

PIONEER NEWS

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

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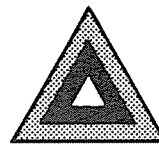
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BACK TO DUBBO ARMY CAMP

The Back to Dubbo 150th Anniversary was held on 20th/21st November, 1999, and the first event on the programme was a grand parade through the streets of the City on Saturday 20th in which five of our members marched, while a few stood on the sidelines as spectators.

On Sunday 21st the Back to Dubbo Army Camp reunion was held on the wartime camp site on Obley Road, now the site of the Western Plains Zoo, which was opened in 1977. The camp covered an area of 700 acres and was occupied from early September, 1940 by an advance party of First Corps Amm. Sub-Park and the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion who arrived from Greta.

The land was originally owned by the Baird family, of which the late Wally Baird of the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion was a family member. In later years men of the 2/2nd Pioneers also trained here before joining the reformed 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion in Wagga after the original unit was captured in Java.

The camp was closed in 1947 when all the buildings were auctioned off; some of the buildings are still standing on rural properties around the district.

Before the reunion luncheon twenty three of our members, including wives, attended the unveiling of a plaque set into a stone cairn bearing the words: "1 Aust. Inf. Trg. Bde - Thanks Dubbo 1941-1944". The original stone cairn was erected at the camp entrance in 1944 but over the years fell into disrepair and eventually found a home at the Dubbo Museum. In 1997 the Dubbo Macquarie Lions Club took on the task of rebuilding it once again on the old campsite and it took a couple of years of hard work before the job was completed. The formal handover of the cairn was made to the Dubbo RSL by the President of the Lions Club.

A very impressive ceremony took place, although the weather was showery for most of the morning and those attending were grateful for the protection of a marquee. Several political leaders and members of both the Lions Club and the RSL took part in the unveiling ceremony and the Blessing of the cairn was undertaken by Salvation Army Major, Stan Morton, who is official padre to the Rats of Tobruk Association. His wife, Eva, accompanied him to Dubbo. Stan had spent time in the camp in 1940-41 and was honoured to be included in the service. A time capsule was placed in the memorial cairn to be opened in 100 years.

The Australian Army Band from Kapooka provided the music for the ceremony and the Catafalque Party was a group of local cadets.

The finale was the luncheon at the Zoo Function Centre at which all twenty-three Pioneer visitors were organised on to three tables. This was a well-arranged function and enjoyed by all present.

Our secretary organised a display of memorabilia of newspaper cuttings of the 2/1st Pioneer Bn.'s arrival in Dubbo in 1940, along with photos taken at the 1980 Dubbo reunion. The item which aroused most interest was the 2/1st Pioneers' Band mace inscribed - "2/1 Pioneer Band. Presented by Norm King, Dubbo, 1940". Norm King was the Licensee of the Pastoral Hotel, Dubbo, from 1939 to 1942. The mace was brought home by the late Peter Bell of Kyogle who in turn passed it on to the late Jim Hall, also of Kyogle. In recent years Ann Healey, Jim's daughter, had presented it to the Association.

In September, 1980, the Association held a country reunion at Dubbo with an attendance of 187 members at the dinner on the Saturday and a barbecue picnic at the Western Plains Zoo on

the Sunday. Prior to the picnic a ceremony was held to affix a plaque to the old hand grenade range wall, commemorating the arrival of the 2/1st Pioneer Bn. at the camp in 1940. The plaque is still in position.

The following members of both 2/1st and 2/2nd Pioneers were in attendance and noted it a most enjoyable weekend: Roy Jardine, Laurie Kelly, Jack Stone, George and Joyce Walker, Frank and Jean Locane, Ern and Norma Lunn and friend Ida Duce, Ken Wilson, Kevin Raward, Alec and Jean George, Robyn Bell, Ted and Mary Carter, Jack Bertram and brother Jim, Jack and Marj Kerslake and Max and Peg Herron.

THE POLISH MEDAL

On 9th February, at the Five Dock RSL Club the Polish Consul General presented the Polish Medal to Rats of Tobruk veterans or next of kin. In a warm speech before the presentation he paid tribute to all those who, during the dark days of the Tobruk siege, fought alongside their Polish comrades in difficult times and it was a pleasure for him to personally present the awards. Members presented were chosen at random by the Polish Embassy, not by ROTA or our Association.

The correct term of the medal is "The Cross of the Polish Armed Forces in the West" (with Tobruk Clasp) and awarded to all armed forces who served with the Polish Brigade in Tobruk. There has been delay in the presentation for various reasons and it was only on 18th June, 1999 that the Australian Dept. of Foreign Affairs confirmed that the Governor-General granted permission for the medal to be officially worn.

In the February issue of ROTA, Secretary Gordon Hughes stated: "I am concerned that there are still hundreds of Rats, or next of kin, who are equally entitled to receive the award, but still waiting for word about it. At this stage, I have no idea when the Polish authorities in Sydney will move to complete the project but I will take the matter up with them in the hope that all the awards would be presented soon".

Because of distance or sickness, some 2/1 members notified to receive the medal, elected to have it posted. The following list is of those 2/1 Pioneers at the presentation: Claude Campbell (deceased) by son Greg; Jack Collis (deceased) by son William; John Moxey (deceased) by Mrs Donaldson; Gordon Finlay, Max Herron, Roy Jardine, Stan Jones, Jack Pearce, Perc. Penrose and Bill Robertson.

KOKODA TRACK WALKWAY

On 14th November 1999 a further service of dedication and unveiling of four stations took place at the Walkway, Rhodes Park, Concord. The stations were Milne Bay, McDonalds Corner, Owers Corner and Uberi. The RSL President, Rusty Priest, AM, who is also Chairman of the Walkway Committee, was Master of Ceremonies, and as usual under his guidance the service ran smoothly.

The Catafalque Party was provided by 4/3 Battalion, The Royal NSW Regiment and the Corrective Services Band supplied the music for the four hymns and the National Anthem.

It was very gratifying to see Milne Bay included in this memorial project as the action at the Bay was vital to the operations taking place on the Track at the time. In fact, it was at

Milne Bay that the advancing Japanese met their first defeat on land. And of course the 2/1 Pioneers had a first-hand interest, being represented by "D" Company, whose personnel performed engineering duties of outstanding quality for a period of twelve months.

The donor of the Veteran and Service Gold sponsorship plaque at the Owers Corner Station was the 14th Aust. Field Regt. Assoc. In his address their President gave a special mention of the assistance provided by the 2/1st Pioneer Bn. and in this regard we quote the related part as shown in the inscription on the plaque: "The terrain was almost impassable for the infantry, let alone the artillery. A third 25-pounder field gun was dismantled and manhandled to Peg 66 beyond Uberi. The Regiment was assisted in reaching their firing position by a platoon of the 2/1 Pioneer Battalion." (Refer to page 102 of our book "The Pioneers".)

It was interesting to note that a group of senior ranked officers supported the Uberi Station as the plaque shows eighteen individual gold sponsorships of \$1500 each from Major-Generals, Brigadiers and Colonels.

Also this occasion was opportune for Rusty Priest to inform the gathering that the vandalism which occurred in October to various sections of the Walkway including the Centrepiece had been repaired by the responsible trades free of charge - a fine gesture.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, excellent refreshments were provided at the Information Centre by the Concord RSL Sub-branch.

Pioneer personnel in attendance were Jack and Kath Tooker, Max and Peg Herron, Vi Flynn, Noel Schomberg, Bill Tasker, Steve Clarke and Roy Levy.

- Reported by STEVE CLARKE

PIONEER ACTIVITIES 2000

WREATH LAYING - Monday, 24th April

The Wreath Laying Service will be held at 4 pm on Monday, 24th April and all members are to assemble on the corner of Martin Place and Pitt Street, on the G.P.O. side at 3.45 pm and wreaths will be placed on the Cenotaph at 4 pm.

ANZAC DAY MARCH - Tuesday 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.

Subscriptions for Pioneer News will be collected prior to the march by Gavin Todd for the 2/2nds and for the 2/1sts by Don Crawford, who will also accept subscriptions at the Occidental Hotel.

ANZAC REUNION - Tuesday 25th April

The ANZAC Day Reunion Dinner will be held at the Occidental Hotel, 43 York Street, Sydney, so after the march board the train at Museum Station and travel to Wynyard Station. Then proceed up the escalators, turn right into York Street and the hotel is on next corner.

ANNUAL MEETING - Friday, 26th May

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday, 26th May 2000 at 1 pm at the Redfern RSL Club, corner of Redfern and Gibbon Streets, Redfern - cordial welcome to all Pioneers.

LISMORE REUNION - 5th/6th August 2000

Held to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the two units in 1940. See page 4.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

The first Mail Bag of the new century and good to see so many of our former comrades able to join in the celebrations of the past months. This year also marks the 60th anniversary of the formation of both 2/1sts and 2/2nds and the bonds of friendship formed in those early days is still very strong. Age has caught up with most of them, but they like to meet as often as possible and renew old friendships. Quite a few letters, since last issue, not all with good news, but most still "soldiering on" and trying to make the best of every day.

CYRIL AMIES 2/1, Thornleigh, with a combined Christmas card and news-sheet of the doings of the Amies during the past year. September saw Doris elected as Chairman of the Board of Directors and President of the Hornsby Ladies' Bowling Club and Cyril once more Master of Home Duties. Congratulations, Doris, and we wish you well in the coming year. Cyril has been busy pruning and reducing some of their adventurous trees to almost ground level – what with your home duties and gardening, Cyril, it looks as if your computer skills will have to be put on hold for a while. All the best to you both.

"SNOWY" ANDERSON 2/2, Aspendale Vic., with a note of thanks for the Pioneer News and he mentions that he and the family had attended the POW picnic at Seaford RSL and had a very enjoyable day. Good to hear from you and love and best wishes to Isabell and Julie – trust the coming year will be a healthy and happy one for all.

REG ARMSTRONG 2/2, Baradine, with the news that both he and Coralie had been having a run of bad luck just prior to Christmas and were hoping for a brighter 2000. (Still hard to write after 19-- for so long.) Reg had a fall which resulted in a couple of broken ribs and pulled muscles in hips and back and Coralie with an operation for cancer. At the time of writing were slowly improving, so hope by the time the News reaches you, Reg, you are both on the mend. Kindest regards from all your old "News wrapping" mates, and the best to Coralie.

ROBYN BELL, South Melbourne, daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1, with a change of address – finally moved into the city and she and Bruce pleased with the decision. (Your new address has been noted.) The reunion in Lismore and then the visit to Dubbo for the Back to Dubbo Camp reunion in November were especially pleasing to her and she hopes to make Sydney for ANZAC Day. Will keep you posted of any Pioneer functions coming up during the year. Keep up your good work with RAAF Assn and RSL in Melbourne and our best wishes for the coming year.

MARJ BOYLE, Moama, widow of Keith 2/1, with greetings for Christmas and thanks for the News which she still enjoys reading. Passes on her thanks and congratulations to those "eager beavers" who work so hard to get the paper out.

Early September Marj had a bad fall and broke all her toes and instep on her right foot – not quite right yet but is able to get back to her Meals on Wheels. (Considering Marj uses a wheel chair to get around she is to be congratulated on her efforts.) Says her accident could have been a lot worse and that the only part of her that never goes wrong is her tongue – probably not still long enough for anything to happen. (Glad your words, Marj, and not mine.)

She sends her best wishes to all Pioneers and their families and enclosed a cheque to keep the News coming. Many thanks, Marj, kindest regards from your friends and trust you are now fully recovered from your accident.

MAVIS BLANCH, Beaudesert, widow of Joe 2/1, also with greetings for Xmas and the coming year to all her Pioneer friends. She enjoyed her Legacy trip to Canberra in October for the opening of the Nurses Memorial and said it was a very memorable day. Also went to the Sunday service at Duntroon – a very moving service.

The army sisters who sailed on the *Johan-de-Witt* with the 2/1sts to the Middle East were

Vera Hamilton and Sue Malcolm. Sue passed away a couple of years ago, but Vera went down to the opening, accompanied by her sister, Marj. Vera and Sue were regular attenders at our country reunions.

On the way home to Beaudesert the coach spent two days in Dubbo and Mavis was able to visit the Western Plains Zoo. Also writes that Cecil Blanch 2/1 (Joe's brother) still lives in Kyogle and was 87 on 3rd January.

Good to hear from you, Mavis, and hopefully may meet up again next reunion in Lismore. All the best from your friends down south.

TED CARTER 2/1, Tamworth, with a note to Max re the Dubbo Camp reunion and to advise that he and Mary would be making the trip. Pleased to report that they indeed attended the various functions and good to catch up again. Ted later transferred to 2/3rd Pioneers and is involved with 9th Division functions and country reunions. Good to see you both.

ERIC CAUSER 2/1, Hamilton Vic., with greetings from Doff and himself for the Festive Season. Nice to hear from you both and hope to see you again soon.

DORA ANDERSON, Merimbula, with a welcome donation to funds and the news that she had a spell in hospital since Don passed away, with a melanoma on her leg and subsequent skin graft. Personally I know how long they take to heal, Dora, as I had one on my leg last year and the skin graft (taken from my stomach) took months to heal. Hope by now your check-ups are OK and no more problems.

She is staying on in the family home – has many good friends and wonderful neighbours and a son living close by, so says why come back to the city.

Dora sends best wishes to all Pioneers and especially to those over the many years who keep the Pioneer News going. Many thanks, Dora, keep well and stay in touch.

JACK COATES 2/1, Umina, with a long letter written in November with lots of news of bygone 2/1st days. Also the news that he and Lex celebrated their 54th Wedding Anniversary on 20th October – congratulations are a bit late to you both – as Lakey used to say "you don't get that long for murder".

Jack Griffiths did not make it to Dubbo, but Jack Bertram did along with his twin Jim, who was in the Navy. Guess it is hard for "Griffo" to get away at times as Esme's health has not improved and she cannot be left on her own.

"Coatsie" has been doing it tough the last few months, has had lots of problems associated with his by-pass last year and his recovery has been slow. He has not been able to get around to meetings and was sad to have not been able to have made the trip to Dubbo in November.

Latest reports from wife Lex are not encouraging and although on maximum medication he is not the best. We have kept in touch with Lex and she keeps us up to date on his problems.

(At the moment of going to press, we are sorry to say Jack has just passed away and our deepest sympathy is extended to Lexie and her family in their loss.)

DICK COBBLE 2/1, Banora Point, with a cheque for the treasurer and to say he had read with great interest the article on the West Aussies who joined the 2/1sts at Hill 69 in Palestine. Dick was in D Coy, at Milne Bay and knew several of the fellows mentioned. He was particularly friendly with J. J. Wright (nicknamed WACA) and heard he was later wounded in action and returned to Kalgoorlie. Bert Woodhouse may be able to help you locate him, Dick, as he is not on our lists. Bert's address is: RMB 136, via Karridale, WA 6288.

