our records, as Max has moved into his late brother's house since he passed away. He had a rather bad year in 1996, but at last report is at least mobile, following three operations on his knee cap. Max also had bad arthritis in his left hand and had an operation to straighten his fingers. At time of writing had only a few days to go before the plaster caste came off. Trust that everything went well, Max, and that 1997 will be a better year for you healthwise.

• That completes the Mail Bag for this issue, plenty of letters which is good to see and lots of news from here and interstate. It is now 45 years since Max Law, together with Frank Cheal, co-editors, produced the first issue of Pioneer News in 1957. Trust that all Pioneers, their wives and family continue to enjoy good health and happiness in their later years and hope to see a good roll-up to the march and reunion on Anzac Day.

NEWS ITEMS

• Jack and Valda Pearce of Harbord celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary in February and on the conclusion of the February meeting of the Rats of Tobruk Association at the Five Dock RSL were congratulated by all those present, followed by the cutting of a lovely cake to celebrate the occasion.

Our heartiest congratulations to both Valda and Jack from the Executive, Committee and members of the Association and may they be spared to spend many more happy years together.

• Sam and Margaret Lewis celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at a luncheon at Manly Leagues Club on 8th February and quite a few Pioneer friends were able to join with them on this happy occasion. Heartiest congratulations are extended to both Sam and Margaret and we wish them the very best for future years.

• Gavin Todd 2/2 of Bexley was in St George Public Hospital for a by-pass operation on 17th February and was visited by Bill Tasker who found him quite cheery and progressing well.

We thank Bill Lewis for his visit and for passing on the details. After St George, Gavin seems to think he will be going to Lady Davidson at Turramurra.

All the best, Gavin, and hurry up and get well.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Friends

RE: THE DUTCH MEDAL

Recently at a Remembrance Day Ceremony I noticed a Digger wearing a ribbon and "gong" which I had not seen before. On approaching him, I learnt that it was the Dutch Medal and he was kind enough to give me a copy of a pamphlet explaining the circumstances of its issue. This information sheet appeared in "The Kookaburra", official organ of the 7th Division Association.

You may be interested, as the 7th Division served in Balikpapan, Borneo, just at the end of World War II, which included as Corps Troops, the 2/1 Pioneer Bn. At that time the atomic bomb was dropped and the war was over.

Yours sincerely,

K. F. STUART 2/1 Pioneer NX24789

RUSS HARRISON TO S.A.

In a letter to the secretary, Russ has informed us that he and Rona have moved to South Australia and are staying with their daughter, Kate, at Oakbank until they purchase a home.

Russ states that he has valued the friendship of the Pioneers over the years and appreciates the efforts of the Committee members in keeping the Association afloat. He also tenders his resignation as Vice-President of the Association, together with other positions he held, and looks forward to meeting up with old friends at future reunions.

We wish you and Rona the very best in your move, Russ, and sincerely thank you for the support you gave the Association in carrying out, most successfully, your tasks as membership collector on Anzac Day and of Association reporter.

LISMORE REUNION

Saturday 13th, Sunday 14th September, 1997.

NSW North Coast Branch invite all Pioneers and their Ladies to their Country Reunion at Lismore and Ballina with details as follows:

WREATH LAYING - Saturday, 13th September
5 pm at the Lismore Memorial Baths Cenotaph, corner of Market and Molesworth Streets. Medals to be worn.

REUNION DINNER - Saturday, 13th September
7.30 pm Smorgasbord Dinner at the Lismore RSL Club, Market Street. Cost: \$25 per head. Drinks at own expense.

BARBECUE LUNCH - Sunday, 14th September
12.15 pm. Lunch at the Ballina Ex-Servicemen's Home Complex, 71-73 Morton Street, Ballina. Members will be invited to inspect the complex. Cost: \$10 per head. Drinks sold at approx. \$1 per can of beer.

ACCOMMODATION - LISMORE - Olympic Hotel; Ph. (066) 21 9900 \$54 double or twin, \$45 single, \$63 triple. Karinga Motel: Ph. (066) 21 2787 \$60 double or twin, \$50 single. Centrepoint Motel: Ph. (066) 21 8877. No rates at present time. These three motels in Molesworth Street within walking distance of RSL and central to Lismore Centre. BALLINA - Fun and Sun Motel, Ballina Heritage Motel, Palms Motor Inn, El Rancho Motel. See NRMA directory for rates. Ballina is approx. 27 kms from Lismore so own transport is needed. All accommodation is to be booked by you and to obtain the price quoted here you must mention you are attending the Pioneer Reunion.

TRANSPORT - To Lismore from Sydney there are planes to Ballina and bus to Lismore run by Ansett of Aust. Also Hazelton Air Lines from Sydney to Lismore direct daily. Country Link XPT from Sydney to Lismore - 1. Departs Sydney 4 pm and arrives Lismore 4 am next morning. 2. Departs Sydney 7 am and arrives Lismore 7 pm. Train travellers will be met at Lismore station and taken to their accommodation.

DEPOSIT OF \$10 PER HEAD is required with application form below and to reach Ken Wilson before 23rd August, 1997, for catering purposes. Deposit is non-refundable if you do not attend.

CHEQUES etc. for deposit to be made out to K.A. WILSON, NOT the Association with the application form and posted to: KEN WILSON, 9 ROSEDALE SQUARE, LISMORE, NSW 2480. Ph. (066) 21 4762.

CUT OUT - Fill in particulars: Lismore Reunion

Surname: Known Name:

Ladies Name: Phone: Unit:

Address:

Attendance Tick: ☐ Dinner ☐ Barbecue ☐ Car ☐ Plane ☐ Bus ☐ Train

PIONEER NEWS

Phone 9759 5491

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

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Welfare: BILL TASKER, Phone 9718 6658

PIONEER ANZAC FUNCTIONS 1997

WREATH LAYING SERVICE

On 24th April 36 Pioneers and eight ladies attended the Wreath Laying Service at the Cenotaph with Bill Tasker acting as Marshal and John Tooker as March Leader.

Banners were carried by Laurie Kelly and Roy Levy. The wreaths were laid by John Gilchrist and Allan McInnes who also recited the Ode. Aub Brazier gave the two Bugle calls.

It was a most impressive service and all in attendance agreed the increased attendance was due to the early start of 4pm.

ANZAC DAY MARCH AND REUNION

Big crowds lined the march even though it was a grey day. Jack Tooker marshalled the 2/1sts and Allan McInnes carried out the task with the 2/2nds. John Gilchrist led the 2/1st and Allan McInnes led the 2/2nds.

The Reunion at the Occidental saw an attendance of 96, including the minders and the meal at \$13 was really good and enjoyed by all. A letter of thanks has been sent to the staff, also making a booking for 1998.

REUNION TABLE TALK

We were grateful to Gavin Todd in carrying out the role of collecting the subs from the 2/2nds before the march. Gavin looked really well considering it was only two months since his bypass operation. Also grateful to Don Crawford for arranging the purchase of the two wreaths for the service and looking after the 2/2nd Banner.

In a successful and painless operation Vic Whiteley, with Doug Shearston and Gavin Todd assisting, extracted subscriptions without resort to anaesthesia which, however, was available later at the Occidental. There, lunch fees were offered to David Herron, Ray Law and Geoff Finlay under instruction from Olive and Gordon Finlay. Thanks were due to flag-bearers Ray Law and Mark Neasbey, and banner-bearers Tim Lloyd and Andrew O'Neill (who is Bill Robertson's grandson).

Proceeding to the first floor, members were welcomed by President Allan McInnes, who first called on Bill Jollie to thank 2/1 members for their magnificent response to the Kokoda Track appeal, which raised in excess of \$8,000. Patron, John Gilchrist then greeted members and called on them to acknowledge with acclamation the work done by Association office-bearers and helpers. Allan then paid a fitting tribute to the late Bob Lake.

From Perth WA, Alf Bentley took long distance honours. Alf was taking the next few days to look around, with wife Pat. Rex Francis, from Shepparton, Vic., had a lot of catching up to do, this being his first reunion contact since Balikpapan. Also from the south was Melbourne, Noel Grant.

In the direction of south we had Ken Finlayson from Wollongong, but missed Frank Locane, Wandandian near Nowra, who was resting a recalcitrant knee. Lance Gayden left the beautiful Shoalhaven Heads to be with his mates. But it was the north which had the numbers in the compass game led by John Hunt and Bert Beasley from Brisbane, while the Sunshine coast is home to Phil Cramsie. The Gold Coast's Don Barraclough and his table companions were swapping views on "the old age droop".

Dropping down over the border, a platoon from the North coast: David Denny was there, Ray Harris, Snowy Dodd, Kevin Rayward, Neville O'Connor, Ken Wilson promoting the September reunion at Lismore, and Alec George. From Sawtell (ex-Dorrigo) came Fred (Hollywood) Wheaton. Closer to home were Jack (Glido) Griffiths and Jack Bertram from Newcastle, and Brian Kybert came down from Long Jetty.

Well situated among the frequent flyers, we observed Laurie (Three Course) Kelly addressing a bottle of Glenfiddich. Welcome indeed was Ray Law, son of Jim Law, as were Brian and Gary Hemmings and Alan Moore, sons and son-in-law of the late George (Snow) Hemmings.

Bluey Miller was there looking a fit 89 years, with son John, and grandson Brian from Singleton. Other father-son combinations were: Bert Neasbey and son Mark; Pat Collins and Gordon; Gordon Finlay and Geoff; Max Herron and David, and grandson John Berry; John Gilchrist and Peter; and Sam Lewis and Gary.

Allan Frogley represented his father who is in a nursing home in Lismore. Allan phoned his parents for the reunion, to find they were thrilled to have seen him on television.

At one end of the room, Padre Steele was seen in animated conversation with the group on the Collins-Neasbey table, having returned to the Sydney fold after attending the Melbourne march last year.

Towards the end of the day, the Coogee-Randwick pipe band appeared and performed. Discussion was still proceeding on the merits of their work when the Sydney Thistle group materialised. This inspired a small group (i.e. small in numbers) viz Bob Ginnane, Ken Wilson and Snow Dodd to perform an impromptu fling, to the delight of all (but possibly to the concern of the drinkers in the ground floor bar below).

Congratulations to Committee and working parties for another memorable reunion.

Reporter - BILL LEWIS

KOKODA TRACK MEMORIAL

Donations received from the appeal letter sent out by the 2/1 Pioneer Kokoda Committee on February 24 resulted in a total of \$8,000 within four weeks. This was an amazing result and the 2/1 Pioneer Committee wish to thank all those 2/1st Pioneers who responded so promptly.

On March 17 a cheque for \$3,000 was presented to the Concord Kokoda Committee to cover the cost of plaque for 2/1 Pioneer sponsorship at the No 5 Station Imita Ridge, which will not be completed until early 1998.

On April 28, a cheque for \$1,000 was handed to the Concord Kokoda Committee for a sponsorship by the 2/1 Pioneer Bn of two commemorative plaques to be placed on the Rose Garden Wall of Remembrance. In our letter to the Concord Committee it was stated that the remaining bank balance of approx. \$3,500 after expenses would be donated for bench seats to be placed in the Rose Garden and along the Track. In their reply of thanks the Concord Committee said they would liaise with us on future sponsorships.

