

PIONEER NEWS

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

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2/1sts AS POW's IN SWITZERLAND

The following notes are taken from a draft called "AIF in Switzerland" compiled by Sapper Bill Rudd, ex 2/7th Royal Australian Engineers, 9th Division who was a Prisoner of War in Italy and escaped to Switzerland, and now lives in South Yarra, Victoria.

Bill was one of twelve sappers attached to the 2/28th Inf Bn on their last attack on Ruin Ridge, El Alamein and was captured together with 500 other Australians. Being an Italian theatre of war most prisoners were sent to Campo 57 Gruppignamo in North Italy, then transferred to Camp 106 in the Vercelli area and from here Bill escaped to Switzerland as did another 420 men. He was in camps there at Turbental and Adelboden, and in his writings he is dealing with POW's in Italy but particularly interested in those who have a Swiss bride like he has.

The 2/1st Pioneer casualty list shows nine personnel were captured in Tobruk, and because it, too, was an Italian theatre of war they were sent to camps in Italy. The unit history book lists them on page 196 as follows: 1941, April - H.E. Perrott, May - J.A. McAdam, August - D. King, E.L. Morgan, K.P. O'Connell, J.D. Raine, Sept. - J.J. Elsegood, H.L. Pack, M.H. Rogers. Three of these members, who escaped into Switzerland were: H.E. Perrott, H.L. Pack and M.H. Rogers.

Five of the nine POW's mentioned in the casualty list were captured as described on page 61 of the "The Pioneers", 2/1st unit history, as follows: "9th August 1941 - over the next three days, lay up patrols were out and on return were able to provide much valuable information as to enemy movements. Following the success of these patrols a patrol with a mission to destroy enemy vehicles was sent out from "D" Company on 9th August. This patrol was under the leadership of Sergeant Raine, with Corporal King and three others. It was to be a two or three day mission. They did not return".

The three others were M.H. Rogers, H.L. Pack and J.J. Elsegood. All POW's in Italy and Switzerland were repatriated to Australia on 23 Sept. 1944.

Another item of interest from Bill Rudd's draft was a report written by a German officer when he was a POW in Australia, by the name of Lieutenant Fritz Eberhard, as follows:

"During the siege of Tobruk fortress on May 1st 1941 an invasion to the north and south of Ras el Medaunar was proposed. Shock troops were to be deployed against each single bunker. This planning took ten days, our division in the northern half of the invasion was to attack bunkers S8, S9 and S10 simultaneously. S9 by the light infantry Pioneers of the SR115. S8 by shock troops of our 3 Kp under the lead of Lieutenant Konigs and S10 by shock troops of our 1 Kp (Tank Engineers 33) under my command.

The shock troops attacked, but they, due to the alert Australians, suffered heavy casualties and were driven back. But we were successful, taking bunker S10 with only two wounded and were able to capture twenty three men. These prisoners were taken behind our lines and wounded Australians taken into the bunker and cared for.

The Australian counter attack on 3rd May brought him success and after I had been severely wounded by a shot through the jaw our defence collapsed and the bunker garrison had to capitulate. We were led away by the Australians and I was looked after in Tobruk Military hospital then finally taken to Heidelberg hospital in Melbourne Australia, where I was operated on and given a skin graft.

It was here that I met an Australian soldier

who had been taken prisoner in Tobruk at Bunker 4 on 1st May and was wounded in the jaw. He was well cared for at the German hospital then repatriated to Australia on an exchange basis.

During another attack on the 16th May the Tank Engineers 33 lost 3 dead, four wounded and thirty eight taken prisoner during the attack on bunker S10."

Bill Rudd states on reading the report by Lieut Eberhard, and taking a look at Barton Maughan's Tobruk and El Alamein (p 216) this engagement may have involved Captain Provan's company of the 2/1 Pioneers. (Captain Provan was 2ic of "B" company and probably had a patrol out, as at the time of these attacks on S8, S9 and S10 the battalion involved was the 2/48 Inf Bn whereas the 2/1 Pioneers were being attacked at posts R8, R9 and R10.).

Editors note: In 1999 I was approached by Bill Rudd to check on the whereabouts of our three members who escaped into Switzerland and found the three members were deceased but was able to give details of the whereabouts of their widows. I thank Bill for the draft he has sent me and wish him every success - Max Herron.

KOKODA TRACK WALKWAY

A Remembrance Day Service was held on Thursday, 8th November, at the Kokoda Track Memorial Rose Garden, organised by Alice Kang, Secretary, and Staff of Concord Hospital.

As usual it was an excellent service with a welcome by Matthew Daly, Executive Director and the service conducted by Rev. Paul Watkins. Highlights of the service was the choir of the Strathfield Public School. Peg and Max Herron represented the Association.

ROCKY CREEK MEMORIAL

At the November Committee meeting it was proposed and approved that the Association make a donation of \$100 to the Rocky Creek Memorial Park Committee towards the cost of the upkeep of the Memorial Park where the plaques for the 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneer Battalions are prominently displayed.

In reply to receiving our cheque and letter the Secretary John Hardy wrote and expressed thanks and outlined all the work that is proposed at the Memorial Park as follows:

1. To relocate a toilet block from the Biboohra State School to the Park.
2. Plant a screen of 100 Australian native trees on the boundary to give a stunning visual screen.
3. Erect a circular masonry block, concrete rendered "Wall of Remembrance".
4. Erect a large entrance sign to the Park.
5. Plant Queensland Blue couch turf around the plaque area where the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Plaque was unveiled on VP Day 2001.

The letter was signed by John Hardy, Secretary Ex Pioneer Sergeant 51 Bn. RQR.

2/1-2/2 LISMORE REUNION

NSW North Coast Branch have again organised a Country Reunion for Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th September. Full details on page four with application form to be sent in by 7th September.

PAY DUES - OR NO NEWS

The stencil addressing system for posting of Pioneer News for the past 50 years has worn out which means converting to a system of stick on labels on to envelopes within six months.

There is no fee to belong to the Association just a \$5 per annum donation to cover the cost of producing the Pioneer News at \$2,700 per year which includes 45 cent postage fee.

Because of the added cost of the new system the Committee decided it is now necessary to make an appeal, especially to those 180 members out of a total of 550 posted out, who according to records kept, have never paid their dues.

Perhaps some of these members are not interested in receiving Pioneer News, in which case they can assist in reducing costs by marking their wrapper not required and returning before the new system is commenced.

This appeal is not directed to the 370 members who have paid dues regularly (or other kindred organisations) and we do thank them for their continued support.

2/2nds ANZAC DAY CHANGE

At the November Committee Meeting it was proposed and approved that the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion on ANZAC Day, march behind the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion, carrying their own banner and with their own march leaders.

Permission was sought from the RSL ANZAC Day march Committee and granted.

In the past, the 2/2nds have formed up at the rear of 7th Division in Phillip Street north, whereas they will now form at rear of 6th Division behind the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion in Phillip Street south, outside the Leagues Club.

This means the 2/2nds will have the benefit of marching to the Castle Hill RSL Youth Band, just as the 2/1sts have done. It will also mean both units will complete the march together and arrive at the Occidental Hotel at the same time for the Reunion lunch.

Television Channel Two have been notified of the change and requested to give separate commentaries. Members should inform their family and relatives of the change so they can be prepared when watching the march.