Glad you have settled in really well at Banora Point with plenty of activities at Twin Towns Services Club and your bowls several days a week. Max says the meals would not have to improve much to be better than Milne Bay. They certainly sounded first class from your letter and reasonably priced as well. All the best and continue to enjoy your life up north.

BETTY CREASY, Portland, widow of George 2/1, with greetings to all for Christmas and a cheque towards expenses of the News. Will possibly be down on ANZAC Eve this year, but as time marches on not so easy to get around. Good to hear from you, Bet, and hope you can make it this year. Quite a few of the "girls" often ask after you.

ALLAN CRUTE 2/1, Woolgoolga, per pen of good wife Beulah, with a donation to funds and season's greetings to all for the coming year.

Beulah and Allan had been to Macksville recently to see Eric and Joyce Reynolds (2/1) and said they were both finding it hard to manage. Eric spends a lot of time in his garden and with help from Meals on Wheels and a cleaning lady they are managing to stay in their own home. Good to have news of them, Beulah, as we don't hear from Eric any more.

Hope by now Allan's hand and ribs are on the mend – so easy to fall these days when we aren't really steady on our "pins".

Glad to hear you are still active in your Red Cross work and that Allan is able to go to his tenpin bowling every week. Gets you out and amongst friends and that's a big bonus as you get older. Sorry you could not make either of the reunions, but distance is making it harder for our age group. Too many bad hips and knees, and makes distance travelling nearly impossible.

Will catch up again one of these days, in the meantime all the best to you both and keep well. Glad Denis and family are well and enjoyed their trip to Tasmania.

NORMA FITCH, Canberra, widow of Harold 2/1, with greetings for Christmas and her thanks for still sending her the paper which she really appreciates. She is getting used to living in Canberra and being close to her daughter and son-in-law who she sees nearly every day, but misses dear old Sydney and watches the news each day. Good to hear from you, Norma, and many thanks for your note.

GRACE FOWKES, Wentworthville, widow of "Snowy" 2/1, also with greetings to all Pioneers for the coming year and a welcome donation to funds. Grace mentions a couple of visits to the Kokoda Track Walkway at Concord and was very impressed. Says it is a lovely memorial and a credit to all concerned. Quite agree with you there, Grace and a fitting memorial to all ex-servicemen, not only those who served on the Track. Kind regards and all the best for the coming year.

AVELINE GAMBLE, Chermiside Qld., widow of Bill 2/1, with a thank you note to Max for the message of sympathy sent to her when Bill passed away in November. Bill joined the unit as a lieutenant when the 2/1st were at Wondecla, before their campaign in Balikpapan, and was very popular with all ranks. Aveline said the years with the 2/1st were a very significant part of his life. Our best wishes and the News will continue to be mailed to you.

STAN GAVAN 2/2, Greystanes, with a donation to funds and best wishes to all Pioneers for the coming year. How about a longer letter next time, Stan?

DR STAN GOULSTON 2/1, Chatswood, who was RMO to the 2/1st from June 1940 to August 1942, was prompted to write after reading in the November issue of the Tobruk Rat Medal. Stan was also presented with one while in Tobruk by the engineer platoon. It is still in his possession and it is regarded by his family and friends as being superior to his other awards. (I might mention here that Stan's "other awards" include the MC and Mentioned in Despatches.) He was also given, by the same platoon, an ash tray made from the propeller of a Messerschmidt plane shot down by the anti-aircraft guns of the battalion.

Sydney Legacy recently honoured Stan with a Certificate for 50 years of service to Legacy (which he joined in 1949) and regrets that there will only be a few to be so rewarded as most of his Legacy colleagues of that era have died.

Our congratulations to you, Stan, and every good wish for the coming year.

JACK GRIFFITHS 2/1, Mayfield, also has been prompted to write following the article on the Tobruk Rat Medal in last issue. He enclosed a copy of a letter he had received from the late Arthur Murray 2/1 following a conversation with Arthur, believe it or not, on ANZAC Day almost 17 years ago. Apparently Arthur was responsible with "Lofty" Barlow for the design of the Medal and along with some of 5 Platoon helped in the making. Jack keeps the letter in the case with the medal – a part of history. In a recent letter from Jack Coates 2/1 he mentions having a Rat Medal too and says it is very highly prized.

"Griffo" reports not much news from his Newcastle area because, as far as he knows, only Jack Bertram, Tom Wallace, "Slim" Wilson and himself are left. He has not seen "Slim" for some time but he sees Tom Wallace most race days as both are members of the Newcastle Jockey Club – regular although not very successful punters. He and Jack Bertram both retain their positions as President and Secretary of Newcastle ROTA – with only eight members present hard to unload the jobs.

Tom Wallace is part of history at the Newcastle Jockey Club – he rode the winner, Tapestry, in the Newcastle Cup in 1936 and holds Hon. Life Membership of the Club.

Sorry to hear Esme does not improve, Jack, and you are fortunate your two daughters Jill and Anne are such a help. Hope we may see you in Sydney on ANZAC Day. Many thanks for your letter.

CLIVE HARRIS 2/1, Aberdeen, with a short note of greetings for Christmas and the news that he is going along fairly well despite a stay in hospital last year. Hope you are on the mend, Clive, and best wishes from your friends down south.

JOHN HAYDEN 2/1, Orange, per pen of good wife Wyn, as usual, and writing under difficulties with some rare disease in her body system – an itchy rash and blisters something like shingles – but fortunately not contagious. Do hope since you wrote Wyn that there has been some improvement and thank you for your long, newsy letter.

Wyn mentions John having his 84th birthday in hospital after having a full knee replacement for the second time in 10 years. He had a fall while in hospital but soon back to his regular walks every day for an hour each morning. (Puts a lot of us to shame.) Wyn also enclosed a cutting from their local newspaper where John won the Active Australia Star of the Week (apparently a local award) for being a dedicated member of the community for many years. He is still the Marshal of the annual ANZAC Day parade, a duty he has carried out for the last 28 years, and has been involved in Meals on Wheels for a long period of time.

John and Wyn celebrated their 59th Wedding Anniversary in November, so this is the "big year". Heartiest congratulations to you both. (They certainly don't last so long these days.) Very best wishes from your old friends, keep well and thank you once again for your long letter and family news. Can see you are very proud of them all.

ELAINE HENDERSON, Epping, niece of Ron Clarke 2/1, with a donation to funds and her kindest regards passed on to the Pioneer family. Thank you, Elaine, and all the best to you for the coming year.

GLORIA HUTCHINSON, Caringbah, widow of Bill 2/1, with her best wishes for Christmas and a cheque enclosed to keep the News on the road. Many thanks, Gloria, and hopefully may see you on ANZAC Day.

BERT HUTTLEY 2/2, Bloomsbury Qld., with praise for the News which he looks forward to receiving regularly. The Tom Welch you wrote about, Bert, is our 2/1st from Mackay and he has now settled in Tuncurry. Bert said he met Tom working on the roads some 30-odd years ago and it was Tom who told him about the Pioneer News. They met a few times after that, but Bert said he had not seen him in the last quarter of a century.

Bert is still attending the march in Proserpine each ANZAC Day and this year had a cheer squad of four generations – he was very proud, to say the least. He also attended the Remembrance Day ceremony in Proserpine and most of the town dignitaries were in attendance.

He sends a special "hello" to all the sigs. who served with the 2/2nds in New Guinea and Borneo and wishes one and all the Compliments of the Season. Kindest regards, Bert, and thanks for your letter.

BILL JOLLIE 2/1, Castle Hill, with a letter to Max with an apology for the last committee meeting. Bill is finding the travelling a problem these days, especially having to negotiate so many steps at the railway stations.

In November Bill was honoured to receive the Commonwealth Recognition Award for Senior Australians and the congratulations of all Pioneers are passed on to you, Bill, with

their best wishes for a healthier and happy 2000.

Many thanks for your generous donation to funds and kindest regards from Max and myself.

JACK KEMPNIH 2/1, Fingal Bay, once again by ever-faithful Mais. What would we do without you and your long newsy letters. Thank you firstly for the donation to funds. There is no set date for payment, Mais, most pay around ANZAC Day for the simple reason a lot are in Sydney for the reunion but we continue to receive it any time during the year when the letters arrive for the Mail Bag. Funds always gratefully received to keep the News financial.

What a pity Jack wasn't with the family on their fishing trip – they certainly struck the jackpot. Still, that's fishing – either a feast or a famine.

Your visitors over the holidays were Noel Schomberg and Vi Flynn. Noel was in the transport platoon and Vi was the late "Micky" Flynn's wife. We often see them at functions here in Sydney and hope you were able to see them again before they left Fingal Bay.

By the time the paper reaches you your trip to the Olympic area will be over and do hope it lived up to expectations. We go ourselves every few months and are amazed at the progress. Have been to the swimming centre and easily see how the swimmers rate it the best in the world. Tried to get tickets to the swimming, but didn't have a hope, along with thousands of others.

There was no mention of your shoulder in your letter, Mais so take it that things are improving since Lismore. There is to be another reunion in Lismore early August to celebrate 60 years of both 2/1sts and 2/2nds so maybe with luck may meet up again.

Many thanks for your kind wishes to all the many fellas who are still battling on – not too many of them left now, but they enjoy meeting old mates for a yarn and a few beers. All the very best to both Jack and yourself.

ELIZABETH MAHY, Leeton, daughter of the late Phil 2/1, with a change of address and a query to Max re the new Australian Service Medal. Trust the Medal Section of CARO were able to help you, Elizabeth, and many thanks for the stamps enclosed with your letter.

LEN O'CONNOR 2/1, Tumbulung, with a generous donation to funds and a long-overdue letter. However, Len has been heavily involved with the local RSL over the years and when their Sub-branch closed they gave their money to the Ballina Services Home. Was also secretary of Kingscliff Fishing Club for 20 years and holds Life Membership, so I guess he can be forgiven for lack of letter writing.

He and his wife, Alma, were in attendance at the Lismore reunion and enjoyed themselves, but were sorry they were unable to make Ballina on the Sunday. Len met up with some mates he had not seen for 50 years. Doug Turner and Loyal Butcher (both 2/1sts) still live in the area and apologised for their non-attendance at the Lismore reunion.

Len and Alma have just celebrated 50 years of marriage, have three children, fourteen grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren – no wonder you don't have time for writing letters, Len.

All the very best to you both, maybe see you again at the next reunion.

NEVILLE O'CONNOR 2/2, Tintenbar, with Christmas greetings to all from both he and Betty. Trust all is going well with the RTA and you have been able to come to a more realistic price with the help of your own valuation. Will be interested to hear the latest news. Every good wish to you both, hope to see you in August.

PETER PEILE 2/1, Caringbah, as usual per pen of Erika, and many thanks for your greetings and donation to funds. Also pleased you were able to meet up with Stan Selwood and his wife for lunch – Stan is still on mailing list but we have not heard from him in over ten years.

Trust your Christmas festivities were enjoyed with family and friends and all the best for the coming year.

LES PATTERSON 2/1, Port Macquarie, with a change of address and a cheque for the News. Les has purchased a nice new unit in the Bellevue Gardens retirement village in Port and

is very happy with his move. Says he has no worries about outside maintenance or lawn mowing, even clean his windows. What a life!! He was pleased to see so many at the Lismore/Ballina reunions, so maybe, Les, you could be a starter for the next one in August, particularly if you have family in the area. Enjoy your new home and your change of address has been noted. Thanks for the donation.

MONA REINERS, Corryong Vic., widow of Bern 2/1, with Season's Greetings to all for the new century. Trust you had a happy time with the family and we hope to catch up again one day soon. Love and best wishes.

CHARLES RICHARDSON 2/2, Manly West Qld., with best wishes to all Pioneers for the coming year. He has had another trip to hospital, but only for a few days. Hope you are on the mend, Charles, and your kind wishes are heartily reciprocated.

MARGARET ROCK, Toukley, widow of Charlie 2/1, with a thank you card to the Association for the kind expressions of sympathy sent to her when Charlie passed away late last year. The News will continue to be posted to you, Margaret, and we send you our best wishes.

TED ROWE 2/2, Willetton WA, with a donation to funds and his thanks for receipt of the Pioneer News. Ted mentions that of the 2/1 Pioneers who joined the unit in the Middle East from WA, there are only five in the area today. Hope the hand is better, Ted, and pleased to have a few lines for the Mail Bag.

HARRY SPREADBOROUGH 2/1, Alexandra Hills Qld., with some "kitty" for hon. treasurer and best wishes from both he and Jean to all "down south" for a healthy and happy New Year. Good to hear from you, Harry, and hope that the new century will be a lot healthier for you than the last year or two have been. Our best to you, Jean, and make the "boss" write a letter now and then.

DUDLEY STANFORTH 2/2, West Wyalong, with a few lines and a change of address from Wagga. Dudley has not been in the best of health the last few months and moved to West Wyalong to be a bit closer to his family. Wise move and we hope your health has improved. Good to hear from you after so long and best wishes from all fellow Pioneers. Many thanks for the sub.

REV. "JOCK" STEELE 2/2, Pendle Hill, with a new address to a retirement villa in the city. He is happy with his move from Cardiff, but says it will take time to adjust to a villa after living for so long in houses with lots of rooms. Jock misses the garage up the back with a tool bench and half-a-dozen jobs partly done, but guesses he has to resign himself to a different lifestyle. After so long in the Ministry and five scripture classes per week in four schools there has to be a time to slow down.

Many thanks for your donation to the News and glad you enjoy reading it. It is certainly one way of keeping in touch with, as you say, happy memories of the Pioneers both at home and abroad. With best wishes and hoping you will be able to join with the "boys" on ANZAC Day.

BILL THIELE 2/1, Port Hughes SA, per pen of good wife Betty (as usual). What would he do without you, Bet. Recently Bill and Betty had spent a couple of days in the Flinders Ranges and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Max and I, together with Gordon and Olive Finlay had a holiday there some years ago and it certainly has to be seen to be believed. It is no wonder there are so many wonderful paintings of the area.

Golfing in their Yorke Peninsula is fairly restricted in the warmer weather, so night bowls is in full swing, under lights of course. The players are called the "Night Owls". Bill also has the fishing bug at the moment and is anxious to get out among the King George whiting again.

Thanks for the donation to funds and your good wishes passed on to all vets for the coming year.

GWEN STRODE, Yagoona, sister of the late Keith Jones 2/1, with a cheque for the News and her best wishes to all Pioneers for the coming year. Good to hear from you, Gwen, and we wish you all the best.