The Memorial Centrepiece is the main focus of the Walkway and is the only project that is completed. It features water flowing alongside large granite walls. Famous photos of the Track by notable wartime photographer, Damien Parer, are sandblasted into the granite walls, depicting the history of the Track.

The Memorial Rose Garden dedicated to the Australian Army Nursing sisters is being constructed in the Hospital Car Park nearly opposite the main road into the hospital. It is expected to be completed by November.

"Victory in the Pacific Day" - Service at the Kokoda Track Memorial, Rhodes Park, Killoola Street, Rhodes on Friday, 15th August at 2.30 pm. Medals worn.

LAST POST

JACK GRIFFITH 2/2 of Frankston passed away on 18th January at the age of 85 years from a heart attack.

Jack was a P.O.W. in Japan and had been in ill health for some time before moving to Tawonga to be with his daughter and son-in-law. Unfortunately, he only had a short stay here before he was moved to Mount Beauty Hospital. He was a regular subscriber to Pioneer News as the last letter from him was in October.

We extend our sympathy to Jack's family.

CLIFF SECOMBE 2/1 of Thirlmere passed away on 6th May and the funeral service at the graveside was attended by Ray Law, son of Jim 2/1. The Poppy Service was conducted by the Thirlmere RSL.

On behalf of the Association, Ray Law placed flowers on the casket and extended our sympathy to the family. Many thanks, Ray.

WIN McDONAGH of Condell Park, wife of John McDonagh 2/2 passed away on 23rd May and the funeral service at St Lukes Revesby was attended by Roy Levy, Bob and Nell Ginnane, Don and Val Crawford.

Association sympathy was extended to Jack and family by Roy Levy.

Rev. ALBERT PITT-OWEN 2/1 of Picton passed away on 13th June at the nursing home where he had resided for a few years.

Albert was Padre to the 2/1st Pioneer Bn for three years and had served with them in Tobruk, New Guinea and the Atherton Tablelands where he was posted to another unit.

The funeral service at St John's Church, Camden, on 17th June saw a packed church of family and friends. Pioneers in attendance were Barbara and John Gilchrist, Doris and Cyril Amies, Kevin Morahan, Vic Whiteley and Bill Tasker who passed on Association sympathy to Peg Pitt-Owen and her family.

BOB McTAGGART 2/2 of Rockhampton, formerly of Gosford passed away on 15th June. The funeral service was held at Our Lady of the Rosary Church at Wyoming on 20th June.

We are grateful to Bob's daughter, Diane Hyett, for phoning us with the details. We also appreciate that Bert Neasbey 2/2 was able to attend the funeral and extend our sympathy to the family. Also in attendance was Alex Mitchell 2/2.

CYRIL DENTON 2/2 of Adelaide passed away on 22nd May and several Pioneers attended the funeral. We thank Allan Olson for passing on the details.

CHRIS ("Apples") McKAY 2/2 of Canada Bay, passed away at Eversleigh Hospital, Petersham, on 23rd June, after months of ill-health, at 76. The funeral service was held at Rookwood Crematorium on 27th June and Bill Tasker, Jack and Marj Kerslake and Roy Jardine attended on behalf of the Association.

To Marea and family we extend our very sincere sympathy in their sad loss.

OFFICE BEARERS 1997

At the Annual General Meeting held at Redfern RSL Club on 16th May the following Office Bearers were elected for 1997.

President: Allan McInnes. **Patrons:** John Gilchrist 2/1 and John Williams 2/2. **Vice Presidents:** Bill Robertson, Gordon Finlay, Jack Tooker and Bill Jollie. **Secretary:** Max Herron. **Assistant Secretary:** George Walker. **Treasurer:** Vic Whiteley. **Welfare Officer:** Bill Tasker. **Reporter:** Bill Lewis. **Editor:** Max Herron. **Mail Bag Editor:** Peg Herron.

The Balance Sheet which was prepared and audited by Mr Arthur Watson, AASA was read to the meeting by the Treasurer and adopted by the meeting on a motion by V. Whiteley - carried.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

Another issue of Mail Bag and scores of letters – mostly in connection with the appeal to 2/1st members for donations to the Kokoda Track Walkway at Concord. The committee were overwhelmed by the generosity of the 2/1sts and thank one and all for their wonderful response. Anzac Day has passed for another year, a good roll up to the march and reunion, and I'm sure was enjoyed by all in attendance. Now on with the letters.

SNOWY ANDERSON 2/2, Aspendale, with a welcome letter and cuttings from a 1953 Melbourne paper on a review of the 2/2nd unit history – and the price, 27/6d. How times have changed!! A good article Snow, also the letter from Les Hall, author of "Blue Haze". Max had a copy sent to him too, with the author's compliments, many years ago. Special thanks to Julie for the tapes – they are now on loan to other 2/2nd Pioneers. Best wishes to Isabell, Julie and yourself and hope to see you again at the Lismore reunion.

BILL ANDERSON 2/1, Beresfield, with a donation to funds and a further cheque to the Kokoda Track Memorial. Many thanks, Bill, and for your good wishes.

ALF BALLARD 2/2, Monterey, with his apologies for not attending the march or reunion, but sends his best regards to all, especially D Coy., 2/2. Says that time has caught up with him. Your donation has been passed on to worthy treasurer – many thanks.

ROBERT BALLY 2/1, Balga W.A., with a donation towards the Kokoda project and hopes one day soon to make the trip to view the finished project. Max will be in touch with you regarding the 2/1 unit history. All the best and many thanks for your welcome donation.

DON BARRACLOUGH 2/1, Burleigh Heads, with a short note to say he would be down on Anzac Day, although marching out of the question. Don also enclosed a cheque for Kokoda Walkway, and felt it was a worthy memorial. Thanks, Don, for your good wishes.

ALBY BARTON 2/1, Gulgong, with a cheque for subs and his thanks for the continued supply of information in the News. Does appreciate hearing the news of so many of the "boys" and looks forward to the paper. He and Gwen are very happy with their move some six years ago to Gulgong and Alby still spends some time at the "Pioneer Museum" and meets many interesting people. Country life can be very rewarding, but he has become more aware of the problems and difficulties our farmers face day by day. Your regards are passed on to the boys, Alby, and our best wishes to Gwen and yourself. Keep well.

JACK BERTRAM 2/1, Hamilton, with a letter enclosing donation for the "Track" and he felt sure all 2/1sts would support the appeal and ensure they do get a place on the Walkway. Hope your trip to Cairns brought back some wartime memories. Kindest regards from all, Jack.

EVELYN BOOTH, Wagga, with a note of thanks following the sad loss of the late Jack Morgan 2/2. Evelyn had known Jack for most of her life and Ken Morgan 2/2 was married to her cousin. She would appreciate to still receive the News as she has met so many Pioneers over the years. This has been noted, Evelyn, and our best wishes to you. Many thanks for the donation enclosed in your letter.

LES BRITT 2/1, Cairns, with a generous donation to the "Track" and says he would sooner walk from Rhodes Station to Concord than back to Imita Ridge. Guess a lot of the fellas would support that statement, Les. (Also remembers the reception the Pioneers gave General Blamey at Owers Corner). Kind regards and thanks for the donation.

FRED BROOKS 2/1, Taree, with a donation for the "Track" and felt the idea was a good one. He agrees that the Imita Ridge station would be most appropriate for the plaque as it certainly holds the most memories in his mind. Fred sees Bill Nicholson now and then who is showing signs of wear like the rest of us. Bill and Fred are the only 2/1 Pioneers left in Taree.

Incidentally, Fred, we do not have Bill on the mailing list – if he would like to have the News would need his address. Thanks for your kind wishes regarding the paper – they were very much appreciated.

ADRIAN BUCKLEY 2/1, Tamworth, ex-C.O. of the unit, with a very generous donation to the "Track" appeal, for which many thanks, also your donation to Association funds. He and wife, Barbara, have now left the farm and live in Tamworth. All the best to you both and keep well.

SAM BUCKMAN 2/1, Laurieton, wondered why he was sending a cheque to put up a memorial to the mud and rain they had to walk, sit and sleep in day and night on the "Track" – but still thought it was a good idea. Something to remind them of the hardships in which they served, but always someone or something to laugh about. Thanks, Sam, for your donation – signed it the "Stew Paddler".

RAY BURROUGHS 2/2, Canberra, with a sub for the treasurer and his appreciation for those who keep the News coming. He and wife, Merle, had been on a trip to Gosford and Forster recently and had called to see Nancy and Don Linton 2/2 at Tuncurry. They were still "full of beans", despite angina problems with Nancy and Don now using oxygen extensively for his lung problems. Merle and Nancy were old friends, living next door to each other when growing up, before Don or Ray knew either of them, so the visit was doubly important. Max has written you about the medals, Ray, and the procedure to obtain same. Thanks for the donation to funds.

LOYAL BUTCHER 2/1, Kingscliff, with a donation to funds, also one for the "Track" appeal. Many thanks, Loyal, and your good wishes passed on to the "boys".

COLIN CAMERON 2/1, Campbelltown, with two short letters – one with a cheque for the Kokoda appeal and the other with some cash for worthy treasurer. Col sends best wishes to all for a good Anzac Day as he will not be able to attend on account of health problems. All the best, Col, and many thanks for the donations.

TED CARTER 2/1, Tamworth, with a generous donation to the "Track" project for which many thanks. Says age is creeping up on him, like the rest, but still manages to take an interest in things to keep the brain active, but finds the memory slipping particularly with names. (Join the mob, Ted). Thanks for the invite if passing through Tamworth any time – will keep it in mind. Your kind regards are passed on to all.

GEORGE CATCHPOLE 2/2, Northgate, with a long newsy letter and cuttings from the Nundah papers on his Anzac Day functions. For a small town 400 to 500 people was a good effort and the papers certainly gave you good coverage. George also attended a reunion of 9th Div. members who were in the landing on Tarakan – was the only Pioneer there, but a good attendance of infantry units and air force personnel. Congratulations on reaching your 80th birthday on 22nd April and hope the year ahead brings you lots of good health. Many thanks for donation to Association funds and your good wishes to all Pioneers.

FRANK CAULFIELD 2/2, Benalla, with a photo of the 2/2 march on Anzac Day and his yearly subs. Mentions that George Murphy (Vic. Secretary) collapsed carrying the wreath at the march and Col Handley took over. George had been in hospital recently with heart trouble and probably returned to his duties too soon. Frank talked to him recently and said he seems to be well on the road to recovery. Hope your "batching" went well, Frank, while Betty was in Cairns on holiday. Bet it was a darn sight warmer up there. Many thanks for the photo and donation to funds.

JACK CLEMENT 2/2, Baulkham Hills, with his dues and some words of praise for the News and for those who keep it going. Says it's good to read and helps to remember some good times (and bad) when familiar names crop up in the paper. Your kind regards are passed on to all.