PIONEER ACTIVITIES 2002

WREATH LAYING - Wednesday, 24th April

On Wednesday, 24th April the Association will conduct their Wreath Laying Service at the Cenotaph at 4.10pm and all members are to assemble on the corner of Martin Place and Pitt Street, GPO side at 3.45pm.

ANZAC DAY MARCH - Thursday, 25th April

The march will be held on Thursday 25th April and the forming up for the 2/1sts is the same as last year in Phillip Street head on to King Street, rear of 6th Division - 2/2nds will now form up behind the 2/1sts in Phillip Street (outside Leagues Club) rear 6th Division.

Prior to march subscriptions will be collected by Gavin Todd for 2/2nds and Don Crawford for 2/1sts.

ANZAC REUNION - Thursday, 25th April

The Reunion will be held at the Occidental Hotel 43 York Street Sydney - just board the train at Museum Station after march and travel to Wynyard Station - up escalators, turn right into York Street and hotel is on corner.

ANNUAL MEETING - 28th June at 1pm

The venue is in the upstairs Board Room of the Redfern RSL Club, corner of Redfern and Gibbon Streets Redfern and a cordial invitation to all members to attend.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

The first issue of Mail Bag for 2002 and many thanks to all those who sent cards and letters to the Association, and to Max and I personally, for the Christmas season. Do hope our readers enjoyed a happy and healthy time with their families and, despite age fast catching up, can look forward to a new year of happiness and good health.

CYRIL AMIES 2/1, Forbes, with a long computerised letter per good wife Doris, and a donation to funds. Many thanks. Since their move to Forbes a couple of years ago, both Cyril and Doris have become involved in various local activities and with lots of garden needing regular maintenance, lead a fairly active life. Doris plays bowls and took on the job of Publicity Officer, as no one else wanted the job, and Cyril also plays and has made good friends with one of the local Rats of Tobruk. They have fitted in a few trips with a Geranium Club to the Japanese gardens at Cowra and to Dubbo and Young.

Cyril had rather a troublesome year, healthwise, with knee problems and a bout of double pneumonia. He is slowly regaining his strength but has realised that age and limited energy require that he takes things a lot easier. Old soldiers never learn!!!

Trust by now you are much improved, Cyril and looking forward to ANZAC Day in Forbes. All the best to you both, good to keep in touch.

ISOBELL ANDERSON, Aspendale, Vic., widow of "Snow" 2/2, with a welcome note of greetings for Christmas and a donation to funds. Many thanks, Isobell, and good to hear from you and Julie. Trust the coming year will be good to you both.

REG ARMSTRONG 2/2, Baradine, with a change of address and a donation to the Association, for which many thanks. Reg and Coralie have both had their "ups and downs" during the year, but still soldiering on. Reg was sorry to hear of the passing of Jack Griffiths and says he will be sorely missed. Certainly agree with you in that regard, Reg.

In regard to the photos you have, Reg, if we hear of any of our members passing through Baradine at any time, will see if we can arrange to have them picked up. Not so many Pioneers travelling about these days, age fast catching up.

Your best wishes are passed on to all old Pioneer mates and trust the coming year will be kind to both Coralie and yourself.

ALBERT BARTON 2/1, Gulgong, with his greetings to all for the coming year and some funds to keep the Association alive. Many thanks. Alby says it was great to read the write-up on the Rocky Creek Memorial. It was a great hospital and he remembers the month he spent in the care of their wonderful staff.

His legs prevent him from being very active, otherwise he and Gwen enjoy life in the country.

Good to hear from you again, our best wishes and hope you have a healthy and happy year ahead.

ROBYN BELL, Port Melbourne Vic., daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1, with Seasons Greetings to all Pioneers and hopes to be able to join members on ANZAC Eve in Sydney. Her mother, Mary, continues to reside at the RSL Hostel in Yass and is very well cared for by the wonderful staff.

Robyn and husband Bruce had a very worrying few days at the time of the September 11th bombing in New York, as one of their sons is based in New York and witnessed the events from his office. Robyn says it was a dreadful time as they did not hear from him for several days.

Our best wishes, Robyn, and hope to see you in Sydney in April.

MAVIS BLANCH, Beaudesert Qld., widow of Joe 2/1, with greetings to all for Christmas. Has just had her usual round of Christmas "break-ups" for Legacy, Church Guild and bowls and looking forward to some "quiet" time.

Trust your mother is recovering from her further stroke and is happy in the nursing home in Casino. Pleased to hear you were able to see Emily Downes the last time you were in Kyogle – she had told Lynn you had been to see her.

Sorry to hear the news of your elder daughter, Mavis, and our thoughts are with you. Hope you are keeping well yourself and with the Lismore reunion on again in September, will perhaps be able to meet up once more. We see Noel Schomberg frequently at functions and he always looks well – will pass on your good wishes.

MARJ BOYLE, Moama, widow of Keith 2/1, with her good wishes for the Festive Season and a welcome donation to funds. Marj has had a few health problems during the year, out of action with a broken ankle and knee cap for three months, but now on the mend – says age is catching up.

Our congratulations on your awards for your work with Meals on Wheels and dementia patients, Marj, from both Federal and State Governments and I'm sure well deserved. It is nice to be recognised for all the years you have given to local organisations, especially when you have had to overcome lots of personal problems with your own health.

Many thanks for your cheque, Marj, and for your best wishes to all those who keep our Association alive. Says it's wonderful to be kept in touch with all that goes on and hopes we will be able to carry on for many more years. Keep well and always good to hear from you.

AUB BRASIER, Dee Why, our bugler on ANZAC Eve for over 40 years, with his best wishes for Christmas to all Pioneers. Aub was introduced to the Association by the late Harry Montague and at our second wreath laying in 1960 became our official bugler. Not a bad record, Aub, and we hope you will be around for many more years.

Aub was associated with the NSW Corrective Services Band for many years and since retiring has travelled around the northern beach areas of Sydney entertaining residents in nursing homes and retirement villages and enjoys the experience.

Keep up the good work, Aub, and hope to see you on ANZAC Day. Our best wishes to Nancy.

LES BRITT 2/1, Edmonton Qld., with a cheque for the News and his best wishes. Certainly won't get writer's cramp with that letter, Les, but our thanks for the donation to funds.

LEXIE COATES, Umina, widow of Jack 2/1, with a couple of letters to Max over recent months in connection with photos Jack had sent to us prior to publication of the 2/1st history. She is making up an album on Jack's life and wondered if we still had the photos. These have been sent on to you, Lex, and our thanks for the loan of them. Her best wishes are sent to all members of the Association for the coming year, and we thank you for the donation to funds and the book of stamps enclosed with your letter. Keep well and always good to hear from you.

ALLAN CRUTE 2/1, Woolgoolga, with a cheque enclosed for his subs and the sad news of the passing of his wife Beulah. Max has reported this in his Last Post, Allan, and we were both very sorry to hear of her death. Our friendship goes back over many, many years, and will be sadly missed.

Trust you will be able to stay on in High Street and look after yourself and the garden, and I'm sure Denny and Chris and family will keep a wonderful eye on you.

Many thanks for your donation to funds and best wishes from both of us and your 2/1st friends down south. Keep in touch.

DON CRAWFORD 2/2, Concord, our worthy treasurer, has been in the bowling news again. Noticed in the paper that he had won the Major Singles and, with his partner, was runner-up in the Pairs Championship for Concord Golf Club. Congratulations, Don, couldn't have happened to a nicer fellow. Well done.