LES TUNKS 2/1, Mareeba Qld., with a couple of letters to the Association re a 2/1 and 2/2 plaque to be erected at Rocky Creek on the Tablelands in a memorial park. Max has been in

touch with Atherton Shire Council with forms to fill in and an application to Veterans Affairs for a grant to allow the project to proceed. So far have not been given the go ahead, but we are hoping our application may be successful.

Many thanks for your help in this regard and for your donation to funds. Our best wishes to both Leslie and yourself.

DICK WAKELY 2/2, Merewether, with Season's Greetings to all Pioneers and some kind words for the editors of the News. Many thanks, Dick, they were very much appreciated and we wish you lots of good health in the coming year.

JACK WESTWOOD 2/2, Bradbury, with a letter to Max enclosing a cheque for the Association and his thanks for back numbers of the Pioneer News. Jack joined the 2/2nds when they were formed in Wagga in 1942 and posted to HQ Coy. in the transport platoon. He saw service with the unit in New Guinea, Tarakan and Balikpapan. Copies of the News will be posted to you regularly in future. Receipt will be enclosed with April issue.

KEN WILSON 2/2, Lismore, with the news of an 80th birthday party for Ray Harris 2/2 given by his daughter Pam and well attended by Pioneers in their area. Ray had an operation on his back some weeks ago and he is walking a lot better and hopes soon to be able to manage without his stick. All the best to you, Ray, and our congratulations also to Neville O'Connor who celebrated his 82nd birthday at the party. Many thanks, Ken for passing on the news.

• That's all the Mail Bag for this issue and the Committee look forward to a good roll-up for the wreath laying on ANZAC Eve at the Cenotaph, to the March and the reunion dinner at the Occidental Hotel. You can be assured of a warm welcome.

ROCKY CREEK MEMORIAL

At the Committee meeting of 21 November 1999 it was resolved that our Association apply to Veteran Affairs for a grant, under "Their Service - Our Heritage" commemorative program, to cover the cost of \$550 for a plaque to be placed in the Memorial Park at Rocky Creek, on the Atherton Tableland. It was here that the 2/2 Pioneer Bn were stationed, firstly at Ravenshoe and Wongabel, then later as a beach group at Trinity Beach near Cairns. The 2/1 Pioneer Bn were firstly stationed at Wongabel and Wondecia and later at Kairi.

The plaque design has been approved by our Committee and will incorporate the colour patches of the two units, the battle honours of both units and the simple inscription - "Dedicated to all who served in these two units". Our Secretary has received notification from Veteran Affairs that our application will be considered at the next joint meeting of their Regional War Memorial Project Committee.

The Rocky Creek War Memorial Park was established in 1995 and is the property of the Atherton Shire Council. It has been developed in an association between the Council and the Memorial Park Committee. Twenty unit plaques are already displayed in the park and some are of those units who had association with Rocky Creek Australian Army Hospital. Close to where the hospital stood is a large igloo building still in existence which was used for army concerts and picture showing. The igloo is now used by the Memorial Park Committee for their meetings.

SICK PARADE

GEORGE SMITH 2/2 of Kingsford was in the Prince of Wales Hospital with lung problems during February and was visited by Roy Levy and Gavin Todd who found him quite cheerful.

PAM HERRICK, daughter of the late George Bates 2/1, was operated on in Sutherland Hospital and we hope by now is at home recovering. Pam was to have been married at Christmas, and we are sorry to report that her fiancé, Pat McLaughlin, who accompanied Pam to the Lismore reunion, passed away a few days before the wedding. Our sincere sympathy is extended to you, Pam, from all Pioneers.

VALE - GEORGE MURPHY

It came as a great shock to hear of the passing of George Murphy, Secretary of the 2/2nd Pioneer Bn. Association in Victoria, on 21st December, 1999. He would have been 74 on the 29th December.

On 20th December George was taken to hospital with severe back pain and he passed away the next morning with a massive heart attack. For the past year or so he has had a series of heart and lung problems and often on oxygen.

George saw service in New Guinea and was with C Coy., 2/2 Pioneer Bn. when they took part in the landings at Tarakan and Balikpapan. Upon discharge in 1946 he held the rank of corporal.

After the resignation of Col Shea as secretary of the 2/2 Pioneer Bn. Association in Victoria in 1985 because of ill-health, George became secretary and was awarded Life Membership in 1988. He has taken a keen interest in the NSW Pioneer Association and attended all their reunions at Gosford and Wagga. He spent his holidays each year at Shoal Bay on the Central Coast of NSW and was often joined by Ian Willmore, a close friend from 2/2 Pioneer days.

The funeral on 24th December was attended by 18 Pioneers who formed a guard of honour as the casket was lowered. President Ted Hansen carried out the Eulogy and spoke highly of George's dedication to his role as secretary and how he was most efficient at all times.

On behalf of the Executive and Committee of the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Bn. Association, secretary Max Herron sent a sympathy card to Joan, wife of George, and her family stating how sad we were at the passing of a dear friend and that our thoughts were with them in their sad loss.

LAST POST

JACK COATES 2/1, Umina, passed away on 23rd February 2000 in hospital. Since having his third bypass in 1999 he has not enjoyed the best of health.

As well as to the family, it is a sad blow to the Association as one could say Jack was our best correspondent and on looking back you would not find many issues without a letter from him. He loved his Pioneers and had a remarkable memory for names and places. He will be sadly missed by all.

At the funeral on 25th February, Peg and Max extended to Lexie and her family, deepest sympathy.

BILL GAMBLE 2/1 of Chermide Qld., passed away on 26th November 1999 in hospital after a heart attack. Warm message of sympathy was sent from the Association to wife Aveline and a thank you card was received in return.

We also thank Ray Law for giving us the details.

BILL O'HEHIR 2/2 of Victoria passed away on 24th November 1999 and we are grateful to John Hore-Lacy for giving us the details.

MAVIS HALL, daughter of our late Patron Mrs O'Malley-Woods, passed away at the age of 95 years on 4th December 1999. Mavis had kept in touch with Peg and Max for many years and had always enjoyed a visit from them when she resided at Penrith.

For the past six months she had been in a nursing home in Sydney where she passed away. We are grateful to her son John for giving us the details.

TED FELTON 2/1 of Grafton and formerly of Kyogle passed away in December 1999 and the funeral on 6th December at Christ Church Anglican Cathedral was attended by Alec George 2/1 of Lismore. Sympathy was extended to Ted's wife Jean and her family.

PHILLIP JACKSON 2/2 of Stratton WA, passed away on 25th December 1999 after a heart attack at home in the early hours of the morning. In her letter his wife said he was very proud to be a member of the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion. We extend to you, Mrs Jackson, our very sincere sympathy in your sad loss.

JIM LAW 2/1 of Tahmoor passed away quietly at his home on the morning of 16th February at the age of 79 years.

He was an original 2/1st Pioneer and was in 13 Platoon, C Coy., in the Tobruk, New Guinea and Balikpapan campaigns. Jim was a regular attendee on ANZAC Day until 1997. Prior to that date his son, Ray, brought Jim to the march and for many years Ray has carried the Australian flag for the 2/1sts and assisted at the ANZAC reunion.

The funeral service was conducted at the Baptist Church, Tahmoor, on Friday 18th February and Max and Peg Herron and Jack and Marj Kerslake represented the Association.

Our sympathy was extended to Mrs Law and her family.

MUFTI of Victoria report by Eric Causer - Deceased: Stan Cattanoach 2/2, Robinvale; Charlie Quinn 2/1, Beaumaris; Thomas Sullivan 2/2, Glen Roy.

2/1-2/2 LISMORE REUNION

Saturday 5th, Sunday 6th August, 2000.

NSW North Coast Branch invite all Pioneers and their Ladies to their Country Reunion at Lismore and Ballina. Seeing that the two units were formed in May 1940, this Reunion is being held to celebrate sixty years since their formation.

WREATH LAYING - Saturday 5th August.

5pm at the Lismore Memorial Baths Cenotaph, corner of Market and Molesworth Streets. Medals to be worn.

REUNION DINNER - Saturday 5th August.

7.30pm. Smorgasbord Dinner at the Lismore RSL Club, Market Street. Cost \$25 per head. Drinks at own expense.

BARBECUE LUNCH - Sunday 6th August.

12 noon. Lunch at the Ballina Ex-Servicemen's Home Complex, 71-73 Morton Street, Ballina. Members invited to inspect complex. Cost \$10 per head. Drinks at \$1.50 per can or stubby of beer.

ACCOMMODATION - LISMORE: Olympic Motel; Ph. 02 6621 9900, Single \$55; Double/twin \$66; 3 persons \$77; Karinga Motel; Ph 02 6621 2787, Single \$55; Double or twin \$66. Centrepont Motel: Ph 02 6621 8877, see NRMA Travel Guide for rates. These three motels are in Molesworth Street, within walking distance to RSL Club and central Lismore.

BALLINA: Motels: Ferry Boat, Fun and Sun, Coast Inn, Heritage, Palms Motor Inn and El-Rancho - see NRMA Guide for rates. Ballina is 27km from Lismore, so own transport is needed.

All accommodation is to be booked by you and to obtain prices quoted mention attendance at Pioneer Reunion.

TRANSPORT: Planes from Sydney to Lismore and Ballina daily; Country Link trains from Sydney to Lismore (1) Departs Sydney 4 pm, arrives Lismore 4 am next morning. (2) Departs Sydney 7 am arrives 7 pm. Train travellers will be met at station and taken to accommodation. Plane travellers to Lismore will be met if notified to Ken Wilson. Plane travellers to Ballina not met.

DEPOSIT OF \$10 PER HEAD is required with application form below to reach Ken Wilson before 7th July, 2000 for catering purposes. Deposit is non-refundable.

CHEQUES etc, for deposit to be made out to K.A. WILSON, NOT the Association and posted, with application form to: KEN WILSON, 9 ROSEDALE SQUARE, LISMORE, NSW 2480. Ph 02 6621 4762.

LISMORE REUNION - Fill in particulars: CUT OUT

5th/6th August 2000

Surname: Known Name:

Ladies Name: Phone: Unit:

Address:

Attendance: No. persons..... Tick: ☐ Dinner ☐ Barbecue ☐ Car ☐ Plane ☐ Train

PIONEER NEWS

Phone 9759 5491

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

Per Annum: \$5

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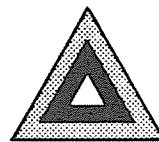
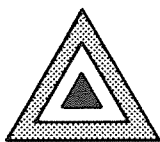
Editors: MAX & PEG HERRON

President: ALLAN McINNES

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Welfare: BILL TASKER, Phone 9718 6658



2/1-2/2 PIONEER ANZAC ACTIVITIES

WREATH LAYING SERVICE

This very important and solemn service was held on 24th April at the Cenotaph in Martin Place with an attendance of twenty eight Pioneers and eighteen ladies. The members were marshalled by Bill Tasker with Jack Tooker as Leader and Neil Whiteley with the 2/1 Banner and Mark Neasbey with the 2/2 Banner.

Wreaths were laid by Patron John Gilchrist for the Association and Mary Lloyd for the Ladies Auxiliary.

ANZAC MARCH AND REUNION - 2/1sts

Despite a drop in numbers and the very inclement weather the 2/1 march proved to be quite a success and was well received by the crowds of flag waving onlookers.

Attendance was forty two, including sons, daughters and widows. The banner was proudly carried by Tim Lloyd and Ray Law the Australian Flag. March leaders were John Gilchrist and Stan Goulston.

The Castle Hill RSL Youth Band was terrific and with a really good tempo, kept everyone in step, even Jack Bertram, who found the old time tunes they played really good. They only arrived back from Tasmania the previous day, especially to be with us for the march.

After the march both battalions arrived at the Occidental Hotel for the reunion and unfortunately our President Allan McInnes, who was in hospital with a heart problem had to forego his rightful spot as M.C. so Vice-President Jack Griffiths, proved himself very capable by filling in the position.

This year is the 60th anniversary of the formation of both units and M.C. Jack called on Patron John Gilchrist, who gave a short history of the two battalions - their ups and downs - their various journeys and accounting some episodes of our service life which were not generally known - particularly interesting to hear of the great loss of life by the 2/2nds in Syria and Java. John Gilchrist then called on co-Patron Bill Robertson, who had served in both units, to address the members and Bill gave a short resume of his experiences.

REUNION TABLE TALK with 2/1sts

Due to the absence on holiday of Bill Lewis 2/2, who is our Reporter, the following notes are the combined efforts of Jack Bertram and Doug Shearston who kindly filled in for Bill as roving reporters.

Laurie (Three Course) Kelly related a story of how he arrived at the Occidental escorted by "two boys in blue". It seems that at Town Hall Station Laurie had an urgent call of nature and left the march. Finding the toilets locked and the station attendant reluctant to open them, Laurie said "if you gotta go, you gotta go" and did just that. The station hand called the police who promptly took Laurie to their car. On explaining what had happened, the officers, highly amused, drove Laurie to the reunion. (No charges were laid).

It is always pleasing to meet and talk with all Pioneers who travel such long distances to be with their mates on ANZAC Day. From W.A. came Alf Bentley and Jack Stewart; Noel Grant, Eric Causer and Robyn Bell from Victoria; John Hunt and Phil Cramsie from Queensland. From the country came Alec George, Nev. O'Connor, Ken Wilson, Peter Priest, Doug Shearston, Sam Lewis, "Snowy" Dodd, Jack Bertram, Jack Griffiths, George Walker and Frank Locane.

"D" Coy. was represented at a table with Bill Hodges, George Walker, Percy Penrose and Ken Oliver, who related the time, when on leave in Brisbane, his mates locked him out of the hotel room. Ken was forced to crawl along a

ledge, three storeys up, to get in the room window. Guess you couldn't do that now, Ken.

Frank Gillian was there, as was Clem Moroney, but too busy talking to give me a story. Our sympathy to Tom Crossman who lost his wife, Laurel, during the year. Steve Clarke watched the march on TV, as his legs are not the best, but came on to the reunion. He reported both units received good coverage. Bill Jollie and Gordon Finlay were missed owing to ill-health. Eric Causer met up with Doug Shearston whom he had not seen since Balikpapan and Eric reported that he had been in touch with fellow sigs Leo Healey and Jack Comerford. Earlier in the day at the march assembly point Max Herron had spoken with another sig. John "Bluey" Pitman of Moree by mobile phone, courtesy John's son. A real gathering of the Sig. Platoon. During many long years Eric has worked for Legacy and has been Pension Officer at the Vets. Centre at Warrnambool.

Jack Stewart from W.A. mentioned he was our battalion tailor - strange professions keep cropping up in the Pioneers. Jack Pearce (94) and Bill Robertson (93) were both in attendance and they should be commended for their effort. Seems age is no barrier if the spirit is willing.