JACK COATES 2/1, Umina, with two long letters, one with donation for the "Track" and the other with apologies for non attendance on Anzac Day. After another spell in hospital was not game to risk a trip to town by train, so attended local service, followed by lunch at

Ettalong Bowling Club and Memorial Club for concert and dinner at night. Was glad to hear Kokoda Walkway appeal was over-subscribed, says he climbed to Imita Ridge three times, second time with John Gilchrist's party handling a 25-pounder gun from Owers' Corner to Uberi and the third time with Colonel Brown's bodyguard after he and five other colonels met Major-General "Tubby" Allen at Uberi. Hopes to make the Lismore reunion in September, would love to see Jim Hall of Kyogle again and maybe Harry Spreadborough. Since he wrote Jack has been in Concord for a detached retina operation and Lex has also been in hospital at Kogarah – hope by this both well on the mend.

RON COYTE 2/1, Wentworthville, with two cheques enclosed with his letter, one a donation to funds and the other for the walkway at Concord. He felt it a very worthy cause, even though he was not in New Guinea. Was saddened to hear of Bob Lake's passing, said he did a great job for the Association and a very likeable chap, and would be sadly missed by all. Sends regards to all committee members for helping to keep the association afloat.

BRUCE CHAMBERS 2/1, Turrumurra, also with two cheques, one for the "Track" and the other for Pioneer News. Many thanks, Bruce, for both donations. He sent his best wishes for Anzac Day and said he enjoyed a recent phone call from Steve Clarke. Good to hear from you again.

RON CLARK 2/1, Kingsford, with a very generous donation to the "Track" appeal, for which many thanks, and the News that he had been in Hospital again for another operation. Ron is home now taking things easy and slowly getting better each day. All the best old mate and hope things are still improving.

JOHN COMERFORD 2/1, Elwood Vic, with a short note with his "Track" donation and words of praise for those who keep the News afloat. Thanks for the kind words and your good wishes. Was saddened to see Bernie Reiners' name in "Mufti", says Bern touched a chord with everyone he met and has left behind an impressive heritage. Quite agree with you there, John he was a great friend to Max and I over so many, many years, along with Mona and their family. We shall certainly miss him, and his wonderful sense of fun and humour.

PHIL CRAMSIE 2/1, Buderim Qld., with his contribution to the Kokoda Walkway which he considers a worthy cause and only too happy to contribute. Phil is looking forward to Anzac Day and seeing all the old crowd again – hope you enjoyed your day. Many thanks for your cheque.

BETTY CREASY, Portland, widow of George 2/1, with a cheque for treasurer and hopes to make the "big smoke" for Anzac Day. Bet keeps in close touch by phone with Bill Hoffman 2/1 of Kyogle and mentions Bill has been having a few more problems and in hospital, but on last report was much better. Betty had recently spent a delightful day cruising the Hawkesbury River, weather was perfect and says the river and surroundings never lose their charm. (Good to hear from you, Bet, sorry you did not make it to town on Anzac Day).

VINCE CULLEN 2/1, Peakhurst, with best wishes to all for Anzac Day and enclosed a donation to the "Track". Many thanks, Vince, hope you are keeping well.

ALBY DEAN 2/1, Shepparton Vic, with a short note and some cash to keep the News afloat. He and his wife are enjoying reasonably good health, which is all you can ask for at this stage of our lives. Max has been in touch with you, Alby, in regards to the badge of the association. Your good wishes are heartily reciprocated.

BOB DONALD 2/1, Glen Innes, with a sub on behalf of himself and brother Vic. They are the only two Pioneers now living in Glen Innes. Says he and Vic enjoy fairly good health apart from aches and pains, commonly known as "travelling" pains, never in the same place twice. Bob is involved with Legacy in the town and has been President for the last two years. There are 131 widows to visit and attend to their welfare, so a big job. They have 20 Legatees in the district, but age starting to catch up with them all. Bob was due in Sydney late May to attend the RSL congress, trust all went well. Best wishes to you both.

GEORGE EGAN ex-R.A.N., Penrith, who wrote to us on behalf of Daphne Garland, sister-in-law of the late Keith Garland 2/1, for which we thank you, also the donation to the Association and the "Track" appeal. Daphne is not in the best of health, but still enjoys reading the News when it arrives. Her husband, Bert, used to march with Keith on Anzac Day and go to the reunion, the reason for the late Bert Garland being on our mailing list. George being ex-navy was involved in the withdrawal of the Australian troops from Tobruk and escorting the convoys home from the Middle East in early 1942, also the Aussie landings at Wewak. He is very interested in the army's campaigns and enjoys reading the news which Daphne receives. Thanks for your letter, George, and the News will be sent regularly.

SAM GARDINER 2/1, Oak Flats, with a donation to the "Track" appeal and a query as to where the writers of the book on "The Pioneers" received the drawing showing the positions on Imita Ridge. (This was obtained from the archives of the War Memorial in Canberra.) Sam was in C Coy. 2/1 at that time, so reckons he must have been in No-man's-land when he was there. Was positioned with his Bren-gun six foot from the track and later was hospitalised with malaria.

DR. STAN GOULSTON 2/1, Chatswood, our original RMO, with a letter of thanks for the receipt of Pioneer News which he had not seen for some time. Unfortunately, the paper had been addressed to your medical rooms in Newtown and had obviously not been passed on. However, your new address has been noted on our mailing list, Stan, and you will now receive your News regularly. Good to see you at the march on Anzac Day and thanks for your donation to the Association. Warm regards from the men of the unit.

STELLA GRANGER, Schofields, widow of Bill 2/1, with a short note of good wishes and a sub for the News. Many thanks.

JIM GRAY 2/1, Warrawong, with a donation to the "Track" and hopes that future generations as they walk along the walkway will pause to remember those that found it necessary to fight and, in some cases die, to keep our country safe. Good sentiments, Jim, and thanks for the donation.

JACK GRIFFITHS 2/1, Mayfield, thought the proposed Kokoda Walkway a fitting memorial to those who served in New Guinea and was pleased to be able to support the appeal. Jack says he was one of the lucky ones as he didn't make it to Imita Ridge. After he broke his leg in the Middle East it was 18 months before he rejoined the unit and by that time they were back in the "infamous quarry". thanks for the donation, Jack.

CLIVE HARRIS 2/1, Aberdeen, with a short note hoping all Pioneers were enjoying good health and looking forward to Anzac Day. He also enclosed a donation to the "Track" and wished the appeal every success.

RUSS HARRISON 2/2, Stirling S.A., with a note informing us of his new address: 14 Vista Terrace, Stirling S.A. 5152, phone (08) 8370 8896. He and Rona have settled in well and looking forward to celebrating Anzac Day with the combined Adelaide Pioneers. Thanks for your good wishes, Russ, hope you both enjoyed your day and do keep in touch.

HENRY HAMILTON 2/1, Merrylands, with a few lines enclosing a contribution to the Kokoda Memorial and said it was a pleasure to support the project. Thanks, Henry, good to hear from you.

JOHN HAYDEN 2/1, Orange, had much pleasure in supporting the Walkway project and hoped it will be a lasting memorial and pride for the 2/1 Pioneer Battalion and all those who fought on the Track. He and Wyn are still battling on and send their kindest regards to all.

LEO HEALEY 2/1, Mentone Vic., with a few lines enclosing a donation for the "Track" and asked for his kind regards to be passed on to all Pioneers, especially the Sigs.

DICK HOBLEY 2/1, Bremer Bay, W.A., with a cheque for Vic and a donation towards the Walkway. He and Sheila still enjoy reasonably good health, give and take a few ups and downs. Dick still gets to shoot fairly regularly at the Nyabing Pistol Club, which is 200km by road. However, as they have several sons farming in that area, it gives them a chance to catch up with grandchildren and other

happenings. Dick hasn't been able to attend a Pioneer gathering in Perth for a long time, the 1,000km round trip seems to get more daunting. The Preedys are doing a good job there. Your best wishes are passed on to the "boys" for Anzac Day.

JACK HUMPHREY 2/1, Casino, with his sub. for the News and a donation towards the "Track". Says it will be a good spot at Imita Ridge station for the 2/1sts. Jack was sorry to hear of Max Law's passing, Max was sergeant of 12 Platoon, B Coy., and Jack was a member of that platoon in New Guinea and Balikpapan. He leads a quiet life these days, walks morning and evening and does a bit of swimming at the pool. Sends best wishes to all old mates of 2/1.

TED JENSON 2/1, Doonside, with a donation for the "Track" for both brother Allen and himself. Many thanks. Ted and Marie have been holidaying in Maryborough with their daughter, but will be home for Anzac Day. Bet it's a darn sight warmer up there than it is here, Ted, no wonder everyone who retires seems to head north. Keep well and best wishes to you both.

BILL JOHNSON 2/1, East Bentleigh, with a thank you for the News and says it's great to catch up with doings of old mates and always thinks of the unit on Anzac Day. He would like to make it to Sydney next year and march if possible – depending on a lumbar operation early May. Trust everything went well, Bill, and that you will be able to make the trip next year. You are assured of a good day.

He and Mavis had a recent trip to the old fort at Queenscliff, Vic., (which the Herrons and Kerslakes also visited on a trip to Victoria a couple of years ago), and it certainly brought back some memories of your family history. Our day was windy and raining, but we enjoyed the outing and the trip across the bay.

JACK KEMPENICH 2/1, Fingal Bay, per pen of Maisie, as usual, and she said Jack was happy to assist with a donation to the "Track". They were getting ready to leave for a trip to Melbourne, King Island and Adelaide. Hope you had a good holiday and the weather was kind to you. Do hope you can make the Lismore reunion in September, will be good to catch up again.

FRED KILLEN 2/1, Warners Bay, with a short note enclosing a cheque for subs. and a donation to the "Track". Many thanks, Fred.

NELL LAUGHREN, Nambour, widow of Pat 2/1, with her usual kind message to the "boys" for Anzac Day. Says the years are flying and she finds it hard to keep up, but her thoughts and prayers are always there for the 25th April. Keep well, Nell, and best wishes.

FRANK LOCANE 2/2, Bewong, with his apologies for non-attendance on Anzac Day – having knee problems and unable to march. However, he will be spending the day at Callara Beach RSL with George Walker 2/1 and should have a good day. Frank hopes Bill Jollie is much better, as he had heard from George that Bill was having some knee problems. Thanks for the sub., Frank, has been passed on to worthy treasurer.

STAN MARSTON 2/1, Buderim Qld., wrote to say it was a pleasure to contribute to the Walkway and wished the Appeals Committee every success. Also enclosed a cheque for the treasurer and he looks forward to receiving the News. Passed on his congratulations to those responsible for a job well done and wished all Pioneers good health and best wishes for the coming year.

KEITH MEDARIS 2/1, Mortdale, with a short note enclosing some cash for Vic and a donation to the Walkway appeal. Doesn't get around much anymore with asthma and arthritis, but wished to be remembered to all.

COL MITCHELL 2/2, Surrey Hills, Vic., with a letter of apology for being a trifle late with his sub. Better late than never, Col, and cheque has been passed on to treasurer. Kindest regards.

KEN MORGAN 2/2, Dorrigo, per pen of his daughter, Dorothy Foster, who had been given the job of writing as her Dad has Parkinsons and shaky. Many thanks, Dorothy, and as your Dad will have read his late brother's funeral service was reported in the April issue. Further to your request for the News to be forwarded to Jack's long time companion, Evelyn Booth, we have placed her name on the mailing list for future issues. We have already written to

Evelyn and had a nice note in return. Your donation to funds was very much appreciated and thank you for assisting your Dad with his "writing jobs".