BETTY CREASY, Portland, widow of George 2/1, with a cheque for funds, many thanks. She had recently met up with Dave Dixon (former 2/1 Pioneer who now lives at Belmont) while Betty was at a Legacy meeting at Lithgow and Dave was up from Sydney with some friends for the day.

I'm sorry to say my golfing days are over, Bet, although I'm still on the social committee for charity days. My back problems caught up with me at last – and old age. Find it hard to keep up with the gardening at times.

All the best to you and the family. Hope to meet up again one of these days.

RON CROSS 2/1, Ballina, has just returned after spending three months in Japan with his son and family and had a very enjoyable holiday. There are only about 800 people on the island of Loko where his son lives and Ron has made

some very good friends on his visits. He hopes to spend next Christmas on another trip.

Thanks for the sub, Ron, and hope to see you in September at the Lismore reunion.

TOM CROSSMAN 2/1, St. Ives, with a letter which was too late for the November issue. He also enclosed a very good photo of the 2/1st marker on the campsite at Wondecla. Many thanks, Tom, and as you will have read from the November issue of the Pioneer News, Max and I must have been in the Tablelands area around the same time as you were also there. What a pity you could not have been there for the plaque unveiling in August.

After so many years, Max also found it hard to recognise some of the camp sites – says they seemed to him to be on the wrong sides of the highway. Still, it was a long time ago, and brought back a lot of memories.

NORMA FITCH, Calwell A.C.T., widow of Harold 2/1, with Christmas greetings and her thanks for the Pioneer News which is sent to her regularly. She misses her years in Sydney and likes to keep up with the news. Many thanks for your donation to funds, Norma, and all the best for the coming year.

BILL FLEMING 2/1, Mittagong, with a cheque for the treasurer – but no news. Your sub gratefully received, Bill, but how about some news next time from your part of the country.

GRACE FOWKES, Wentworthville, widow of "Snowy" 2/1, with her best wishes to all Pioneers for the year 2002 and her thanks for the News which she much appreciates. Thank you, Grace, and for your donation to funds. All the best, keep well.

AVELINE GAMBLE, Chermside Qld., widow of Bill 2/1, with a letter to Max which arrived too late for inclusion in the November issue of the News. Aveline had recently come across a small note pad belonging to Bill with personal records of 13 Platoon, C Coy, and looking for a "new home" for them had written to Max for his advice. Your suggestion that Ray Law would probably appreciate the keepsake was a good one, especially with the closeness Bill had with Jim Law, his father.

Thank you, Aveline, for the moments of your trip to the Canungra Jungle Warfare Centre, now Kokoda Barracks. Max photocopied it and has given copies to a few Pioneers who attended courses there. Also thanks for your donation to Association funds, and we wish you all the best for the coming year.

STAN GAVIN 2/2, Greystanes, with a cheque enclosed for the News and his best wishes to all Pioneers for the coming year. Enjoys reading the newsletter and catching up with news of old mates.

BETTY GAYDEN, Shoalhaven Heads, widow of Lance 2/1, with a card of greetings for Christmas and a donation to funds. Since her card arrived informing us Lance had been in a nursing home at Bombaderry for the last 12 months following a stroke, he has recently passed away and Max has included this sad news in his Last Post.

We presume you still wish to receive copies of the News, Betty, and will continue to post them to you until we hear from you to the contrary. Our sincere sympathy in your sad loss and thank you for your card and subscription.

CLIVE HARRIS 2/1, Aberdeen, with greetings to all for the coming year. Says he is still plodding along and doesn't go far from home these days. All the best to you, Clive, keep well.

MERCIA HEALEY, Keysborough Vic., widow of Leo 2/1, with a change of address and Xmas wishes. Her youngest son, Gerrard, was married 10 days after Leo's death and moved into a new home, so Mercia has moved into their unit – much more modern and closer to the rest of the family. Good move, and not nearly so much to look after. Our best wishes to you and the News will be sent to your new address.

JACK HEARN 2/2, Howlong, per pen of good wife Audrey, with a note to Max with thanks for the write up in last Pioneer News and for the photos of the unveiling of our plaque at Rocky Creek. Les Tunks 2/1 had sent Jack lots of photos which were very much appreciated. Our best wishes to you both and hope you will keep in touch.

ELAINE HENDERSON, Epping, niece of Ron Clark 2/1, with special greetings to all Pioneers for the New Year and a donation to the News. Many thanks, Elaine, for keep in touch and wishing you all the best for 2002.

PAM HERRICK, Sutherland, daughter of the late George Bates 2/1, with a long letter of her "doings" over the last 12 months. Has been very busy working at Sutherland Hospital and voluntary work at Calvary Hospital – which she has found very rewarding.

Her mother, Dorothy Bates, is still in John Paul Village nursing home in Heathcote and doing well with the aid of their wonderful staff. Mum recently had a 4-day holiday at Port Stephens with some of the nursing home residents and loved being away. Good to hear she is doing so well.

Pam's son, Damian, was married in December to Cassandra, in Berrima, and flew to North Carolina in U.S.A., where Damian now teaches in a Special Education school. Eldest daughter, Karen, and husband Tom came home from the Philippines with family for the wedding and stayed until the New Year. They are both teachers. Second daughter, Tracey, and Sam were also home for the wedding. They live in Brisbane where Tracey is also a teacher, and Sam studying Marine Biological Science at Uni. How lucky to have them all having the same school holidays each year, Pam, and lots of interesting places for you to visit too.

Our love and best wishes to you and to Dorothy and look forward to seeing you around ANZAC Day.

BILL JOLLIE 2/1, Castle Hill, with a card of greeting for Christmas and his best wishes to all for the coming year. Yes, it was a wonderful trip to Nth. Queensland, Bill, just a pity it is so far away. I'm sure most of our readers would love to be able to go back in time to those months they spent on the Tablelands before going off to Borneo. Hope you are keeping well and perhaps, may see you ANZAC Day. All the best.

JACK KEMPNIH 2/1, Fingal Bay, with special wishes to all for the Festive Season – as usual per pen of good wife Mais. Thank you for your personal wishes to Max and I on our efforts on behalf of the Association, they were very much appreciated, and we hope to be able to carry on, health permitting of course. None of us are getting any younger and the old brains don't work as well as they used to. Hope both are well and perhaps may see you in Lismore in September.

LYNN KRUGER, Castlemaine Vic, widow of Ron 2/1, with a letter of apology for not informing us earlier that Ron had passed away with a heart attack early in 2000.

Ron enjoyed reading the News and catching up with doings of old mates he remembered from the battalion. He would often talk about different ones after seeing their name in the latest issue. Ron did keep in touch with Gerry Collins until he also passed away.

Thank you for your donation to funds and the News will be sent to you for as long as you wish to receive it.

JOYCE LAW, Kareela, widow of Max 2/1, with her greetings to all Pioneers and wishing all lots of good health in the coming year. She was very interested in reading of our visit to the Tablelands last August for the unveiling of the Pioneer plaque and said it must have brought back a lot of memories to Max and all that has happened then and since. Certainly did, Joyce, and he was so glad he was able to make the trip.

Joyce was saddened to read of the passing of our old friend Jack Griffiths and her thoughts were with his family in their sad loss.

Trust your foot problem has improved, Joyce, and that Karen has fully recovered from her operation. Look forward to seeing you, we hope, for ANZAC Day. Will be in touch. Love and best wishes.