This report would not be complete without mention of the younger generation of Pioneer sons who each year, very willingly give of their time to make the reunion a success. Their efforts are much appreciated by the Committee and they are Ray Law, David Herron, Geoff Finlay, Tim Lloyd and Gordon Finlay's grandsons Craig and Darryn Reynolds.

Many thanks to Don Crawford for once again collecting the subs. at the march for the 2/1sts and ably assisted by Doug Shearston.

- Reported by JACK BERTRAM and DOUG SHEARSTON

ANZAC MARCH AND REUNION - 2/2nds

Despite the ravages of time and disease the 2/2 attendance at the march was quite good. I noticed quite a few of the regulars missing, but a few new faces appeared including Andy Beebar and Rod Shoebridge, son of the late Frank.

Owing to the illness of Allan McInnes, Jack Allison assumed command and with the help of John McKnight, soon had the men ready to march. Mark Neasbey was busy serving coffee and biscuits, whilst Gavin Todd and Roy Levy were collecting the subscriptions. Captain Michael Bye, Permanent Army, son of the late Tom Bye, arrived to renew old friendships and elected to carry the banner.

Meanwhile back at the Occidental Hotel members of "B" echelon (non marchers) were awaiting reinforcements from the march before attacking their main objective which was lunch. A battle plan was formed and our northern contingent of Ken Wilson, Nev O'Connor, Peter Priest and "Snowy" Dodd were to attack from the right whilst Frank Locane from the south and the city slickers up the centre. On the command "attack" knives and forks appeared and in quick time the objective was defeated and utterly devoured. The "munga" award went to Bert Neasbey for eating two dinners and four bread rolls.

Pat Collins with sons Gordon and Jack and his grandson Trevor Corrigan from Melbourne were prominent as were Padre Jock Steele, Vince Longmore and Jack McDonagh. When the Caledonian Pipe Band from Parramatta came in "Snowy" Dodd reached for his kilt.

Although down in numbers Treasurer Don Crawford was smiling broadly at the nett result.

As time came to depart, everybody agreed it was a great day and we will do it again in 2001. Special thanks to Mark Neasbey for his generosity.

Reported by JACK ALLISON and BOB GINNANE

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2000

It is an honour to present my Annual Report; the first in this new millennium. It has been a very satisfactory year with the Association represented at the following activities:- 1. Back to Dubbo Army Camp. 2. Unveiling of the last four stations at the Kokoda Track Walkway. 3. A very well attended and successful reunion at Lismore, organised and carried out by our North Coast Branch. Thanks to Ken Wilson and his hard working Committee. 4. Our Annual Wreath Laying Service on ANZAC eve with a good roll up of members and we all know how important this is to the Association members. 5. The ANZAC march, the most important item in our yearly events, was well attended, but due to our ages and disabilities was down in numbers. Those who were able to make it, marched with pride behind our banners.

The ANZAC Reunion, obviously down in numbers, but voted by all present a wonderful day, with mates meeting and swapping their doings, past and present. Thanks to Secretary Max and Treasurer Don who organised with the hotel manager, how the food was to be cooked and presented which made sure the meal was perfect. The service by the hotel staff of drinks and food was most professional.

On behalf of Pioneers all over Australia I wish to thank Peg Herron for the wonderful work she carries out and congratulate her on achieving the Association's Life Member Certificate and Badge.

Thanks to Don Crawford who stepped in when we needed a Treasurer and he has done a wonderful job with our funds. To the Committee and Executive, I say thank you, and it is pleasing to see them all roll up at our Committee meetings and present their views for the benefit of our Association.

I apologise for my absence over the important ANZAC activities, but the doctor pushed me straight into hospital on the Thursday prior to ANZAC Day and even when I said it can't be done - I will go in next Wednesday, as it is my 83rd birthday on Easter Sunday - ANZAC Day on Tuesday, he would not relent, so I ended up in hospital listening to the Dawn Service and watching the March from my bed.

I therefore present this report as a very proud old Pioneer - regards to all.

President ALLAN McINNES

SOUTH AUST PIONEERS

Russ Harrison 2/2 of S.A. rang the secretary to relate that the S.A. Branch had a good march on ANZAC Day with their combined Pioneers and an attendance of thirteen.

Allan Olson, President, is doing well as is George Sauer, Secretary, but Len Norman is having problems since his stroke. Russ is now Vice-President of the Branch and keeps busy helping his daughter with her house near where Russ and Rona live.

NEWS ITEM

Roy Jardine 2/1 was elected Association Vice-President at the Annual Meeting and we thank you Roy for accepting this position. Roy is also Vice-President of the Rats of Tobruk Association and they keep him very busy.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

The first issue since ANZAC Day and, although attendance was down on previous years, was voted a great day by all who were able to march and attend the reunion dinner later at the Occidental Hotel. The weather could have been better, but did not dampen the spirits of the men or the enthusiastic onlookers. Plenty of letters received for the Mail Bag and many thanks to all those who have taken the trouble to write since last issue.

CYRIL AMIES 2/1, Thornleigh, with the news that he and Doris have sold their home and bought a house and five acres of land at Forbes and will be at their new address from early July. Their only daughter, Wendy, is the Principal of Forbes High School and they both decided it was in their best interest to make a move closer to family. They both like Forbes very much and the land is flat and good for tired old legs. Cyril has already booked to play golf each week with the "Old and Bolds" and I'm sure Doris will soon be a member of the local bowling club.

Our best wishes go with you both and hope to see you now and again on ANZAC Day. Keep well and stay in touch.

IVOR (GEORGE) BALMAIN 2/2, Soldiers Point, with a welcome donation to funds and his apology for non-attendance on ANZAC Day. He and his wife, Jan, and grandson Louis, returned from abroad too late for the "big" day. However, Ivor reports that on the morning of ANZAC Day he and Louis stood on the far end of the pier at Santa Monica (U.S.A.) watching the sun rise and both observed a minute's silence, dedicating their thoughts to all those Pioneers down on Phillip Street waiting for the march to commence.

During the war years Ivor was known as "George" and the name has stuck. It seems that when he was transferred in 1942 from 18th Inf. Bn. to the 2/2nd Pioneers the platoon sergeant of C Coy. greeted him by saying "Ivor – Ivor, that's a pretty fancy name for a b____y footslogger so how about we call you 'George'." So George it became and George it still is. He discovered later in life that the Sgt. must have borrowed his nickname from a popular singer on the radio during the '30's by the name of George Balmain (no relation).

Good to hear from you and your kind regards passed on to Allan McInnes and the 2/2nd fellas. Hope to see you next year.

ALBERT BARTON 2/1, Gulgong, with congratulations to all those who received their Polish Cross and says it was a privilege to serve beside those dedicated men. We hope it won't be too long before the rest of the Rats receive their medal too. On viewing the march on the T.V. it was apparent a lot of Pioneers were unable to make it this year. Age is fast catching up, Alby, and although the spirit is willing the legs are not getting the message.

Good to hear both Gwen and yourself are keeping reasonably well and I hope all went well with your "over 85" driving test. Even to be able to drive around Gulgong is a bonus, just to shop and keep up your day-to-day activities. Pleased you are still involved with your church and that the mission from Vanuatu went well.

Your good wishes are passed on to all the "boys" and many thanks for your kind remarks on the News and glad our efforts are appreciated. All the best to you both and your letters always welcome.

MAVIS BLANCH, Beaudesert, widow of Joe 2/1, also with news of a move. She has sold her home in Hart Street and staying with her daughter until her new home in the Garden Settlement is finished in June. (Presume this is also in Beaudesert, Mavis, as you did not say in your letter). However, have noted your daughter's address and the paper will be sent there until we hear from you again.

Mavis was going to the Gold Coast over Easter to see daughter Lola and family and had just returned from a bus trip to Moama and watched the World Bowls while she was there.

Also had a cruise on the Murray and a trip to Bendigo to ride on the Talking Tram.

On the way home the tour took in the Western Plains Zoo at Dubbo and Mavis said she was able to tell the coach driver of the involvement of the 2/1st Pioneers with the camp and of the 60th Anniversary of the unit coming up in May. Sounds a great trip, Mavis, and good to see you are still able to go.

Looking forward to seeing you again at Lismore, all going well, and your good wishes passed on, via the Mail Bag, to all Pioneers and their loved ones.

LES BRITT 2/1, Laurieton, with many thanks for your very generous donation to the News and can assure you it was much appreciated and will be put to good use.

Quite agree with you on your remarks re the trouble on the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway at Concord and find it hard to believe that anyone could sink so low as to damage the memorials. Still, the area is in a public park and very hard to maintain security on such a large area, even with patrols and security cameras. It is such a wonderful memorial to all servicemen, that it is hard to believe that it means so little to those who are hell-bent on destroying it. I believe the police and Council are trying to make sure it doesn't happen again – we certainly hope so.

Again many thanks and our best wishes. Trust you are happy in your move to Laurieton.

CLAUDE CAMPBELL 2/1, Inverell, with a letter to say he was "still in the land of the living", despite Max's efforts in the article on the Polish Medal in last issue to have Claude as deceased. Max has written you with his apologies, Claude, and explained that as your son represented you at the presentation he (without checking our records) presumed that you had passed away. Good to see such is not the case and I'm sure all your 2/1st friends will be pleased with the news. We do not hear news of you very often, so at least your "early demise" soon had you putting pen to paper. Good to hear you can still get around by bus to some outings, even at 86, and as you say "everyday a bonus". Take care and best wishes to both Dorothy and yourself from all old friends in 2/1sts.

COL CAMERON 2/1, Campbelltown, per pen of his daughter Sandra, with a donation to funds and the news that her Dad enjoys reading the News and keeping up with doings of the Association. Unfortunately Colin is unable to attend the reunions, as he is permanently incapacitated, and only leaves his bed with the help of the nurses. Sorry to hear this, old mate, and we send you our best wishes.

Thank you, Sandra, for your letter and the donation enclosed.

TED CARTER 2/1, Tamworth, with a generous donation to funds and to say how he enjoyed catching up with old friends at Dubbo in November and having the opportunity for a quiet chat at the RSL.

He regrets not being able to come to Sydney for ANZAC Day, but he and Mary have family coming home to Tamworth for Easter and that will keep them both busy.

Many thanks for your kind remarks to the News editors for their efforts in keeping the Pioneers together. As long as we still continue to receive plenty of letters for the Mail Bag, the job is easy, so keep those letters coming.

Your kind regards Ted, are passed on to Gordon Finlay, Bill Robertson and Jack Tooker.

Gordon is not keeping the best of health and was not able to attend on ANZAC Day (I would think for perhaps the very first time) but Bill and Jack still soldiering on. Age is fast catching up and making attendance at reunions etc. no easy task.

Very best wishes to Mary and yourself and perhaps may see you both at Lismore reunion.

GEORGE CATCHPOLE 2/2, Northgate Qld, per pen of his daughter Lynn Jones. Thank you, Lynn, for sending us news of your father and we are sorry to hear that he has been in Greenslopes and now unable to return home. Hope by this time you have been able to find a nice nursing home where he will be well looked after in a stimulating environment. We have not altered our records from Northgate until we hear he is settled in his new "home".

All the best, George, from your old mates and glad to hear that with the excellent care you

received in Greenslopes that you are much better even though the old legs won't do what you would like them to.

LEXIE COATES, Umina, widow of Jack 2/1, with a welcome letter enclosing notes she had found amongst Jack's papers on doings of the Battalion in early days. Many thanks, Lex, and when time permits I shall go through them. We shall miss the long, newsy letters that found their way into the pages of the News over the years – there were very few issues that did not have a letter from Jack and were always most welcome.

Hope you are keeping well and we shall stay in touch. Love and best wishes.

RON CROSS 2/1, Ballina, with a note to say he has just returned after seven months in Japan where he had been staying with his son and Japanese wife. Some holiday you've had, Ron, and good to have had family support on the anniversary of Joyce's death. Also great you had time to spend with your 4 year old grandson.

Many thanks for your donation to the coffers of the Association and looking forward to seeing you in Lismore in August.

DAVE DENNY 2/1, Lismore, with a cheque for the News which he looks forward to receiving and sends many thanks – as he says a very welcome and valuable piece of mail. Your kind words are much appreciated.

He keeps fairly well, can't do very much and regrets having to leave so much to Joyce but says she doesn't complain. (Have to put in for a pay rise, Joyce, everyone else seems to be doing it).

Dave mentions lots of get-togethers of the Lismore Branch and says a wonderful way to keep in touch. Is also looking forward to the reunion in early August and doing his best to stay well. We hope to see you both, all going well – at our age it doesn't do to plan too far ahead. So far quite a few seem to be going from our part of the state – hope the weather will be kind.

BOB GINNANE 2/2, Leumeah, with apology from wife Nell for her non-attendance at the wreath laying as she has osteoporosis in the spine and doesn't enjoy train travelling. Who does these days, Bob, with our rail system in such a mess.

Bob and Nell's family have grown in the last two months with two more great-grandkids, making it five children, 15 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. (Hope you don't have to buy presents for all that brood). He and Nell have a 60th wedding anniversary coming up early 2001 and have seen all of their grandchildren married. One is a Superintendent of Police so have missed the worry of drugs etc.

Best wishes to you both and thanks for your letter.

JOHN HAYDEN 2/1, Orange, once again per pen of good wife Wyn, with a long newsy letter and very best wishes passed on to all Pioneers for a wonderful ANZAC Day. John was busy preparing for the "big day" in Orange – his 25th year as Marshal. All the schools in Orange also take part in the march and several of the Hayden grandchildren are marching – one as school captain laying the wreath for the school. It's great to see the younger generation involved on this special day.

John celebrated his 85th birthday on 5th May and as a surprise his son John Jnr. presented him with a small album with photos he had taken on ANZAC morning in Sydney with snaps of wartime friends and the 2/1st banner. Both his father and uncle, Ernie Hayden, were original members of the 2/1sts. Needless to say the simple gift was received with much emotion. Copies of the photos were also given to Max by John Jnr. and some of these have been passed on to Pioneers concerned. Many thanks to your son, John, and I hope he can persuade you to make the trip to Sydney for the march next year.

Always good to hear from you, Wyn, and trust by now your face has healed from your skin operations. Keep well and fond greetings from your friends in this part of the city to you both.

ALF HOLLOWAY 2/1, Grafton, with a letter to Max after seeing an article in the Lismore paper re the reunion in August. Alf was unaware that the Association existed until he read the article. Working for the Railways for 45

years, Alf was constantly on the move and although a member of the RSL did not attend any marches in Sydney as he mostly worked on ANZAC Day.

Alf joined the 2/1sts on the Atherton Tablelands after being transferred from the 2/9th Field Engineers. He was in D Coy. and took part in the landing at Balikpapan and following actions of this Company during that campaign. Alf was on the patrol with Keith Jones when Keith was shot and subsequently died of his wounds. They had been very friendly so it was a big loss.

