

PIONEER NEWS

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

Treasurer: VIC WHITELEY Editor: M. HERRON President: ALLAN McINNES

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Welfare: BILL TASKER, Phone 9718 6658

PIONEER NEWS - 1952 to 1998

As mentioned in a previous copy of the Mail Bag the Pioneer News has just concluded its 45th year of publication and still going strong, thanks to the support of its many contributors through donations as well as letters for the Mail Bag. Without this support the paper would cease to exist.

At a committee meeting of the 2/1 - 2/2 Pioneer Btms Association in 1948 it was proposed that every effort be made to write the history of the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion and, if at all possible, to endeavour to publish a newsletter. However, it was not until 1952 that the Committee of the day felt sure they could turn out something regular and worthwhile that could maintain contact with those members of both units whom they already knew and try to re-establish relations with those whom they had not seen for years since the war finished.

The Committee comprised Hec. Page, Frank Cheal and Bill Robertson 2/2, and Max Law, Rod Pegg and Harry "Monty" Montague 2/1. Subsequently, Max Law, as secretary, wrote to the various newspaper groups around Australia and in almost every case the Association's plea for members was published in city and country newspapers alike, resulting in quite a list of members being enrolled.

The first issue appeared in December, 1952, edited by Max Law 2/1 and Frank Cheal 2/2. It was a small typewritten sheet of eight pages containing a President's message (at that time Hec. Page 2/2) and a message from our Patron, that great lady Mrs. Lilla O'Malley Wood, with very encouraging words for the new venture. Mrs. O'Malley Wood had been instrumental in forming the 2/1st Pioneer Btn. Comfort Fund in 1940 and later included members of the 2/2nd Pioneer Btn when that unit was reformed in 1942.

The subscription at the time was 2/6d, but donations of larger amounts were gratefully received. The postage was 3 1/2d. each, so there was not a lot left over to publish the paper. Max and Frank attempted to get enough news to continue printing the news each quarter, enlisting the help of a young typist at the bank where Frank worked to type the contents onto a stencil to be roneod. This was done free of charge. After a few issues two good friends of Max who were printers set up and printed the news free of cost. This arrangement carried on for some time and gradually the Pioneer News began to take on a more professional look.

By the end of 1953, however, the news had grown from its small beginnings as a typewritten roneod sheet to a small printed edition and able to be registered at the GPO as a periodical. The Mail Bag in those days was printed as "In Passing" and as time went by and more members were contacted, the number grew.

As it was now possible to contact members by virtue of the news, the Association was able to hold quite a lot of functions resulting in not only the men getting together for the Anzac march and reunions but families able to join in outings and meet one another.

These were in the form of Christmas parties for the children (money for gifts often being raised by Mrs O'Malley Wood and the ladies from the Comforts Fund), picnics, car trials, dances etc. These were all very well patronised and would have not been possible only by publicity in the news.

By 1958 our mailing list had grown to nearly 900 members of both units and printed for the grand sum of £13-8s. (\$27.60). Before the addressograph machine was purchased in 1959, the wrappers for the paper were typed each issue by Peg Herron as at that stage Max was a co-editor with Max Law. When Max Law was transferred to Adelaide by his firm in 1959 Max Herron was appointed as editor, with Vic Whiteley as co-editor and responsible for the Mail Bag.

However, in 1963 Bob Lake was appointed as co-editor when Vic Whiteley resigned and was very ably assisted my daughter Gail who typed the Mail Bag for Bob from 1963-1966. When Gail married, his other daughter Eileen "fell" for the job and carried on until she retired from her position at the A.B.C. Bob held the position of co-editor until his untimely death in September 1996.

During the seventies Max and Bob were assisted from time to time with articles by John Harnetty, ex C Coy., - 2/1, who was an interpreter in the 2/1 during the war years, and later became a journalist on one of the city newspapers. The articles were full of humour and a great source of amusement to all who had the good fortune to read them.

Over the years the paper has gone from strength to strength and from that small beginning we have the news as it is to-day. It costs a lot more to produce - current charges for 650 copies are \$622 for printing and \$293 for postage per issue.

The Association, over the years, has been greatly indebted to all those who have given of their time in the wrapping of the news. With so many of the earlier helpers no longer with us, it is hard (with failing memories) to record all those who have been a tower of strength in this task but we are reasonably sure that the following is a fairly accurate list. Prior to 1957 the paper was wrapped at the home of Fred Callaway and included Bert Holmes, Tom Crossman, Alf Carter and Max Herron. After that date and up to the present time, Max has been responsible for making sure the paper is printed and then wrapped for posting at his home in Beverly Hills.

Since 1957 the following members and their wives have given sterling service and are to be commended for their efforts: Max and Peg Herron, Bob Burnside, Don Lawson, Gavin Todd, "Sailor" Witham, Bob and Joyce McGregor, Jack and Laura Westwood, Harry Mostyn, Wal and Lal Page, Gordon and Olive Finlay, Jack Dodson, Alf Carter, Bob and Jean Dixon, Jim and Kathleen Field, Reg Armstrong, Jack Henderson, Doug and Roma Shearston, George and Joyce Walker, Nev. Woodham (on the occasion his taxi was in the Beverly Hills area) and Ruth Rhodes.

With age catching up and so many of the above who have passed on, or moved away from Sydney, the sole wrapping committee now consists of Gordon and Olive Finlay and Max and Peg Herron.

On reading back over the earlier news it is sad to read of so many old friends who have passed on, including Max Law (one of the original editors) and then late in 1996 our long-time Mail Bag editor Bob Lake. They are gone, but will never be forgotten.

Keep your letters coming and, hopefully, we may continue into the next century.

ANZAC ACTIVITIES 1998

WREATH LAYING - Friday 24th April

The Wreath Laying Service will be held at 4pm on Friday 24th April and all members are to assemble on the corner of Martin Place and Pitt Street, on the G.P.O side at 3.50pm and will place wreaths at the Cenotaph at 4pm.

ANZAC DAY MARCH - Saturday 25th April

Forming up will be the same as previous years for both units - 2/1st in Phillip Street, head on to King Street and rear of 6th Division - 2/2nd in Phillip Street near Martin Place and rear of 7th Division. Both banners will be displayed at respective assembly points. Check newspapers for any change in assembly point.

ANZAC REUNION - Saturday 25th April

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

Costing will be: - meal \$15. Refreshments Beer: \$1.70, Schooner \$2.20, Jug \$6.90 Service to tables.

ANNUAL MEETING - Friday 22nd May

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 22nd May at 1pm at the Redfern R.S.L. Club, corner of Redfern and Gibbon Streets Redfern and a cordial welcome is extended to all Pioneers to attend.

BILL ROBERTSON - OAM

With the announcement of the Australia Day honours it was pleasing to see the name of Bill Robertson 2/1 - 2/2 Pioneer as a recipient of the Order of Australia Medal.

In supporting Bill's nomination by the Clovelly RSL Sub-Branch our Association letter stated: -

"As a captain, Bill served with the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion in the siege of Tobruk. On return to Australia he was seconded to the newly formed 2/2 Pioneer Battalion, whose original members had been captured in the fall of Java. During the 1943 New Guinea campaign he was O.C of "D" Coy and took part in the Lae campaign including Nadzab, Tsili Tsili and Shaggy Ridge.

In 1945 he was appointed Major - Beach Commander, for the 2/2 Pioneer Battalion when they landed at Tarakan and Balikpapan.

Since the war, Bill has been Vice-President of this Association for thirty years as well as a staunch Committee man since 1948. He has not missed an Anzac Day March and Reunion Dinner and has attended all Country Reunions conducted by this Association, who fully support your nomination."

Bill has been a member of Clovelly RSL Sub-Branch since 1951 during which time he served as President for nine years as well as Welfare Officer. At the age of 94 years Bill is a Life Member of the Sub-Branch and in 1993 was awarded the Meritorious Medal by the RSL. Other positions Bill held with the Sub-Branch were pensions officer, delegate to the NSW State Congress and member of the Combined Anzac Memorial Committee.

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

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

The first issue of the Mail Bag for 1998 and many thanks to all those who sent letters and cards with Seasons Greetings to the Committee of the Association and to Max and I personally. Trust all members spent some happy hours with family and friends and hope the coming year brings lots of good health to all.

GLADYS ALLAN, Mackay, widow of Jack 2/1, with a long family letter to Vic Whiteley and a cheque for the news. Says she continues to read the news, but finds the names she and Jack both knew are getting very few. Gladys was very sad to read of the passing of Bob Lake and realises what a great loss it was for all concerned with the 2/1sts. She keeps reasonably good health with a few "hiccups" now and then, but still battling on. All the best to you, Glad, and many thanks for the donation to funds.

CYRIL AMIES 2/1, Thornleigh, with a special greeting card and letterhead designed on his colour printer and scanner – a very professional job Cyril. Doris says he spends hours on his computer and is really enjoying his "new toy". They have had a busy and exciting year helping daughter Wendy and her husband extend their home and she and Cyril travelling in Brisbane and Victoria. They found the scenery in Victoria very interesting and the Dandenongs in spring were a blaze of colour. Their garden and their bowling continues to take up their time and apart from a few minor disabilities are able to maintain a very active life. Our best wishes to you both – keep well.

"SNOWY" ANDERSON 2/2, Aspendale, with greetings for Christmas and some kind words to the editorial staff of the news. Many thanks, Snowy, and to Isabell and Julie. We shall endeavour to keep up the good work. Sorry you could not make it to Lismore, but perhaps you will see you in Wagga in October.

REG ARMSTRONG 2/2, Baradine, with a short note and greetings for all Pioneers, particularly the "paper wrappers". They are very depleted these days, Reg, only Gordon and Olive Finlay and Max and I on the job. What a far cry from the days we had ten or twelve – how time marches on. Reg sends apologies for Anzac Day this year, but will be on deck at his local club. All the best to you and Coralie, and many thanks for the congratulations to Max on his award.

LEILA BARBER, Trangie, widow of Eric 2/1, with a donation to funds and says she still enjoys getting the news but finds the old well-known names are getting fewer every year. Leila sends kindest regards and best wishes to Bill and Win Tasker, Joyce Law, Brian and Betty Kybert and Rita Trefoni and hopes 1998 will be a much better year for all. Good to hear from you after such a long time, Leila, and thanks for the sub.

VAL BLACK, Evans Head, widow of Allan 2/1, with a welcome donation and apologies for lateness of letter. Always good to hear from old friends, Val, and glad you still enjoy receiving the news. Pleased to see Barney Muldoon keeps in touch with you and some of the Kyogle boys. There are not many of them left either, Val, both Toby Hale and George Scholes have passed on recently. Many thanks for your kind wishes.

MAVIS BLANCH, Beaudesert, widow of Joe 2/1, with a note and greetings to all for 1998. Mavis is keeping well and tripping about with a Legacy Group that was formed in Beaudesert last June. In November went to Stanthorpe, from Brisbane, to the Flanders Poppy Festival, which was opened by the Minister of Veterans Affairs, Bruce Scott, and the red poppies were growing amongst the wheat and bluebells as in Flanders. Rather a lovely sight. Has also been down to Kyogle for a visit and saw Bill Hoffman 2/1. Mavis passed on the news that Jack Richards 2/1 of Lennox Head had been in hospital again but now home

on a four-wheel walker. Jack had a bad fall and is having physio daily. Thanks for passing on the news, Mavis.

MARJ BOYLE, Moama, widow of Keith 2/1, with greetings and a clipping from the local paper on the death of Ted Grumley 2/2. She was unable to attend the funeral as she was on duty for Meals on Wheels, but passed on the Association's condolences to the family. Marj is still organising Meals on Wheels six days a week and holds a respite afternoon once a week so kept busy. (All the more remarkable as Marj is herself in a wheel-chair). Hope your health improves, Marj, and keep up the good work.

LES BRITT 2/1, Cairns, with Xmas greetings to all Pioneers and a donation to the news. Many thanks, Les, and hope you haven't been affected too much by the bad weather up north.

ERIC CAUSER 2/1, Hamilton Vic, with a card and greetings from his new home. He and his wife Doff have a busy time ahead painting and gardening, but I guess it isn't as constant as the jobs on the sheep property at Macarthur. Will keep your kind invitation in mind when next down in your part of the world. Very best wishes to you both.

JACK COATES 2/1, Umina, with lots of news in two long letters and stamps for yours truly. Max has acknowledged these, Jack, but many thanks. I don't get much time for my hobby these days. He and Lex have had their fair share of hospital visits the last few months. Lex is still on chemo and so far is keeping the "bug" in check. Jack has had cat scans and lots of bowel tests and says all the brews he's swallowed would kill a brown snake at 10 feet. Wog beer, Alicante and umbrella port were nectar to the gods compared with some of the dope he's taken. (Let's hope they did the job, Jack). Jack and Lex were able to attend the Rats meeting at Ettalong in December, the first for 12 months. "Bluey" Miller 2/1 and Edna have not been well and as far as he knows Harry Hamer 2/1 still O.K. Jack has had a phone call from Jim Hall 2/1 of Kyogle and said Jim was to go to Toby Hale's funeral the day after he rang. Despite all your problems, Jack, there is nothing wrong with your memory – should you take the time one day to put all your memories down on paper. Always good to hear from you and hope by the time the paper is printed things are a lot better for both Lex and yourself. Our best wishes to you both.

BETTY CREASY, Portland, widow of George 2/1, with greetings to all for the new year and hopes that she may be able to make Anzac Day this year. She had good intentions in 1997, but things didn't work out. Bet still manages to have a chat to Bill Hoffman 2/1, Kyogle, on occasions per phone. Do hope you can make it this year, Bet, will be in touch.

ALLAN CRUTE 2/1, Woolgoolga, per pen of good wife Beulah, with a cheque for the Association and some kind words for those who keep the news coming. Also many thanks to you both for the congratulations on Max's award, just as well he doesn't wear a hat!!

Beulah and Allan celebrated their Golden Wedding last year with plenty of celebrations from both family and friends. Congratulations. Allan also celebrated his 80th birthday and this sparked off more celebrations – our wish for you both is lots of good health in the years to come.

Both Allan and Beulah are still heavily involved with the Red Cross and were very busy before Christmas organising a party for 100 or so people and making puddings and Xmas decorations. Good to hear the family are well and Denis now fully recovered from his heart problems.

Beulah also mentioned Eric Reynolds 2/1 and wife Joyce were O.K. and they had also celebrated their Golden Wedding.

ARTHUR DAVIS 2/1, Granville, with a short note of thanks for the news and a donation to funds. All the best old mate, keep well.