RON MURRAY 2/1, Hill End, with apologies for his non-attendance on Anzac Day, but hoped to be down next year. Ron's wife has been undergoing chemotherapy since December and still had a couple of treatments to go. Hope everything is going well for her, Ron, and thank you for your subs.

JACK McDONAGH 2/2, Condell Park, with a note enclosing some tapes of the war years of a 2/2nd concert at Shepparton and on board the "Queen Mary". It was great music, Jack, and we enjoyed listening to it. On a sad note, we were sorry to hear of the loss of your good wife, Win, and extend to you the sincere sympathy of fellow Pioneers.

JACK MCGREGOR 2/2, Shortland, with cheque attached to his note for subs. and the news that he and Doris are still "plugging along" (in very small plugs), but have no real problems. Good to receive Pioneer News regularly and sends best wishes to all who keep the wheels turning. Thanks, Jack, and best wishes to Doris.

WAL PAGE 2/1, Chinderah, sends a donation, with pleasure, for the "Track" and a change of address. Good to hear from you old mate, keep well.

LES PATTERSON 2/1, Port Macquarie, and says although not in New Guinea he would like to make a donation to the Walkway. Also enclosed his subs. for the News. Sorry to hear of the passing of your wife, Jess, in January after a three year battle with cancer – sincere sympathy from the Association. It's good that your son and family are a tower of strength to you and I'm sure you appreciate their concern. All the best, Les.

PETER PEILE 2/1, Caringbah, per wife Erika, with a donation to funds and our "Track" Appeal. Sorry about your mother, Erika, and trust you are OK after your trip to hospital. Kindest regards to Peter and thanks for the subs.

MONA REINERS, Corryong, widow of Bern 2/1, with a long personal letter and a thank you for the extra copies of the Pioneer News for her family. They have been a great help to her since Bern's death and come home as often as they can. Mona did not have any luck with her application for a war widow's pension – even though his condition was accepted, he hadn't served in an area where there was proof of radiation. Our best wishes, Mona, hope you are able to make the trip west to see Mandy.

ERIC REYNOLDS 2/1, Macksville, with a note of good wishes for Anzac Day and a welcome donation for the "Track". At 82 Eric says he's going to call it a day for Anzac Day, will attend the local march and luncheon at the RSL this year and then be content to watch the Pioneers march on TV. Let's hope the ABC change their minds and keep up the telecast. All the best to Joyce and yourself Eric, and thanks for the donation.

CHARLES RICHARDSON 2/2, Manly West, Qld., with apology for his non-attendance on Anzac Day, Had hoped to be in Sydney, but an operation on his knee put paid to that. Charles celebrated his 80th birthday with all his family in March and enjoyed the celebrations. Congratulations and all the best to you, hope the knee problems have improved.

MICK ROBERTS 2/1, Leeton, with a donation to funds and a cheque for the "Track". Mick also notified us of the death of Les Gavel of B Coy., who passed away with sudden heart failure late last year. He keeps in touch with Jack Purcell, says he and Jack shared the same "hole in the hill" – presume he means in Balikpapan. Andy Collins was in Leeton on a brief visit and they shared a few minutes chat on old times. Has not seen Jack Painter for some time, but good to see he had been in touch with the News. Mick says he misses the visits of the late Max Law, a great mate, and has been in touch with Joyce and Craig. Thanks for your good wishes to the committee – says they do a grand job and need a medal.

BILL SANDS 2/1, Condell Park, with a very generous cheque for the News and a donation to the Walkway appeal. Sends his best wishes to all and a big thank you to all those who keep the paper rolling.

GEORGE SAUER 2/1, Lower Mitcham, S.A., with his contribution to the "Track" and was glad to contribute to such a worthy project.

George passes on his kindest regards to the committee and hopes one day to spend some time in Sydney and can respond personally. Our good wishes to you, George.

LINDA SAUNDERS, Scone, widow of Ross 2/1, with a change of address, the reason she had not been receiving recent issues of the News. This has been noted, Linda, and copies will be forwarded regularly in future. We are glad you still enjoy reading same and find reference to old mates of your husband, Ross. Many thanks for the sub. and best wishes.

CLANCY SCHOLES 2/1, Casino, with a welcome donation to the "Track" and some news of Jack Shearman 2/1 of Kyogle. Jack had a heart operation in January which wasn't a real success, had a pacemaker put in which didn't work properly and then had to have another operation to fix it. Home then and doing O.K., but infection set in and had to go back to hospital. Clancy had been in touch with Flo and he was on the improve and we hope by now back home again. Thanks for the news, Clancy, and glad to hear you, Irene and Wendy are well. Says he is starting to shorten the step a bit, but apart from that no worries. Hope to see you all at the Lismore reunion in September.

DOUG SHEARSTON 2/1, Forster, with a cheque for Vic – said in the excitement of Anzac Day forgot to give it to him. Really enjoyed his day and sends best wishes to all.

JOHN SMITH 2/1, Smithtown, per pen of daughter Wendy Anderson, with a cheque from her Dad to the News. He enjoys receiving the paper and reading news of old mates, despite being almost blind and deaf. John turns 90 in July and late last year he and his wife celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary, quite an achievement on both accounts, and our congratulations to you both. Hope your mum is on the improve after her cataract operation and many thanks, Wendy, for writing on your dad's account.

RAY SMITH 2/1, Glen Iris, Vic, with a sub. to Association funds and to the "Track". Sends kind regards and says to keep up the good work. Many thanks, Ray.

BONNIE SNUDDEN, Dubbo, widow of Cecil 2/2, with two letters recently, one with a cheque for Pioneer News and the other with a news report of the passing of Cyril "Rocky" Robinson, 2/1, of Cobar. "Rocky" was a much-loved member of the Cobar community and will be sadly missed. He was not on our mailing list, Bonnie, but I am sure would be known by some friends in the unit. Thank you for the details. The possibility of another reunion in Dubbo is slim – most of our members are getting either too old or with disabilities which prevent them travelling too far. There are far more members on the north coast, therefore a more central area for a reunion. The Lismore reunion on again in September, organised by the Branch in that area. Good to hear from you again, Bonnie, and thanks for your kind thoughts for Anzac Day.

DANNY SPROUSTER 2/1, Dundas, with his best wishes for Anzac Day and a money order towards the Kokoda Walkway. All going well, hopes to make the reunion luncheon at the Occidental.

GEORGE TOLMIE 2/1, Canley Heights, with very best wishes to the Committee for the job they are doing and hopes George Walker 2/1 is once again in good health. He also enclosed a cheque for yearly dues and "something" to the Track appeal. Many thanks and keep well.

JOHN URE 2/2, Meltham, W.A., with a cheque for subs. How about a short note next time, John, and some news from your part of the world to your old mates in 2/2nds.

BILL WADE 2/1, Bulahdelah, with a cheque for the Kokoda appeal and some money for Vic for the News. Bill says it's the only contact he has now with the old battalion as there are no more Pioneers left in his area. He passes on his kind regards to C Coy. boys who are still going strong and says many thanks to the dedicated Committee who keep the battalion Association going.

DICK WAKELY 2/2, Merewether, enclosing two cheques with his letter – one for subs. and the other for a Front Line medal. Max has written you re this matter, Dick, and I hope by now you have received the medal from Queensland. Thank you for your kind remarks about the News.

RON WEBSTER 2/1, Bass Hill, with a

cheque towards the Track Memorial, for which many thanks. Ron says he's still "kicking himself" for not buying the book on the history of the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion and if one ever turns up would be only too glad to purchase same. The best we can do, Ron is put your name on our "waiting" list, as there are no more copies available. Most of the suburban libraries were given a copy, so if you only wanted to read it I'm sure Bankstown City Library would have one or could get it for you. I know Liverpool, Fairfield and Hurstville have one.

DAVE WELLER 2/1, Bomaderry, with a donation to funds and the "Track" appeal. Passes on thanks for the News which is read and greatly appreciated.

FRED WHEATON 2/1, Sawtell, apologising for not replying to the "Track" appeal sooner, but he and Jean had been in Melbourne for over a month as one of their grand-daughters was on the sick list. Fred has booked at the Occidental Hotel for Anzac Day and is looking forward to catching up with old mates. Best wishes to you both.

BARBARA WILLIAMS 2/7th AGH, Brassall Qld., with her usual welcome greetings to all the boys for Anzac Day. (Barbara was formerly married to late Capt. Geoff Williams 2/1 and a sister-in-law of late Dr. Jim Goding 2/2.) The letter contained lots of family news of children and grandchildren and Barbara is always pleased to receive the News and to see mention of those she knew during the war years. Best wishes, Barbara, and keep well.

NEV WOODHAM 2/1, Cleveland, Qld., with apologies for being late with his "Track" donation, but has been snowed under with RSL duties and the opening of their new club in Cleveland on 19th April. He and Bet have had quite a problem year as far as sickness goes. Bet with a gall operation, spine surgery for a pinched nerve and to cap it all a total hip replacement, but now 100% and walking without a stick. To add to their problems, Nev had glandular fever and hepatitis. Trust you are both much better as you've certainly copped your share of troubles. Nev has been keeping in touch with Bill Chisholm 2/1, who has been having a rough trot with ill-health, but Nev says as cheeky as ever and will never throw in the towel. Our best to you too, Bill, it's good to keep in touch with old mates. Nev says their ROTA Association in Cleveland is still surviving with three Pioneers turning up every month – Ken Franks and John Keegan coming occasionally. Hope you will be able to make it to Lismore in September, and trust the weather will be a lot warmer than Sydney at the moment. Method in your madness in moving to the Sunshine State.

BERT WOODHOUSE 2/1, W.A., with a cheque for the Kokoda Track appeal and says Imita Ridge certainly holds memories for those who were there. Bert has been reading quite a lot of history re Kokoda Track campaign and has reached the conclusion that men of the 2/1st Pioneers owe their good fortune there to Lieut-General Rowell, who insisted that the 25th Brigade be re-directed to the Owen Stanleys instead of to Milne Bay. It is certain that those months on the Track will never be forgotten by those who were there, along with the back-breaking days in the Quarry. Thanks for your good wishes, Bert, and your donation.

GEORGE MURPHY, Secretary 2/2 Pioneers, Vic., with a get-well card to Max and best wishes for a quick return to good health. Max is now home from hospital, but has to take things quietly for a few weeks. Thanks for your good wishes, George, hope by now you have fully recovered from your heart problems.

JOAN PYM, Narrabeena, sister of the late Bob Lake, with a short note and a donation to funds from herself and Bob's other sister Betty Lawrence of Laurieton. Many thanks, Joan, and for your kind wishes.

That concludes the Mail Bag for this issue, lots of letters from here and interstate on account of the Track Appeal, and good to hear from those who don't normally get round to writing letters. Hope that all Pioneers, their wives and families continue to enjoy good health during the winter months – will be nice to look forward to some warmer weather.

STOP PRESS – Following letters received late will be answered in November issue – Jim Gray, Jack Kempnich, Phil Barnett, Bert Woodhouse, Les Tunks and Syd Moore.