ERN LUNN 2/2, Dubbo, with greetings to all for the New Year from he and Norma. Mentions he marched with 6th M.G. Battalion on ANZAC Day to help swell the numbers – made it up to 12. Quite a few sons made the numbers a bit better. Hope to see you in Sydney this year marching with 2/2nds. They have been given permission by the RSL to march behind the 2/1sts, with their own banner and march leaders.

Do hope Norma is keeping well and that you will be well enough to make Lismore for the reunion in September. Kindest regards to you both.

OWEN MILLS, ex-7th Div. Sigs, Springwood, with a long newsy bulletin and greetings for Christmas to all Pioneers. Growing up in Maclean and with many of our former Pioneers as school mates, Owen has continued to keep in touch over

many years. While in Maclean recently, he took a walk around the local lawn cemetery had said it was a sobering thought to look down on the graves of ex-Pioneers with whom we shared a life together, and paid his respects.

He and Molly have had a fairly good year healthwise, thanks to the medicos who look after them, although Molly had a slight stroke in May last and is expected to make a complete recovery. Hope the cataract surgery went well in December, Molly, and you can be off on your travels again. I'm sure Owen won't be happy until he gets another caravan and takes off once more. Hope you both continue to enjoy the best of health this year, kindest regards.

Many thanks for the donation to funds, Owen, and good to hear of your "doings" over the year.

JOYCE MCGREGOR, Bradbury, widow of Bob 2/1, with Xmas greetings to all and says she still reads the News with great interest. Doesn't recognise many of the names mentioned these days, as so many she remembered have all passed on – now only happy memories. Love and best wishes to you and the family, Joyce, and lots of good health and happiness in the coming year.

JEAN MCINTYRE, Springwood, widow of John 2/2, with a change of address from Warrimoo and a cheque for the treasurer. Jean has sold her home and bought a unit in Springwood, very handy and in walking distance of everything. Hope by the time you receive the News you have settled in and enjoying your change of life style, and no way affected by the terrible bush fires that have ravaged the mountain areas.

Trust you have a better year, Jean, after the loss of your two sisters and am sure you will have lots of happy memories of your years growing up together.

Glad to hear you still enjoy the News and your good wishes are passed on to all Pioneers and their families for the coming year. Keep well, and thanks for the cheque.

LEN O'CONNOR 2/1, Wollongbar, also with a change of address and a cheque for the News. Len and wife Alma have sold their house on the Tweed and moved down to be near the grand-children. Len sends news of Doug Turner and Loyal Butcher, both 2/1sts, and reports both are fairly well, still enjoying a bit of fishing and bowling. Not a bad life, Len, hope it may continue. Your best wishes are passed on to all for the coming year and many thanks for the donation to funds. Max has noted your new address.

NEVILLE O'CONNOR 2/2, Ballina, per pen of good wife Betty, with greetings to all for a happy and healthy 2002. Has not been a good year, healthwise, for either Betty or Neville – with several trips to hospital for Betty and an operation for Neville in November. Do hope by now you are both much better and looking forward to a healthier new year.

While up in Bundaberg visiting Betty's daughter in July, two of Betty's grand-children aged nine and six, who live out of Burleigh Heads, went missing in dense rain forest and were not found until the following day. Certainly a worrying time for all concerned and good to hear were O.K. when found.

Hope to see you both again in September for the reunion in Lismore – perhaps may even see Neville for ANZAC Day, health permitting.

ALLAN OLSON 2/2, Letherby, S.A., with greetings from South Australia to fellow Pioneers for the coming year and to advise of the passing of Len Norman and Reg Cranwell, 2/2nds, during the year. Many thanks, Allan, and best wishes to all.

JOHN PAUL 2/1, Camira, Qld., with a long letter to Max apologising for not being in touch with the Association earlier, after making contact with Les Tunks 2/1 of Mareeba during the year. John reports his wife had been hospitalised twice with heart attacks and he had been diagnosed with diabetes and a severe attack of gout – says he never thought the day would come when he had to drink Diet Coke instead of XXXX. Hope by now things have improved in the Paul household and you will keep in touch. Many thanks for your donation to funds and that after so many years you have been able to make contact with the Association. All the best.

PETER PEILE 2/1, Caringbah, per pen of ever faithful Erika, with cheque for the Association and their best wishes to all Pioneers for the new year.

Do hope Peter's health has improved, Erika, since you wrote in December and that the ray

treatment has improved his condition. He has certainly had his fair share of problems.

Good to see he can still potter in the garden and can go on some of the local RSL outings, health permitting and I'm sure you will enjoy the outing to the Kokoda Track Walkway if you are able to make it in April. It is well worth a visit and is being improved with lots of trees and shrub plantings. Quite a lot of clubs make it a day's outing for their members.

Thank you for the donation and best wishes to you both. Glad to see you were able to enjoy your 80th birthday with your family Peter and that you have now joined that exclusive O.B.E. Club. Certainly have plenty of mates. How time marches on.

JACK PURCELL 2/1, Coffs Harbour, with a generous donation to funds and the news that he is still in the land of the living. Says at 83, like most Pioneers, has had his share of ups and downs, but keeps going and sometimes it is hard to believe where the years have gone.

Jack sends his best regards to all and his thanks to the folk who keep the Association and the Pioneer News going. Says it is very much appreciated. Thank you for your kind remarks, and your donation.

JOY PREEDY, Shenton Park, W.A., widow of Len 2/2, with a call at Christmas to wish all Pioneers the very best for the coming year. Since Len passed away, Joy has had health problems of her own resulting in the loss of a portion of her leg. She has been able to stay in her own home with some alterations to her house and with the aid of an electric chair. Her family occupy the main part of the house, so are always close by. She misses the contact with the Pioneer group Len had formed in W.A., but was unable to carry on under the circumstances. We send you our best wishes, Joy, and it was good to hear from you. Do keep in touch.

MONA REINERS, Corryong, Vic., widow of Bern 2/1, with a long family letter and it was good to catch up with the news from your part of the country. How the families are growing up, Mona, doesn't seem so long ago since we enjoyed all those wonderful holidays together. How time marches on, and what a lot of memories.

She did enjoy reading in the News of our trip to Cairns and the Tablelands and passed it on to an old friend of Berns who had been in army camps up in the area. I'm sure it would have brought back a lot of old memories to him. What a long drive from Corryong, no wonder he wasn't the best when he arrived home.

Do hope you had a lovely Christmas with Lex and family and that Brian and Barb had a great trip to Mandy in the West. The young ones sure spread their wings these days, don't they, it's hard to realise they are now at Uni and holidaying overseas.

We did appreciate your nice remarks on the "News", Mon, and will endeavour to keep up the good work. This is only possible on account of the letters we receive – if our readers didn't take the trouble to write and send their donations to keep the Association afloat, we would be out of a job.

Our love to you and all the best from the Kerslakes. Hope to be able to visit one day soon. Many thanks for the stamps enclosed.

CHARLES RICHARDSON 2/2, Manly West Qld., with his thanks for the latest copy of the News and a welcome donation to funds. He mentioned that he had seen John Paul's letter in the Queensland RSL paper, but although he rang him he wasn't much help as John had joined the 2/1sts after Charles had transferred to the 2/2nds. However, was able to contact Matthew Elliston regarding his grandfather, Phil, as both served together in the C.M.F. and the 2/1 Pioneers. Matthew had promised to call on Charles when he returned from his honeymoon. I'm sure Matthew will be glad to hear from you in regard to news of his grandfather.