Thank you for the donation to funds, Alf, and copies of the News will be sent to you as published. Maybe some of the names that crop up now and again will help to jog your memory.

ALLEN JENSON 2/1, Rydalmere, per pen of his wife Joan, with greetings for ANZAC Day and a donation to the News. Joan says Allen is still in the nursing home and very frail, but they are blessed to have him still with them. Kindest regards to you both and many thanks for your letter.

DON LINTON 2/2, Tuncurry, with a note of thanks with his sub. for those involved in the Pioneer News. Don says it's hard to believe that it holds together a lot of great blokes and their families for close on sixty years. He can still remember Mrs. O'Malley Woods in her little office in Hunter Street and the great work she and her ladies did for both battalions during the war.

While going back in time, Don recalled the following names of former 2/2nds: "Rusty" White, Jim Drummond, Ray "Curly" Jones, "Sandy" Powell, "Podge" and Harry Sullivan, "Donga" Ron Corbett, "Tojo" Gregory, Charlie Firth, "Cappy" Christian, Jack Howie, Billy Holmes – says he could go on but must add Colonels Joe Lang and "Peanut" Davies.

Don sends best wishes for ANZAC Day and was sorry he could only be with them in spirit. However, would see them on the T.V. and hoped all had a great day. Best wishes to both Nancy and yourself, Don, keep well.

MARY LLOYD, South Coogee, widow of John 2/1, with a donation to funds and a very nice note of appreciation for a wonderful ANZAC Day and her thanks for the amount of time and effort put in to make the day such a success. Mary says she was honoured to lay the wreath on ANZAC Eve on behalf of the Ladies Auxiliary and really appreciates the kindness and friendship shown to her over so many years by Pioneers and their wives. Thank you, Mary, for your kind thoughts and your good good wishes. Keep well.

"TIB" MARTIN 2/2, Dapto, per pen of son Don, to say his dad had been in hospital after falling off the roof and after two operations he is well on the road to recovery. (Says you can't kill old Pioneers). Trust by now, Tib, you are fully restored to good health and I think you had better leave the roof jobs to someone younger.

In regard to the Borneo Medal, Max has been in touch re your request and sent the price and Christies' address for the Dutch Medal. However, if your request was for the latest Army Service Medal for service in the Islands after September 1945, you need to write to the Army Medals Section, Soldier Career Management Agency, G.P.O. Box 5108 B B, Melbourne VIC 3001 giving your full name, regimental no. and service details. Hope this information is what you required.

DON MURRAY 2/2, Tinonee, with a cheque to keep the News coming and says how he enjoys reading about old comrades in arms. Don did not have a great year in 1999, but thankful that he has reached the age of 77 (only a chicken compared to some) and can still drive his car, but restricted to daylight hours only. Guess you have to be thankful for that, Don, gives you a chance to go about daily activities. Trust the coming year will be brighter and maybe you may be able to make the Lismore reunion in August. Many thanks for your donation to funds.

JACK MCGREGOR 2/2, Shortland, with a short note and his subs for 2000. He and Dot are still managing to put one foot in front of the other and as well as can be expected at their time of life. He sends his kindest regards to all those who work so tirelessly for the Pioneer News and on the Committee and hoped all had a great ANZAC Day. Best wishes to you both.

JOHN MCKNIGHT 2/2, Dundas, with a donation to funds and the news that he has received the Gold Card and in good health. That's all you can ask for, John, as your health is one thing money can't buy. John reports that he has found a sister he parted from 75 years ago when his mother died and the sister went to a different family. What a wonderful experience for you, John, I guess that was really some reunion. All the best and thanks for the donation.

ELEANOR NEWCOMBE, Burwood Vic., daughter of the late Cal Mitchell 2/2, reporting the death of her father on 5th January last after a number of months of ill-health. His funeral on 10th Jan. was attended by 16 members of the 2/2 Pioneer Bn. and the Eulogy was delivered by Fred Tubb, 2/2. Her father served in Syria and then Java where he was taken prisoner by the Japanese. Cal was a prisoner for 3½ years and spent that time working on the Thai-Burma railway. Mrs Mitchell sadly passed away nine weeks after her husband died, after being in a nursing home for two years. Please accept our sincere sympathy.

Thank you Eleanor for your letter and as Max has written you your name has been placed on our mailing list for future copies of the News.

LEN O'CONNOR 2/1, Tumbulgum, with a request to Max re the Polish Medal recently presented to members of the 2/1sts who served in Tobruk. Max has written you re this query, Len, and given you the address of the RATS secretary who handled this matter.

Thank you for your good wishes and hopefully may see you and your wife at the Lismore reunion.

LINDA SAUNDERS, Scone, widow of Ross 2/1, with a donation to funds and her thanks for still receiving the News and reading news of old mates of her husband. Linda was sorry to have missed the Dubbo reunion – unfortunately taken ill and in hospital for 4½ months. Two of her sons and their wives went to the reunion and enjoyed the trip. It's a pity they did not make themselves known to our members who attended, Linda, we would have been happy to meet them. It was a great week-end.

Max has written to you, Linda, re the Polish Medal and the new Australian Service Medal 1945/75, in case Ross was eligible.

Kindest regards and trust you are keeping well after your long stay in hospital. All the best.

CEC SLOGGETT 2/2, Gunnedah, with two letters, courtesy May, in a week. Not to worry – presumed you had forgotten you had written to Max and sent cheque for subs, and then you had written to me for Mail Bag. Anyway good to hear from you, May, and to know you are both well. Cec must be in good condition to be painting the roof and putting watering systems in the garden. Nice to be kept busy, as long as he takes care on the roof. So many of our Pioneer folk have had hospitalisation on account of falls while painting.

Have been talking to Maisie Kempnich recently and they are hoping to make the Lismore reunion in August. Why not try and get Cec to make the trip – would be great to see you both again.

Many thanks for your letters and your donation to the News. Keep Lismore in mind.

BRIAN SMALLHORN 2/1, Armidale, with subs for the coming year and best wishes and congratulations to the Committee for the great job they are doing in keeping the Association alive. Brian was saddened to read in the last News of the passing of Bill Gamble, 14 Pl. C Coy. Bill was very kind and exceedingly friendly when Brian joined the unit and took over 15 Pl., a fine and friendly man and a good soldier.

Brian has asked that his sincere sympathy be passed on to Mrs. Gamble in her sad loss.

Thanks for your letter, Brian, and your good wishes to all Pioneers.

BONNIE SNUDDEN, Cobar, widow of Cecil 2/2, with a change of address from Dubbo and a welcome donation to funds. Bonnie was sorry she was unable to make the Dubbo reunion in November because of ill-health and missed out on seeing our Pioneers who attended. We all had a good time, Bonnie, and thoroughly enjoyed the trip back.

Trust you are feeling better and hopefully our paths may cross again one of these days. All the best and keep well.

HUGH SORLEY 2/2, Canning Vale W.A., with a short note and a cheque for the Treasurer – many thanks. In regard to your query re the name of Geoff Smith in the News, the only 2/2 Smith we had was a George Smith of Kingsford, who sadly passed away a few weeks ago. Perhaps one of the 2/2nd members may know if George worked on the Railways and if he enlisted in Melbourne, living in South Yarra at the time.

DANNY SPROUSTER 2/1, Dundas, with a donation to funds and apologies for not being able to make it on ANZAC Day on account of ill-health. He missed seeing all the old faces but he tries to keep in touch with a few old mates every so often. You missed a good day, Danny, and your best wishes passed on to Gordon Finlay. Gordon did not make it himself this year on account of ill-health, along with several other regular attenders. Age is catching up.

ARTHUR STEAIN 2/1, Forster, with a welcome donation to funds and the news that he had received a visit from Roy Jardine a few days before ANZAC Day and enjoyed seeing his old mate. Unfortunately Arthur can only walk a little way, so not able to make Sydney for the Pioneer reunion or to Rats of Tobruk functions. Max has written you, Arthur, re the correct spelling of your name and as our records show the spelling as above, you may be getting our wrappers confused with ROTA. Perhaps Roy can check with RATS for you.

Thank you for your donation and all the best for the coming year.

REV. JOCK STEELE 2/2, Pendle Hill, with a couple of letters in April acknowledging receipt of his donation to funds. Not to worry, Jock, Max realised you must have forgotten you had already written a week earlier. Easy to do with age – join the growing number who can put things away and then can't remember where!!

Thank you for your comments on the News and, as you say, you are limited to the letters or stories sent in. However, it keeps the members in touch, even though age and distance restrict some of them from making it to the march or reunions. Good to see you made ANZAC Day.

GEORGE TOLMIE 2/1, Canley Heights, with his good wishes passed on for ANZAC Day even though unable to attend. There are not many of 18 Pl., D Coy., left these days – Max could only name about six. Sadly time marches on and age and ill-health catches up. Thank you for your donation to funds.

JAN WILLIAMS and **LEXIE GILCHRIST**, Goulburn, daughters of the late "Snow" Vickery 2/1, with a nice letter of thanks and a donation to Association funds. Their mother, Gert, passed away earlier this year after a long illness and we received from Jan and Lexie a letter of appreciation for the great friendship and support given by our members to both Gert and "Snow" over many years. The family often enjoyed the tales of the great times shared by their parents at our reunions in happier times. Many thanks my dears and for the cheque enclosed with your letter.

• That's all the Mail Bag for this issue and plenty of interesting letters from around the country. Before concluding, I should like to thank the Association, through their Committee, for the wonderful honour bestowed on me at their Annual Meeting of Life Membership of the Association. The beautifully engraved silver tray and Life Membership Badge and Certificate will be a reminder of the friendship I have shared with our "Pioneer Family" over so many years.

Do hope to see a good roll up to the reunion at Lismore in August, commemorating the 60th Anniversary of both 2/1st and 2/2nd in May 1940. You can be rest assured of a warm welcome.

ROCKY CREEK MEMORIAL

The Association Secretary has received notification from Veterans' Affairs that our application for funds to cover the cost of a plaque to be placed in the Memorial Park at Rocky Creek, on the Atherton Tableland, has been granted. Design has been approved by the Committee and will now be forwarded to the manufacturer. No date has yet been fixed for the unveiling.

"EXCELLENT BAND"

These were the words of the Adjudicator, when he awarded the Australian Junior A grade concert band championship trophy to the 2/1st Pioneer, Castle Hill RSL Youth Band on Easter Sunday.

The championships were held in Launceston over the Easter weekend and the band also entered the Open B Grade championships and won the Hymn Section and came overall third.

This was an excellent result and quite remarkable because their Director of Music, Mike Butcher conducted one handed, following a shoulder operation six weeks ago.

The band flew back from Launceston on Easter Monday so that they could participate in the ANZAC Day March with the 2/1st Pioneers who have been Friends of the Band since they first marched in front of them in 1994 and band members are proud of the continuing relationship with the Pioneers.

The above is an article sent by the Band Secretary, Carolyn Gould and in reply a letter of congratulations has been sent to the Band, thanking them for their mighty effort on ANZAC Day.

DR. STAN GOULSTON

EDITOR'S NOTE: While awaiting the start of the March on ANZAC Day I spoke with Stan Goulston who was the original medical officer to the 2/1st Pioneers and inquired as to his present day activities. I became so interested I asked him to send me a resume of his life since leaving the army. I thought it very fitting to publish herewith the achievements of such a person with whom we shared our army days.

For his service in Tobruk he was awarded the Military Cross and was also Mentioned in Despatches.

"I was awarded Membership of the Order of Australia in 1980 and elevated to an Officer of the Order in 1986. (OA) 'for service to Medicine and particularly to Gastroenterology.'

At the end of the war in 1946 I was appointed to the staff of Royal Prince Alfred Hospital as an Honorary Physician. With my senior colleague, the late Sir William Morrow, we founded the subspecialty of Gastroenterology starting in a small way doing endoscopies and running a consultant service. This advanced from a unit to an Institute with an active research component, the first such unit in Australia. In the late 1950s with interstate colleagues we initiated the Gastroenterological Society of Australia and I was the first Secretary and the third President. This Society now has approx 500 members and hosted the World Congress of G.E. in approx 1987. The Society honoured me with their Distinction Medal and Honorary Membership. I was involved in clinical research as well as patient care and teaching throughout my 35 years with RPAH and Sydney University.

Soon after the war I became a Member and later Fellow of both the Royal College of Physicians of London and the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. I had a long association with the latter College as a Member of Council for 11 years, member of the Board of Censors (examining body) for 14 years being Censor-In-Chief from 1970-1974; then President from 1974-76. During this time I was involved in helping to run courses in Advanced Medicine in Singapore and served as external examiner in Singapore for their Master of Medicine examinations and in Papua New Guinea for their final undergraduate examinations. I was also made an honorary member of the Canadian College of Physicians and Surgeons and the American College of Physicians.

I served as a member of the Australian Drug Evaluation Committee from 1974-1984 and chairman from 1976-1984. This Committee was directly under the Federal Minister and Department of Health and was responsible for control of all pharmaceuticals to be acceptable for entry to Australia.

I continued in private practice until Dec. 1993 and then did a M.Phil at Sydney University English Dept. graduating in 1997.

Since then I have been running an Option in Literature for Medical students in the new postgraduate course at Univ. of Sydney.

Lastly, I value greatly an honour I received from Univ of Sydney of Doctor of Medicine (Honoris Causa) in 1983, the occasion being the Centenary of the Faculty of Medicine."

SICK PARADE

STAN JONES 2/1 of Dee Why was in Concord Hospital for a back operation on 13th April and was visited by Bill Tasker who reported Stan was now home recuperating.

BRUCE METCALF 2/2 of Condell Park was at Lady Davidson, Turramurra, in April, in fact was in the bed alongside **COLIN CAMERON** 2/1 of Campbelltown.

JIM GRAY 2/1 of Warrawong had a severe stroke in December 1999 which has left him with little use of his limbs or speech. He is in the Unanderra Nursing Home and is being looked after by his daughter, Cathie and her children. George Walker regularly visits Jim by motoring up from Nowra. The committee members agree the meetings are not the same without Jim and his quotations of the day.

FRANK LOCANE 2/2 of Wandandian was in Strathfield Private Hospital in June for an aorta valve operation.

ALLAN McINNES 2/2 of North Sydney was in hospital over the ANZAC period with a heart problem but recovered for the Annual Meeting.

JACK GRIFFITHS 2/1 of Mayfield went into hospital on 26th May with health problems and was visited by Jack Bertram.

KATHLEEN FIELD wife of the late Jim Field 2/2, has been admitted to a nursing home in Greystanes after suffering injury to her leg in a fall in a shopping complex. Kath had been in hospital at Westmead and later in Lottie Stewart at Dundas for several months before being admitted to the nursing home. She has been visited by Peg and Max Herron.