GRACE FOWKES, Wentworthville, widow of "Snowy" 2/1, with greetings to all Pioneers for Christmas and some funds to keep the news going. Glad you were able to get a copy of "The Pioneers" from the library and enjoyed

reading the news of the men and doings of the battalion, Grace, and the book "Sandakan". As she says makes one feel quite humble and forever in debt to our gallant servicemen. Please God it may never happen again. We shall keep you on the waiting list, Grace, in case some copies of the book comes into our hands. Max is forever photo copying different sections of the book for readers that only want specific chapters. It is amazing how many children and grandchildren of Pioneers are looking for information on the war years. So good to see. All the best and many thanks for the sub.

TOM GAISFORD 2/2, Balwyn Vic, with greetings and says how pleased he is to receive copies of the news which helps to keep alive that wonderful spirit of comradeship and experiences shared so long ago. His grateful thanks go to all those who give of their time and talents in keeping the news going.

Tom has a bit of a problem with arthritis which has affected his back and legs making it necessary to give up his bowls, only temporary he hopes. Still he's had a good run as far as health goes and glad to have received his "OBE" without many problems on the way.

Thanks, Tom, and your best wishes are passed on to all 2/1 & 2/2 boys, especially the Anti-Tankers of the 2/2nds.

SAM GARDINER 2/1, Oak Flats, with his donation for the news and his apologies for lateness. Sam is having eye problems again owing to cornea grafts not being successful and has to have a further operation shortly. He is hoping to have more luck this time. Best of luck, Sam, hope all goes well.

STAN GAVAN 2/2, Greystanes, with apologies for his donation to funds being overlooked – no harm done, Stan, better late than never. Sends best wishes to all Pioneers for a healthy and happy new year and many thanks for the news which he looks forward to with interest.

BOB GINNANE 2/2, Leumeah, with greetings for 1998 and now home from hospital after a pretty close call with the Grim Reaper – goes to show Bob you can't keep a good Pioneer down. With a germ in urinary tract, blood poisoning and kidney collapse, also a coma for two weeks, Bob says he arose like Lazarus. Through the Mail Bag, Bob has asked me to thank all the well-wishers for him and says he is feeling a lot better, but has a sister coming each day to monitor his blood sugar and count. Hope all continues to go well, Bob, and our best wishes to both Nell and yourself.

DR. STAN GOULSTON 2/1, Chatswood, with his thanks for the Pioneer News and his heartiest congratulations to Max on his Anzac of the Year Award. Max was deeply touched by your comments, Stan, and would like me to thank you most sincerely for the wonderful tribute you passed on for his forty years of service.

At this point in time it looks as if Stan may not be marching on Anzac Day due to a return of his back and sciatica trouble. After a couple of operations in 1992 and 1995 the trouble has flared up again.

He was very sorry to read of the passing of John Morahan and Pat Murphy and, in closing, sent his warmest regards to all old 2/1 Pioneers. Hope your problems are improving, Stan.

STUART HALDANE 2/2, Preston Vic, with Seasons Greetings to all 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneers and his sub for Pioneer News. He congratulated the editors for the job they do in keeping up with the news and well-being of our members. True, Stuart, but this is only possible because of the letters we receive – if they did not drop us a line or two every so often we would not have a paper, so keep up the good work. Stuart says he keeps fairly well for a senior citizen and looks forward to continue reading the news. Many thanks for your kind remarks.

CLIVE HARRIS 2/1, Aberdeen, with a short note enclosed with a greeting card. He apologises for not being in touch for so long but has promised to write again soon. All the best, Clive, and thanks for your best wishes.

PAM HERRICK, Sutherland, daughter of the late George Bates 2/1, with greetings to all Pioneers and their families from both herself and George's wife Dorothy. Her mum is keeping well and Pam herself still working at

Sutherland Hospital. Nice to hear from you, Pam, and sorry to hear the news of Patrick. Keep in touch.

GLORIA HUTCHINSON, Caringbah, widow of Bill 2/1, with her congratulations to Max on his award and best wishes to all for 1998. Was delighted to tell us that she has at last been granted a War Widows Pension and is very thankful to Doug Shearston for his help in this regard. Good news, Gloria, and hope to see you Anzac Day.

ERN JAMISON 2/1, Gladesville, with his thanks for continuing to receive the News and enclosed a nice donation to funds. He says he is fairly well for an "old un" and even though he gets around on crutches because of a hip replacement that went wrong and a few skin cancers he's doing O.K.

In your letter, Ern, you mentioned you were thrilled to see your old corporal's name in connection with the Concord Walkway, being with him in 14 Pl. C Coy., and how it brought back many memories. The only problem — you did not mention who the corporal was!! Maybe next time.

Thanks for your kind remarks and best wishes.

JUNE KERR, Narrabeen, widow of Ken 2/1, with her sub and thanks for the News which she still receives and enjoys even though she does not know many of the names mentioned. Also passed on her congratulations to Max for his Anzac award and after 40 years service to the Pioneers and scouting feels it was well deserved. Thank you, June, and sorry we did not see you last December at the Rats luncheon at War Vets. Keep well.

JOYCE LAW, Kareela, widow of Max 2/1, with greetings to all for 1998 and mentions that she has now retired from work and busily catching up with chores at home. Many thanks for your offer of help any time we need it, Joyce, we shall certainly let you know if the occasion arises. Perhaps you may care to once again join the ladies on Anzac Day for lunch — will be in touch. Best wishes and hope you are enjoying your retirement.

DORRIE LONG, Sutherland, widow of Bob 2/1, with best wishes to all Pioneers for a healthy new year and cannot believe how time is flying — more so as we are getting older. True, Dorrie, but as long as we can stay healthy that's all that matters. All the best to you and yours.

ERNIE LUNN 2/2, Dubbo, with a donation to funds and apologies for non-attendance last Anzac Day due to knee problems. Needs some treatment on it, but his Dr. says to leave it as long as he can. However, he attended the Day at Mendoran (not familiar with that town) where his wife lived in her early years. Also was not able to make the Lismore reunion, but hopes for better luck next year.

Ernie mentions he has just finished reading Peter Stanley's book "Tarakan" and says you have to read one page twice to realise that the 2/2nds were there — but with three killed and nine wounded presumed they must have been.

PAT MACFARLANE, Blacktown, widow of Ron 2/1, with greetings for the Festive Season and some money for worthy treasurer. Pat had a triple by-pass late last year and is starting to move around quite well. Her only complaint is that her son won't bring the lawnmower for her to use — smart boy I think Pat. Do hope you continue to improve, all the best.

JOYCE MCGREGOR, Bradbury, widow of Bob 2/1, with lots of family news and best wishes to all for 1998. Also many thanks for your congrats. to Max, especially from a very good friend over so many years. We had some very wonderful times together in those early years of the Association didn't we, and it's sad to remember all the dear friends who have passed on. Those old paper wrapping days were quite a social occasion. In this issue Max has included an article on the early days of the Pioneer News and as one of our very early paper wrappers I feel sure you will find it of interest.

Joyce liked the article by Rev. Playstead at the Lismore reunion and it brought back a lot of memories.

NEV O'CONNOR 2/2, Tintenbar, per pen of

Betty, with greetings for Christmas to all Pioneers. They have had a busy year which included a trip to Canada and Alaska which they enjoyed very much. Neville is another who has celebrated his 80th birthday recently with a round of parties, and keeping well. Missed you both at the Lismore reunion, but hope to see you next year. Kindest regards from all.

JOY PREEDY, Shenton Park W.A., good wife of Len 2/2, with a nice card of congratulations to Max on his award from the W.A. Pioneers. Many thanks, Joy, and trust Len is still battling on. Warm wishes from all over in the East, for a better and healthier new year.

MONA REINERS, Corryong Vic, widow of Bern 2/1, with a long, newsy letter to the Herron family for Christmas, and her congrats. to Max on his well-deserved award. Mona is always pleased to get the News and sometimes sees a name or two that she remembers or has heard Bern talk of over the years. Also had a visit from Doff and Eric Causer (2/1) on their way home from Canberra to Victoria and was sorry they could not have had more time together. (Eric was in the Sig. Pln. with Bern).

The family have been wonderful support for Mona since Bern passed away and has plenty of weekend visits from both sons and families, also daughter Mandy has been able to visit from W.A. on several occasions. Mona has had a few trips away herself, to Perth and Adelaide, to Canberra for Floriade (which she really enjoyed) and hopes to go to Tassie some time this year to see an 86 year old brother. Good to see, Mona, and very best wishes from all here in Sydney. Hope to see you soon.

CHARLES RICHARDSON 2/2, Manly West Qld, with greetings for the new year to the Committee and members of the Association. He hopes all enjoy a healthy 1998.

HARRY SPREADBOROUGH 2/1, Alexandra Hills Qld, with a long newsy letter on his recent travels and greetings for a very healthy and prosperous 1998. Has been a bit lax, he says, with letter writing lately on account of the heat and is quite happy to look for a cool spot — and do nothing. At the time of writing these notes it's much the same here, but my "Boss" has the whip out for his Mail Bag notes so must soldier on.

Glad you enjoyed your trip to Adelaide with Jean and your trip down the Murray. Certainly a wonderful experience and a relaxing holiday. Spent some time at the wineries along the way and some lovely rose gardens. Harry says they grow the roses amongst the grape vines because they were told the roses warn growers of any fungus which attack the fruit.

All the very best to you both and hope that Jean and yourself are fully recovered from your accident. Keep fit and every good wish for the coming year.

GWEN STRODE, Yagoona, sister of the late Keith Jones 2/1 K.I.A., with her best wishes to all in the Association for a healthy and happy 1998. Thanks for the donation, Gwen, and we wish you all the best for the coming year.

MICK TASSELL 2/1, Hay, with a donation to funds and good wishes to all. You certainly won't get writer's cramp, Mick, but good to hear from you just the same.

BILL THIELE 2/1, Port Hughes S.A., per pen of good wife Betty, who says Bill will never suffer from writer's cramp. So many of the wives seem to have fallen for the writing jobs these days — just as well, or we'd be scratching for letters for our Mail Bag.

Bill and Betty enjoyed the gathering of members of the S.A. Pioneers Branch recently which was held at the home of Allan Olson's daughter. It was a lovely dinner and there were plenty of yarns exchanged during the evening.

Last September Bill and Betty went on a tour to the N.T. and had a truly wonderful holiday. They loved Darwin and it was an educational experience. Max and I went several years ago on a camping safari to the Territory for four weeks and it was one of the most fascinating and interesting holidays we have ever done. Can see how you found it an experience too — and how the outback people live.

Many thanks to you both for the card to Max on his award and he'd like to thank you for the

kind words. It was very much appreciated.

Keep well and all the best for 1998.

ERIC REYNOLDS 2/1, Macksville, with a letter which arrived too late for inclusion in the November issue and some money for treasurer Vic. Glad to hear both you and Joyce are keeping well and hope you enjoyed your holiday with Alison and family at Hawkes Nest. Not so far for you to travel as down to Victoria. At 82 Eric keep busy, but has a man in to mow the lawns and no longer has the "chooks" when they stopped laying.

Thanks for your Christmas wishes and kindest regards to you both for the year ahead.

JOHN TREVETHICK 2/1, Lane Cove, with his best wishes to the hardworking Committee and a sub for the News. Was saddened to read of the death of John Morahan in the last paper, as John along with his brothers Cyril and Kevin, Stan Jones, Bill Hood, John Flood, Dick Chalmers and himself joined the Pioneers together in May, 1940, at Greta from the Militia (Engineers) in Sydney.

Good to hear from you, John, and many thanks for your congratulations to Max on his award.

LES TUNKS 2/1, Mareeba, with a note of thanks for the newsletters he had received, and which he and wife Lesley enjoy reading.

We have not heard from your friend Rex Francis, but did get a card from Les Britt at Christmas. He was well but, in his own words, not much at letter writing.

Do hope by now you have finally received your army medals. With so many applying in later years, I guess it takes some time. However, better late than never and will be appreciated by family in later years.

Trust you have had no problems with the bad weather they have been having up the Top End and every good wish for 1998.

TEMPLE WOOD 2/1, Terrigal, with a cheque for funds and to say how he looks forward to the News. It keeps him in touch with those who are left. Temple's health is not the best and limited in his movements, especially as his eyes are not what they used to be. He spends a lot of time at Lake Conjola where he says life is very peaceful.

Kindest regards and your good wishes are passed on to all members of 2/2nds for a bright and healthy 1998.

ALLEN STONE 2/2, Raymond Terrace, with a few lines with his sub. and the news that after a triple by-pass he is feeling quite well. Good to hear Allen, also that you have joined the "O.B.E. Club" and enjoyed your birthday party. He is still gardening and walking to keep mobile and looks forward to the News to read of the doings of the old crowd. All the best and keep up your healthy lifestyle.

PETER PEILE 2/1, Caringbah, once again per pen of wife Erica, with a donation to funds and the news that Peter is still in the "perpendicular" and enjoys listening to the cricket and football, even though his sight is so bad. They are off to Tasmania on a coach tour late in February and are both looking forward to the trip. All the best to you both and hope you enjoy your holiday.

ELIZABETH MAHY, Camperdown, daughter of the late Phil Mahy 2/1, with a nice letter of thanks for the information sent to her, per medium of her uncle John McLean of Avalon. John had contacted the secretary for some information on Phil's army life, as his daughters were interested to hear of the doings of the unit in which their father had served, and Max was able to photo copy the Balikpapan chapter. Glad to have been of help, Elizabeth, and only too pleased to have been of assistance.

SID (BLUEY) HOLMES 2/1, Comboyne, with a change of address from Sussex Inlet and a cheque for the treasurer. Sid has sold his property on the South Coast and moved back to his place of origin, where he has brothers and sisters still living. He says the local Ex-Services Club have gone to great lengths to record the district's involvement in both wars with photos of all who served on one wall, also a monument in the centre of town with all names recorded. As you mention Sid, quite a lot of 2/1sts from the area, especially the Sig. Pln.

• That concludes the Mail Bag for another issue and the Committee look forward to a good roll up to the Wreath Laying, the March and reunion at the Occidental Hotel on Anzac Day. Until then keep well and our best wishes to all.

BRANCH REPORTS

STH. AUST. BRANCH – by Ken Wilson

The Pioneer Get-Together was held at Allen Olson's residence in November with a total of fifty people representing the four Pioneer units, including George Sauer 2/1, Bill Thiele 2/1, Joe Robertson 2/2, Bruce Scott 2/2, Geoff Lloyd 2/2, Allan Olson 2/2, Ken Wilson 2/2 and Russ Harrison 2/2.

While in Adelaide Ken attended the Wreath Laying with George Sauer, Russ Harrison, Allan Olson and Doug Waters which was very good. After the service we went to the cemetery and because it was Armistice Day the school children had placed a small Australian flag on every wall plaque and it was most impressive.

NORTH COAST BRANCH – by Ken Wilson

A luncheon was held at the home of Ossie and Betty Carter on the 29th November which was the branch Xmas get-together. Approx 25 people attended with a caterer organising everything. Betty O'Connor made the Xmas cake. Pioneers attended the party of Nev O'Connor who turned 80 on the 5th Dec and Kevin Raward who turned 80 on the 26th Dec.