BRANCH REPORTS

SOUTH AUST. BRANCH – by George Sauer

Anzac Day in Adelaide began with perfect weather and 6,000 people attended the Dawn Service with 20,000 at the march.

We held the usual Reunion Luncheon at the Duke of York Hotel with 55 in attendance and all voted it a good event.

I received an interesting letter from Ian Paynter (son of the late Doug Paynter 2/1) who practices medicine in Holland. He and his wife, Susan, were going to Villers-Bretonneux for the Anzac Day Service. Best wishes to all Pioneers.

NTH. COAST BRANCH – by Ken Wilson

In May we held a meeting to discuss the arrangements for the Lismore Reunion on 13/14th September and we had an attendance of twenty members. All who attended the Sydney Anzac Day Reunion voted it excellent.

Jack Shearman has had a heart bypass and went through a bad patch for a while but is now on the mend. Ossie Carter's wife had a spell in hospital with a leg operation but she is now home and going all right. Ossie has to go to the specialist to have a throat examination.

Allan Olson of SA rang to say he has had the chemo machine taken off him, but has to go into hospital shortly for an eye implant. He also mentioned that George Sauer had an accident while boarding a train and was sent to hospital.

LATE LAST POST

TOM WENMOUTH 2/1 of Adelaide passed away on 31st May and thanks to Bert Woodhouse for details.

JACK NILON 2/1 of Murrumburrah passed away on 16th June at age of 80 years after a long illness and is survived by wife Joan and two daughters.

MAURIE McEVOY 2/1 of Farfield passed away on 29th June, the service was attended by Roy Jardine, Jack and Marj Kerslake, Vic Whiteley, Jack Pearce and Bill Tasker who extended our sympathy to the family.

JACK MONGER 2/1 of Redcliffe, W.A. passed away on 1st July.

HENRY LISTON 2/2 of Glen Innes passed away on 28th June.

LISMORE REUNION

WREATH LAYING - Saturday, 13th September 5pm at the Lismore Memorial Baths Cenotaph, corner of Market and Molesworth Streets. Medals to be worn.

REUNION DINNER - Saturday, 13th September 7.30pm Smorgasbord Dinner at the Lismore RSL Club, Market Street. Cost: \$25 per head. Drinks at own expense.

BARBECUE LUNCH - Sunday, 14th September 12.15pm. Lunch at the Ballina Ex-Servicemen's Home Complex, 71-73 Morton Street, Ballina. Cost: \$10 per head. Drinks sold at approx. \$1 per can of beer.

ACCOMMODATION - LISMORE - Olympic Hotel; Karinga Motel; Centrepont Motel. These three motels in Molesworth Street within walking distance of RSL. BALLINA - Fun and Sun Motel, Ballina Heritage Motel, Palms Motor Inn, El Rancho Motel. See NRMA directory for rates. ALL Bookings by members.

TRANSPORT - Train/Plane travellers will be picked up by Ken Wilson and his team and taken to their accommodation. They will also organise transport to and from Ballina on Sunday. But they must be notified.

DEPOSIT OF \$10 PER HEAD is required with application form below and to reach Ken Wilson before 23rd August, 1997, for catering purposes. Deposit is non-refundable if you do not attend.

CHEQUES etc. for deposit to be made out to K.A. WILSON, NOT the Association with the application form and posted to: KEN WILSON, 9 ROSEDALE SQUARE, LISMORE, NSW 2480. Ph. (066) 21 4762.

CUT OUT – Fill in particulars: LISMORE Reunion

.....		
FULL NAME		
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LADIES NAME	PHONE	UNIT
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ADDRESS		
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Tick: <input type="checkbox"/> DINNER <input type="checkbox"/> BARBECUE <input type="checkbox"/> CAR		
No. <input type="checkbox"/> PLANE <input type="checkbox"/> BUS <input type="checkbox"/> TRAIN		

PIONEER NEWS

Phone 9759 5491

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Welfare: BILL TASKER, Phone 9718 6658

2/1-2/2 NORTH COAST BRANCH REUNION

For the Lismore Reunion on 13-14th September, 1997, there was good company, good weather, good food - Lismore had it all, plus that special country blend of warm hospitality and relaxed living. Congratulations to Ken Wilson and Committee, not forgetting the ladies, whose contribution to the success of the Reunion was obvious in many ways.

With family and friends, attendance was 80 and once again travellers were met and transported as necessary. From South Australia we had Allan Olson; from Victoria, Robyn Bell, daughter of the late Leo Morris (2/1); Don and Mona Barracrough and Bert Beasley came down from Queensland, and from that direction Roy and Lorna Leadbeater (long time no see).

The executive of the association was well represented with President Allan McInnes, Vice-President Jack Tooker, Secretary Max Herron and Treasurer Vic Whiteley.

WREATH LAYING CEREMONY

The Soldiers Memorial near the RSL was the site of this activity at 5 pm with Reverend Peter Playstead officiating. Rev Peter is the Presbyterian Minister at Lismore and Chaplain at the Amberley RAAF Base. Despite some flak from a nearby PA System in the adjoining park, the ceremony proceeded smoothly with wreaths being laid by Allan McInnes, Ken Wilson and Peg Herron.

The branch banner was prominently displayed in the care of Dave Denny and Ray Robbins. Kevin Raward marshalled the assembly, Ron Cross attended the flag, Alf Webb kept tabs on the PA system and the Ode was recited by Ken Wilson. The Last Post and Reveille were competently rendered by bugler Miss Anneke Withers.

After the Appreciation by Allan McInnes and the Benediction by Rev Playstead, the gathering adjourned to the RSL Club.

THE REUNION DINNER

On arrival, name tags were issued by Mona Barracrough and Dot Priest while Don Barracrough assisted Ron Cross to collect fees. A specially composed Grace was said by Rev Peter Playstead and after the usual formalities, Ken Wilson proposed a Toast to the Guests.

In his response, Allan McInnes drew the attention of participants to the Sept/Oct issue of Reveille, which included a photograph of Max Herron receiving an "Anzac of the Year Award" from his Excellency the Governor of NSW, the Hon Gordon Samuels AC. On behalf of the Association, Allan extended to Max - "Congratulations and best wishes for an award well deserved."

Many apologies were received, too numerous to list, but especially missed were Bill and Toss Robertson whose company was so much enjoyed at the last Lismore Reunion.

Among many visitors we met Mavis Blanch (widow of Joe Blanch 2/1st), and Gloria Gray (widow of Paddy Gray 2/1st). There were some daughters - we have already mentioned Robyn Bell - Dorothy Foster, daughter of Ken Morgan; Pam Lee, daughter of Ray Harris; Christine Raward, daughter of Kevin; then we saw Ray Walker, son of Dick Walker with wife Narelle; and also David McInnes, son of Allan McInnes.

We sang Happy Birthday to Ron Cross, and hoped he would win the raffle, but it was Roy Jardine who took home the microwave oven. And then it was time to rest up for the barbecue next day at beautiful Ballina.

BALLINA BARBECUE

On Sunday, 14th September, the Pioneers and their ladies had descended on the Ballina Ex-Servicemen's Home Complex for a barbecue as the final activity of the Lismore Reunion. All told the attendance was sixty one, and after the Reunion of the night before they were all in good spirits.

The complex is situated on the edge of the river and is in a perfect situation. On arrival

Treasurer Ron Cross collected the luncheon fee after which the bar was opened and the cans flowed quite freely. It was a happy atmosphere, with the ladies sitting together in groups, and mostly the men were moving around talking to one another about past deeds.

President of the branch spoke to the gathering and thanked them for attending and said the Committee would be meeting shortly to discuss the possibility of another reunion.

Vice-President of the Association Jack Tooker responded by thanking Ken and his committee for the work they had put into the reunion. He also thanked staff members Noni and Jenny for the wonderful barbecue lunch they had prepared and cooked for our members. He also extended thanks to Peter Morris, the complex manager, for the use of his excellent facilities.

Late in the afternoon came the time to say farewell to one another and go their different ways, but all agreed they had thoroughly enjoyed the weekend.

- BILL LEWIS, Reporter

REVEREND PLAYSTEAD'S ADDRESS

As presented to the Wreath Laying Service at Lismore on 13th September, in outlining the meaning of the word PIONEER ...

First of all, they were PRAGMATIC; that is, they were not just tied to the official rule book as to how things were supposed to be done. They were flexible and vigorous enough to try anything, whether it was by the book or not - pragmatism was the rule, in the best Australian pioneer fashion.

One of the 2/1 Tobruk memories goes like this - "During the morning of the 24th April a 'Tank Hunting Platoon' was formed under Lieut Jock McAdam ... later that day the battalion was allotted four Italian field guns which were for anti-tank use, and to be manned by our own troops. So our involvement with 'bush artillery' began, which indicates the Pioneers were Pragmatic.

They were also INNOVATIVE, that is they were masters at short-circuiting problems by being creative; and not just in matters military.

Again from the 2/1st history, in a vacant house in Tobruk. "The party had managed to salvage a fair quantity of rum and whisky from Derna during the earlier part of the day, and it was carefully carried back, no doubt due to its well-known medicinal value. Apparently that night in the vacant house in Tobruk they felt the need for some of the cure."

McNaughton goes on to say how they had some more for breakfast then 'some time that night we found our way out to where the battalion was camped. We arrived just as C.S.M. Jim (Pop-eye) Edward was telling the company what great boys we were and that we would be mentioned in despatches, but we were gone, gone, gone. When we fell out of the truck he immediately put us under arrest."

PRAGMATIC, INNOVATIVE; What next? Well, the Pioneers were destined to be mostly OVERSEAS.

Their overseas history was to become really famous. The 2/1st was off to the Middle East, "Up the Desert", the Siege of Tobruk, and camps in Palestine, then on to New Guinea, "Up the Track" and "The Quarry", all the way through to Balikpapan in Borneo in July, to September, 1945. The 2/2nd listed amongst their overseas assignments the Middle East, Palestine and the Syrian campaign, Java, the

various POW locations, New Guinea, Tarakan and Balikpapan also. To say that the Pioneers had a notable overseas service would be to make the understatement of the century. Really, they got around.

PRAGMATIC, INNOVATIVE, OVERSEAS, and also NEW.

The Pioneers were a new type of Australian soldier, sourced in the experience of World War I. As the official 2/1st history says - "When in late 1939 or early 1940, each man made his own decision to join the AIF, none would have had any idea that he would finish up in a "Pioneer Battalion" - indeed few had heard of such a unit.

... a straight answer as to what a "pioneer battalion" was - "you will be as good as the infantry, and as good as the engineers - able to do either job".

Later appointments of junior officers reflect also the aim to have - a mixture of infantry and engineers. It was a NEW idea to be a Pioneer, so much so that it took some new recruits a bit of time to adjust to the idea.

N for NEW, and then two EE's. Well, E has to stand for EXCEPTIONAL, for the Pioneers were of exceptional calibre. To quote just part of a letter that Brigadier J. J. Murray wrote on 21st May, 1941, to Lieut-Col A. Brown ... "I desire to express my appreciation of the splendid work that was done by the unit. Being underarmed, they gave an excellent account of themselves. I would like you to congratulate all members of your unit on their magnificent performance in a most difficult situation." EXCELLENCE was simply par for the course in being a member of the Pioneers.