Looking back over the years, Charles, I guess you could not foresee that the Association would still be in existence so many years after it's formation, in which you played a major role in those far off days. Members of both 2/1 and 2/2 have worked well together, especially as quite a few served in both units and that about 50% of the reformed 2/2nds were NX numbers. Best wishes and good health.

REBECCA SOYA, Alexandra Heights, W.A., daughter of Keith Prosser 2/1, with her thanks to Max for including her dad in the last newsletter and putting him on the mailing list for future copies. He has written you, Rebecca, on the details of the information you wanted and hopes it will be possible to send you dad to Sydney for ANZAC Day.

I'm sure it would have brought back many memories of his old unit when he read the history of the 2/1sts, kindly loaned by Alf Bentley.

Thank you for your letter and best wishes to your dad for the coming year.

HARRY SPREADBROUGH 2/1, Alexandra Hills, Qld., with a letter written as soon as he received the last newsletter. Even surprised himself, with such a quick reply. Good to hear from you Harry, and to know both you and Jean are still battling on.

Trust you have received the photo of the Imita Ridge plaque Max sent you Harry and it's a pity you are too far away to enjoy the Kokoda Track Walkway. Is quite a show piece and well visited by lots of visitors.

Harry mentions that the Victoria Point Primary School established and dedicated a monumental garden in their grounds dedicated to the Rats of Tobruk and the opening was quite a memorable occasion. It's good to see the young generation are reminded of Australia's past history and the men and women who helped to keep us a free country.

Our best wishes to you both and many thanks, Harry, for your donation to funds.

DUDLEY STANFORTH 2/2, West Wyalong, with a cheque and the news that he has not been in the best of health but is hoping to go up north for a month's holiday in August. Should have made it September, and attended the Lismore reunion. Hope you are feeling better and many thanks for your best wishes to your old mates of the unit.

GWEN STRODE, Yagoona, sister of the late Keith Jones, 2/1, with her best wishes to all Pioneers for the coming year and lots of good health. Certainly need that at our time of life, Gwen, and many thanks for your donation to funds.

BILL THIELE 2/1, Port Hughes, S.A., once again per pen of wife Betty, and we hope Bill has recovered from his "fight" with a neighbour's fence resulting in a trip to hospital with a nasty wound to his leg. Doing a good deed putting out a neighbour's garbage bin, Bill walked into a low, feature fence – and a hurried trip to hospital. No wonder he says he's allergic to rubbish bins.

In September, he and Betty had been on a five day whale watching coach trip to the eastern side of the Nullabor and says it is a sight that will stay with them both forever.

Bill keeps in touch occasionally with Doug Waters 2/1 and Allen Olson 2/2 and they were both well at last report.

All the best to you both and thank you Betty for continuing to write on Bill's behalf.

CATHE TRETHERWIE, Highfields, Qld., daughter of the late Charlie Kerr 2/1, with a welcome donation to funds and a change of address. She and husband Colin still enjoy reading the News and now their two sons 13 and 16 often look through it too. They read with interest the article on the 2,000 steps cut into the mountain at Imita Ridge.

Good to hear news of you again, Cathe, and our best wishes and thanks for the donation.

LES TUNKS 2/1, Mareeba, with a letter enclosing cuttings from local newspapers about signposting at Rocky Creek where the 2/2 A.G.H. stood and a dedication ceremony which was to take place. About 60,000 soldiers were treated at both 2/2 and 2/6 A.G.H. during the war and the site was the largest military hospital complex in the Southern Hemisphere.

Hope Lesley has recovered from her nose problem, Les, and your broken ribs coming good. Sounds very much if you had a boxing match together.

Thanks for the letters and the cuttings and hurry up and get well. Our best wishes to you both.

DICK WAKELY 2/2, Waratah, with his best wishes to all Pioneers and his donation to funds enclosed in his letter. Says he is always delighted to get the News and grateful to those who take the time and effort to keep members in touch with their fellow Pioneers. Many thanks, Dick, and all the best for the coming year.

BERT WOODHOUSE 2/1, Karridale, W.A., together with Harry Cable 2/1, were in Brisbane recently on an organised holiday tour operating from the Koala Resort in Brisbane. They had flown over from the West and hoped to visit their old mate Len O'Connor 2/1. Trust you had a great holiday and thanks for the call, it was good to hear from you.

JOHN HAYDEN 2/1, Orange, once again per pen of good wife Wyn, with the good news that John will be down in Sydney for ANZAC Day and looking forward to once again seeing his old mates. He hopes Bill Jollie will be well enough to make the reunion. Wyn had a trip to hospital and has been waiting on new glasses. Best wishes to you both and look forward to seeing you in Sydney for ANZAC Day.

In concluding this issue of Mail Bag, I would like to wish my dear friends Mary Lloyd and Joyce Walker lots of good health in the coming weeks. Both have been slow in picking up after operations and my thoughts are with them. Hurry up and get well.

LAST POST

ALLAN JENSON 2/1 of Rydalmere passed away on 30th October after a long stay in a nursing home. The funeral was attended by Bill Tasker who extended to wife Joan and her family our sincere sympathy. In reply we received from Joan a thank you card.

JIM GRAY 2/1 passed away on 16th November after a long stay in Woonoona Nursing Home, following a stroke three years ago. Jim was a staunch Committee member and seldom missed a meeting.

The funeral on 20th November saw an attendance of fifty family and friends and sincere sympathy was extended to daughter Kath by George Walker and Ken Oliver who represented the Association.

LESLIE (SNOW) PATTERSON 2/1 of Port Macquarie passed away in November and the funeral service took place at St Thomas' Church Port Macquarie on 24th November.

Les firstly served in the 5th Aust Infantry Brigade in Sydney and Western Australia where he transferred to the AIF in 1942. After training in Nth Queensland the unit was broken up in 1944 and he joined the 2/1 Pioneer Battalion, sailing to Moratai and then Balikpapan in mid 1945.

Eulogies read at his funeral service told of his commitment to family and the various communities in which he lived. We are grateful to his son Rex of Port Macquarie for supplying all the details.

BEULAH CRUTE of Woolgoolga and wife of Allan 2/1 passed away on 15th December after twelve months treatment for cancer.

Over the years Beulah had been one of our best letter writers. She always spoke of her busy life, as at one stage she was a Cub Leader of the local Scout group. She also wrote of her son Denny and his family and devoted a lot of time to visiting them.

Beulah was a close friend of the Herrons, who, on their trips up North, would regularly call and visit Beulah and Allan, which always ended up with a sing-song around the piano with Beulah playing. She was a very keen gardener and had a bush house full of exotic plants.

Sincere sympathy has been extended to Allan and his family and we are also grateful to Doug Shearston, who served in the 2/1 Signals platoon with Allan and Max, for keeping us posted with the progress of Beulah over the past twelve months.

LANCE GAYDEN 2/1 of Shoalhaven Heads passed away on 26th January, aged 78 years, at a Bomaderry Nursing Home where he had been following a stroke twelve months ago.

The funeral on 30th January at Warragee Crematorium was attended by fifty family and friends with the President of Bomaderry RSL

carrying out the Poppy Service. George Walker, representing the Association, extended to wife Betty and family our sincere sympathy.

BILL CHISHOLM 2/1 of North Ryde passed away on 28th January aged 82 years and the funeral service was held at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium on 1st February. Rev. Grant spoke of Bill's private life then called on nephew Tony Cunneen to give the Eulogy on Bill's life in the Army, having served in 15 Platoon "C" Company 2/1st Pioneers.