SICK PARADE

FRANK LOCANE 2/2 of Nowra was in Royal Prince Alfred hospital on 3rd November with gall stone problem and was visited by Jack Mc Donagh, Vic Whiteley and Bill Lewis, who took along a Tab ticket for Frank on the Melbourne Cup. The horses name was Markham and Bill chose it because the 2/2 Pioneers were in the Markham Valley needless to say it came third so Frank and Bill had quite an interest in the race.

Bill called in to see Frank at his home late in November, who said he would be returning to hospital to have the gall operation.

BOB GINNANE 2/2 of Campbelltown was in hospital in October with quite a few problems and was visited by Roy Levy and Jack McDonagh.

ALEC MITCHELL 2/2 of RSL Village Gosford was in Brisbane Waters Hospital early December for a triple by-pass operation and was visited by Bert Neasby 2/2. Thank you Bert for the details.

LAST POST

COLONEL JOHN WILLIAMS, O.B.E., 2/2 Pioneer Battalion of Bundall Qld, formerly of Sefton NSW passed away on 20th November 1997 at the age of 93 years.

John served in the Middle East with the 2/17 Inf Battalion and the 2/15 Inf Battalion before, with the rank of Lt. Colonel, he was appointed to command the 2/2 Pioneer Battalion. Together with this unit he was captured by the Japanese when diverted to Java, and spent the rest of the war as a Prisoner of War.

On the Java Burma Thailand Railway he commanded the "Williams" forces. After the war he was appointed an officer of the Order of the British Empire for outstanding leadership in Java.

After discharge in 1946 he was recalled to the army to give evidence at war crime trials in Japan. He then became active in the NSW Prisoners of War Association and was President for 20 years. He also helped establish the Federal body and served a term as Federal President of the Ex - POW Association of Australia.

John had been Co-Patron of our Association and attended the Anzac Day march and Reunion in Melbourne each year,

before he moved to Bundall where his daughter Janine looked after him at her home. At the time of passing he was in a nursing home.

The Association contacted Janine and extended the sincere sympathy of all Pioneers.

TED JENSON 2/1 of Doonside, formerly of Enfield passed away on 14th November 1997 in Blacktown Hospital after suffering two strokes in the past 3 years.

The funeral service was held at St John Vianney Church at Doonside and Ted's brother-in-law gave the Eulogy of Ted's life as a family man while Joan his sister-in-law read a lesson from the Bible.

In giving an Eulogy of Ted's army days with the 2/1 Pioneers, Welfare Officer Bill Tasker spoke of how Ted's brother Allan, who was in the Signal Platoon, claimed Ted into the unit while on the Atherton Tableland. Ted served in 10 Pln B Coy and saw action in Balikpapan. Bill also spoke of how he knew Ted when he was playing cricket at Enfield; and how he spent many happy moments talking with Ted at the Anzac Day March and Reunion as well as Country Reunions where Ted was a regular attendee.

The Poppy Service at Pinegrove Lawn Cemetery was carried out by the Welfare Office of Enfield RSL Club. Pioneers in attendance were Bill Tasker, Vic Whiteley, Ron Callaghan, Gordon and Olive Finlay, Don and Mona Barracough and Max and Peg Herron.

Sincere sympathy from the Association was extended by Bill Tasker to Ted's wife Marie and her family.

RON CLARK 2/1 of Epping, formerly of Kingsford, passed away on 18th November at Ryde Hospital at the age of 83 years. He had not enjoyed good health in recent years, but in a letter of last year said he would visit the Kokoda Track Walkway to see the Pioneer plaque on the Imita Ridge Station to which he had made a substantial donation.

We are grateful to niece, Elaine Henderson for supplying the details and extended our sympathy.

CLIVE MEEK 2/1 of Glen Innes passed away on 1st November and the funeral service was held at St Augustines Anglican Church at Inverell.

The RSL Poppy Service was carried out by John Blake. We are grateful to wife Maisie for supplying the details and have extended our sympathy to her.

TED GRUMLEY 2/2 of Albury passed away on the 24th November and the funeral service was at St James Anglican Church Moama. Ted was a P.O.W at Changi and the Burma Railway for 3½ years. At the good age of 94 years, Marj Boyle 2/1 of Moama who sent us the details, said Ted had a good innings.

JACK PRICE 2/1 of Harden passed away on 18th June 1997 at the age of 79 years after a long illness. We thank his wife for sending us the details.

JACK ROBERTSON 2/2 of Shepparton Vic. passed away on 6th September 1997 after four months in hospital. Jack served with the 2/2 Pioneers in the Middle East and fought in the Syrian campaign and then on to Java where he was taken Prisoner of War with the unit. He worked on the Burma Railway for 3½ years. After discharge in October 1945 he took up farming until he sold it in 1997. He never enjoyed good health and passed away soon after retiring. We thank his wife Ruth for giving

us the details and extend our sympathy to her and family.

TOBY HALE 2/1 of Kyogle passed away in December at the age of 88 years. Funeral was attended by Jack Shearman, Bruce McNaughton, Ted Felton, Jim Hall and Clancy Scholes.

GEORGE SCHOLES 2/1 of Kyogle passed away in December and we thank Jim Hall for supplying details.

BERT BEASLEY 2/2 Woolloowin, formerly of Sydney passed away on the 20th November 1997 at the age of 85 years. The cremation service at the Albany Creek Crematorium was attended by John and Mollie Hunt who extended sincere sympathy to his son John and family. Thank you John and Mollie for supplying us with the details.

JACK HARVEY 2/1 of Caringbah passed away on 26th January and the funeral was held on the 30th January.

GEORGE CECIL SMITH 2/1 of Bunbury WA passed away on the 5th December at Augusta Hospital at the age of 80 years. He was cremated at Bunbury Cemetery.

ARTHUR PRITCHARD 2/1 of Kingsley WA passed away at Hollywood Hospital at the age of 93 years. He was buried at Karrakatta Cemetery. He had lived at the RSL Veterans Home at Mt. Lawley for some years. He left the 2/1 Pioneers when they came out of the quarry. We are grateful to Bert Woodhouse 2/1 of Karridale WA for supplying the details on George Smith and Arthur Pritchard who he had visited when at the Veterans Home.

BARBARA WILLIAMS, 2/7th A.G.H. of Brassall QLD passed away on 5th December at the age of 84 years. Barbara was the former wife of the late Captain Geoff Williams. 2/1. She was well known to many Pioneers and over the years has corresponded regularly.

WAGGA WAGGA REUNION

TUES.13th, WED. 14th OCTOBER 1998

In response to many requests, another reunion has been arranged for Wagga and this is your last chance before the year 2000. Details as follows:-

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13

Dinner at RSL Club 6.00pm. Cost of dinner, plus incidental expenses \$26

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14

Morning Service at Kapooka Chapel
Barbecue at Uranquinty Hotel – 12.00 noon at about \$12.50 per head.

Evening – Buffet meal at RSL Club at members cost.

ACCOMMODATION: Members to arrange own accommodation.

There are many motels and a caravan park. CLUB, ASTOR and PARK Motels provided a 10% discount in 1996 so discuss this when booking. (TRANSPORT: a bus will be available to Kapooka, Uranquinty and return to Wagga, or you can take your own vehicle. But beware the breathalyser.

BOOKING FEE: \$13.50 per person, payable with application form below. For catering etc. we need to know numbers. Make cheques etc. payable to Ian Willmore NOT the Association and send to –

IAN WILLMORE, P.O. BOX 387 Vaucluse NSW 2030

WAGGA REUNION – CUT OUT – Fill in particulars

Surname.....Known name

Ladies namePhone.....Unit.....

Address

Tick: Dinner ☐ Kapooka ☐ Uranquinty ☐ Buffet ☐ Bus ☐ Car ☐

PIONEER NEWS

Phone 9759 5491

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

Per Annum: \$5

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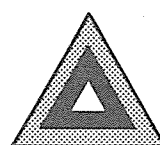
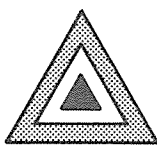
Editor: M. HERRON

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Welfare: BILL TASKER, Phone 9718 6658



KOKODA TRACK MEMORIAL WALKWAY

The fourth dedication ceremony at the Walkway site was held on the 29th April 1998 at 2.30 pm. The first dedication was the Official Opening of the Memorial Centrepiece on the 3rd October 1996, followed by Station "Eora Creek" on the 15th August 1997 and Station "Myola Ridge" on the 5th November 1997.

This time, i.e. 29th April, five stations were unveiled and moving in order along the track they are Imita Ridge, Ioribaiwa, Efogi, Myola and Templetons Crossing.

The service, involving three Ministers of Religion, bugler (Last Post and Reveille), Piper (Lament), and Corrective Services Band, was conducted under the chairmanship of Mr Rusty Priest (N.S.W. State President of R.S.L.) who as usual gave an excellent Address of Welcome. One item which he will be targeting is to ensure that the Olympic Torch passes along the track in the last stages of its journey to the Homebush Olympic Stadium in September 2000. Brigadier Sir Frederick Chilton delivered the Requiem on behalf of Veteran Gold Sponsors, whilst Mr Terry Lamb, of Canterbury Rugby League Club performed that duty on behalf of Corporate Gold Sponsors.

At the conclusion of this segment of the service the congregation moved towards respective Stations for individual unveiling, and accordingly the Pioneers gathered at the Imita Ridge station where already a member of the armed forces with fixed bayonet was standing to attention.

The members of the 2/1st Committee, viz: Bill Jollie, Max Herron, Vic Whiteley, Steve Clarke, involved since October 1996 in related matters, performed the unveiling duty and Bill was asked to speak. In a few well chosen words he referred to the various aspects involved in reaching this ultimate situation. He also thanked the gathering of 30 Pioneers, including wives and friends for their participation in this ceremony.

I would like to include at this point, our sincere gratitude to Peg Herron for her willing and proficient assistance to our Committee throughout the period of the last 18 months.

On the face of the plinth (concrete slab) is a picture of the "Golden Stairway", the sponsors names in stainless steel - Veteran 2/1st Pioneer Battalion, Veteran - Kingsgrove R.S.L. and Corporate - Canterbury Bulldogs (corporate is \$10,000) and the following narrative:

STATION FIVE - IMITA RIDGE

"The Australians' final defensive position, Imita Ridge was reached by the "golden stairs" which consisted of some 2000 timber steps cut into the mountain side by the engineers. It was an exhausting climb. After leaving Uberi the track rose 1200 feet in the first three miles, dropped some 1600 feet and then rose about 2000 feet in the last four miles.

During 17th September 1942 Brigadier Ken Eather's 25th Brigade at Ioribaiwa withdrew to Imita Ridge and its 3rd, 2/25th, 2/31st, 2/33rd and 2/1st Pioneer Battalions were deployed to meet the final Japanese attack. It was this withdrawal which caused intense consternation at the Allied headquarters in Brisbane. Lieutenant-General Sydney Rowell in Port Moresby told the 7th Division commander, Major-General Arthur (Tubby) Allen, that any further withdrawal was out of the question. Eather must fight it out at all costs.

The Australians did not know that on 18th September the Japanese had been ordered to withdraw. Nevertheless, when the Australians began patrolling forward from Imita they struck Japanese defences which were still in force on 25th September. On 28th September the Australians at Imita launched a major attack on the Japanese at Ioribaiwa, but found that the

Japanese had abandoned the position. At last the Australians could begin their counter-offensive."

All the material on the plinth is encased by reinforced glass edged with black granite.

Shortly it is anticipated that the two bronze plaques on which are displayed the battalion's battle honours and messages of sympathy and costing \$500 each, will be erected in the Rose Garden which is situated in the car park opposite the Hospital.

The final sum of \$3,500 was forwarded by way of bank cheque to the Secretary of the Walkway Committee on 3rd April 1998. We have requested that this amount be used in providing three bench seats, one to be placed in the precinct of the Memorial Centrepiece, another in the trees near Imita Ridge Station and the third one along the track (all permanently secured). Also a name plate affixed securely to the benches with the wording "Donated by 2/1 Pioneer Battalion".

The 2/1st Pioneer Kokoda Track Committee would like to thank all members for their kind generosity, so that this most worthwhile project has been completed comprehensively.

Reported by STEVE CLARKE

ANZAC FUNCTIONS - 1998 WREATH LAYING SERVICE

A special solemnity attended the laying of the wreaths on the Cenotaph on 24th April as memories were so readily recalled by the 31 Pioneers and nine ladies eager to pay respects. Bill Tasker acted as Marshal; Jack Tooker acted as March Leader, while the banners were carried by George Walker (2/1 Pioneers) and Don Crawford (2/2 Pioneers). The wreaths were laid by Steve Clarke (the Association Representative) and by Peg Herron (Ladies Auxiliary).

A real focus was given the ceremony when Allan McInnes recited the Ode to the Fallen. A surrounding audience in Martin Place stood still as Aub Brasier played the Last Post and The Reveille on this his 38th occasion. Several of those attending had travelled distances, including a sterling representation from the North Coast Branch: Kevin Raward, Ken Wilson and Neville O'Connor.

The number in attendance further confirmed the suitability of 4 pm as the time for the ceremony.

Reported by JACK ALLISON

ANZAC DAY MARCH AND REUNION

After some earlier April showers, this day dawned crisp and clear, bringing out a large enthusiastic crowd. For the 2/1st, Jack Tooker acted as marshal. John Gilchrist and Max Herron led the march, with Ray Law and Tim Lloyd the flag and banner bearers. Allan McInnes did the honours for the 2/2nd, with John and Gordon Collins bearing the flag and banner which had been in the keeping of Don Crawford (who also organised the wreaths for the ANZAC Eve Service).

Vic Whiteley was again in charge of subs collection, assisted by Doug Shearston and Gavin Todd. At the Occidental Hotel, Gordon and Olive Finlay with David Herron and Ray Law collected lunch fees while Geoff Finlay and George Walker issued name tags.

REUNION TABLE TALK

Allan McInnes welcomed the 95 members and conveyed an apology from Bill Jollie who

was not well enough to attend. Allan mentioned the special honours conferred on Bill Robertson (OAM), and Max Herron (ANZAC of the Year). Allan reported the sad statistics of 43 members who died since the last ANZAC Day, and fittingly concluded with the Ode. John Gilchrist spoke of the pleasure he derived from being Patron of the Association, and paid a special tribute to the Office bearers and their helpers.