LAST POST

KEN STUART 2/1 of Turramurra passed away on 12th April and the funeral was conducted at Northern Suburbs Crematorium. In attendance were Roy Jardine, Jack and Mari Kerslake, Jack Tooker and Bill Tasker, who carried out the Eulogy. Sincere sympathy was extended to wife Jan by Bill Tasker.

GEORGE SMITH 2/2 of Kingsford passed away on 25th April and the funeral was attended by Gavin Todd, Roy Levy and Bob Ginnane who delivered the Eulogy. Sincere sympathy was extended to George's wife by Bob Ginnane.

JACK GLOVER 2/1 of Brighton-Le-Sands passed away on 22nd May and the funeral at Woronora Crematorium was attended by Roy Jardine and Bill Tasker who carried out the Eulogy. Sincere sympathy was extended to wife Bernice by Bill Tasker.

SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

Subscriptions are due each year on 1st April and with this, send news of your family and happenings. The letters should contain your Surname, Christian name, company battalion and your present address. If forwarding new addresses, please state your old address, and please print all the information in block letters.

If Pioneer News is no longer required, please mark the wrapper NOT REQUIRED and post to the Secretary. All correspondence to the Secretary as follows:

M. Herron, Hon. Secretary, 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Battalion Association, 3 Enoggera Road, Beverly Hills, New South Wales 2209.

PEG HERRON – LIFE MEMBER

At the Annual Meeting on 26th May a presentation was made to Peg Herron of the Association's Life Member Certificate and an inscribed silver tray.

In presenting Peg with the honorary Life Member Certificate and badge, Patron John Gilchrist read the citation and thanked Peg for her remarkable work voluntarily given to the Association over forty four years.

President Allan McInnes then presented Peg with a very elegant silver tray, suitably inscribed, and told the meeting it was a pleasure to have known Peg since 1940 when he was in the same tent at Walgrove with Max when they were in the 2/1 Pioneer Training Battalion and Peg had visited them with a basket full of goodies.

In her emotional reply Peg thanked the Committee for bestowing on her the Association's highest award and the beautifully inscribed silver tray and said she would treasure them for the rest of her life.

Highlights of the citation read as follows:- 1956 assisted secretary Fred Callaway by typing 800 Pioneer News wrappers, four times a year for four years until the advent of an addressograph machine in 1960.

From 1958 when Max was appointed Secretary, Peg has carried out the task of typing all correspondence and Committee meeting minutes. Since that year she has also been a leading member of the Pioneer News Wrapping Committee.

1959 appointed Secretary of the Ladies Auxiliary and still holds that position today.

From 1963 at the first Country Reunion held at Port Macquarie, until the last Association Country Reunion at Gosford in 1993 Peg had carried out the task of accommodation Secretary for the fourteen Country Reunions conducted by the Association in that period.

Then in 1996 Peg was appointed Co-editor of Pioneer News after the previous Co-editor Bob Lake, passed away.

Reported by **DON CRAWFORD**

2/1-2/2 LISMORE REUNION

Saturday 5th, Sunday 6th August, 2000.

NSW North Coast Branch invite all Pioneers and their Ladies to their Country Reunion which is especially organised to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the two units. The 2/1 was formed at Ingleburn NSW 24th May 1940 and served in Tobruk while the 2/2 were formed at Moonee Ponds Vic., 18th May 1940, and served in Syria and Java. On return to Australia both units once again fought as infantry in New Guinea and Borneo.

WREATH LAYING – Saturday 5th August.

5pm at the Cenotaph, corner of Market and Molesworth Streets. Medals to be worn.

REUNION DINNER – Saturday 5th August.

7.30pm. Smorgasbord Dinner at the Lismore RSL Club, Market Street. Cost \$25 per head. Drinks at own expense.

BARBECUE LUNCH – Sunday 6th August.

12 noon. Lunch at the Ballina Ex-Servicemen's Home Complex, 71-73 Morton Street, Ballina. Members invited to inspect complex. Cost \$10 per head. Drinks at \$1.50 per can or stubby of beer.

TRANSPORT: Train travellers will be met at Station and taken to accommodation. Plane travellers to Lismore met, if notified to K. Wilson.

ACCOMMODATION – is to be booked by you. See NRMA accommodation guide.

DEPOSIT OF \$10 PER HEAD by 22nd July to Ken Wilson, for catering purposes.

CHEQUES etc, for deposit to be made out to K.A. Wilson and posted to: Ken Wilson, 9 Rosedale Square, Lismore, NSW 2480. Phone 02 6621 4762.

LISMORE REUNION - Fill in particulars: CUT OUT

5th/6th August 2000

Surname: Known Name:

Ladies Name: Phone: Unit:

Address:

Attendance: No. persons..... Tick: ☐ Dinner ☐ Barbecue ☐ Car ☐ Plane ☐ Train

PIONEER NEWS

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President: ALLAN McINNES

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Welfare: BILL TASKER, Phone 9718 6658

ALONG THE KOKODA TRACK WALKWAY

When plans for the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway were unveiled in 1994 it was envisaged as a memorial to those who had served on the Track, but now it is looked upon as a memorial to all ex-servicemen as outlined by Rusty Priest at the following two moving services.

VICTORY IN PACIFIC DAY

On Tuesday 15th August this grand walkway was once again the perfect setting for commemorating an annual historical event. This service was held in honour of VP Day and the good attendance of mainly ex-service personnel were accommodated on seating under marquees.

Rusty Priest, RSL President and Chairman of the Walkway Committee, handled the ceremony in his usual efficient manner. The prologue was given by Peter Woods OAM, Mayor of Concord, and his address concentrated mainly on the latter years 1944-1945 of the battle in the Pacific.

Major "Tex" Morton, OAM of the Salvation Army, Chaplain Gerard Glynn and Rev. David Hayes OAM were responsible for the prayers and benediction. The wreath was laid by Major General Sandy Pearson, and excellent music was provided by the NSW Corrective Services Band and with the assistance of two excellent vocalists, Melinda Edwell and Simon Militano, the assembly were led in hymns.

The Ode was recited by well-known ex WWII Army nursing sister, Mrs Ethel Lane, AM, MBE. In his "vote of thanks", Rusty Priest especially mentioned the construction company Payton Dixon for valuable assistance rendered following vandalism of the Walkway and also complimented the Walkway Board of Directors on the magnificent memorial commenced in 1995 and now brought to fruition.

At the conclusion of formalities an excellent afternoon tea was provided by Concord Repatriation General Hospital and enjoyed by the patrons. The Pioneer Association was well represented by the following group: Joyce Law, Bill Tasker, Steve Clarke, Max & Peg Herron, Jack & Marj Kerslake, Don & Val Crawford, Ian Secombe, Ron & Barbara James and Bill Jollie.

- Reported by STEVE CLARKE

OLYMPIC TORCH ON THE TRACK

At a gathering of 3,000 people, on Thursday 14th September at 5am, Rusty Priest AM, who was MC, welcomed the guests representing Federal and State Governments, the Navy, Army and Air Force as well as Felicity Barr, of Veterans' Affairs and Sandy Hollway of SOCOG.

In his opening address Rusty Priest gave thanks to all those brave men left behind for the freedom we all enjoy today. He then quoted the words expressed by Lt-Col. Ralph Honner, CO of 39th Battalion, which was the first unit to halt the Japanese advance along the Kokoda Track, as follows:-

"How, then, do we remember them? Survivors of the bomb-loud battles of the ragged and the bloody might muse where sleep the brave whose gathered bones rest in the hushed, unsanguined beauty of the Bomana War Cemetery. There they might review long lines of mute memorials, immaculately dressed for that ultimate parade, seeing again the familiar names of the fallen - and almost their once familiar faces. And they might scan again the sundered years of their severed lives - 19, 18, 17 years - and ponder the ravished promise of their perished youth. They died so young. They missed so much. They gave up so much - their hopes, their dreams, their loved ones. They laid down their lives, that their friends might live. Greater love hath no man than this."

After the prologue, delivered by Peter Woods, Concord Mayor, the service was conducted by the three clergymen and hymns were led by the Sydney Town Chorus. At the conclusion of the service, Alice Kang, Secretary, Kokoda Track Committee, was thanked for her organising of the event and called upon to release a flock of doves as a token of peace - it was a very fitting finale.

The Olympic Torch was then lit by Rusty Priest at the Centrepiece, delivered by Peter Woods, Concord Mayor, the service was conducted by the three clergymen and hymns were led by the Sydney Town Chorus. At the conclusion of the service, Alice Kang, Secretary, Kokoda Track Committee, was thanked for her organising of the event and called upon to release a flock of doves as a token of peace - it was a very fitting finale.

The Olympic Torch was then lit by Rusty Priest at the Centrepiece and carried by the following Torch bearers: 1. Don Oughtred, 2/3 Inf.Bn. 2nd AIF. 2. Ron Cashman, 3RAR Korea. 3. Eddie Wright, 3RAR Korea, Malaya, Borneo. 4. John Neenan 87th Transport Company Vietnam. The Torch bearers proceeded along the track, lined with the unit bearers, up to the Rose Garden.

The Pioneer group in attendance were: Don/Val Crawford, Roy Jardine, Rae Kean & niece Mary, David/Lynn Herron, Bill Tasker, Ian Secombe and Max/Peg Herron.

EDDIE WRIGHT, left, Korean veteran 3RAR pictured at the Myola Ridge Station, with the wreaths in the form of the Olympic rings, from where he carried the Torch along the Track past the Imita Ridge Station where Max Herron and Don Crawford displayed the 2/1 unit banner.

LAST POST

CLEM MORONEY 2/1 of Carramar passed away on 24th June while in Manly Waters Private Hospital and the funeral on 28th June was attended by Jack Stone, Perc Penrose and Roy Jardine who recited the Ode and Bill Tasker who gave the Eulogy.

Padre Stan Morton conducted the service at Woronora Crematorium and expressions of sympathy on behalf of the Association were extended to Rene and family by Bill Tasker.

Clem had been a Committee member for many years and will be missed by the group he mixed with after the meetings with his very much appreciated sense of humour. All 2/1 Pioneers will remember Clem as the really good piano player who entertained them on many occasions.

We are grateful to Rae Kean of ROTA for passing on all the details.

GWEN PETRICH wife of the late Vince 2/1, passed away in June and our sympathy was extended to her family.

JOAN CLARKE wife of Committee man Steve Clarke 2/1 of Chatswood, passed away on 4th July after a long stay in a nursing home. Expressions of sympathy were extended to Steve on behalf of all Pioneers.

LIONEL "SNOWY" ANDERSON 2/2 of Aspendale Vic, passed away on 16th June and to wife Isabell and daughter Julie we extend our deepest sympathy. "Snowy" was one of our best news reporters in Victoria as he regularly wrote or rang giving news of the members of the 2/2 Committee in Victoria, and of his family doings.

RON PASFIELD 2/2 of Christies Beach S.A. passed away on 21st July and the funeral service was held at Morphet Vale and attended by many relatives, friends and Pioneers, Russ Harrison, George Sauer and Allan Olson.

Sympathy was extended to wife Ellen and her family on behalf of the Association by President of the S.A. Branch Allan Olson.

GEOFF LLOYD 2/2 of Plympton S.A. passed away on 13th August at Largs Bay Hospice, Adelaide after a long illness, and the Church Service was attended by Rona, Kate and Russ Harrison, George Sauer, Joe Robertson, Geoffrey Olson and Allan Olson who delivered the Poppy Service and the Ode.

Geoff Lloyd's two sons, Stephen and Lance gave the Eulogy which mentioned that Geoff had joined the reformed 2/2 Pioneers at Wagga in 1942 and saw service with them in New Guinea and Balikpapan. While on leave in 1944 Geoff married Veronica (Ronnie) Taplin and wedding guests were 2/2nds, Jack Henderson (best man), Len Hope, Vince Longmore and Russ Harrison.

Sadly Ronnie passed away last year, so sympathy was extended to the family by Allan Olson who laid a wreath from the S.A. Branch.

ROY LEADBEATER 2/2 of Rockhampton passed away on 16th August aged 82 years and we are grateful to Neville O'Connor for passing on the details.

HARRY HAMER 2/1 of Gosford passed away on 12th August and the funeral on 16th August was attended by Roy Jardine and members of R.O.T.A. and T.P.I. Sympathy on behalf of the Association was extended by Roy Jardine to the family, and we have received a thank you card from Glad Hamer.

JOHN BROWN 2/1 of Padstow passed away on 29th August and we are grateful to his son Robert for informing us of the details. John will be remembered by 2/1sts as a member of the R.A.P.

MUFTI of Victoria, reported by Eric Causer 2/1 - Deceased - 2/2nds Francis Connors; John Grundy; E. Timbs and Charles Poulton.



MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

The last issue for the year – and what a year it has been. Firstly celebrations for the new Millennium, the games of the XXVII Olympiad and the 60th Anniversary of the formation of both 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneers in May 1940. Those of us who were lucky enough to have taken part in all these activities, despite age and aching hips and knees, have really had a year to remember. Letters for the Mail Bag were not as many as usual, but still plenty of news from around the country. Many thanks to all those who put pen to paper to keep me "on the job".

FRED ALWAY 2/1, Beaumaris Vic., with a cheque for the Treasurer and his thanks for the recent copy of the News, always interesting and very welcome. Fred shouted himself a cruise last September, his very first, and visited Milne Bay, Vila, Noumea and various other islands. Although he went on his own he had a great time and met many nice people.

Fred's health had not been the best early in the year, suffering a mild stroke, but apart from leaving him a bit forgetful, considers himself lucky to have got off so lightly.

He sends his regards to all Pioneers and, by the time you receive this copy of the News, trust your health has vastly improved.

ALF BALLARD 2/2, Monterey, with a short note enclosing a donation to funds. Alf's eyes are not the best, but sends regards to all especially Don Coy. 2/2. Our thanks for the sub, Alf.

MAVIS BLANCH, Beaudesert, widow of Joe 2/1, with her new address in the Beaudesert Garden Estate, and the news that she would be at Lismore in August for the reunion. It was good to see you Mavis, and that Gloria Gray, wife of "Paddy" 2/1, was able to come with you. All the best, Gloria.

My thanks to you, Mavis, for the lovely card with congratulations on my Life Membership Award of the Association. It was very much appreciated, and I shall endeavour to "keep up the good work".

SID BOOTH 2/2, Minyama Qld., with a letter of thanks to Max for sending on back numbers of the News and enrolling him on the mailing list for future issues.

Sid and his wife Jean were able to make the Lismore reunion in August and extend a big thank you to Ken Wilson and his committee for a great week-end. Says it was good to see so many from D Coy, and thought they were not as wild as they used to be.