Tony had interviewed Bill in 1999 so he was able to read extracts from his draft which spoke highly of Bill as a soldier and a "man's man".

North Ryde RSL carried out the Poppy Service and fifteen ex-servicemen came forward and placed their poppy on the coffin alongside the slouch hat.

Sympathy was extended to son Paul, daughter Carol, son-in-law Jim, nephew Tony and the grand-children by Neville Woodham 2/1 who was in the same platoon as Bill and was known to the family.

Other Pioneers in attendance were Jack and Marj Kerslake, Max and Peg Herron and Bill Tasker.

REVEILLE – Deceased: H.B. Aitkin 2/1, D.L. Hooper 2/1, H.L. Martin, Dapto 2/2, W.H. Miller 2/1, Len Norman, SA 2/2, Reg Cranwell SA, 2/2, J. Chalmers 2/1, T. Morgan 2/2, H. Peterson 2/2.

2/1-2/2 LISMORE REUNION

Sat. 14th, Sun. 15th September, 2002.

NSW North Coast Branch invite all Pioneers, wives, friends and adult families to attend their Country Reunion at Lismore and Ballina.

WREATH LAYING – Sat. 14th September.

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

REUNION DINNER – Sat. 14th September.

7.00pm. Smorgasbord Dinner at the Lismore RSL Club, Market Street. Cost \$25 per head. Drinks at own expense.

BARBECUE LUNCH – Sun. 15th September.

12 noon for lunch at the Ballina Ex-Servicemen's Home Complex, 71-73 Norton Street, Ballina. Cost is approx. \$10 per head. Drinks at \$1.50 per can or stubby of beer.

ACCOMMODATION – LISMORE: Olympic Motel Ph 02 6621 9900. Single \$55; Double \$66; 3 persons \$77. Karinga Motel Ph 02 6621 2787 same rates as Olympic. Centrepoint Motel Ph 02 6621 8877 see NRMA travel guide for rates. These three motels are in Molesworth Street, within walking distance to the 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.

TRANSPORT: Planes from Sydney to Lismore and Ballina daily. Country Link trains from Sydney to Lismore (1) Departs Sydney 7am arrives Lismore 7pm same day. (2) Departs Sydney 4pm, arrives Lismore 4am next morning. Train travellers will be met at station and taken to motel. Plane travellers to Lismore will be met, if notified to Ken Wilson. Ballina travellers to arrange own transport.

DEPOSIT OF \$10 per head is required with application form below to reach Ken Wilson before 7th September 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 to: KEN WILSON, 9 ROSEDALE SQUARE, LISMORE, NSW 2480. PHONE 02 6621 4762.

LISMORE REUNION - Fill in particulars: CUT OUT

14th, 15th September 2002

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

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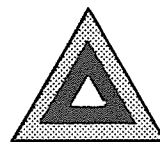
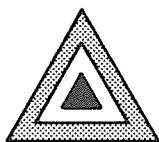
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Welfare: BILL TASKER, Phone 9718 6658



2/1-2/2 PIONEER ANZAC ACTIVITIES

WREATH LAYING SERVICE

This very important and solemn service was held on 24th April at the Martin Place Cenotaph with an attendance of twenty two Pioneers and ten ladies. The members were marshalled by Bill Tasker with Allan McInnes as leader and Ron Webster with 2/1 banner and Jack McDonagh with 2/2 banner. Wreaths were laid by Steve Clark for the Association and Robyn Bell for ladies.

ANZAC DAY MARCH

The 2002 Anzac Day was notable in that for the first time, the 2/2 Pioneers marched behind the 2/1st in the official order of march. This arrangement is an indication of the close ties which have developed from amalgamation of the two units since the Association was formed fifty six years ago.

A further notable feature was that Channel 10 TV had arranged to spend the day with the 2/1 and 2/2 in order to produce a feature to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Kokoda Track campaign for their evening news. Despite some discreet combing of hair and straightening of ties, the eventual product featured 96-year-old, Bill Robertson, with the fountain of all knowledge, Max Herron, and a few well-chosen words from Bill Tasker. This was shown in the Channel's 5.00pm news, and was a great hit with our members, despite some poetic licence with some of the facts. For example, the 2/2 will not relinquish Bill Robertson, although Channel 10 showed him as 2/1 Pioneers. (Bill served with the 2/1sts from 1940-1942 including the siege of Tobruk, before transferring to the 2/2nds.)

In the meantime, Treasurer Don Crawford collected subs from 2/1st members, and Gavin Todd did likewise for the 2/2nd. The march proceeded after some delay, in typically autumn weather. John Gilchrist and Stan Goulston led the 2/1 with Tim Lloyd and Ray Law taking on the onerous task of banner and flag bearers. For the 2/2 these tasks were the purview of Mark Neasbey and John Collins who showed the way for Allan McInnes.

As the sun warmed the march towards the end, there was some unease as to Allan's staying power. After all, the much younger Bruce Ruxton had to take time off in Melbourne. But Allan would have none of that nonsense, and carried on to the finish.

Although the 2/2 had hoped to benefit from the City of Sydney Band, we were able to admire their bright colours, but the acoustics of the city were such, that not much joy was derived by the 2/2. Once again, we were in the no-man's band-land with which we have become familiar in the past.

OCCIDENTAL HOTEL REUNION

The conjoining of the two units meant that after the march, all were processed and seated at the Occidental sooner than in the past. As members arrived, they paid their money and got name tags from the working group of Ray Law, David Herron and Geoff Finlay. First drinks of the day were again on Mark Neasbey whose generous gesture was much appreciated by the thirsty marchers.

President, Allan McInnes, welcomed those present, and recited the Ode. He thanked the sons and helpers for their assistance during and after the march. Allan then made reference to the formation of the 2/1-2/2 Association in 1946, by far-sighted members who have all since passed away. He said the Pioneer units had a deserved high reputation, and he recalled an incident when some members of the 2/2 Pioneers were about to rejoin their unit, having flown into Dumpu. A jeep pulled up, and

they were given a lift by a Senior Officer, with a lot of red braid. It was none other than General Vasey, and on being informed they were from a Pioneer Battalion, General George mentioned that in each division the purple and white of the Pioneer Battalion was held in the highest regard.

Allan went on to pay tribute to the hotel staff and management for their continued high quality service, and mentioned that Alan Olson had phoned from Adelaide the previous night with best wishes for a successful day.

Our patron, John Gilchrist, also acknowledged the foresight of the early committee members, and welcomed the 2/2nd as marching partners. John also mentioned that an anonymous benefactor had delivered a bottle of Glenfiddich to his table, and invited anyone to partake. John concluded with a poem, and an English/Scottish/Irish joke, to neither of which we could do justice in the written word. So that, for those who missed out, it is recommended that John be asked for a personal rendition, at the first opportunity.

Another speaker was 2/1st Pioneer from Orange, John Hayden, who explained that he had been the Marshal for marches at Orange for the past 26 years. Now that he had retired from that duty, he looked forward to meeting with old friends more often in the future.

In no particular order, Pioneers from other places were the North Coast contingent, Ken Wilson, Lismore, Nev O'Connor, Ballina, Snowy Dodd and Sam Lewis, both from Forster. Phil Cramsie from Queensland. From Western Australia came Jack Stewart with news that Alf Bentley was absent, having been operated on at a Perth hospital to correct a stroke. Noel Grant came up from Melbourne. Ian Willmore, missed out this year, hopes to make it next year.