Pioneers came from near and far. From Floriat (Perth) there was Jack Stewart; also from Perth (Yokine) came Alf Bentley; from Altona Vic, Noel Grant; Bill Dundas came down with sons John and Vince from the Gold Coast; Phil Cramsie from Buderim, Q.; Jack Griffiths from Newcastle bearing the Japanese flag which was found in a rag-collection bag and handed on to him. Amazingly the flag has a prior connection with B Coy 2/1st as reported in Pioneer News last November... Pat Egan now living in Queanbeyan; Bob McGregor (Bob had five uncles with 2/1st!); and of course the North Coast Branch contingent of Kevin Raward, Ken Wilson, Nev O'Connor and Snowy Dodd, with an apology from Ossie Carter. Don and Mona Barraclough came from Burleigh Heads and made a holiday of it by going to the Kokoda Track Ceremony on the 29th April.

SONS AND OTHERS

In no particular order, Pat Collins' sons John and Gordon; Allan Frogley filling in for father Jack (confined to a nursing home); Geoff Finlay, David Herron, Ray Law, son of Jim who could not make it because of leg problems, John and Vince Dundas; Ian Secombe son of recently deceased Cliff who would have been tickled to know his grandson Andrew will be reporting to Holsworthy for work experience later this year; Tim Lloyd, son of the late Jack; Gary Lewis was there with father Sam; Gary and Brian Hemmings, sons of the late George were there with brother-in-law Alan Moore; Jack Tooker's grandson Matthew Cole; John Gilchrist's son Peter (whose daughter Julia marched with 2/1st); Allan McInnes' son David - who will shortly be visiting Bulolo, Wau and Nadzab, a place etched in 2/2nd history; and then there was Robert Stubbs who is married to the niece of 2/1st's Noel Schomburg.

Many thanks to Mark Neasbey, son of Bert 2/2, for his generous donation in shouting drinks for the gathering over the first hour at the bar - it was much appreciated Mark.

During the reunion we had a visit from Chris and Lynn Lennon. Lynn was only three months old when her father died in 1962. He was Charles Williamson, a driver in HQ Coy, 2/2nd. Lynn was delighted to meet Pat Egan, who remembered her father. Spiritely Padre Steele (who is said to be 87 years young) came down again from Newcastle; and was observed at one stage with a mobile phone to his ear. And there are the solid regulars who seldom get a mention including Wally Coe, Les Graham, George Smith, Clive Maddrell, John McKnight and Andy Beebar, some of whom march but miss the reunion.

As the afternoon progressed, we waited with anticipation (or dread, as the case may be) for the arrival of the pipe band. In the event, a lone piper from Coogee-Randwick Pipe Band materialised and arguably recorded as many decibels as the full band.

Full marks to the Occidental for friendly and professional service, and thanks to the Committee and helpers for another enjoyable reunion

Reported by BILL LEWIS

WAGGA WAGGA REUNION

TUES. 13th, WED. 14th OCTOBER, 1998

As this is the last Pioneer News before the Reunion please fill out the cut-out slip on page 4 now.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

The first issue since ANZAC Day and what a great day it was for all members. There was a good roll-up of both units at the march and the reunion at the Occidental – one of the best. There were also plenty of letters for our Mail Bag – over fifty – so I must get on with the job.

FRED ALWAYS, 2/1, Beaumaris, Vic., with a note of apology for a late sub owing to a bout of ill health, but at time of writing was a lot better. Age is catching up with us all, Fred, and there's not too many these days that can say they have no aches or pains. Good to see you enjoyed the visit of your daughter and family down from Alice Springs and after six years you had a lot of "catching up". Many thanks for the donation to funds and trust your health continues to improve.

DON ANDERSON, 2/1, Merimbula, with a cheque for the treasurer, and his best wishes. You certainly won't get writer's cramp, Don, but thanks for the sub.

ALF BALLARD, 2/2, Monterey, with apologies for his non-attendance on ANZAC Day as he says old age has caught up with him. Always looks forward to the News and to hear what's happening to former mates. Sends a donation to funds and passes on his best wishes to all who keep the Association going.

PHIL BARNETT 2/2, Alstonville, with a short note enclosing his subs for 1998 and passed his kindest regards to all. Thanks, Phil, trust you are keeping well.

MAVIS BLANCH, Beaudesert, widow of Ray (Joe) 2/1, with her usual newsy letter and a cheque for Vic. Mavis had a visit in early April from Cecil Blanch 2/1 (Ray's brother from Kyogle) and says he looks very well for 85 and still living alone and doing his daily walk. Cecil mentioned that Jack Boyd 2/1 had passed away recently and was buried at Warwick. Jack Shearman and Bruce McNaughton 2/1 were able to attend the funeral. Mavis had also been in touch with Gloria Gray (widow of "Paddy" Gray 2/1) who was recovering from a slight stroke. Gloria is gradually getting movement back in her right hand and arm and is hoping to drive again soon. Our very best to you, Gloria, and continue to improve.

Sorry we cannot give you any news, Mavis, of Gert Vickery as we have not heard from her in years. She is still on our mailing list so presume she still gets the News, or it is being sent on to her.

Good to hear from you, Mavis, keep well and many thanks for the news in your letter.

ALBY BARTON 2/1, Gulgong, with a letter which arrived too late for last issue and a donation to funds. Your good wishes for ANZAC Day were much appreciated and I can assure you the "old boys" had a great day although, as you are aware, their numbers are decreasing every year. Still they had a great reunion and close on 100 in attendance. Of course the march is out for so many now, but they try and make it to the reunion dinner.

Do hope Gwen is recovering from her stroke and that your "old" knees are no worse, though I guess the coming cold weather won't improve them.

Belated congratulations on your 60th wedding anniversary last October and that you both enjoyed all the celebrations with your family and friends. We wish you lots more happy years together.

Glad to hear you are still enjoying your days at the Gulgong Museum and Fred Ratcliffe (son of Jack 2/1 deceased) mentioned that he met you on a recent trip.

Warm greetings to you both and thank you for the kind remarks on the Mail Bag.

TERESA BRENNAN, Altona Vic., widow of Bill 2/1, with a change of address and a welcome donation to funds. Sorry you missed out on some issues of the News, Teresa, but Max has sent you the back numbers. Glad to hear you have settled in your new unit and our best wishes to you for the future. Always good to hear from you.

COLIN CAMERON 2/1, Campbelltown, per pen of good wife Jean, with Col's best wishes

for ANZAC Day and a sub for the News. He is still unable to move about very much, but enjoys hearing news of his old mates. Col was sad to hear of the passing of Ted Jenson and passes on his sincere sympathy to Marie and her family. All the best to you, old friend, and thanks for the sub.

TED CARTER 2/1, Tamworth, an original member of the unit who transferred from the battalion after coming out of hospital after Tobruk, with a letter to Max regarding some memorabilia of the unit. Max has written to you in this regard, Ted, and trust the information may be of use. If my memory is correct, I feel you may have finished up with 2/3 Pioneers, as I often see your name mentioned in their newsletter.

Congratulations to Mary and yourself on your 50th wedding anniversary and that you had a great celebration with your family. All the best and keep well.

GORDON CHRYSTALL 2/1, Molong, per pen of his wife Eunice, with a welcome donation to funds. Eunice says Gordon is always "gunner" write and send his dues, but never seems to get round to it. However, it's the thought that counts and we thank you Eunice for putting pen to paper. Good to hear from you and many thanks for the good wishes.

JACK COATES 2/1, Umina, with several newsy letters and books of stamps for Max. Always very acceptable as you would know. Jack apologised for non-attendance on ANZAC Day, but would have to take a rain check again this year. His health has not been the best and Lex still having chemo and tests. Jack and Lex attended "Bluey" Miller's 90th birthday early in April, along with about 50 other guests, but says the "old fella" is not in the best of health. I'm sure he would have appreciated the lovely rug Lex knitted for him. Sorry Edna is not well either, but as you say, grateful at our age to be still on deck.

Your notes on the doings of the 2/1sts and some of their "characters" make very interesting reading, Jack, and Max has promised to make space for them in a future issue. Good to have it all down on paper while the memory holds out – and you're not doing too badly for an "over 80".

Keep well and hope to see you both when Lex is down to St George to see the specialist.

RON COYTE 2/1, Wentworthville with a short note and cheque for the News. He sends his best to all those who keep the News alive and looks forward to hearing of the doings of those of the old unit.

BILL CUNNEEN 2/2, Burleigh Waters, Qld. with a sub for the treasurer and his best wishes to all. Bill's letter came too late for inclusion last paper. At the time of writing, the Gold Coast was having some pretty hot weather and forced Bill into getting air conditioning – says he now sleeps well and worth the money. His bowling is on the downside and he has resigned from the Green Director's job. It took up a lot of time and had to put up with the "smarties" who know how it should be done but never take on the jobs. Enjoy your retirement, Bill, and good to hear from you again.

ALBY DEAN 2/1, Shepparton Vic., with the news that he had a total hip replacement earlier this year, but was able to dispense with his crutches in time to attend the ANZAC Service, and was happy to meet an old mate Rex Francis 2/1. Apart from a slight limp he and his wife are keeping reasonably well. Sends his best to all members and thanks for the donation to funds, Alby.

JOHN DOWD 2/2, Wagga, per pen of good wife Daphne, with a short note on John's behalf and a sub to keep the News alive. Due to John's health and age, he was not able to attend the ANZAC activities in Wagga, but they had a nice sunny day and good crowds along the route of the march. John says they miss Jack Morgan as he was a great "news gatherer". Thanks for the sub, John, and your good wishes.

LIONEL FULLARTON 2/2, Orbost, Vic., with a donation to funds and his thanks for the News which keeps him in touch. Says he always sees at least one name he remembers and it was good last issue to see mention of Reg Armstrong and to know he was well.

Lionel enclosed a cutting from the Orbost

local paper with a good write-up on Fred Lay, a 95-year-old ex-POW 2/2. Fred served in Syria with 2/2nds and then finished up in Java and eventually taken prisoner by the Japanese. From Changi Fred worked on the Burma railway, was taken ill and treated by "Weary" Dunlop and spent the rest of the war working down coal mines in Japan. Finally demobbed in 1946, Fred was employed by the PMG for some years before working the family farm until he retired at 79. He has lived in retirement in Orbost ever since. He still plays bowls and is a life member of the Orbost Bowling Club. Not bad for a 95 year old.

As hospital visitor for the local RSL, Lionel reports the passing of another 2/2, Ted Harris, which has been included in Last Post. Many thanks for the news, Lionel, and your good wishes.

STELLA GRANGER, Schofields, widow of Bill 2/1, with a short note and a sub and her best wishes to all for a happy ANZAC Day. Our thanks, Stella, and keep well.

JOHN GARLAND, North Balgowlah, son of the late Keith Garland 2/1, with the sad news that his mother, Norma, had passed away in March from complications after a spinal operation at the age of 77. Whilst sorting through his mother's effects, John came across a letter Norma had started to write to the News and somehow had never finished. In the letter she thanked the Association for the Pioneer Newsletter which she looked forward to receiving, but felt a great sadness as she read of those who had passed on. (Her husband, Keith, had passed away in 1967). Their first son, Philip, was born during the New Guinea campaign and like many other children only knew their father as a photograph on the mantelpiece for the first few years of their lives. Philip joined the army in which he served for 33 years, serving with the artillery in Vietnam and here in Australia. He retired as a Major from Victoria Barracks aged 50. Norma and Keith had three sons and three daughters and in her letter she said how proud she was of them and her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

John does not know if this was all his Mum wanted to say, but it was all that was written and he felt his Mum would be pleased to know that the letter was finally sent and her thoughts passed on.

Our sincere sympathy to you and the family, John, and thank you for taking the time to write and send us your Mum's letter.

JIM GRAY 2/1, Warrawang, with his thoughts on ANZAC Day and how he never thought he would see the day when D Coy 2/1 would only have four members at their table. Death and sickness have taken a big toll over the last few years, Jim, but I guess they were with you in spirit. He sends his best wishes to Jack Lamerton and his side-kick, George Tolmie, and asks if George still has the tape recorder he had when the reunions were held at the Castlereagh Hotel.

Sorry you weren't able to attend the unveiling of the plaques at the Kokoda Walkway at Concord. It was a great occasion and well worth a visit when you are ever in that area. All the best, keep well.

RUSS HARRISON 2/2, Stirling S.A., with a cheque for funds and best wishes from both he and Rona for ANZAC Day. They were looking forward to their second ANZAC Day with the Adelaide Pioneers and their families, also to the unveiling of the memorial plaque and ceremony commemorating the four Pioneer Battalions. Trust you had a good day, Russ, and good to hear from you. All the best to Rona.

ELAINE HENDERSON, Epping, niece of the late Ron Clark 2/1, thanking the Association for their expression of sympathy on the death of her uncle. Elaine has arranged for a rose to be planted in the Memorial Rose Garden at Concord and regrets that Ron did not live long enough to see the unveiling of the Imita Ridge station. Thank you for your letter, Elaine, and our best wishes.

BILL LEWIS 2/2, Carlton, with quite a few items of interest for the Mail Bag, and a cheque from Charlie Henry 2/2 for his subs. Bill had a yarn to Charlie at Bodalla and he and his wife Enid are in good shape. Charlie, who is 86, reports that Roy Stubbs 2/2 at nearby Moruya is still soldiering on, too. On the way home from a week in Narooma, Bill called on Frank Locane

2/2 and wife Jean, and found Frank much improved after his hospitalisation in October, but still has a long way to go. Frank sends his regards to all his old mates. He and Jean spent ANZAC Day locally with Tom Woods 2/2 and his wife Renee.

Bill was also at Lightning Ridge over Easter and just missed Bob Molyneaux 2/2 at the back bar at the bowling club, but was able to spend an hour with him at his home. Bob is in good shape for 85 and has a noble white beard to prove it. He enjoys receiving Pioneer News and asked to be remembered to Don Coy, mates, in particular Bob Ginnane, Kevin Raward, Russ Harrison and John McKnight.

Thanks for all the 2/2 news, Bill, you've certainly been around in the last couple of months.

DICK HOBLEY 2/1, Bremer Bay W.A., with a sub for the treasurer and a copy of old army newsheets that Dick had dug out when going through some old papers. Sure make interesting reading, Dick, 50 years down the track, and many thanks for sending them on.

Dick noted with regret the passing of Ted Jensen and mentions they were in the same section during the latter stages of the Balikpapan campaign and had kept in touch over the years.

He passes on his special thanks to the committee and those who keep the news coming and sends regards to all. Thanks for the kind words, Dick, and all the best to those in the West.

JOHN HUNT 2/1, New Farm Qld., with apologies for not making Sydney for ANZAC Day or the Annual Meeting in May owing to family commitments. You missed a good day, John, but there will be other years. He also enclosed a sub for worthy treasurer to keep him in good spirits. Trust by now the medication has done the trick and that both you and Mollie-Jean are in good health. Always good to hear from you.