He mentions that he is the only one left from the Frank Bradley tent – what a wonderful team – "Curly" Martin, "Speed" Gordon, Ernie Allen, Billie Bourke and "Colt" Barnes. Weren't the best or the worst soldiers, but Sid said they were the best card players in the unit (always on his bed). Sid was the only boy in a family of sisters – he wondered what he had struck with his tent mates but finished up great friends.

Sid mentions Billie Barnes is in a nursing home in Canberra with Alzheimers and he sends his best wishes to Bill Robertson, Allan McInnes and Russ Harrison. As to Lieut. Lock, we have no idea, Sid, he is not on our mailing list but some 2/2 may know of his whereabouts.

Many thanks for the sub. and for your good wishes and hope to hear from you again. Interesting to hear you knew Beverly Hills well, Sid, you'd certainly notice the difference since the days of your enlistment. Our regards to Jean.

PHIL BARNETT 2/2, Alstonville, with a cheque towards expenses for the News and his thanks for the effort the editors and Committee put in to keep the Association alive. Many thanks.

JACK BRYANT 2/1, Coraki, a short note with his dues and says he is enjoying good health, a game of bowls and a beer – what more can you ask. Good to hear from you, Jack, and trust you continue to enjoy the best of health.

LES BRITT 2/1, Gordonvale Qld., with the news that he is once more on the move back to

Queensland. He has enjoyed his last two years at Laurieton, especially with the bowling club, but his youngest daughter wanted him to return to the Cairns area to live with her and her family and this he has decided to do. Good for you, Les, and I'm sure you'll be a lot better off with family than on your own. Max has noted your new address for his mailing list.

We were interested in your footnote that in 1936 you lived opposite our street in Beverly Hills in Moorefields Road. There were certainly not many houses in those days, nor in 1947 after the war when Max and I built here. A very busy road these days and the new M5 Freeway extension is in the process of being built further down the road. How time marches on. All the best and trust your move back to Queensland brings good health and happiness.

RAY BURROUGHS 2/2, Cook A.C.T., with a welcome donation to funds and his best wishes passed on to all his Pioneer friends. Thank you very much for your congratulations on my Life Membership and your kind words – it was a great honour, Ray, and a reminder of the friendships I have shared with so many over forty odd years.

STEVE CLARKE 2/1, Killara, with a short note of thanks to the Association for the card and kind thoughts expressed to Steve and his family on the loss of his wife, Joan, in July. (Joan had been in a nursing home for some time as the result of a stroke). Steve has now left the family home and moved into an apartment with meals and help provided and coping well in his new surroundings.

Take care, Steve, and our best wishes.

GORDON CHRYSTALL 2/1, Larras Lee, per pen of good wife Eunice, with a welcome donation to funds. Gordon is still busy being a trucker, but Eunice says getting a bit slower these days – but aren't we all. He looks forward to getting his Pioneer News and all the work that goes into it and trusts that we will be able to continue the good work for a long time to come. We hope so too, Eunice, but time is marching on and none of us are "spring chickens" anymore. Thanks for the sub and best wishes to Gordon and yourself.

LEXIE COATES, Umina, widow of Jack 2/1, with a note enclosing the funeral notice of the late Harry Hamer 2/1 for our records. Harry had been ill for some time and passed away in August. Lexie was not able to attend the funeral as it is not easy for her to get to Palmdale. She had been speaking to Glad Hamer on the phone and Glad is battling on despite not keeping the best of health herself. Many thanks, Lex, and take care.

RON COYTE 2/1, Wentworthville, with a cheque for the Treasurer and his thanks for the News which he enjoys reading. He appreciates the time and effort that goes into its publication to keep members in touch with one another.

He and his wife Eileen recently returned from a three week holiday (the first in nine years) travelling to Tweed Heads, Bellingen, Dorrigo and Bateau Bay, for a few days with their daughter. The weather wasn't the best with quite a few days of rain, but enjoyed the holiday and the break away from home.

Ron has turned 79 and still enjoying life, so what more can you ask. As long as you are in good health and happy, life can be pretty good. All the best to you both.

ALBERT DEAN 2/1, Shepparton Vic., with his subs. for the year and a letter to Max re the Borneo Medal. Max has sent you the details, Albert, and presume it was the 1945/1975 Australian Service Medal you were enquiring about.

They had an interesting ANZAC Day in Shepparton this year as the local Cenotaph had been re-vamped and the statue of "Mateship" had been installed alongside the original memorial. The new statue was blessed and dedicated just prior to ANZAC Day and as one of the chaps depicted was a Shepparton man it held much more significance.

Thanks for the sub and your good wishes.

MATT ELLIOTT 2/2, West Wollongong, with apologies for not being able to get to Sydney for the march the last couple of years due to ill-health. Matt has had a heart by-pass and his leg also operated on, but hopes everything will soon be back to normal.

Thank you for the cheque, Matt, and your good wishes passed on to all Pioneers, especially D Coy, 2/2.

AVELINE GAMBLE, Chermside Qld., widow of Bill 2/1, with a short note enclosing a cheque to help keep up the good work. Many thanks and your best wishes passed on to all. Trust you are keeping well.

SAM GARDINER 2/1, Oak Flats, also a short note to say he was still in the land of the living and his health not too bad.

Good to hear, Sam, and thanks for your donation to funds. Always good to hear from one of the old 2/1 Sigs. Max sends his best wishes.

GLAD HAMER, East Gosford, widow of Harry 2/1, with a note of thanks for the card sent on behalf of the Association when Harry passed away. Glad sends her best wishes to all for the kind thoughts from herself and her sons. Take care yourself, Glad, and our best wishes.

JOHN HAYDEN 2/1, Orange, as usual per pen of good wife Wyn, with a long newsy letter for the Mail Bag and a very nice card to me of congratulations for my Life Membership award. My thanks to you both for the kind thoughts, they were very much appreciated.

John and Wyn were involved in a nasty car accident recently on their way home from a visit to their daughter Helen. Two teenagers ran up the back of their car and both Wyn and John badly shocked and John with whip-lash. Their car was badly damaged, but is now back on the road. Trust by now you have both recovered and rid of the flu virus. The weather in your part of the country has certainly not been the best with cold winds and heavy frosts – and some snow falls for good measure.

So glad to hear the News is still of great interest to John – there is always some item of news that reminds us of old friends and lots of memories. We hear news of Jan Stuart occasionally from Marj and Jack Kerslake and she was well at last report.

Bill Jollie has left his unit and is now in Kilvinton Village in Castle Hill and is managing very well. He has problems with steps, but manages to get about on his "good" days with the aid of his cane. Your good wishes are passed on to him per the paper.

Let's hope John can make it to Sydney for next ANZAC Day – it would be great to have a day with his old unit. Better start now applying for a "leave pass".

Hope you are feeling better now Wyn that the warm weather is here and that John keeps well. Fond greetings to you both.

STAN JONES 2/1, Dee Why, with a cheque for the News which he usually pays on ANZAC Day. However, he regretted he could not make it this year but watched the march on T.V. and was so proud to see the members of the old Battalion marching so well despite the rain.

Stan was sorry to hear of the passing of Ken Stuart – a good friend and a great Pioneer. He will be sadly missed.

Thank you, Stan, for the kind remarks on my award, they were much appreciated. He also sends his best regards to Max for a job well done and all his Pioneer friends.

With thanks for the donation to funds and hope to see you on deck next ANZAC Day.

JACK KEMPNIICH 2/1, Fingal Bay, per good wife Maisie, with lots of news as always and the news that they hoped to make the trip to Lismore for the reunion. This they certainly did and it was great to meet up again. Glad you were much better, Mais, and Jack looked great for his 88 years.

Mais was pleased to have news of May and Cec Sloggett 2/2 in last paper, also the letter from the daughters of the late "Snow" Vickery 2/1 to say their mother had recently passed away. She and Jack were sorry to hear she had suffered so long before her death. It just goes to show how beneficial the letters in the Mail Bag become to our readers, especially with former members of the units being scattered all around the country.

In regard to your query re the Association, Mais, the first meeting was held in March, 1946, and the first issue of the Pioneer News was published in 1952 – 48 years ago. The first Dubbo reunion was in 1980 and I can remember Jack and the late Jim McDonald meeting up after so many years – Jack had not known the Association existed until that year. What a lot of memories names and places bring back. Let's hope we are able to carry on with

the News for a few more years, and we can only do that if the letters keep coming.

Fond wishes to you both, keep well and always good to hear from you.

FRED KILLEN 2/1, Warners Bay, with one line – sub. from Fred Killen. Certainly short and sweet, Fred, surely you must have some news from your part of the globe. However, many thanks and hope you are well.

MARIE LAMERTON, Liverpool, widow of Jack 2/1, with the news that son Harry had taken her down to Concord to see the Kokoda Track Walkway recently and she was very impressed with all the work that had been done, especially the Centrepiece. Harry had walked the Kokoda Track in 1992 and said the highlight of his trip was the ANZAC Day service at Imita Ridge which the 2/1sts occupied in 1942. In 1994 Harry made a second trip to take along his son, Peter, to show him the conditions under which the Australian soldiers fought during the war. The Walkway is not only a lasting memorial to all those who fought on the Track, but to all servicemen and women.

Good to hear from you Marie, and continue to enjoy your outings with Legacy.

ENID LANNAM, Forster, daughter of the late Ronald Curry Hay 2/1, with a note of thanks for copies of the News posted to her recently. Enid also enclosed a cheque for Association funds for which many thanks.

Max has given you the information re the Australian Archives and where to apply. I have personally obtained records of an uncle who was in the Light Horse at Bethsheeba (for a fee of around \$16) and of my father who served in World War I. Trust you have good luck with your enquiries and will be interested to hear your results.

Do hope your health has improved, Enid, and we send you our best wishes.

KIM LATHAM, Warriewood, daughter of the late Jack Howie, sends many thanks for keeping her up with the News and included a cheque towards Association funds. Kim was sorry to read Allan McInnes had been hospitalised over ANZAC Day and sent him her best wishes, also a big Hello to Gavin Todd. So many names in the News "ring a bell" as she recalls her dad's reminiscences whilst they were young. Good to hear from you again, Kim, and thank you for your donation to funds.

JOYCE LAW, Kareela, widow of the late Max 2/1, with a note of thanks for the luncheon on ANZAC Day and says how nice it was to meet up with old Pioneer friends again. Our thanks for the donation to funds, Joyce, and fond wishes to you and the family.

ERNIE LUNN 2/2, Dubbo, with some kind words on my Life Membership, for which many thanks. It was a great honour and something to be treasured. (No hope of me wanting to resign now is there, Ern, sure would have a guilty conscience).

We were sorry you could not make the Lismore reunion on account of Norma's health problems and appreciated your phone call on the evening of the reunion dinner. It was a very successful week-end and a credit to the organisers. However, realise that sometimes health problems have to take first priority (there were a lot of apologies due to illness) and from speaking to Norma on the phone hope the problem may not be as serious as at first thought. Take care, Norma.

Belatedly thank you for the lovely morning tea from Kerslakes and ourselves after the Dubbo Camp reunion and for all the plant cuttings. Most of them grew and are doing well.

Ern spent this ANZAC Day at a service in Mendooran – although numbers are small every organisation in the district, some 30 of them, laid a wreath which included a book which is given to the local primary and central schools.

Good to hear from you, Ern, and our very best wishes to both Norma and yourself. Hope to catch up again in the near future.

FRANK MAHER 2/2, Goolwa S.A., with a short note enclosing his subs and the news that his health has not been the best this year after two trips to hospital but he is slowly on the mend. Hope things are on the up and up, Frank, and many thanks for the donation.

OWEN MILLS ex-7 Div. Sigs, Springwood, a former resident of Maclean on the Clarence River and school mate of several 2/1 Pioneers

– Alec Cameron, Ted Day, Tom Loy and the Smidt brothers, with a newsy letter after receipt of the Pioneer News. Owen was very interested in the article on Dr. Stan Goulston in the last issue, and had made a copy to send to a specialist friend, Dr Michael Cox of Penrith, a Master Surgeon. The doctor you mention, Owen, is the son of Dr. Eric Goulston, Professor Terry Goulston of the North Shore Hospital in Sydney. Dr. Eric was a Captain, later Lieut/Col. in the 2/5th A.G.H., and is still alive and involved with his old unit. He is the brother of our Dr. Stan. There was a Mark Lawrence in the 2/1sts but I am unaware if he was Dr. Stan's batman.

Good to see you and Molly enjoyed your trip to Coffs for the 7th Div. Cav. reunion and were able to go on to Maclean to look up old friends. Trust your health is still improving and always good to hear from you. Best wishes and take care.

TOM MORGAN 2/2, Forster, per pen of wife Mary, with a donation to funds and some kind remarks to the editorial staff of the News. Tom is not able to write, but enjoys Mary reading the paper with news of old mates as his eyesight is not the best. Our best wishes to you both and thanks for the cheque.

DOROTHY MOWBRAY, Cleveland Qld., widow of Harry 2/1, with a very welcome letter and donation to funds. She has asked for the News to be sent on to her after Harry passed away, which Max is more than happy to do. They had been married for 23 years and had a good life together, travelled overseas four times and always enjoyed their trips to our Pioneer reunions. Sadly so many have passed on, Dorothy, but age and ill-health fast catching up.

Dorothy still goes to Victoria Pt. State School for ANZAC Day and will continue to give the Bursary in Harry's memory (a lovely remembrance) and two books to the school library. She still attends the Ladies Auxiliary of Rats of Tobruk, but says their numbers are getting smaller each year. This happens to all Associations in our age group, Dorothy, unfortunately there are no younger ones to carry on. Not too many veterans now are under 76, most of the earlier men are all over 80, or close to it, a couple on our Committee 95.

Thank you for your nice letter and we are glad you are going to keep in touch. Our fond wishes and hope that old knee problem may improve and maybe get you back bowling again.

DON MCCLELLAND 2/2, Bundaberg, with a few lines and his sub for the year. Don made it to Melbourne for the reunion and ANZAC Day – a long haul from Bundaberg. He was lucky to get a ride on the day and not have to march, but walked back to the hotel for lunch. Says it was far enough. He had a great time – was away for seven weeks – and hopes to do the same next year. Don sends his best wishes to all, especially 2/2nds.

FRANK RAY 2/2, Mont Albert, Vic., with a newsy letter and his subs for the year. The annual sub is \$5 for the News, Frank, but with rising printing costs and postage anything over is a donation to the Association. Many thanks.