Around the tables were quite a few sons and relatives. The Neasbey's were well represented, with Bert's sons Greg, Rodney and Mark. Noel Schomberg's grandson, Michael Witney was there, and Wayne Fleming, grandson of Noel Grant with father, Frank Fleming, from Bathurst. Also Tim Lloyd, George Granger, Ray Law, David Herron and Geoff Finlay. Bill Tasker's son John was present from Canberra.

Still on the sons and others, Gary Lewis, son of Sam, with Chris Lewis (grandson). Gary and Brian Hemmings, son of George (Snowy) together with the "best" son-in-law, Allan Moore. Andy Beebar was with son Andrew. Wait! there's more. Peter Gilchrist, son of John. Adam McInnes, son of Allan, and John Hayden Jnr. son of John, Ian Secombe, son of Cliff, Jim Fleming, son of Bill, Rob Stubbs, son-in-law of Noel Schomberg; and that's not all. John Dawson was there with his brother Phillip and father Ross (Smoky) Dawson.

The Collins boys were there, John and Gordon, sons of Pat Collins. Which reminds me of the time Pat took leave while at Kapooka in September, 1942, to get married. That was nearly 60 years ago, so the Collins' have a big wedding anniversary coming up this year. Steve Clark was wearing an even bigger smile than usual. This was due to daughter Julie, and her husband Doug McWilliam coming from Griffith especially to see the march – the first time they have been able to get away.

It seemed no time at all before the minders and drivers began to arrive, signalling the end of yet another memorable day. The efforts of the Committee, and the many helpers, who are responsible for the successful organisation, are very much appreciated by all those who attended.

– Reported by Bill Lewis

ANZAC DAY – BY A KIWI

The following abridged article is from "Music Matters", the magazine of the Castle Hill RSL Youth Band, written by one of their members.

"As a former Kiwi I was honoured to carry the Australian standard for the Youth Band in today's ANZAC march and I was awestruck to witness first hand the national fervour that enables Australia to retain its place as one of the premier countries of the world.

When the Youth Band swung out of Martin Place into George Street, enabling me to see crowds five or six deep on either side of the roadway, with the latecomers squeezed onto any vantage point they could; allowing me to see a sea of waving Australian flags permitting me to witness old timers singing, until their lungs protested, the lyrics of the tunes the Youth Band were playing; letting me see over a quarter of a million people gathering to commemorate the sacrifices, courage and bravery that Australians had shown in world conflicts; it was this that showed me why the Australians are consistently winning.

I was thrilled to be asked to carry the standard today. I was conscious that better qualified people were watching from the sidelines. I mitigated my discomfort in that, by reminding myself that I stood for the NZ of ANZAC.

I shall remember today in many ways the cheering throng; the patriotism, marching behind musicians who appear to have been born with rhythm in their veins; the patience and "g'day mate" attitudes that pervaded the central city streets and teeming with people. I am truly thankful to be allowed to commemorate this sacred day with you." – ALAN COLEMAN

LT. COL. ARNOLD BROWN

It was with great pleasure that members welcomed Mary Burnham, daughter of the late Lt. Colonel Brown, D.S.O., O.B.E., M.C., who was Commanding Officer of the 2/1st 1941-1943 to her first Anzac Day march this year.

In her letter to the Secretary in May, Mary stated she must have been one of the proudest marchers on the day. Marching behind her "Bindi" Moane remarked that she kept step all the way and did not miss a beat.

According to Mary, the Colonel was very proud of "his boys" and often related stories of their doings, such as the large intake of lads from Kyogle who were pretty wild but really good soldiers.

Mary also related that when the 2/1 were in that terrible quarry in New Guinea for an extended period, working in shifts and were fatigued, the Colonel flew to Sydney with the object of obtaining relief for them, so he tried for an appointment with General Blamey. Because he was not successful he gate crashed a tactical party at the Australia Hotel and saw Blamey who said he would consider the request then followed with the remark "Brown, you will never get promotion".

Mary was most grateful to Vern Humphreys, close friend of the late Vic Whiteley who in a kind gesture presented Mary with his copy of the 2/1 unit history "The Pioneers". She was thrilled to recall the names in the book she remembered so well, such as Jim Raine, John Gilchrist, Charles Richardson and "Lofty" Barlow, who presented the Colonel with his first Rats of Tobruk medal he made. Mary presented this medal to the Rats of Tobruk Association and his other medals to Victoria Barracks museum.

The Secretary wishes to thank Mary for her most interesting letter and for her generous donation to funds and looks forward to seeing her again next year.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

Another ANZAC Day has come and gone and once again we were blessed with great weather and a good roll-up of members and sons and daughters of those who had passed on. It was also good to see both 2/1 and 2/2 marching together – a very impressive sight. It is sad to see so many familiar faces missing in the parade, but time is marching on and none of them are young men anymore. However, our Mail Bag was filled to overflowing this issue, so I must get on with my job to keep the "Boss" happy.

JOYCE ACHURCH, Croydon, widow of Kevin 2/2, with a welcome cheque to funds – many thanks. Joyce is kept busy working voluntarily for Legacy and Anglicare which she says keeps her out of mischief. Sends her best wishes to the Committee and is always pleased to receive the News. Good to hear from you.

FRED ALWAY 2/1, Beaumaris, Victoria, with his thanks for the recent issues of the News which he reads with great interest. Although Fred lives alone, says he is quite contented – gets Meals on Wheels delivered daily and housework regularly attended to so has a lot to be thankful for. Many thanks for your subscription, Fred, and your best wishes passed on to all Pioneers.

DORA ANDERSON, Merimbula, widow of Don 2/1, with her sub for the year, plus a little "bonus". Glad your cataract operation went well and by now you have had the other eye done.

Your trip to Sydney with your Legacy group sounded very interesting and glad you were at last able to see the Rose Garden and the Kokoda Track Memorial. Certainly a wonderful tribute, not only to all those who fought and died on the Track, but to all servicemen and women.

In her latest letter, Dora was thrilled to see the Pioneers on Channel 10 on ANZAC Eve and to see on the news, faces which she had only known by name for so many years – really made her day. She had watched the march from start to finish and saw the Pioneers march by, but to see them all enjoying themselves did her heart good.

Thanks for the donation to funds, Dora, and your best wishes passed on to all.

PHIL BARNETT 2/2 Alstonville, with a short note enclosing his sub and congratulations to all those who do so much to keep the Association afloat. Sends his best to all Pioneers and glad to read Charles Richardson is still in the land of the living.

DON BARRACLOUGH 2/1, Burleigh Heads, with a healthy cheque towards the publication of the News, which he really looks forward to receiving. Don has missed the last two ANZAC reunions and not able to march any more. Your kind remarks to Max and I were very much appreciated and accept our thanks. All the best to you and Mona – keep well.

PETER BARRY 2/2, Floreat Park, W.A., with a generous donation to funds – many thanks. Although not being active in any association, Peter enjoys reading the News and says to keep up the good work. He passes on his congratulations to all on our service and dedication. Kindest regards and best wishes from all Pioneers.

BERT BEATON 2/2, Casterton Vic., with apology for not writing earlier, but says better late than never. He and Olive have just recently sold their property after being on it for 50 years, but will continue to live in the house – just couldn't leave it after all those years. Both have had heart problems but battling on. Bert enclosed a cheque for the treasurer and sends his kindest regards to the Association members. Best wishes to you both and many thanks for the cheque.