NEVILLE JAKINS, Lake Entrance, Vic., son of the late Alf Jakins 2/1, with a donation to funds and his apologies for not writing sooner. He has not been the best the past couple of years with a bad attack of shingles in his middle ear, leaving him deaf in his left ear and loss of balance. Lost over four stone in weight and says his brain is in a fog most of the time. Hope by now, Nev, you are picking up – had a really bad bout myself some years back, and again last year, so I know what they can do to your system. Hope you've had the rain you badly needed and the restrictions lifted. Kindest regards and thanks for the sub.

JOAN JENSON, Rydalmere, wife of Allen 2/1, with a donation to funds and Allen's best wishes to all for ANZAC Day. Allen is still in a nursing home but able to come home once a week in a taxi. Many thanks, Joan, and our very best wishes to Allen and yourself.

KIM LATHAM, Warriewood, daughter of the late Jack Howie 2/2, with a change of address and a donation to the News. Kim sends her best wishes for ANZAC Day and as she will be nursing over that week-end she passed on her fondest regards to Allan McInnes and Gavin Todd. Many thanks, Kim, and the paper will be posted to your new address.

BILL JOLLIE 2/1, Castle Hill, with apologies for both the wreath laying and ANZAC Day due to lots of leg and back problems. He sends his warmest regards to all for a day of good fellowship.

It was good to see you were able to make the opening of the Imita Ridge station at the Kokoda Track Walkway, Bill, and our thanks to Sharon for bringing you down. It was a great day and worth all the effort that was put into the project.

Many thanks for your kind thoughts on the Mail Bag – my BOSS hasn't given me the sack yet, or else he's not game to in case he can't get anyone else. Thanks also for the cheque for the News, has been handed on to worthy treasurer. Keep well and our kindest regards.

JACK KEMPNIICH 2/1, Fingal Bay, per pen of good wife Mais (as usual), with two letters since last issue. Your first letter arrived too late for April issue, but your good wishes for ANZAC Day were passed on to all old friends. The "boys" had a great day, good weather and a very successful reunion. A few days later they also had their Imita Ridge station opened at the Kokoda Track Walkway at Concord and we

hope it won't be too long before you are able to make the trip to see it.

Thank you, Mais, for the good news of Jack Bertram's award in your latest letter. Up to that date we had not heard, but Max has been in touch with Jack this week and passed on both the Association and our best wishes. A well-deserved award, and a worthy recipient.

Cannot believe from your letter of the rain you have had – 11 inches – I'm sure our Sydney catchment area would have liked some of it. That will make Jack's vegies grow – or wash them out of the ground.

Hope by now Jack has recovered from his bad turn on the Indian Pacific and the resultant trip to hospital. What a way to end a lovely holiday in Adelaide. Guess it's a warning to slow down a little and enjoy a less exhaustive life-style. However, a daily walk will do him good and a fishing trip now and again – if they are biting.

I'm sure you will be glad to get your shoulder operation over and done with – it's been a long wait for you to qualify for the hospital cover. Take care both of you and enjoy your footy – the Newcastle Knights are really shining this year again.

ROY LEADBEATER 2/2, Rockhampton Qld., with a short note enclosing a cheque for the Pioneer News and his kindest regards to all Pioneers. Thank you, Roy, and our best wishes.

GEOFF LUVIS 2/1, Dorriggo, with a letter penned by his wife, Mavis, to notify us of a change of address and the news that Geoff is now a permanent patient in Dorriggo Hospital.

If any Pioneers are ever passing through the town, Geoff would appreciate a visit. Mavis takes him home on Wednesdays and Saturdays for the day only. All the best old mate and we hope someone may be passing one day and able to call in.

MARY LLOYD, Coogee, widow of Jack 2/1, with a nice card from London on her recent trip overseas and her best wishes to all. She had four weeks away and since her return has had successful surgery for a cataract – in her own words could not believe how the wrinkles had suddenly appeared on her face. Much worse Mary, when you look at the kitchen cupboards!! We missed you at our ladies ANZAC Day lunch, but glad to see that you, at last, did have your eye done. Many years overdue. All the best and keep well.

DON MCCLELLAND 2/2, Bundaberg, with apologies for lateness in sending his sub – but as he says, better late than never. Don went down to Melbourne for the 2/2 reunion and ANZAC Day and had a great time, and hopes the boys in Sydney did, too. If his health is good he hopes to make the trip again next year – even though it takes him four days to drive down from Bundaberg. Hope you make it, Don, and many thanks for the sub.

OWEN MILLS, 7th Div. Sigs, Springwood, with some cash, he says, to keep the show on the road. Owen is an old school friend of lots of old 2/1 fellows he went to school with in Maclean and the Clarence River in particular. Unfortunately most of them have all gone to the "great parade ground" – to name a few Alex Cameron, Tom Loy and the Smidt brothers Arthur and Roy all 2/1sts. In regard to your friend "Slim" Summersby of Maleny, Max has been in touch with him but sorry to say the Herron family of Wentworth Falls were no relation, nor was the Gordon Hughes of the RATS Assn. of the same scout group as "Slim", although Gordon had also been a scout.

Glad you had a good time at your last 7th Division reunion in Wagga, and as you will have noticed the Pioneers will be there again in October. All the best, Owen, from one old Sig. to another.

JACK MCGREGOR 2/2, Shortland, with a welcome letter and cheque for the treasurer. Jack was pleased to learn of Bill Robertson's award of the O.A.M. and being one of "Robbie's boys" from Kapooka on to Balikpapan says how lucky they were to have him as Company Commander. Consider your best wishes passed on from "Johnny" McGregor. Says now he's nudging 80 he's become Jack. All the best to you and Dot, hope to meet up again one of these days. Keep well.

JOAN PYM, Narraween, sister of the late Bob Lake, with a note and a cheque to funds from herself and Bob's other sister Betty Lawrance. This will be passed on to Vic. Says

she hates writing letters but sends her love to all. Keep well, Joan, good to hear from you.

FRED RATCLIFFE, Picnic Point, youngest son of the late Jack Ratcliffe 2/1, with a welcome donation to funds and some very interesting notes on his dad's early days in camp at Greta and Dubbo in 1940. They certainly brought back lots of memories to Max of his days in both camps and he intends to pass them on to other 2/1sts who knew Jack well, namely Vic Whiteley and Gordon Finlay. As soon as space permits, Max is going to include in the "News" a series on various personalities and their memories of camp life and will be pleased to use some of your Dad's notes.

Thanks for typing them out, Fred, and for good wishes for ANZAC Day. Also pleased you had recently met up with Max's old mate Alby Barton at the Gulgong Museum – Max had just received a letter from him, published elsewhere in the News. Small world!!

DARREL "BLUEY" REID 2/1, Swansea, per pen of his step-daughter Janet Cater, with a sub for the News and recent news of "Bluey" as he was known to his mates. Darrel has been living with his wife Velma in Swansea for the last thirty odd years and says it's a lovely spot for their retirement years. Of late, he has had his share of health problems and "doesn't get around much anymore" without the aid of transport. However, he and Velma have a caravan at Scott's Head and are able to spend time with friends in the area. Fortunately Velma drives so their activities are not curtailed in this regard, and Darrel participates in weekly Carers Group activities.

Thank you Janet for writing on the "young fella's" behalf – always good to hear they are still battling on, and thanks for the sub to funds.

JOE ROBERTSON 2/2, Findon S.A., with a cheque and very best wishes to all here in Sydney for ANZAC Day. Joe was looking forward to meeting all the guys in Adelaide for their march and the reunion luncheon afterwards. Says it's always good to catch-up with everyone, even though they do have a small get-together during the year. Healthwise, he's not too bad, says his pacemaker acted up a while back and he had a new one fitted – but reckons as he's joined the O.B.E. Club, he really can't complain. The numbers joining that exclusive club are growing, Joe, you've got a lot of mates. All the best.

BRIAN SMALLHORN 2/1, Armidale, with a cheque and his best wishes. Can't make too much from your note, Brian, but still good to hear from you.

MICK SMITH 2/2, Bateau Bay, with some kind words for those who compile the Pioneer News and a cheque for the treasurer. Mick found the history of the Association and the beginnings of the News most interesting and emphasises that if it were not for the efforts of a chosen few, both then and now, any Association would cease to exist. Fortunately, Mick, we have been very lucky over the years to have members who have been prepared to give lots of time and effort to keeping our Association and newsletter afloat.

Mick's original battalion was 2/22 Inf. (8th Div.) and not many are left, but he says although he gives his time to his old unit he still enjoys receiving the News to keep his "finger on the pulse". He still keeps personal contact with quite a few members of the 2/2nds.

Healthwise he says he's not too bad for an old bloke and trusts all Pioneers can say the same. Thanks for your letter, Mick, and your good wishes.

RAY SMITH 2/1, Glen Iris Vic., enclosing a sub for the News, which he reads with great interest. Ray found the history of the Pioneer News in last issue very interesting reading and sends his thanks to all those who keep it going. Says our ranks are thinning and old age catching up, so important to keep in touch. Thanks for the kind words, Ray.

DANNY SPROUSTER 2/1, Dundas, with his sub and apologies for not being able to make ANZAC Day because of ill-health. Sorry about that, old mate, you missed a good day.

Danny said he watched the march on TV and said it was a credit to all who took part and made him proud to be able to say he had served with them all. Nice words, Danny, and we thank you. He is looking forward to catching up with Frank Gillian, Dick Blakeney, Ron

Callaghan and Brian Kybert at their next get-together. Hope your health has improved and our good wishes.

BONNIE SNUDDEN, Dubbo, widow of Cecil 2/2, (known as "Smoke Stack") and some kind words regarding the News along with her sub. Bonnie says she loves getting the paper and says it is a wonderful way of keeping us all together even though separated by long distances. Thank you for your good wishes for ANZAC Day, Bonnie, the men of both units had a great day and despite old age and indifferent health managed to still keep the show on the road. Hope to catch up with you again one of these days, keep well and our very best wishes.

DICK WAKELY 2/2, Merewether, with a letter too late for inclusion in the April issue and some kind words to Max on his Anzac of the Year Award for 1997. His year of "glory" has gone, Dick, but it was a great honour and, maybe I could be biased, but I felt, very well deserved. Thanks on his behalf for your kind words. Also many thanks for your remarks on the Pioneer News and glad you still find it interesting reading.

Dick felt privileged to have served with so many great fellows during his service with the Pioneers and likes to keep in touch per medium of the News.

He closes with his best wishes to all Pioneers and their ladies, with special thanks to yours truly. Keep well, Dick, and thank you for your kind words.

RON WEBSTER 2/1, Bass Hill, enclosed a sub with his short letter and his belated congrats to Max on his 1997 award. Many thanks, Ron, and for your best wishes to the Committee of the Association who keep the show on the road.

DAVE WELLER 2/1, Bomaderry, has not been well and is awaiting a trip to Sydney to hospital. He was pleased to receive a visit from Cyril Amies 2/1 when in the Nowra area recently. Hope things are looking a little brighter, Dave.

FRED WHEATON 2/1, Sawtell, with a letter passing on the sad news of the death of Sister Sue Malcolm 2/5 AG.H., one of the four nursing sisters who accompanied the 2/1st Pioneers on their trip to the Middle East on the Johan-de-Witt. Fred attended her funeral, but did not meet up with anyone else he knew. Sue was a long-time matron of Coffs Harbour Hospital and as Fred lives in the area he quite frequently met up with her. Thanks for passing on the news, Fred, and for attending the funeral.

He and Jean are still battling on, although Jean has not been well for the last couple of years and Fred had a pacemaker fitted last September. However, he says plenty worse off and blames the age. Know what you mean, Fred, we all seem to be having trouble with that awful word.

JOYCE LAW, Kareela, widow of Max 2/1, with a welcome donation to funds and her very best wishes passed on to all Pioneers, especially those who are responsible for the News. Many thanks, Joyce, for your kind remarks, will endeavour to keep up the good work.

BRUCE CHAMBERS 2/1, Turrumurra, with a cheque to keep the News afloat and says he is always pleased to catch up on the latest news of former members. He was sorry to read of the passing of John Morahan, one of the early members of the old unit. Thank you, Bruce, for the congrats. To Max on his award last year and for the kind remarks in connection with the News. They were very much appreciated. Good to hear from you again.

ALF BENTLEY 2/1, Yokine, W.A., with a note of appreciation for ANZAC Day and says how he and Pat enjoy being able to come to Sydney for the big day. Going to the opening of the Pioneer plaque at the Kokoda Track Walkway was an added bonus and they hope to be able to make the trip again next year. We hope so too, Alf, and best wishes to you both.

ROBYN BELL, Harkaway, Vic, daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1, with her thanks for another great ANZAC Day and how she enjoyed meeting many of her father's old mates. She hopes to make the Wagga reunion in October, but will make final arrangements a little closer to the date. Your letter re the Infantry Medal has been attended to by Max and he has written you re this matter. Robyn was pleased to see the men of the North Coast Branch down

for ANZAC Day and Noel Grant and Jean from Victoria. Your best wishes are passed on to Vic Whiteley and Allan McInnes and hope to see you in Wagga.

That concludes the Mail Bag for this issue, keep your letters coming and hoping that we may meet up with lots of old friends at the coming Wagga reunion in October. Lots of good health in the coming months to all, and our good wishes.

S.A. PIONEERS MONUMENT

The unveiling and Dedication ceremony of the Pioneer Battalions' Monument, in memory of those men who served in World War II, was conducted on the 31st May, 1998, at a site above the Military Parade Ground in the City of Adelaide. The ceremony was attended by 150 members and guests.

Brigadier John McKinna, CMG, CBD, DSO, LVO, ED, Patron of the Association, carried out the unveiling and Rev. Des C. Smith the Dedication ceremony. Included in his address was the following passage: "To honour the memory of those who have suffered and died while on operational service". In his Blessing, he asked all to join in remembering all those who served in the 2/1st, 2/2nd, 2/3rd and 2/4th Pioneer Battalions, followed by prayers.

A wreath-laying ceremony was conducted with members of the 10/27th Battalion RASB Band supplying the music for the National Anthem, God Save the Queen and the hymns. A bugler from the band played for the flag-raising ceremony.

All four battalions were represented. Charles Dicker came from Umina in NSW and was loud in his praise for the service. Joe Stevens represented the 2/3rd Pioneers and placed a wreath on behalf of his old unit. The 2/1sts and 2/2nds wreaths were laid by George Sauer and Allan Olson.

After the Dedication service all present were invited to afternoon tea in the Army Parade Ground Building where Ms. Pamela Blamey, Deputy Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs, gave a short address. Dr. Andrew Southcott, Federal MP, and several senior army officers also attended.

Allan and Jeffrey Olson struck a medal for all in attendance, which was very much appreciated. This proved to be a fitting conclusion to a great and memorable occasion.

— Reported by **GEORGE SAUER**

JACK BERTRAM — O.A.M.