Just two letters remain; R and S. There is an old English word called 'REDOUBTABLE' which means something like a formidable warrior - and the 2/1 and 2/2 certainly fell into that category. Here is Rommel's own opinion, in his own words - "immensely big and powerful men, without question ... an elite formation of the British Empire". Rommel's biographer says "In Tobruk he found the Australians in position, defending stubbornly and showing no sort of inclination to yield. Their ... fire was heavy and accurate on every occasion. Their strong points were manned and defended with tenacity." To which one can only add - "Well, of course". They were REDOUBTABLE. What else can one expect!!

As for the final letter, well that is the letter S, the last letter in PIONEERS, the letter for the sacred dead, for sacred indeed they are. 2/1st and 2/2nd left their dead in many different places - in fact, 2/2nd Pioneers were recovered, after the war ended, from no less than seven different countries, excluding those who were picked up by an American submarine, after their ship was torpedoed, half way to Japan. This is a sacred subject. To quote the Book of Ecclesiasticus which says in Chapter 44, "Their bodies are buried in peace, but their name liveth for evermore. The people will tell of their wisdom: and the congregation will shew forth their praise."

REUNION JOTTINGS - Turn to page 3

REUNION DINNER GRACE

By Reverend Peter Playstead

From Tobruk to Kokoda
from Lae to Tarakan,
in the deserts and the jungles
Places hardly known to man.

They fought beside each other
on many a foreign sod,
in districts where the maps say
This is only known to God.

They put aside their luxuries
they conquered all their fears,
as we eat here to-night O Lord
Please bless these Pioneers.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

The last issue of Mail Bag for 1997 – how the year has flown – and not such a lot of letters in the past few months. We had such a large Mail Bag last time, mostly on account of the Kokoda Track Walkway appeal, that most Pioneers felt they had "done their duty" for the year. Letter writing, to some, can really be an effort as the years roll on, what with bad eyesight and fingers full of arthritis, so we must be grateful for every letter we receive.

PHIL BARNETT 2/2, Alstonville, with a letter of apology for lateness in sending his sub, and has added a little extra as penalty. Praises the Editors and Committee for doing a great job in helping members to keep in touch and sends his kindest regards to all.

BOB BALLY 2/1, Balga W.A., rang early in August with his best wishes to all for the V.P. Service to be conducted at the Kokoda Track Memorial on the 15th August. He hoped the weather would be kind to us and that we would have a good roll up for the service. We are happy to say, Bob, that it was a perfect day and the attendance was close on 500 with members from all units who served in New-Guinea, their relatives and friends. Many thanks for your call.

ERIC CAUSER 2/1, Hamilton, Vic, with a note of thanks to Max for looking after he and his wife Doss on their recent overnight stay in Sydney, en route from Brisbane to Melbourne. They have sold their sheep property at Macarthur in Victoria and have bought a home in Hamilton, which Eric is busily spring cleaning. Lots of work to do on outside walls and plenty to do on fences and gardens.

At a recent friend's funeral, Eric met up with his late friend's brother, a Frank Maher of 2/2nd Pioneers who lives in Goolwa, S.A. Eric forgot to ask him what company he was in, but Frank remembers Allan McInnes and was interested in receiving the News. Max has put his name on the mailing list, Eric, perhaps receiving the paper will bring back memories of former mates.

All the best to you both, was good to have you with us for a couple of days.

JACK COATES 2/1, Umina, with two letters for this Mail Bag – one too late for inclusion in last issue, with apologies for non-attendance at Lismore reunion, and a further letter to Max with his congratulations on Max's award of "Anzac of the Year" for 1997. Many thanks for your good wishes Jack and Max was quite honoured with the award.

Sorry you were unable to make the trip to Lismore, but with both you and Lex on the sick list it was understandable. Trust by now Lex has finished with her chemo and the results are promising.

Jack had a visit in early September from his old friend from Kyogle, Jim Hall 2/1, and, apart from his deafness, Jim is in remarkably good health. They had a pleasant day together recalling their wartime years. Sorry Jim wasn't able to make the Lismore reunion, but he was to join Jack and Lex at a family wedding up north early in October. Hope all went well, and that you both are none the worse for the trip.

BETTY CREAMY, Portland, widow of George 2/1, with a short note of apology for non-attendance at Anzac Day functions and her donation for "Money Bags" Whiteley. Betty keeps in regular touch with Bill Hoffman 2/1 who is still in the hostel at Kyogle Hospital. Many thanks, Bet, sorry you were unable to be with us, but perhaps next year.

BILLIE DYNON, Mona Vale, widow of Frank 2/1, with a sub to help keep the News going. Billie enjoys reading the paper and says it never ceases to amaze her how the Pioneers still manage to keep together and do so many things together after so many years. She sends her best wishes to all Pioneers and their families. Good to hear from you, Billie, and our thanks for the donation to 'funds'.

BILL FALLON 2/2, Barraba, with a cheque for Vic and an apology for not being able to attend the Lismore reunion: He and Daphne are keeping an eye on a mate's property while he and his wife are overseas.

Bill and Daph keep good health and are still able to drive their car on trips to wherever they like to go. Their daughter Kay lives in Port Macquarie, where she and her husband have a white goods business, and are doing well considering how times are at present.

His good wishes are passed on to all who keep the Association going and says how he looks forward to receiving the News. All the best to you both, and many thanks for the sub.

JIM GRAY 2/1, Warrawong, with a clipping from his local newspaper on the passing of Rev. Albert Pitt-Owen 2/1, who died in June. Many thanks for sending it on, Jim, and you will have read in last issue of the News that several Pioneers and their wives were able to attend the funeral service in Camden. He also sent his apologies for non-attendance at the Kokoda Walkway service on V.P. Day, but was laid up with the 'flu bug.' Best wishes, Jim, hope you are now fighting fit.

ELAINE HENDERSON, Epping, niece of Ron Clark 2/1, formerly of Kingsford, to inform us that Ron was entering a hostel in August, due to declining health, and would we send the News to her address in future. She would then take it to him on her visits. This has been altered on our mailing list, Elaine, and we thank you for your concern on Ron's behalf. Elaine says he is a wonderful uncle and she and her family are very fond of him.

Ron is still quite "chirpy" but, as he has not enjoyed the best of health the last few years, he has decided to move into a hostel where he can be looked after. All the best, Ron, and glad to see you still enjoy receiving the News.

DICK HOBLEY 2/1, Bremer Bay, W.A., was in touch with Max enquiring about the Front Line Medal recently and has been given details of how to apply for same. They were having a very cold spell in the West, but he was well and sent his kind regards to all, especially his mates in B Coy. Good to hear from you, Dick, and trust the medal application was successful.

GORDON HUGHES, Allambie Heights, Secretary of the N.S.W. Branch of the Rats of Tobruk Assn., with a letter of congratulations to Max on his award of "Anzac of the Year" and to say how delighted they were to see the award to one of their members. Max sends his thanks to the "Rats", Gordon, and said how much he appreciated your kind remarks, and your good wishes to Peg and himself.

JOHN HUNT 2/1, New Farm Qld., per pen of his good wife Mollie-Jean, apologising for their non-attendance at the Lismore reunion. They had intended to go, but Mollie says the noise worries John lately, so decided against the trip. Sorry about that John, it was a good show, but hope to see you both in Sydney next Anzac Day. Many thanks for your letter, Mollie, keep well.

JACK KEMPENICH 2/1, Fingal Bay, per pen of Maisie (as usual), a long letter which arrived too late for inclusion in the last News. Their trip to King Island was very enjoyable, but Mais says the facilities for tourists were sadly lacking and it's a pity Tasmania can't support it more. The weather was bitterly cold, but they were able to go "home" to a roaring fire. They returned to Melbourne and went on to South Australia to see Maisie's folks. Were now getting organised to make the trip to Lismore for the reunion. Glad you were both able to make it Mais and good to see you again. I'm sure everyone enjoyed their week-end and it was great to meet up with friends who don't normally get to Sydney for the Anzac functions.

Our many thanks to Jack and yourself for the lovely day (not weather-wise) Max and I and Jack and Marj Kerslake spent with you at Fingal Bay on our return from the reunion. It was great to enjoy your company and did appreciate the outing to the Bowlers Club for lunch – guess when you invited us for morning tea, you did not expect to still have us for the day – shades of the movie, "The Man Who Came to Dinner".

Our very best wishes to you both and again many thanks for your hospitality. I know Max and Jack enjoyed their day as much as Marj and I did. Look after that shoulder, Mais, and keep in touch.

JOYCE LAW, Kareela, widow of Max 2/1, with a nice card and congratulations to Max on his Award and to say she was looking forward to the Service at the Walkway on V.P. Day. It was good to see you, Joyce, with Rita Trefoni,

widow of Noel 2/1, and to have you take part with Bill Jollie in the wreath-laying ceremony on behalf of the Pioneers. Many thanks for your card and your good wishes.

JOAN LEE, North Strathfield, widow of Bob 2/2, with a letter of thanks for still continuing to send her the News. She said it was good reading about Bob's old pals of the war years, and she enclosed a donation to help defray costs. Many thanks, Joan, and your kind remarks about those who keep the Association going.

DON LINTON 2/2, Tuncurry, with an interesting news item from his local paper "Extra" regarding old mate Snowy Dodd, D Coy, 2/2 and the dedicated work Snowy has put into the creation of this beautiful Memorial Park on the banks of the Wallamba River just north of Tuncurry. The park was a Bi-Centenary project and Snowy has been working on it, with other dedicated helpers, for nine years. A couple of years ago the park was dedicated to the memory of Australian ex-servicemen and women.

Don points out in his letter that recent vandalism has done a lot of damage to the park and shares the disgust and anger which Snowy and his helpers are feeling and hope that vandalism of this nature can be eliminated. It is a sick trend which is becoming too prevalent in a section of today's society.

Thanks for the news, Don, and our best wishes to Snowy on a job well done. We hope that he can continue to care for the park for many more years. Best wishes to Nancy and yourself.

SYD MOORE 2/1, Wentworthville, with a short, but welcome note with his sub for the News which he looks forward to receiving. Owing to ill-health Syd was unable to make the Anzac reunion this year, but sends his very best wishes to all his old mates.

OSSIE MCCURTAYNE 2/1, Laurieaton, with a few lines and cheque for worthy treasurer. You certainly won't get writer's cramp, Ossie, but thanks for the note and the kind words for those who keep the News coming.

ROY MCGREGOR 2/2, Rothbury, with apology for lateness in sending sub, but says his eyes make writing quite a chore and he keeps putting writing letters off until tomorrow – and you know about tomorrow! A friend at the local RSL told him not to forget he was ten years past his "use by" date. Some friend, Roy.

Roy has turned his licence in and is being driven around these days, but still manages to get about and enjoying life with Marion. He sends his regards to one and all and especially those who keep the Association and Pioneer News together. Says it's great to be kept in contact with those "Who are Left" and very much appreciated. Best wishes to Marion and yourself, and thanks for the donation to funds.