Frank says time marches on and memories fade but are re-kindled when reading the Mail Bag. Names such as Jim Drummond, Allan McInnes, Fred Tubb and a few others are well-known to him. He keeps in touch with Bob Philpots by phone each week and corresponds regularly with Mick Smith, who I know is also a good friend of Allan McInnes. Glad to say Bill Robertson has improved in health but great for a man his age – and for what he does. Puts a lot of younger people to shame.

Frank was saddened at the death of Cal Mitchell but pleased that he was able to see him often during his last months. He sends his best wishes to the Association and all members of 2/2.

OLIVE RICHARDS, Lennox Head, widow of Jack 2/1, was unable to make the Lismore reunion this year due to back problems, but sent along a cheque for funds and a book of stamps which were very acceptable. As you can imagine, Olive, we have a huge postal bill and the stamps were much appreciated.

After the reunion was over, Max and I, together with Marj and Jack Kerslake, spent a pleasant morning and had a welcome "cuppa" with Olive talking of old times. She had recently

had cataracts removed from both eyes and waiting on new glasses. Her garden was a picture and she is getting renovations done to the house – her son and daughter-in-law have moved up from the south to be close and they are to share Olive's home.

Enjoyed our morning with you, Olive, and fond wishes. Have passed on your regards to Marj and Jack.

GEOFF ROBINSON 2/1, Quaaama, with a couple of letters to Max re photos taken on ANZAC Day by John Hayden's son, John Jnr. Max had posted two or three on to Geoff – one of battalion members and one of Geoff, which I thought was a very good snap. (Geoff's comments were "there's nothing like a photograph to reveal the wrinkles, warts and other signs of age, is there?") Being a bit hard on yourself, Geoff.

Good to hear you have Enid back home from hospital and recovering slowly. Gordon Finlay is also home and taking things very slowly as he has had a pretty torrid time these last months. Gets plenty of care from Olive and perhaps will pick up now the warmer weather is here.

All the best to Enid and yourself and thanks for your letters.

RAY SMITH 2/1, Glen Iris, Vic., a welcome letter and cheque to Pioneer News. He has had one long holiday this year, a delightful four months at their beach house at McCrae on the Mornington Peninsula soaking up the sun (do you really get sun in Melbourne?) and then a trip to New Zealand. When he and his wife heard that their daughter who lives in N.Z., was going to carry the Olympic Torch they decided to make the trip and see her – a very exciting time. The daughter competed in the Paralympic Games in Barcelona (1 gold) and Atlanta (1 gold, 1 silver) but has now retired from competition. (You did not mention in what sport she won all these wonderful medals). The Games start here in Sydney very shortly and Max and I are hoping to make it to one of the days' events. You cannot but admire these young athletes who compete with their handicaps, and really enjoy their sport. Hope our Aussies do well.

Thanks for your letter, Ray, and the cheque. Can assure you it will be put to good use.

ALLEN STONE 2/2, Raymond Terrace, with a few lines "to let the boys know he is still around". He is still gardening and walking for his health (82 this year) and it helps to fill in the days. Recently celebrated his 60th wedding anniversary and he and his wife had a lovely luncheon – hearty congratulations to you both.

We hear fairly regularly from Don Murray who was still battling on at last report, but have not heard anything this year of Harry West.

Thanks for the sub, Allen, and your good wishes are passed on to all members.

JOHN TREVETHICK 2/1, Lane Cove, with another change of address in same suburb, (getting to be like Grace Bros. John) and have noted your phone number will remain the same. Trust by now you have settled in, John, and enjoying your new surroundings. Moving must be in the air as Bill Jollie, Steve Clarke and Stan Jones have all just recently changed houses for something smaller or to avoid too many steps in their old age (their words, not mine).

Thank you for the donation to funds and for your kind words re the Pioneer News and my Life Membership – all very much appreciated. All the very best from both Max and I and lots of good health in the coming months.

LES TUNKS 2/1, Mareeba Qld., with his subs and stamps for the News. Many thanks, Les. He also sent Max several photos of some of the memorial plaques recently unveiled at Rocky Creek and to tell us that the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer plaque had arrived from the makers in South Australia, to be unveiled at a later date.

Les says there was a good crowd on V.P. Day, close on two thousand people, when more of the memorials were dedicated. As the unveiling only takes place twice a year, ANZAC Day and V.P. Day, it is uncertain when our Pioneer plaque will be dedicated.

Thank you for the information, Les, and our best wishes to both Lesley and yourself.

TEMPLE WOOD 2/2, Terrigal, with his dues and a donation to the Association, for which many thanks. He has difficulty getting about these days and not as active as he would like to

be. Join the club, Temple, I'm afraid you have a lot of mates as time marches on. Thanks for your good wishes to all Pioneer friends and try and keep well.

NEV WOODHAM 2/1, Cleveland, with news that he and Betty were going to the reunion at Lismore and were looking forward to seeing old friends. Very pleased to see you both again and looking so well – the cold winter in Brisbane and the early nights and warm bed must have agreed with both – even at 80 (aimed at Nev, Betty, not at you).

Nev says their R.O.T.A. Sub-Branch is still operating and down to 12 members, but will keep going until they have to fold up. He is still secretary and Bett is President of their Ladies Auxiliary. The ladies have a better roll up than the men do and always raising funds. Harry Spreadborough always attends, but not in the best of health. Ken Franks lives too far away and cannot attend because his eyesight is not the best to drive that distance. Nev is also secretary to the RSL Sub-Branch which is very strong with 800 members, at present the sixth highest in the State.

After living in Queensland for 20 years, Nev (born and bred in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney) still follows the Roosters and was delighted when they beat the Broncos in one of the semis. Sadly your delight was short-lived with the result of the final – never mind Nev there's always next year.

Always good to hear from you and hope you can make ANZAC Day next year. Warm wishes to you both from your Sydney friends.

JOHN DOWD 2/2, Wagga Wagga, with apologies for lateness of sub, but has not been in the best of health with a couple of trips to hospital. Hope you're feeling better, John, and your good wishes passed on to all.

• That's all the Mail Bag for this time, the last for 2000, and on behalf of President Allan, Treasurer Don, Max and myself we would like to wish all members, their wives and families the very best for the coming Festive Season and lots of happiness and good health in the coming year. To those who have lost loved ones we send special thoughts and hope your happy memories will remain with you in the years ahead. Merry Christmas and a Healthy, Happy New Year.

ANOTHER KELLY STORY

Readers will remember our item in the July issue of Pioneer News regarding 2/1st character Laurie (Three Course) Kelly being in a spot of bother when he had to make an urgent "nature stop" while in the ANZAC Day march. After quite a commotion with railway staff he was "escorted" by kindly police away from the scene of the crime and taken by police car to the Occidental Hotel to the reunion dinner. Now Laurie has again hit the headlines in the Manly Daily.

It appears Laurie has stepped in to help deliver the Manly paper to all the properties along the 1km stretch of bone-shuddering, pot-holed dirt road that leads to his property deep in the valley at Oxford Falls. Cromer mother of three Lyn Strettan has been delivering the mail, and the Manly Daily, since she took over the postal contract 12 years ago and despite pregnancy, and resultant twins, 10 years ago, has continued to provide a much-valued service to the Oxford Falls close-knit community.

However, all that came to a halt recently when Australia Post informed Lyn that the service would be taken over by a regular postie. She then decided that it was time to hand over the newspaper round. No one was interested in taking over, so in the early morning on her way to work at the Chatswood Mail Centre she has been delivering the paper rather than see residents lose a service they had come to rely on.

Good work, Laurie, and we feel sure all those people along Kelly Way would appreciate your effort. Wonder how long it will take him to make the delivery after a chat here and there, especially if he were to relate some of his tales of Army life that we have heard from time to time.

SICK PARADE

BILL ROBERTSON 2/2 of Randwick had a few days in Prince of Wales Hospital in May but

is now home and getting along well for his 94 years, and was visited by Bill Tasker, Roy Levy and Gavin Todd.

FRANK LOCANE 2/2 of Nowra was in Strathfield Private and operated on for the Aorta valve in June. He is now home and improving. Thanks to George Walker for keeping in touch.

GORDON FINLAY 2/1 of Liverpool had a fall at home in August and broke a leg bone which resulted in an operation at Liverpool Hospital. He was then transferred to the Metro Rehabilitation Hospital at Petersham where he was visited by Bill Tasker, Mary Lloyd, Marj and Jack Kerslake, Joan Lake and Peg and Max Herron.

ROY LEVY 2/2 of Revesby was admitted to Bankstown Hospital and after a few days was transferred to the Prince of Wales Hospital for a heart operation in September which necessitated in the changing of his pacemaker. We thank Don Crawford, who made regular visits to see Roy, for keeping us posted with Roy's progress.

SOUTH AUST. PIONEERS

A service to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the four Pioneer Battalions for service in World War II was held on 13th August, at the Battalions' Memorial on the Memorial Walkway, Torrens Parade ground in Adelaide.

Major General (Rtd) Rev. Des C. Smith R.F.D. E.D. L.T.H conducted the service. The band of the 10/27 Infantry Battalion performed and in attendance were 70 Pioneers, including relatives and friends. Also present were representatives of 9th Brigade, Keswick, Dept Veterans' Affairs and ex-service organisations.

The service included the laying of wreaths, the Ode, followed by Last Post and Reveille and the National Anthem. The Blessing delivered by the Rev. Des Smith concluded the service.

Following this service a luncheon was served in the Sergeants Mess at Keswick Barracks, which included many distinguished guests. In attendance were thirty nine relatives and friends and ten Pioneers, namely, George Sauer, Ted Blanchard, Rod Everrett, Bruce Scott, Ken Wilson, Peter Priest, Eric Taylor, Russ Harrison and Bill Thiele who acted as M.C. and Allan Olson who presided over the formal proceedings.

— Reported by RUSS HARRISON,
S.A. Branch Vice President

2/1-2/2 LISMORE REUNION

On 5th/6th August 2000 the North Coast Reunion was held at Lismore, especially organised to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the two units in May 1940.

Nineteen members boarded a bus on Saturday 5th at 8.30am for a tour from Lismore to Rosebank and the Minyon Falls with an excellent commentary by local member Kevin Raward. Upon the return trip, morning tea was taken at The Channon, which was a quaint little village. At the conclusion of the trip, Jack Bertram thanked driver Ian for the tour.

WREATH LAYING CEREMONY

On Saturday 5th August at 5pm the members were marshalled by Kevin Raward at the Lismore Soldiers Memorial for the Wreath Laying Ceremony. This was conducted by the Rev. Peter Playstead, Lismore Presbyterian Minister and Chaplain at the Amberly RAAF Base, who spoke on the exploits of the two units using their unit histories as a guide.

The branch banner was displayed by Peter Priest and Dave Denny, while the National Flag was lowered by Ron Cross.

Wreaths were laid by Peg Herron (Ladies Auxiliary) Max Herron (Assoc.) and Ken Wilson (North Coast Branch). After the Benediction by Rev. Playstead the gathering proceeded to the RSL Club.

THE REUNION DINNER

Name tags were issued by Dot Priest on arrival at the RSL Club and the collection of fees was carried out by Alec George and Terry McGuire.

After welcoming guests Kevin Raward as M.C. called on Rev. Playstead to say Grace

while the Loyal Toast was in the hands of Ray Harris. Kevin Raward then proposed the toast to our departed comrades.

After proposing the Toast to the Guests, President Ken Wilson read a long list of apologies, mostly through illness, and then called on Jack Griffiths, Vice-President of the Association to respond. Jack, in his usual very capable manner, commented on what a strong bond still remained within each unit and between the members of the two units some sixty years after their formation. He said it was pleasing to see the Association had recognised the effort by Peg Herron in keeping this bond of mateship together and he congratulated Peg on being awarded Life Membership of the Association. He made a special welcome to the two daughters of the late Bob Lake – Gail Swinburne and Eileen Dick, as well as to all the other daughters and sons present.

REUNION DINNER GRACE

*Composed and read by
Rev. Peter Playstead*

They signed up for Australia
They left their homes behind
They travelled half way round the world
With others of their kind.
They wore the Aussie uniform
With courage and with pride
Beneath that flag of Southern Cross
They lived and fought and died.

And now the ranks are thinning out
Because of passing years
Together we all meet again
With laughter and with tears
Of solemn memory for the blokes
Who conquered all their fears
But never made it back to Oz
Lord, Bless the Pioneers.

BARBECUE AT BALLINA

The gathering then descended on the Ballina Ex-Servicemens Home Complex on Sunday 6th August and when the bar was opened it had a good many customers. After drinks the members moved up to the large dining room where the staff of the Complex served an excellent lunch.

Upon completion of the meal, Secretary Max Herron spoke on behalf of Pioneers and their ladies present in thanking Ken Wilson and his Committee for the work they put into the organising and conducting of the Reunion. He also thanked the ladies, sons and daughters for their attendance and support, and said he was particularly proud of the presence of the twelve Association Committee members out of the total thirty five Pioneers. He said members were also appreciative of the gesture by the Branch Committee in reducing the BBQ cost from \$10 down to \$5 and that we were grateful to Dept. Veterans' Affairs for their grant of \$1,000 to the Branch Committee towards the reunion.

ATTENDANCE FOR WEEKEND

There were thirty five Pioneers in attendance consisting of eighteen 2/1sts and seventeen 2/2nds and their ladies as follows.

2/1sts: Jack Bertram, Dave/Joyce Denny, Jack Griffiths, John/Mollie-Jean Hunt, Max/Peg Herron, Jack/Marj Kerslake, Jack/Maisie Kempnich, Len/Alma O'Connor, Noel Schomberg, Ted/Mary Carter, Les Patterson, Neville/Betty Woodham, Alf/Lil Bettens, Alec/Jean George, Terry/Clare McGuire, Jack/Flo Shearman, Ron Cross and Peter/Dot Priest.

2/2nds: Jack/Barbara Allison, Don/Val Crawford and sister Noelene, Bill/Beris Cunneen, Snowy Dodd, Bob Ginnane, Roy Levy, Bert Neasby, Kevin Raward, Gavin Todd, Ken/Ida Wilson, Sid/Jean Booth, Dick/Alison Walker, Ossie/Betty Carter, Ray/Ruby Harris, Jack Westwood and his wife, Les Nolan and Neville/Betty O'Connor.

It was pleasing to see in attendance the following: **Widows:** Mavis Blanch, Gloria Gray, Joan Lake, Peg Wells, and Vi Flynn. **Sons:** David McInnes, Ian Secombe, Ray Walker, Perry Wells, and Neil Frogley. **Daughters:** Robyn Bell (late Leo Morris 2/1), Eileen Dick and Gail Swinburne (late Bob Lake 2/1), Pam Lee (Ray Harris 2/2), Pam Stubbins (Peter Priest 2/1), Nola Lindfield (Jack Westwood 2/2).

All who attended voted it a great week-end and hoped to meet again in the not too distant future.