It was pleasing to hear the announcement in the Queens Birthday Honours of the name of Jack Bertram, 2/1st Pioneer as a recipient of the Order of Australia Medal.

Jack has been a staunch Committee member of the Newcastle Rats of Tobruk Association over many years and has held numerous positions on the Executive and the recent position he has accepted is that of Branch Secretary.

As far as our Association is concerned Jack has been Vice President since 1966 and in 1990 at the Gosford Reunion was presented with his Life Membership of the Association. It was stated here that Jack had been responsible for the organisation of the Country Reunions held at Newcastle and Greta. He has always been a regular attendee of all our Country Reunions, Committee Meetings, ANZAC Day marches and the ANZAC Reunion.

On behalf of the Association Executive a letter of congratulations has been sent to Jack and all Pioneers join in sending best wishes to you Jack — a much deserved award.

SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE — send news of your family and happenings to **MAX HERRON**, 3 Enoggera Road, Beverly Hills, NSW 2209

LAST POST

TED SHELTON 2/2 of Corowa passed away in January, 1998 while in Corowa Hospital at the age of 77 years having been in hospital for the past ten years. After enlistment Ted served with the 2/2 Pioneers in the Syria campaign where he lost a leg as well as other injuries. Sincere sympathy was extended to his widow. Thank you Mrs Shelton for sending us the details.

TED HARRIS 2/2 of Murrumbidgee, Vic., was in Orbost Hospital when he passed away in April. Thanks to Lionel Fullarton for the details.

BERT BEASLEY 2/2 passed away in Brisbane on 20th November, 1997 at the age of 85 years and on 18th April, 1998 his son arranged a Memorial Service at the graveside of Bert's wife at Rookwood Cemetery, Sydney.

Salvation Army Chaplain, Major June Tyson conducted the religious service and called upon Association President Allan McInnes to give the Eulogy after which Welfare Officer, Bill Tasker conducted the Poppy Service, Last Post, Ode of Remembrance and Rouse. Also in attendance were Vic Whiteley, Gavin Todd and Max Herron.

BILL HENRY 2/2 of Monterey passed away in May, 1998, while in a nursing home at Dalmeny. We are grateful to brother Charlie and Bill Lewis for supplying the details.

SUE MALCOLM 2/5th A.G.H. passed away on 1st May, 1998 at the age of 84 years, at Coffs Harbour nursing home. 2/1st Pioneers will remember Sue, together with Vera Hamilton, as the nursing sisters who looked after them on board the Johan-De-Witt en route to the Middle East.

Fred Wheaton 2/1 of Sawtell attended the funeral on 5th May and we thank him for the details.

JACK RICHARDS 2/1 of Lennox Head passed away in June after a long illness, while at the Ballina Ex-Servicemens Home and sincere sympathy has been extended to Olive and her family. We thank son Chris for sending us the details.

SICK PARADE

RITA PRITCHARD, widow of Darcy 2/1 was in Berry Hospital in April. Thanks to George Walker for details.

BILL TASKER 2/1 was in hospital on 20th May for an operation on his ear but at time of writing he was home and progressing favourably.

WAGGA WAGGA REUNION

TUES. 13th, WED. 14th OCTOBER 1998

In response to many requests, another reunion has been arranged for Wagga and this is your last chance. Details as follows:

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13

Dinner at RSL Club 6.00pm. Cost of dinner, plus incidental expenses \$26.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14

Morning Service at Kapooka Chapel
Barbecue at Uranquinty Hotel — 12.00 noon at about \$12.50 per head.

Evening — Buffet meal at RSL Club at members cost.

ACCOMMODATION: Members to arrange own accommodation. There are many motels and a caravan park. CLUB, ASTOR and PARK Motels provided a 10% discount in 1996 so discuss this when booking. **TRANSPORT:** A bus will be available to Kapooka, Uranquinty and return to Wagga, or you can take your own vehicle. But beware the breathalyser.

BOOKING FEE: \$13.50 per person, payable with application form below. For catering, etc. we need to know numbers. Make cheques, etc. payable to Ian Willmore NOT the Association and send to —

IAN WILLMORE, P.O. BOX 387 Vacluse NSW 2030

WAGGA REUNION — CUT OUT — Fill in particulars

Surname Known name

Ladies name Phone Unit

Address

Tick: Dinner ☐ Kapooka ☐ Uranquinty ☐ Buffet ☐ Bus ☐ Car ☐

PIONEER NEWS

Phone 9759 5491

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

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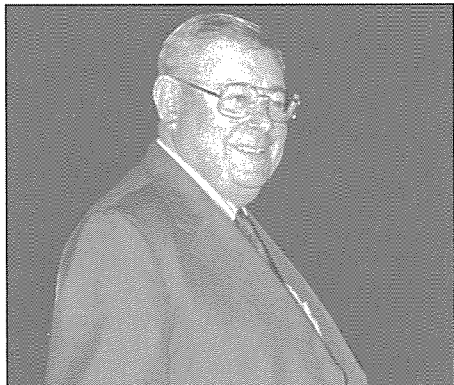
VALE - VIC. WHITELEY, TREASURER

On Thursday, 27th August it came as a great shock to hear of the sudden passing of Vic. Whiteley who had been the Association treasurer for the past twenty three years, and committee member for fifty years.

The funeral at Woronora Crematorium on 2nd September was attended by 24 Pioneers and nine Pioneer ladies as well as 21 Servicemen, representing Penshurst RSL, Riverwood Legion Club and Rats of Tobruk Association.

The service was conducted by Salvation Army Chaplain, Major Stan Morton and the Eulogy, Poppy Service and Bugle calls were arranged by Welfare Officer, Bill Tasker.

In lieu of a floral tribute at the funeral, members of the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Bn Ladies' Auxiliary sent a donation to the Heart Foundation as a tribute to Vic. This has been acknowledged and a letter sent to Neil and Joanna Whiteley by the Foundation.



The Chaplain gave a brief outline of the private life of Vic. As follows: "Born at Leichhardt in 1918, he went to school at Crystal Street, Petersham. He started work at Dairy Farmers Milk Company where he met his wife, Peg, who worked in the office. They were married at St Stephens Church at Kogarah in 1943.

After discharge from the army in 1945 Vic. worked for the NSW Govt. Railways at Darling Harbour for 32 years, retiring in 1979 and during these years he served as a sergeant in the 8th Railway Unit C.M.F. and was honoured with the Efficiency Medal for 14 years service."

The Eulogy was delivered by Bill Tasker as follows: "On behalf of Penshurst RSL,

Riverwood Legion Club, Rats of Tobruk Association and the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Bns. Assoc., who are all represented here today I would like to read of Vic's excellent service with the 2/1st Pioneer Bn. and the Association."

Vic Whiteley's service to the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Battalions Association has been a most outstanding one. Enlisting in the 2nd A.I.F. in 1940 he was an original member of the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion and served with that unit from 1940 until November 1945 in all their campaigns covering Tobruk and the Libyan Western Desert, Kokoda Track in New Guinea and Balikpapan in Borneo.

After the war when the 2/1st and 2/2nd Pioneers formed an Association, Vic. became a member of their Committee in 1948 and over the years served in various positions as follows:

1960: Appointed Mail Bag Editor of the Association newsletter "Pioneer News" and held this position until he handed over to the late Bob Lake in 1964.

1975: Appointed Treasurer of Association and held this position until his death.

1981: Awarded Honorary Life Membership for his outstanding services to the Association.

1986: Appointed finance Officer of the Committee formed to produce the unit history of the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion.

1996: Member of the committee formed to establish the 2/1st Pioneer Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway project.

In addition to the above duties, Vic was on all the committees to organise the Country Reunions since he took office in 1975, as well as to the forefront of the duties entailed every year in the organisation of the ANZAC Day reunions and the collection of subscriptions at the ANZAC March and the Reunion Dinner.

Vic. was a keen Committee member of the Rats of Tobruk Association and was originally their Treasurer, recently being presented with Life Membership of the RATS of which he was very proud.

In conclusion, the Executive of the Pioneer Association would like to extend to Vic's family their very sincere sympathy and we thank God for giving us the life of Vic. Whiteley. No greater tribute can we pay Vic. than that - WE WILL REMEMBER HIM.

which added greatly to members' comfort and convenience. At Kapooka, it had not been possible to arrange a service in the Chapel but the Commandant, Colonel Platt took time off his duties and addressed the group. However, the Pioneers were first required to complete an orienteering and obstacle course. It was necessary to locate the RTW Building in the MI Block. Enquiries of small groups of soldiers marching by had a negative result, as they just kept marching!

Having located the venue, the walking stick brigade was then required to negotiate sundry flights of stairs, and a maze of corridors. Once seated, the Commandant made us welcome and gave us the freedom of the camp. Tom Brabin responded and thanked the Army for its generous support of this and previous reunions.

Although short on numbers, the Pioneers rallied, and a combined force of 2/1 and 2/2 occupied the key Uranquinty Hotel sector, which they held until evacuated by Army bus at 2.45 pm Wednesday.

We have a report (unconfirmed) from a local source that a Wagga TV news program included an item about the Pioneers reunion.

Reported by BILL LEWIS

KOKODA TRACK WALKWAY

The official opening of the Memorial Rose Garden, which is in the car park opposite the entrance gates of Concord Hospital, was held on 1st November, 1998.

The Catafalque Party was provided by 3 R.A.R. and the welcome address was given by Mr Rusty Priest, AM, State President of the NSW Branch of the RSL. Rusty is Chairman of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway Committee and, before calling on the Rev. David Hayes, OAM, to dedicate the Rose Garden, spoke of the campaign in New Guinea of which the fighting on the Kokoda Track formed a large part, with respect to the direct security of Australia. Mrs Ethel Lane, AM, MBE, on behalf of the Nursing Sisters, then gave a short address on their involvement in New Guinea and later at Concord Hospital, followed by Mr Neil Whitaker, Chief Executive Officer of the National Rugby League, corporate sponsor of the Rose Garden.

The Address was given by The Hon. Bruce Scott, MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs, representing the Prime Minister. Mr Scott spoke at length on what was owed to the veterans and the medical and nursing services.

After the cutting of the ribbon to the Rose Garden and wreaths were laid, Last Post was sounded and Rusty Priest recited the Ode, followed by Reveille and the Lament.

The wording on the plaque at the entrance to the Rose Garden reads as follows:

"This Memorial Rose Garden marks the start of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway. The Walkway commemorates the Herculean efforts in the 1942-43 Papuan campaign of the Australians, who, with the support of the Papuans (Fuzzy Wuzzies), kept Australia secure from invasion."

Here we honour the compassionate care provided by the Medical Corps and Nursing Services to the casualties of all areas of conflict."

The two plaques in the Rose Garden, sponsored by members of the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion in memory of their Fallen Comrades, were very well displayed.

The following Pioneers were in attendance: Jack and Kath Tooker, Bill Jollie, Steve Clarke, Roy Levy, Jack Pearce, Jack and Marj Kerslake, Max and Peg Herron and Ian Secombe (son of the late Cliff Secombe 2/1).

PIONEER REUNION WAGGA WAGGA

In keeping with the current trend to miniaturisation and down-sizing the Pioneer Wagga get-together turned out to be a mini-reunion with a total attendance of thirty-eight, on 13th and 14th October, 1998.

At the Tuesday night dinner, South Aust President, Allan Olson, apologised for the absence of President Allan McInnes who had family commitments, also Patron and Vice-President Bill Robertson who had just returned home after a stay in hospital with pneumonia. Bill and Allan sent best wishes to all for a successful reunion. Apologies were received from Jack McDonagh, John McKnight, Snowy Dodd and Bill Jollie.

Allan Olson welcomed those present including Jack Tooker, NSW Vice-President Max Herron, NSW Secretary (with wife Peg, Newsletter Editor), Tom Brabin, Vic. Vice-President, George Murphy Vic. Secretary, and Ken Wilson, President North Coast branch.

Special guests were Robyn Bell (daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1), Evelyn Booth (partner

of the late Jack Morgan), and from Tasmania, Marlene Klintonworth (niece of the late Bob Merritt). Marlene was busy de-briefing Don Hose concerning his recollections of her late Uncle Bob. The North Coast sub-branch as usual was well represented.

Allan Olson spoke with regret of the untimely death of long-time NSW Treasurer and Association stalwart, Vic Whiteley. Vic had planned to attend, but sadly and unexpectedly passed away some weeks before the reunion. We also noted the sad passing in August of Victorian Committee member, Frank Cheal.

When the roll was called, NSW led with 23, followed by Vic. 13, with SA and Tas. one each. Snow Anderson and family had some train trouble and didn't arrive until Wednesday morning. All other ranks behaved with decorum thus limiting the scope for gossip. There was a lively atmosphere at the William Farrer Hotel, where a large group camped for the duration.

The Army again provided transport from Wagga to Uranquinty via Kapooka and return,

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

The last Mail Bag for 1998 and for some reason not so many letters – perhaps the weather had a lot to do with it as we certainly had some cold and rainy days and floods in lots of areas. Do hope not too many of our readers were in those areas that were devastated by the floods, and to those in country districts who needed the rain badly for crops that it proved beneficial. Thank you for the letters we did receive and for the donations enclosed – maybe I won't end up with writer's cramp this issue.

GLADYS ALLAN, Mackay, widow of Jack 2/1, with a kind letter of thanks for the news passed on to her regarding the death of Vic. Whiteley. Vic. and Jack were close mates in the army and Glad has been corresponding with Vic. since her husband died in 1967. She was deeply sorry to hear the news and said he would be sadly missed by many – a good friend.

Gladys hasn't had a good year healthwise, had a trip to hospital for nearly three weeks and then a spell with one of her daughters for a few days to recuperate. Says her daughters have been very good to her and she is very grateful for their kindness.

Thank you for your donation, Glad, and after this issue Max will no longer send you copies, as requested by you. I guess the fact that living in a different state and so far away you did not get to meet any of the Pioneer people apart from Vic. and the late Bob Lake. Max remembers Jack with thanks – in 1960 he and several other scouts took a party of 48 scouts to Fraser Island and Jack organised transport from Roma St. Station to Brisbane, en route to Maryborough. No mean feat with boys and all their gear. Perhaps you may now recall the event.

Take care, Glad, and many thanks for your letter and the kind thoughts contained therein.

BOB BALDIE 2/1, Albert Park, with a few lines to say hello and a cheque for the News. He looks forward to reading each issue and says to keep up the good work. Thanks, Bob, and for your kind wishes.

GEORGE CATCHPOLE 2/2, Northgate Qld, with a donation to funds and his thanks for the newsletter which he is always grateful to receive. George has been having a lot of trouble with both legs with acute osteomyelitis and has been in and out of hospital since the end of March.

He has nurses attending him at home every day which helps a lot, but says he is not getting better fast enough for his liking. Hope by now things are improving, George and thank you for the sub.