GEORGE MURPHY, Secretary of Vic 2/2 Assn., contacted Max in September to say he had been on holidays at Shoal Bay and had been visited by Bill Lewis and Ian Willmore 2/2. A good day was enjoyed by all. George had been in hospital for foot problems prior to his holiday, but was now on the mend. Good to hear from you, George.

JACK RICHARDS 2/1, Lennox Head, per pen of good wife, Olive, with a donation to funds and apology for being late with their subs. Olive says Jack was in hospital for seven weeks, first in Lismore and then Ballina and doctors say his recovery has amazed all the medicos. Jack is home now and able to walk with the aid of a four-wheeled walker. Vet. Affairs have been very good and provided all equipment needed and local doctor and nurses have been A1.

Olive says Jack was very pleased to see Marj and Jack Kerslake, Noel Schomberg, Mavis Blanch and Vi Flynn when they were up for the Lismore reunion and greatly appreciated them calling at the Ballina Hospital. Also Jack and Olive send their best wishes to Vic Whiteley.

Glad to hear from you, Olive, and hope that all continues to go well with Jack.

CHAS RYALL 2/2, Cowan, with a note and enclosed sub and apologies for his lateness in sending it on. He and Nola no longer have a cheque account – as he says, along with many others, have found that the bank's friendly hand was now a grasping one. Certainly agree with you both on that account.

Was high in praise for the skilled and caring treatment he was still receiving by the sisters and staff of Concord Hospital, almost made it a pleasure to be there. Chas is being treated every few months for Paget's Disease and although a new generation has taken over the hospital, and procedures changed, says the nursing staff are just as dedicated as ever. Good to hear, Chas, as we do hear conflicting reports at times on changing hospital conditions, and criticism of the staff of the "new brigade".

Your best wishes are passed on to all, and thanks for the sub to the News.

GEORGE SAUER 2/1, Lower Mitcham, S.A., with a cheque for Pioneer News and his thanks to those who keep it going. Not much news to report from South Australia, apart from the fact that they are pushing ahead with a proposed memorial in Adelaide to all Pioneers, but awaiting on news from Canberra for some financial support, and would keep us posted as to developments.

All the best, George, and your good wishes will be passed on to Bill Jollie and Steve Clarke.

GIL SHORT 2/2, Caringbah, with his apology for not attending the march and reunion on Anzac Day, but says time and aching bones have caught up with him. However, sends his best wishes to old mates, especially C. Coy. 2/2.

Thanks for cheque, Gil, which has been handed on to the treasurer.

BILL ("PEE WEE") RUSSELL 2/2, Tamworth, with a donation to funds and a note to Max re the passing of a 2/2 Pioneer, Norm Sunderland, which is mentioned in Last Post.

Bill is still working in his floorsanding business and says everyone wants him to retire, but he's been "retreaded" so hopes to last a little longer. He is also involved with local RSL in visiting the elderly in hospitals and nursing homes and really enjoys these visitations. Bill says when he gets really old he hopes someone will visit him – Nell said they'd better start NOW!

His wife Nell is not well, but a motorised wheel chair enables her to get out of the house. (Says he does a few "wheelies" around the backyard when she's not looking.) It's good to be able to retain a sense of humour in our "advanced" years.

Best wishes to you both and keep well. Your kind regards are passed on to all, especially those in 14 Pl. C Coy. 2/2.

LES TUNKS 2/1, Mareeba, Nth Qld., with a letter from a newcomer to the fold. Les was unaware of the Association until a friend showed him a copy of a Sydney paper with our Anzac Day functions advertised and he was able to make contact after all these years. He lived in the Tableland area prior to the war and still lives in Mareeba. Max sent him a batch of past Pioneer News and he and his wife Lesley have been busy catching up on news of the past years. He also sent him a Pioneer badge and photo-copies of the pages of the 2/1st history dealing with Balikpapan, as the book is no longer obtainable. These have all been gratefully received.

Many thanks for the donation, Les, also the poem which will be published some time when space is available.

Good to hear from you after so long.

BARBARA WILLIAMS 2/7th A.G.H, Brassall Qld., with a note of thanks for the News and her best wishes to all. Barbara says she's 84 now, just a "chick", and keeps reasonably good health, but so many of the nursing sisters have passed on in recent years. She was the former wife of the late Capt. Geoff Williams 2/1, and over the years has known many former 2/1st Pioneers. All the best, Barbara, and thanks for your letter.

BERT WOODHOUSE 2/1, Karridale, W.A., with a long, newsy letter and a welcome donation to funds. Bert reports the passing of a good friend, Tom Wenmouth, 2/1 who passed away in Adelaide in May. He and Bert met a couple of days after joining up in Northam Camp in May, 1941, and their friendship lasted until Tom's death. Tom enlisted in Kalgoorlie and returned there after discharge, but chose to move to South Australia where he met and married his first wife. Sadly she died of leukaemia after nine months and in a few years Tom married his present wife Bernice, an ex-A.W.A.S.

The only other Pioneers in his area of W.A. are George Smith, who was in C. Coy., and is now around 80, and Arthur Pritchard who is now in the Mt Lawley War Veterans Home. He is 92 years old. Bert is sure Tom Crossman would remember him – along with Jack Edwards and Bert they shared an Atap Lean-to at Nauro together. It is a pity the story of Nauro was never told, it was a real "balls-up", starting off in the wrong direction and working on a track for three weeks and then being told to abandon it and start again in the opposite direction.

Bert also mentions that Gerry Casey is in a nursing home in Northam and Fred Pratt is living in the Wongan Hills area. Bert went to the Perth Anzac March, the second time in 45 years, and met up with Harry (Soapy) Cable and Ron (Dasher) Dean and they all had a very enjoyable day.

Thanks for all the WX news, Bert, and our very best wishes to you and all in the West.

JACK GRIFFITHS 2/1, Mayfield, with a letter just in time to make the Mail Bag. He enclosed a photostat copy of a Japanese flag with significant connection with 2/1 Pioneer Bn. The flag came into the possession of Alf Stone 2/1 Inf. Bn, who gave Jack the particulars. It was found among some old rags by a fellow in the business of sorting old rags, faded and indistinct, but with help from the University and Red Cross the names on the flag were highlighted. Some of the names, possibly all B. Coy 2/1 as this was mentioned on the flag, were "Toby" Hale of Kyogle, Reg Gwynne (who was wounded in Balikpapan), J. H. Doran, H. Mitchell, K. Hall. Jack hopes to eventually gain possession of the flag.

At a recent meeting, Jack met the Shadow Minister for Vet. Affairs, Laurie Ferguson, whose grandfather, Jock Ferguson, was an original of the 2/1 Pioneers. He gave Laurie the secretary's address as he was anxious to gain more information about his grandfather. Thanks for that, Jack, perhaps we shall hear from him in due course.

Jack's health is O.K., but still under doctor's supervision, but says his daily "fluid intake" is not being neglected. A friend recently reminded Jack that he had qualified for another award, the O.B.E. – "over bloody eighty". Our congratulations!!

DON MURRAY 2/2, Tinonee, with a welcome donation to funds and to say how pleased he had been to attend the Lismore reunion. Said it was good to meet up with old mates, especially Allan McInnes whom he had not seen since the end of the war. Don has sold the farm which has been in his family for three generations, but with so much stress from "greenies" and environmental people was rather pleased to see the last of it.

Thanks for the cuttings from old "Pioneer News", Don, they bring back lots of memories. Guess you didn't realise that the "young bloke" on the right of the photo with Mrs O'Malley Wood was "young" Max Herron with Jack Bertram 2/1 at the back. They are the only two still alive. The photo was taken in 1960.

All the best, Don, hope all goes well in your home.

RON EDWARDS 2/1, Wantirna South, with a welcome letter and a sub for the News. Although a late-comer to the unit in Balikpapan (Ron was one of the last five taken on strength and recorded in daily Routine Orders), he finds the Mail Bag notes provide him with a valuable insight into the type and calibre of the fellows who made up the unit. He sends his grateful thanks to all who do so much for the benefit of the rest of the members.

Your kind thoughts are much appreciated, Ron, and make all the effort well worthwhile. Many thanks for the sub, good to hear from you.

MARIE JENSON, Doonside, wife of Ted 2/1, to say Ted had been taken ill while on holiday in Maryborough, Qld, and after some days in hospital there had returned home and admitted to Blacktown Hospital. He was awaiting transfer to Lady Davidson at Turrumurra at the time of the News going to press.

• That concludes the Mail Bag for this issue and on behalf of the Executive and Committee of the Association I would like to wish all members, their wives and loved ones all the very best for Christmas and lots of good health and happiness in the coming year. Also Max would like to say many thanks for all the cards and messages of congratulations on his "Anzac of the Year" Award – they were all very much appreciated.

REUNION JOTTINGS

by Peg Herron

Jack and Marj Kerslake travelled north with us to the Lismore reunion and we enjoyed a couple of weeks holiday with them, including meeting up with fellow Pioneers on the way.

• After the barbecue at the Ballina Ex-Servicemen's Home Complex on the Sunday following the reunion, Jack and Marj called in to Ballina Hospital to see Jack Richards 2/1 who had been there for some days. Jack was very pleased to see them. Mavis Blanch from Beaudesert (widow of Joe 2/1) also called to see him before heading home with Gloria Gray (widow of "Paddy" Gray 2/1).

• Nancy Grant, a local Ballina lass, came to the barbecue at the Complex with her husband, Bob, in the hope that she may meet up with some of her late father's friends. Her dad was Bill Lowe 2/1 who was wounded in Tobruk. Nancy was pleased to talk with Jack Tooker who remembered her father, also to Laurie Kelly who helped carry Bill out of the front line to the Fig Tree R.A.P. Laurie also visited Bill in Gaza Hospital when the unit came back to Palestine from Tobruk. Nancy was so pleased to have been able to speak to some of her father's wartime mates.

• Bill Hoffman 2/1 was on the visiting list at Kyogle and Max and Jack spent some time with Bill at the Kyogle Court Aged Home. Apart from trouble with his teeth, Bill was in fairly good health. Max and I were able to see Bill again at a wedding in Kyogle several days later.

• During our stay in Casino, Marj and Jack had dinner at the Casino Services Club with 2/1st "Clancy" Scholes and wife Irene, while Max and I were attending a wedding reception upstairs. However, the next morning they called at our motel with daughter Wendy, who is recovering from a broken knee, and we had quite a pleasant hour while the "boys" fought the war all over again – and won. Clancy is in good health, but reckons he needs a bit of extra oxygen to walk up hills. He sends his regards to all old friends.

• As reported in the Mail Bag, Jack and Maisie Kempnich 2/1 were last on our visiting list at Fingal Bay and we had a great day in good company. Mais is a very staunch Newcastle ARL supporter and showed us her Knights T-shirt which she was going to wear while watching the League Final on TV – Knights versus the Manly Sea-Eagles – must have been that little extra Mais that saw your team successful. A good match and they really deserved their win.

• Reunions seem to have strange effects on some Pioneers when on the loose without their minders. Cast your mind back to last Lismore reunion when a certain couple of 2/1st fellows "misaid" their motel and Marj and Max spent ages driving around Ballina looking for a missing motel. Then a certain 2/2 fellow (no names, no pack drill) left the train at Coffs Harbour to stretch his legs and a "wee break" and came out to see his train disappearing out of the station, along with his coat and luggage, and said Pioneer left on the station in the very early hours of the morning wrapped up in newspapers to keep warm until the day train departed. What hassles he went through to claim his luggage, with no I.D., would have had to be seen to be believed.