BARBARA CHEAL, Burwood Vic., widow of Frank 2/2, with a very generous donation to the Pioneer News, which Frank and Max Law 2/1 produced firstly in December 1952. Barbara recalls how many of the first editions were composed in her lounge room. Many thanks also for the notes on Frank's army and post-war life Barbara, and Max has included these in the Last Post columns.

Our best wishes to you and the News will continue to be posted to you regularly.

JACK COATES 2/1, Umina, with a couple of newsy letters since last issue and some stamp booklets, for which many thanks. We have been busy sorting through the notes you have written on the doings of the 2/1sts and some of their "characters", Jack, and you will find we have included some in this issue.

Our thanks for the news of the passing of Jim "Bluey" Miller and for your attendance at his funeral. Max has included the notes in Last Post elsewhere in the News, and we thank you for your visits to "Bluey" while in Woy Woy Hospital.

Glad to hear Lex got a good report from Professor Norris at St George when she had to see him in October, and that your eyes are very much improved after your cataract operations. You've both certainly had your fair share of health problems the last few years.

We were sorry you could not make it to the

reunion in Wagga, but it is a long trip from Umina on public transport. Jack Griffiths was able to come – a welcome break – and looked well after his recent trip to hospital. Just as bright and breezy as ever.

Keep well both of you and hope your trip to family in Narrabri is more than a possibility. Ken was lucky to get a police posting to his home town I'm sure Rose would be elated. All the best.

BILL FALLON 2/2, Barrabra, with a welcome donation to funds and his apologies for his non-attendance at the Wagga reunion. Had he and his wife Daphne not been to Wagga recently they would have made the trip. Both keep reasonably good health – Daph has blood pressure problems but kept in check with medication.

Their family are doing well and scattered around the country – Kay in Port Macquarie, Peta having a house built at Portland and the younger daughter Sharyn has a MacDonald's franchise at Wellington. Plenty of places for a visit and a change of scenery.

Bill passes on his congratulations to Bill Robertson on his recent OAM award and to Max for his 1997 Anzac of the Year award. He feels that both awards were very well deserved. Kind thoughts, Bill and I'm sure both recipients well appreciate your good wishes.

NORMA FITCH, Calwell A.C.T., widow of Harold 2/1, with a change of address from Rydalmere. Norma has made the move to Canberra to be with her daughter and to have someone to care for her. The paper will continue to be sent on to your new address.

Do hope you will be happy in your new surroundings, Norma, and thank you for your kind wishes to Max and myself for the future. All the best and keep well.

JOHN FLOOD 2/1, South Penrith, with the sad news that his lovely wife had recently passed away and I'm sure all your old mates of 2/1 extend their sincere sympathy in your sad loss.

John enclosed a welcome donation with his note and says how he really looks forward to receiving the News and to catch up with the various activities the Association is involved in. He also passed on his thanks to all who keep the Association and the Pioneer News on the road. It's getting harder with age catching up, but managing even if only at a snail's pace.

Good to hear from you John and our kindest regards.

TOM GAISFORD 2/2, Balwyn Vic., enclosed a welcome cheque with his letter as a donation to Pioneer News and the Association funds. He expressed thanks and appreciation for the receipt of our top quality newsletter and said it was a credit to all concerned in its publication. Thank you, Tom for your kind words.

In common with all other Pioneers, Tom is experiencing problems with advancing years, but at the same time appreciates the fact that he is still a survivor.

He very much regrets not being able to make the Wagga reunion but distance rules him out. However, he sends best wishes to all those lucky enough to make the trip.

JOHN HAYDEN 2/1, Orange, with a long letter per pen of good wife, Wyn. (Definitely worth more money Wyn, especially for such a long note.) Like all of us age is catching up with both John and Wyn, but they admit there never seems to be enough time to catch up on their activities – church work, Meals on Wheels, and for John three orders of the Lodge. He also has the honour of being in Grand Lodge. (A bit over my head, Wyn, but our Lodge Pioneers will get the message.)

John has eye problems, had both operated on for cataracts and not very successful owing to muscle damage during the process and has had both knee replacements. However, he still takes his early hourly walk to keep active.

From our family commitments you both certainly are kept on the go and I'm sure your family appreciate all the help you give them. (Helps to keep you young.) Do hope your grandson Andrew has improved after his major heart surgery – a real trauma for a 15-year-old – and a pretty worrying time for his parents and yourselves.

It's good to see Gordon Chrystall calls in to have a chat with John when in town – we haven't many Pioneers in your area. We shall

pass on your good wishes to Bill Jollie and his address is as follows if you would care to write to him: 57/350 Old Northern Rd, Castle Hill 2154. I'm sure he would be pleased to hear from you as he hasn't enjoyed the best of health lately.

Our best wishes for your 58th wedding anniversary in November – must be a good omen for leap year marriages. Do hope John will be able to make ANZAC Day in Sydney one year – he must do a good job in Orange if he has been the march marshal for 28 years.

Good to hear all your news and hope to see you down in the "big smoke" while you are both able to make the trip. Keep well and our best wishes.

IRENE HEPBURN, Condell Park, widow of Frank 2/2, with a donation to funds and a sub. to the News, for which many thanks. Irene was enquiring re the Front Line Medal for her family and Max was able to answer her query. Sorry you were not able to obtain additional medals, rather difficult when you have several children. Good to hear from you again, Irene, and that you still enjoy reading the News.

MARY LLOYD, South Coogee, widow of Jack 2/1, with some kind words of thanks for those who keep the News on the road. Like all Pioneers it has kept her in touch the 23 years since Jack passed away and she feels she belongs. Mary passed on a message for Jim Gray, Don Coy., after his remark on only four members on the D Coy. table on ANZAC Day – says all is well "up there" and she's sure Jack is saying – extra loud – "Up the 2/1st Pioneers." Her love and best wishes are passed on to the many friends she has made over the years.

ERNIE LUNN 2/2, Dubbo, with a cutting from a Ballina paper re the death of Jack Richards 2/1 of Lennox Head and a cheque for the News. Thank you for sending it on, Ern, and Max has included the details in Last Post. You've certainly had your share of rain in the Dubbo area and trust it has done some good where it was badly needed. Did not see you at the Wagga reunion as you hoped, so something must have come up. It was a good show, despite the small number in attendance. Perhaps you'll be able to make the Lismore reunion in September, 1999.

CLIVE MADRELL 2/2, Allambie Heights, with the name and address of a 2/1 Pioneer, Ron Hay of A Coy., he had met while on holidays in the Alice Springs area. Clive and his wife met Ron and his wife Barbara in the dining room of their hotel one evening and when the topic of WW2 came up they found both men had been members of the 2/2nd Pioneers. A small world!! Ron mentioned he had lost contact with the Association but would like to receive the Pioneer News. Clive sent him his copy of July issue and has asked that future copies be mailed to Ron at his address at Pambula Beach. This will be done, Clive, and many thanks for your letter and Ron's address.

FRANK MAHER 2/2, Goolwa, S.A., with a donation to funds and his thanks to Eric Causer, 2/1 of Hamilton for putting him in touch with the Association. It was good to receive the News and catch up with all the names in the Mail Bag. Frank was also pleased to be in contact with members in South Australia and was able to travel with Les Bence and his son, Norm, to the ANZAC reunion in Adelaide, also the unveiling and dedication of the Memorial Plaque, both very enjoyable days. Good to hear from you, Frank.

BILL MURPHY, Blakehurst, son of the late Pat 2/1, with a sub. for the News and his thanks again for the support shown by his dad's army mates at Pat's funeral service. Nice to hear from you, Bill, and hope your Mum and family are all well.

DON MURRAY 2/2, Tinonee, with a cheque for the News to keep it financial. Don noticed in last issue that Allen Stone 2/2 of Raymond Terrace had reached the O.B.E. stage and says it seems such a long time ago (it is a long time ago) that on arrival at Kapooka someone told him that there was another chap from Don's area also in the unit. Don looked him up and it was a "young and handsome" Pte. A Stone. Don's best wishes are passed on to you, Allen, and hopes you are well.

Don left on a 24-day tour of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales on the 1st September after selling the farm at Tinonee

which has been in his family for three generations. Hope you had a great trip.

Many thanks for attending the funeral of Fred Brooks 2/1 at Taree, Don, he and Max were good mates in the Sig. Platoon. Keep well and best wishes.

ROY MCGREGOR 2/2, Maitland, with his apologies for lateness of his sub., but says writing is one of the jobs he can quite easily put off – puts it down to “old age”.

Did not have much news to report – plenty to do in the garden after the good rains they had received in his area and lots of green, green grass. He has about 4 acres of lawn and is blessed with a ride-on mower. The trees and shrubs are all in flower and really look good.

Roy sends his regards to all and says it's good to read the Mail Bag and catch up with all the news of old mates. Best wishes to both you and Marion – keep well.

WAL PAGE 2/1, Chinderah, with a cheque to cover his dues and best wishes passed on to all old friends. He is finding it a bit difficult to attend the reunions now as he has a few problems slowing him down and doesn't travel too well. However with the right medication he manages to get to bowls a couple of times a week and still manages to knock up a meal for himself. Good to hear Wal, and perhaps you might be able to make the Lismore reunion next year seeing it is closer to home. Good to hear from you again.

JACK PAINTER 2/1, Narrandera, with his apologies for not being able to make the reunion at Wagga, but says his health has not been the best and unable to make it. Jack had a big bowel operation in Wagga Base Hospital and it's been a long road back to recovery. He lives alone since his wife died and finds he is just starting to feel he can cope a little better. Passes on his best regards to all 2/1sts and maybe catch up again one of these days.

ERIC REYNOLDS 2/1, Macksville, with a short note enclosing his sub. for the News. Says that time is going so quickly now he is 83. He and Joyce had a short trip to Victoria to see family and marvels as to how quickly the grandchildren are growing. Hope you are both well and may see you again one of these days.

OLIVE RICHARDS, Lennox Head, widow of Jack 2/1, with a nice letter and card of thanks on the passing of Jack a few months ago. He had been sick for some time and eventually Olive was able to get him into the Ex-Services Home in Ballina where she says the nursing care was first class. They had been married over 54 years and Olive was grateful for the time they had together. Her son, Chris, had spent a lot of time with her while Jack was so ill and later this year he and his wife are moving up there to live. That will be good for you, Olive, and we will continue to keep you on the mailing list. Many thanks for the sub. and our love and best wishes.

GIL SHORT 2/2, Caringbah, per pen of good wife Ivy, with apologies for Gil not being able to attend the march or reunion on account of leg problems, for which he is receiving intensive treatment. Thank you for the sub. and hope things are a lot brighter with Gil.

CEC SLOGGETT 2/2, Gunnedah, with a welcome note per pen of wife, May. Good to hear from you again and to know you are both well. They have just returned from a trip to Gladstone in Qld, taking their van and really enjoyed their holiday. Gunnedah had plenty of rain and floods in the lower part of the town and apparently they had no problems. Cec is still bowling and they are enjoying good health, so can't ask for more. Kind regards from all.

GEORGE TOLMIE 2/1, Canley Heights, with a welcome donation to funds and to say how pleased he is to receive the News and to see so many old names still getting a mention. He has not been able to get to the reunions for the past few years due to leg problems and the fact that his old mate Jack Lamerton finds it even more difficult to get himself on parade. George likes to spend the day with him watching the march on TV.

His kindest regards are passed on to Max, Gordon Finlay, George Walker, Jim Gray, not forgetting Steve Clarke and Bill Hodges.

LES TUNKS 2/1, Mareeba Qld., with the news of the passing of Paul Jones 2/2 of Kuranda, late of Bendigo, Vic. Les has passed on the Association's name to his widow Gladys and she may be in touch later.

As soon as space permits Max will publish the poem you sent – some issues get pretty “tight” especially if we have a lot of Last Post,

All the best to you and Lesley and all good wishes for the coming year.

MAX WILSON 2/1, Stockton, with his dues to keep the show on the road. Says he has had a lot of sickness, but now reasonably fit as can be at 74. You're only a “youngster” compared with most, Max, as there are not many 2/1sts who have not reached the O.B.E. stage. All the best, always good to hear from you.

DELLA WOODHOUSE, Sanctuary Point, widow of the late W.O.II Bill Woodhouse 2/1, with a very generous donation to funds. Bill died in Concord Hospital in 1982 and Della has been so pleased to have had the News posted to her over the years. They had many happy years together and has a lot of wonderful memories. Bill loved fishing, played golf and lawn bowls and often spoke of the great friends he made in the army.

Della and son, Geoff both send their kindest regards to all Pioneers and their families and all the best for the future. Many thanks, Della, keep well, and the paper will continue to be sent to you at Sanctuary Point.

BERT WOODHOUSE 2/1, Karridale W.A., with the news of the passing of Gerry Casey WX14380 on 13th August, aged 87 years. A service was held at Northam, where he had been for some time in a nursing home, and the burial took place in his home town of Meckering. He left a wife and a son with family. Our sincere sympathy to them in their loss.

Gerry joined the 2/1sts at Hill 69 when 90 West Australians were drafted from the 24th Inf. Training Brigade at the request of Colonel Arnold Brown (at least that is what they were told on their arrival). Colonel Brown had served in the 28th Battalion in the Great War 1914-18.

Twenty of the above group left the Pioneers at Wondecla in Jan/Feb 1944 to join the 2/11th Btn. and, when space permits, Max will publish the list which could be of interest to former members. Many thanks for your letter and the donation enclosed.

That's all the Mail Bag for this issue, the last for 1998, and on behalf of Editor Max and myself we would like to wish all members, their wives and families all the very best for Christmas and lots of good health and happiness in the coming year. To those who have lost loved ones during the year our thoughts have been with you and we hope the happy memories you hold will be of comfort in the days ahead.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

LAST POST

RAY BUTCHARD 2/2 of Moss Vale, formerly of Victoria passed away on 17th June at 72 years. He was in Liverpool Hospital with bowel problems and died suddenly. He was a great charity worker as he made lots of wooden toys for children and will be greatly missed in the community.

We are grateful to Jack Hore-Lacy 2/2 for conveying our sympathy to Ray's wife Pearl and supplying the details. Jack was in the mortar platoon with Ray.

PAUL JONES 2/2 of Kuranda, Qld, formerly of Bendigo passed away on 27th June and the funeral at Mareeba Cemetery was attended by Les Tunks 2/1 who expressed our sympathy to Paul's wife, Gladys. Thank you, Les.

ALEC MITCHELL 2/2, of Gosford passed away on 3rd July and we thank Bert Neasbey 2/2 for visiting Alec in hospital and for attending the funeral. Bert extended our sympathy to Alec's wife, Melva.

RITA PRITCHARD, widow of Darcy 2/1 passed away on 4th July after a long stay in Nowra Hospital. Thanks to George and Joyce Walker for visiting Rita in hospital and attending the funeral.