Not content with this episode, same 2/2 fellow books into a Lismore motel this year, along with three other mates to share a room, and draws the "short" straw (or should I say the "short" bed) and had to beg another 2/2 to allow him to share the spare bed in his room, as the previous bed was too small. To further complicate matters said 2/2 sits on this bed to undress and the bed collapses and he had to spend the night sharing a double bed with one of his officers. Next trip fella I think you had better take out accident insurance – or take your wife.

SICK PARADE

BILL TASKER 2/1 our Welfare Officer was in Concord Hospital in August with pneumonia and was visited by Vic Whiteley, Roy Jardine and Max Herron.

BILL JOLLIE 2/1 was in the Hills District Hospital in early October with a slight heart turn but is now back home and taking it easy.

ANZAC OF THE YEAR

In a ceremony at Government House on 22nd July, our Association Secretary Max Herron was presented with the 1997 "Anzac of the Year" Award by His Excellency the Governor of NSW, the Hon. Gordon Samuels, A.C. This unique award by the RSL is made annually to Australians who have given service to the community and their fellow Australians in a positive, selfless and compassionate manner.

Max's service to the community was for forty years with the NSW Scout Association. He rose from Group and District appointments to the position of Leader Training Commissioner in NSW. Among his scouting awards he received the Scout Wood Badge, Medal of Merit, Bar to Medal of Merit, Long Service Medal and Bar to Long Service Medal.

His service to fellow Australians has been with the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Battalions Association which he joined after service with the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion from 1940 to 1945. Joining the Committee in 1956, he became a Vice-President and then in 1957 was nominated as Secretary, a position he still holds forty years later. Max has been Editor of the "Pioneer News" since 1958 and has organised all country reunions from 1963-1992. He was awarded Life Membership of the Association in 1975.

The Executive and Committee of the Association extend their congratulations to Max on a job well done over so many years.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ANNUAL MEETING, 16 MAY 1997

After eight very successful years Bill Jollie found it necessary to resign as President and I was very proud when elected. However, to follow Bill's term is a very hard act to follow. Bill presided over all meetings and was always available to help and advise his Executive.

The Anzac March was most successful and both battalions had a good roll up – a little down in numbers on 1996, as many members now find the march hard going, but we were pleased they could attend the Occidental for our reunion. It seems such a short time since Anzac Day 1996 and I guess 1998 will be with us all too quickly.

The reunion was another success with just short of 100 in attendance. The catering and drink service was first class, and the Regent Hotel could not have done better. We are fortunate to have such a convenient and well-managed hotel as the Occidental and Bill Jollie deserves our thanks for finding our current venue. Our thanks go to our members' sons who, as usual, did jobs that released the Executive members. You will be pleased that we will be back at the Occidental next year and we are looking forward to seeing you all again.

The wreath laying on the 24th was, as usual, appreciated by the 36 members attending and a good roll up of our ladies and friends. I think your good attendance was because of Max organising our time change to 4 pm which is a more suitable time for aging Pioneers – let's face it, boys, we are old.

Our life line, the Pioneer News, was posted three times and thanks go to our editors, wrappers and members who sent in news and contributions which we need to meet the high cost of printing and postage. We are now a National association with sub-branches in Perth, Adelaide and the Northern Rivers, with the 2/2nd in Victoria very closely allied.

Our Secretary, Max Herron has, as always, done a superb job and how he fits all the Pioneer work into this life is amazing.

We are still solvent and our thanks go to our capable hard-working treasurer, Vic Whiteley. Our welfare has been in the capable hands of Bill Tasker and he has kept track of and visited sick Pioneers: our thanks to Bill and his helpers.

I have left the bad news till last – over the past year 35 members have passed away, including two members of our committee (Bob Lake and Cec Peake) and we extend to their families and friends our sincere sympathy. Bob Lake was a tower of strength to the Committee, never missed a meeting and always had something to contribute. He was co-editor of the Pioneer News with Max Herron and every Anzac Day saw him seated at the door leading to the reunion writing name tags and with a

cheerful greeting to all. Bob did much for the Association and is sadly missed. Losing our co-editor was a blow, but Peg Herron stepped in and volunteered to carry on – isn't Peg marvellous.

I am proud to be in the chair again after so many years to present this report and I am sure having such a capable hard-working Executive, the Association will have another excellent year.

– ALLAN MCINNES

VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC

The 52nd Anniversary of the cessation of hostilities in World War II was commemorated with a service and wreath laying ceremony on 15th August at the Concord R.G.H. Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway. This was attended by 550 veterans and ladies and was most gratifying to Secretary Alice Kang and her Committee. After local dignitaries had laid their wreaths, Bill Jollie, assisted by Joyce Law and Rita Trefoni, placed a wreath on the memorial in honour of departed 2/1st Pioneers.

Master of Ceremonies Bill Jenkins, OAM, did a fine job, as did other speakers and three officiating padres. The Walkway is progressing well and is on schedule for completion some time next year, which includes the 2/1 Pioneer plaque at the Imita Ridge Station.

The Memorial Centrepiece is a fitting reminder of the horrific campaign fought throughout New Guinea mud and jungle against a very tenacious Japanese force. It is fitting that the beautiful granite walls of the Centrepiece display copies of Damien Parer's famous photos sand-blasted into the granite, so that future generations will see this Walkway as a reminder of one of the most important campaigns in Australian history.

The plinths at each station are completed and ready for the plaques to be fitted. The Rose Garden, as a memorial to Australian Nursing Sisters, is close to completion and is ready for the rose planting and the laying of lawns along the outer walls. Two plaques have been donated by the 2/1 Pioneers as well as two garden seats, one in the Rose Garden and the other along the Track, suitably inscribed.

Mr "Rusty" Priest AM (RSL State President) presided over the dedication of Eora Creek Station and it was fitting that Major-General Cullen, AC, AO, CBE, DSO, ED, FCA carried out the "Requiem" and he spoke at great length about the campaign from first hand experience.

It is recommended you visit the Walkway now that the track and stations are almost complete. Access is very easy from the main gates of the hospital, the Rose Garden is opposite and the track continues from there going past the various stations to the Memorial Centrepiece about ten minutes easy flat walking. Trees and shrubs have been planted and are growing well, adding pleasure to the walk.

There was a good attendance of Pioneers and their wives at the service, and Bill Jollie came with a bus-load of Legacy ladies.

At the conclusion of the ceremonies, afternoon tea was served by a group of capable ladies.

– Reported by ALLAN MCINNES

LAST POST

NORM SUNDERLAND 2/2 Tamworth, passed away on 30th June in Tamworth Base Hospital and the funeral was conducted at Inverell Church of England. Norm was 75 years and had been in and out of hospital since October, 1996, with blood circulation problems in the legs resulting in the amputation of his right leg.

After enlistment Norm went to the Middle East with 2/3 Machine Gun Bn and then transferred to the 2/2 Pioneer Bn and was eventually taken Prisoner of War in Java. After spending time on the Burma railway he was sent to Japan and worked in the coal mine.

To his five sons, ten grandchildren and five great grandchildren we extend our sympathy. We also thank Bill "Pee Wee" Russell of Tamworth for sending us the above details who ended by saying "Norm was a great mate, a worthy and true Aussie bushman."

STANLEY ROBERT MILLIN 2/2 of Tugun, Qld, passed away on 17th May at the age of 79

years at his residence, from a heart attack. He retired to Qld with his wife twenty years ago after living in Melbourne. We are grateful to his daughter Denese for supplying us with the details.

JOHN JAMES LAMERTON of Canberra, son of Jack Lamerton 2/1, passed away in July at the age of 49 years. We have extended our sympathy to Jack and his family.

JOHN MORAHAN 2/1 of Surfers Paradise passed away on 28th September at Pindarra Hospital after a long illness, at the age of 81 years. The funeral was conducted at the Allambee Gardens Crematorium at Nerang.

PAT MURPHY 2/1 of Blakehurst passed away on 28th August, aged 75 years and a Requiem Mass was celebrated at the Mater Dei Catholic Church at Blakehurst on 1st September, and at the conclusion of the Mass the funeral proceeded to the Woronora Crematorium.

A grandson read the Eulogy on Pat's private life while the Minister read the details of his army service as supplied by the Secretary. Pat enlisted in 1940 at the age of 18 years and was with the 2/1st in the Tobruk Siege and with "D" Coy in Milne Bay as well as Borneo. Pat served for many years as caretaker of the Redfern Town Hall and as such made sure we were well looked after at each Anzac Day Reunion. He organised each year a bottle of whisky to be placed on the "D" Coy table.

Pioneers in attendance at the Church service were Vic Whiteley, Bill Hodges, Ken Oliver and Peg and Max Herron. To Pat's wife Colleen, daughter Carol and son Bill we extended our sincere sympathy in their sad loss – he was a good friend to all of us – We Will Remember Him.

"MUFTI" Victoria supplied by Eric Causer of W. J. Craig 2/2, Dandenong; J. M. Stevens 2/2, Highett; W. J. Thompson 2/2 Portland.

"REVEILLE" issues July to October – A. L. Neuss 2/1; R. H. O'Brien 2/1; G. F. Brown 2/1; A. H. Cheetham 2/1; M. J. Connell 2/1; F. K. Francis 2/1; R. C. Hazell 2/1; J. Morgan 2/2; C. K. Secombe 2/1.

7th DIVISION ASSOC.

Our new delegate to the above Association is Roy Levy 2/2 and at the meeting of 25th July all units of the Division who had not previously placed a plaque on the wall of the Garrison Church at the Rocks in Sydney were asked to do so.

Roy promptly contacted the 2/2nd Pioneer Assoc. in Victoria and their Executive kindly donated their plaque for which we thank them. This was arranged through George Murphy, Secretary, and Jack Hocking, Treasurer, by Roy Levy.

A service was held at the Garrison Church on 7th September when the plaque was presented and placed on the wall.

2/1-2/2 PIONEERS W.A.

Len was in Hollywood Hospital in August for a week after being confined to bed for a week at home. He has been having leg problems, so hope he won't be laid up for too long.

We were very sad to lose a very good member Jack Monger who passed on July 1st. We extended sincere sympathy to Joan.

Attendance at our July meeting was, Bob and Norma Sefton, Joan Monger, Hugh Sorley, Jack Stewart, Len and Joy Preedy. Thanks to the following for their donations: Bob Sefton, Jack Stewart, Brian Guhl, Bill Sutton and Norm Le Cornu.

Bill Sutton had been in Hollywood Hospital for an operation and was being transferred back to hospital in Wongan Hills – thank you Hazel for the phone call.

We all missed Norm Le Cornu so hope you are well Norm. Two of our regulars, Ethel and John McDougall were also missing, and we know Neil MacPherson was away on his travels – he gets away from our winter, lucky man.

I am having difficulty with my right hand as I had an accident at the end of May and it is a very slow recovery hence this report is a little short. Every good wish to you all and see you at our next meeting on 21st November.

– JOY PREEDY