FRED BROOKS 2/1 of Taree passed away on 9th July while in hospital. Thanks to Don Murray 2/2 for details and attending the funeral.

CYRIL MORAHAN, M.B.E., E.M., 2/1, Clovelly passed away on 29th July, 1998

After a lifetime of army service, Cyril was honoured with a military funeral. The coffin was draped with the Australian flag and placed on top a ceremonial sword, Cyril's cap and service medals. Army pall-bearers and escort attended

the coffin. Pioneers at the funeral were Kevin Morahan, John Gilchrist, Steve Clark, John Trevethick, Vic. Whiteley, Bill Tasker, Frank Gillian and Mary Lloyd.

An original member of the 2/1 Pioneer Bn. Cyril served in Tobruk, New Guinea, and Balikpapan. After the war he served in the 17/18 Infantry Bn. CMF (The North Shore Regiment) training the first National Service call-up. Then later he joined the permanent army service in the Korean war, followed by various staff duty appointments at Eastern Command H.Q. for which he was awarded the M.B.E.

The Executive extended deepest sympathy to wife Olga, son Terry and daughter Gabrielle. We are grateful to John Trevethick for this write up, and to Mary Lloyd for the Order of Service.

FRANK CHEAL 2/2 of Burwood Victoria passed away on 4th August and the funeral service was held at St Oswalds, Glen Iris. The RSL service included both sons of Frank speaking with great feeling.

Frank was born at Singleton NS W in 1924 and was 17 years of age when he enlisted in 1941 and served with the 2/2 Pioneer Bn in New Guinea, Tarakan and Balikpapan. He was co-editor of the Pioneer News with Max Law and produced the first issue in the lounge room at Frank's home.

After the war Frank joined the 45th Battalion CMF (St George Regiment) and after a move to Melbourne joined 6R.V.R. and eventually retired as a Captain.

Frank worked for the Commonwealth Bank and had posts at Rose Bay and Mascot, then a move to Melbourne in 1960 where he was appointed Manager of the Hightett Branch and then the Sunshine Branch. Next move was to Young, NSW then Moree and Armidale from where he retired due to heart by-pass surgery. He then moved to Port Macquarie to live for a couple of years before returning to live in Melbourne in 1986.

Frank battled many medical problems over the last few years including arthritis, but through all this he kept his great humour.

The Executive have extended sincere sympathy to wife Barbara and her family and we are grateful to Barbara for giving us details.

REX FRANCIS 2/1 passed away on 11th August after an operation and was visited in hospital by Les Tunks 2/1 who sent details.

JACK FROGLEY 2/2 of Lismore passed away on 29th September and the funeral was attended by Ken Wilson and Kev Raward.

VIC DONALD 2/1 of Glen Innes passed away in September and we thank Vic's brother, Bob for the details. The brothers were both in the unit in New Guinea and Balikpapan.

JOYCE CROSS, wife of Ron 2/1 passed away on 31st September and we are grateful to Ray Harris for extending the Association's sympathy to Ron.

JACK HENDERSON 2/2 of Blacktown passed away on 7th August and the funeral was held at Pinegrove Cemetery. We thank Kath Field for the details.

JAMES (BLUEY) MILLER 2/1 of Umina passed away on 2nd October at the age of 90 years and the service at Sacred Heart Catholic Church was attended by Jack Coates 2/1 and five members of the Rats of Tobruk Association.

MUFTI newspaper of Victoria report by Eric Causer 2/1 – deceased – E.C. BURNS 2/2 Chelsea, E.D. CHANTER 2/2 Geelong, and C.H. OATS 2/2 Waverly.

NSW NTH COAST BRANCH

Annual Meeting of the Pioneer North Coast Branch was held on 23rd August with an attendance of sixteen members. The election of office bearers resulted as follows: Ken Wilson, President, Kev Raward and Ray Robbins, Vice Presidents and Ron Cross, Secretary/Treasurer.

LISMORE REUNION is to be held on 11th/12th September, 1999 with the same venues and program as in 1997, except that a bus tour of Lismore will be arranged for the Saturday morning, free of cost to members.

DINNER GET-TOGETHER was held on 26th September and a Committee Meeting was conducted on 15th November. Our Xmas Dinner was held at the RSL Club on 28th November.

Reported by KEN WILSON

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD

Every unit has its fair share of "characters" and over a period of time Jack Coates 2/1 has, with his remarkable memory, put pen to paper. The following are stories of the "good old days" of army life, and personalities, and we are sure they will bring back memories to former 2/1sts, particularly long-time members of the battalion.

WALLY THOMPSON – A LEGEND

Wally Thompson was a bright cheerful soul, about eight stone, head of black wavy hair and a black moustache. Part aborigine, he had been a drover, Gulf country to rail heads, aged about 30, but hard to say.

He could ride camels like he rode horses, superbly. Twelve Platoon adopted him and called him "Sporty". Jack's section was blessed to get him. Lieut. Jack Riley was Platoon Commander, Greg Noris (later died of wounds) Sergeant, Len Smith was Corporal with Jack Coates as the Lance Jack. Wally was illiterate, his section mates would write his letters, particularly thank-you notes to the Comforts Fund of the unit thanking them for canteen orders, socks, balaclavas, etc.

As members of the unit in Palestine would remember, Australian bottled beer was only a shilling at the wet canteen and therein lay Wally's problem. Len Smith and Coatsy used to have to watch him like a hawk. The beer was in cases of 48 bottles, so the occupants of the tent would pool their money, cart it back to the tent and when finished put the case and straw back at B Coy kitchen.

At one stage in Palestine, Wally even decided to take on Major (later Colonel) Brown. Overhearing a remark in a line-up for dinner which included the words "as the Ace of Spades", Wally no doubt thought it was aimed at his colour. Up went the dukes and he danced around like a terrier inviting Major Brown to "put 'em up". Wally was short with a mighty temper and Major Brown very tall and barrel-chested, so it must have been quite a scene.

Came the Siege in Tobruk and Wally was invaluable. On patrol with rarely a compass, black night, no moon and heavy cloud meant no North Star to guide us back – no worries, we had Wally. Throughout the Siege he was his usual unworried self, never complained, readily accepted patrol duties and there were dozens over our five tours of front line time.

At another period during the Siege, a bomb was dropped on the No 5 Wharf, Pontile D'Aosta (named after Mussolini's son-in-law the Duke of Aosta) right in the middle of the T-shape wharf. So repairs were needed. In addition to 12 Platoon, some dozen or so Senussi Arabs were taken on strength, their No. 1 man spoke excellent English and was really black and full of cheek. Jack Griffiths was in charge of Senussi, so he acquired a khaki boiler suit for head Senussi, painted three stripes on the arm and paid him two tins of bully beef and two packets of biscuits. The others were paid one of each. This No. 1 man ran the show and gloried in it. One day "Griffo" and No. 1 Senussi were in job conversation when Wally chipped in, so the black Senussi told Wally "be quiet SAMBO". Well, the blue was on, Wally yelling "don't call me Sambo, you black bastard" and into him. After some minutes the Senussi took off with Wally after him. The platoon were in fits. Some two hours later Wally returned and some two days later Senussi also came back, still in his boiler suit, 3 white stripes up. The job on the wharf was never finished.

Back home in Australia, Wally did not show up after leave and was posted A.W.L. There were quite a few missing from all companies. Eventually, Wally was found, brought back and received two weeks field punishment at Churchill, a tough Field Punishment Centre near Ipswich. The "Rosellas" (Military Police), so called by their red and green colour patch, gave him a hard time and we never saw Wally again. All efforts to track him down failed.

In later years on a holiday in Broken Hill, Jack Coates stayed at a pub "Willyama" which at that time was the only pub that allowed aboriginals to drink in the public bar. They were also allowed rooms in galvanised huts in the yard of the hotel. Jack was allowed to buy them drinks and in conversation asked the Boss drover if he knew Wally. He did, and said Wally had been droving up north after his time in the

army, but had gone back to the tribe, had a wife and kids. Jack Griffiths also heard later he was somewhere around the Riverina on a farm. No one has seen or heard of him since.

Come the Hereafter, we might meet him in the Spirit World and do a patrol or two.

THE GINGER WOG OF JULIS

Anyone who was ever at Julis camp would have known him. Very fair gingery hair with pale skin, about early to mid 20's. He called on us and wanted to join us – "me Australie, my daddy Light Horse". He sold us oranges and grapefruit from a citrus orchard nearby. We were allowed to pick up windfalls, as were Ginger and his mates. They would bob up everywhere, doovers, route marches with their call 5 for 5, 10 for 10, oranges very sweet, very clean, very Quais. They were the famous Jaffa oranges, and the currency was in MILS, 1 1/2 mils, about three pence.

When we came out of Tobruk we camped at Kilo 89 for a month or so, then to Hill 69 alongside Julis. Up bobbed Ginger, still claiming a "Light Horse Daddy", and Jack believed him too.

EARLY DAYS AT GRETA CAMP

Jack's home town of Balmain was well known for the odd bods, so he was well prepared for the 2/1st Pioneers at Greta during June, July and August of 1940. "Wolf" Cross ate anything, "Aspro" Dowling was always at the R.A.P. after a fix, "Corn Sacks" Thompson, no matter what the topic of conversation, told us how many sacks he could sew in an hour. The "Black Copper" – he could fight. Needed to, our 10 Platoon had Jack Keegan who would take to him anytime. Nothing for them to mix it in the middle of B Company parade ground. A few were always drunk – there was a plonk shop over the railway line on the Maitland Road, and it was well patronised. Semlitzky, Tom Crowe and the four Cheshier brothers were all good judges of a drop. Over at the main gate in wooden huts were 1st reinforcements to 6th Division. They sailed early August and the row could have been heard in Newcastle.

The camp was known as Silver City, so called by the new galvanised huts gleaming in the sun. Jack Griffiths and Jack Bertram would remember well. 12 Platoon at the bottom of B Company lines were known as Tal's babies, Harry Talberg was platoon sergeant when Greg Norris went to O.T.C. Mostly young blokes except for six old hands. Two of them were Corporal Jack McCracken, one of Newcastle's own and Cecil John Westacott of Campsie. Cecil was out of work and had enlisted to feed his six "jammy-fingered kids". When anyone said the A.I.F. could afford to pay another General with the allowance Cecil was drawing he would become very upset.

After weekend leave, at Lights Out, they would harmonise songs – one he remembers "My Own Iona". Then it would be "13 more nights after tonight home to Mumma – you beaut". Both came home from the Siege in Tobruk, and Jack has very fond memories of them. Two great blokes who helped Jack Riley and Greg Norris handle the tearaways.

Others remembered well by Jack were Gordon Osborn, a fine officer and a good bloke, Phil (Champ) Bright and Jack Lloyd (later commissioned), Bert Murray (later C.S.M.) and Harry Showers, a bush lawyer who used to tutor anyone up on a charge. All good men and a credit to any unit.

BILL LEWIS 2/2 Sent in an article from the "Diary of NX18655, Dvr F.G. Mathieson" ex-2nd Division A.A.S.C., also in reference to the writer's early days in Greta. He mentions it as being a brand new camp – in two sections, silver city and chocolate city. The latter was mostly infantry. The 2/1 Pioneer Battalion were on one side of the writer's lines and a supply company the other. The A.A.S.C. bugler was very unpopular when he sounded Reveille, so one night "someone" filled his bugle with porridge. He was not amused.

The writer said "the 2/1 Pioneers next door have a great band, 36 piece. They wake up everyone at 0530 hrs. marching up and down between their own lines. We just lay there and listen to the music. It's great. The Pioneers train hard and are good soldiers, tough as nails, glad they are on our side".

NEW TREASURER

At the November Committee Meeting, Don Crawford was elected as Treasurer of the Association and the Executive and Committee were unanimous in their praise of Don for accepting this position vacated on the death of Vic. Whiteley.

Don already has the role of looking after the 2/2nd Banner and organising the two wreaths for the Wreath Laying Service so we say many thanks to Don for accepting this extra task.

SICK PARADE

CLEM MORONEY 2/1 of Carramar was in Liverpool and Baulkham Hills hospitals in July for a broken thigh which he sustained after a fall at home. He was then transferred to Lady Davidson at Turramurra where he was visited by Max and Peg Herron.

JACK DOLAGHAN 2/1 of Malabar was in Lady Davidson in July in the same ward as Clem Moroney with a shoulder problem – also visited by Max and Peg.

DAVE WELLER 2/1 of Bomaderry was in Nowra Hospital in July and then moved to Prince Alfred for an operation.

JACK TOOKER 2/1 of Chatswood was in hospital in July for a few days with bronchial trouble.

JACK LAMERTON 2/1 of Liverpool spent some time in hospital in July with a leg circulation problem and was visited by George Tormie, George Walker and Max and Peg Herron.

ROY LEVY 2/2 of Revesby was in Bankstown Hospital in August with a pacemaker problem and was visited by Jack McDonagh, Don Crawford and Bob Ginnane.

ERN JAMISON 2/1 of Gladesville is 93 years of age and was in Concord Hospital with a broken hip. He was then moved to Lady Davidson Hospital at Turramurra on 29th September, but his wife had phoned on 19th October to say he is now at home. He was visited by Bill Tasker and Jack Tooker, who learnt from Mrs Jamison that their grandson is a keen follower of Ern's army life and would be eager to march on Anzac Day to represent his grandfather.

KEN STUART 2/1 of Turramurra was in hospital in August, but was later moved to Nazareth House, Bobbin Head Road, Turramurra. He had been visited by Cyril Amies, Jack Kerslake and Jack Tooker who had a good talk with Mrs Stuart and promised to visit again at a later date.

BILL ROBERTSON 2/2 of Randwick was in hospital in October but is now recuperating at home. He was visited by Frank Gillian and Mary Lloyd.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT, 1998

It is always a pleasure to report another successful year, but this year was tinged with sadness, recollecting the 45 members who have died since our last annual Meeting, including our co-patron Colonel John Williams.

The Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Cenotaph on 24th April was well attended by members and relatives.

The Anzac Day march saw both battalions down in numbers as hips, knees etc are feeling the years, but they still turn up for the lunch.

The dinner at the Occidental was most successful with an attendance of 95 and all enjoyed the lunch and afternoon snacks.

Our Association has an Executive that is excellent in conducting all our business so well and on behalf of all members I would like to thank them for their effort.

The Pioneer News remains the lifeline of our Association and even though it is posted to all states and distant country areas, it gives us all a feeling of togetherness. – **ALLAN McINNES**

WAGGA REUNION statement of Income and Expenditure:

RECEIPTS			
Advance deposits	\$451.00		
Balance paid	966.50		\$1417.50
EXPENDITURE			
Wagga RSL	\$838.75		
Urquhnty Hotel	432.00		
Refund deposits	67.50		
Chapel donation	79.25		\$1417.50