GORDON BELL 2/2, Tumburumba, with a short note enclosing his sub to the News and apology for his lateness in sending it on. Says it's good to catch up on the news of some of his mates in the 2/2nds, and sends best wishes to all.

ARTHUR BENNETT 2/1, Pendle Hill, with his cheque towards the News and his thanks for enrolling him as a member of the Assoc. Says he was 84 in April and still battling on. Best wishes, Arthur, and thanks for your cheque. Keep well.

DICK BLAKENEY 2/1, Narrabeen, with his best wishes for a successful march and reunion

lunch on ANZAC Day and a cheque enclosed to help with the News. Has been passed onto worthy treasurer, Dick, and many thanks for same and your best wishes.

MAVIS BLANCH, Beaudesert Qld, widow of Joe 2/1 with her usual long, newsy letter and a cheque for the News. Many thanks. With all your "gadding about", Mavis, it's a wonder you have time for writing letters. Your latest trip to the Blue Mountains with Kirklands sounded great and we hope you really enjoyed it – certainly covered some territory and plenty to see and do.

Pleased to hear Gloria Gray is well and thank her for passing on the news that Val Black (wife of the late Alwyn "Dora" Black 2/1) had passed away recently. We had not heard news of Val for many years.

Hopefully we may see you at the Lismore reunion if Lola's health permits. Her latest grandchild must have been a godsend for her in these troubled times and hope all continues to go well for her with latest chemo. Love and best wishes from your friends in the South.

EVELYN BOOTH, Wagga, friend of the late Jack Morgan 2/2, with a note to say she still looks forward to the News and enclosed a donation to make sure she stays on the mailing list. Good to hear your eyes have been done, Ev, and hope you enjoy your trip to the "Top End" in June. All the best and good to hear from you once more. Take care.

SID BOOTH 2/2, Minyama, Qld, with his sub for the News and some very kind words to the editorial staff. Many thanks, Sid, will try and keep up the good work. In regard to your query re Charles Richardson 2/2, he does live in Queensland at Manly West, not in Sydney, and has lived in Qld for many years.

Although a member of Maroochydhore RSL, Sid has not met any Pioneers, but can assure you there are lots around the border towns all trying to escape the cold weather down south.

Best wishes to Jean and yourself and your kindest regards are passed on to Allan McInnes, who is still soldiering on.

KAY BURTON, Springwood, daughter of the late Bert Burton 2/1 of Kyogle, with a welcome letter and a donation to funds. Kay says her mum, Margaret, still lives alone in Kyogle and occasionally sees Flo and Jack Shearman 2/1. Margaret is in phone contact on a weekly basis with Min Leis (widow of Joe 2/1) who lives in Casino. Although Margaret's eyesight is poor and she can no longer write, her health otherwise is quite good. Thanks for the sub Kay and for the news of your mother.

COLIN CAMERON 2/1, Campbelltown., with sub kindly forwarded by his daughter, Sandra Grainger each year. Colin sends his regards to all 2/1 Pioneers and wishes them good health in the coming year.

GORDON CHRYSTALL 2/1, Larras Lee, per his good wife Eunice, enclosing sub for the News. Gordon is still driving his truck and keeping very busy, but at 78 this year Eunice says he'll have to retire one day soon. Most of the 2/1sts have already reached their eighties, so he still has a few years left to catch up.

Thanks for the donation to funds and glad to see Gordon still looks forward to receiving his News. Best wishes to you both.

VERA COOK, Randwick, widow of Clem 2/1, with a nice letter enclosing some books of stamps to help with our postage. Many thanks, Vera, and always appreciated. She was so pleased to see mention of the 2/1sts on the TV on ANZAC night and that the march was such a success and the weather perfect for the "big day". It's great that these old soldiers can still meet in friendship after so many years. All the best to you, Vera, and nice to hear from you. Keep well.

BILL CUNNEEN 2/2, Burleigh Waters, Qld., with the sad news that he had suffered a stroke since we last met in Lismore and has lost the use of his left side. Sorry to hear the news, Bill, and that you and Beris will not be able to make the reunion in Lismore in September. Time is marching on and ill-health fast catching up with us all. Your good friend Roy Levy 2/2 is in hospital at the moment after having his leg amputated below the knee some weeks ago, so is also doing it tough at the moment.

Our best wishes to you and I'm sure Beris is keeping a close eye on you with lots of t.l.c. Many thanks for the sub and I hope you continue to show some signs of improvement. Love to Beris.

ROSS DAWSON 2/2, Bayview, with a change

of address and a welcome donation to funds. He and Sue have moved to a retirement village and have had a busy year including a trip to the West on the Indian Pacific. En route to W.A. were able to meet up with Joe Robertson and Russ and Rona Harrison at Adelaide railway station where they had a great yarn.

Ross had a full knee replacement in December, is walking well and looking forward to the march on ANZAC Day with his two sons John and Phillip. Good to see you were able to make it Ross and enjoyed your day.

ALBY DEAN 2/1, Shepparton, Vic., enclosing a cheque with his letter and reporting that ANZAC services in his part of the country were attended by record crowds this year and seems to be the general trend all over the country. Their local Sub-Branch had the official opening of new extensions to the Club in March and as Alby was a foundation member he and his wife were invited to attend the official dinner. The extensions are very impressive and doubles the size of the Club. Your good wishes are passed on to all our members, and many thanks for the sub.

JOYCE DENNY, Lismore, widow of Dave 2/1, with a sub enclosed with her letter. Many thanks. They are all looking forward to their Branch reunion in September and hoping for a good roll-up. However, time is catching up with a lot of the regular attenders and no one likes to book too far ahead. I have been on the sick list myself for a couple of months with severe anaemia caused through kidney problems and only just starting to pick up – has been a long, slow process. Hopefully will be well enough to make the trip in September.

Joyce reports Lismore has a lovely new cenotaph, all done in black marble and everyone is very proud of it. They had good weather for ANZAC Day with big attendances at both services.

All going well, look forward to seeing you in September, both send our best wishes.

E. T. DUNSTAN 2/2, Euduna, S.A., with a few lines enclosing his sub to the News. Thank you for same and next letter could you please let us know your christian name for our records.

WINN DWYER, Waverley, widow of Mick 2/1, with a donation to funds and the news that she had recently had lunch with Joyce Law and Rita Trefoni and says it was good to catch up with them both. Winn keeps in touch with Frank Gillian (2/1) and his wife Beryl, and says Frank's health has not been the best of late. Nice to hear from you, Winn, and thanks for the sub.

BILLIE DYNON, Toronto, widow of Frank 2/1, with his sub for the News and says she still enjoys reading the doings of the men of the unit. She is looking forward to seeing the Pioneers march on ANZAC Day. Thanks, Billie, and hope you are keeping well.

ANDY ELLISTON, Narooma, son of the late Phil 2/1, with a note of thanks for Max sending him copies of the News. Thank you for the news of 2/1 Ossie McCurtayne, Phil, as he is no longer on our mailing list – perhaps you may care to send his address. Ossie has moved to Hobart to be closer to his family, as his wife is in a nursing home. He is now 90 years of age and still driving. Our best wishes to him when you talk to him next. Thank you for your donation to funds and kind regards.

JOHN FLOOD 2/1, Penrith, with a change of address to an Aged Care Centre where he will spend the rest of his days. Good to see you are able to pen a few lines yourself, John, and thanks for the sub. He sends his best wishes to all for a great ANZAC Day – hope you were able to see the old unit marching proudly behind their banner, and the Channel 10 broadcast at the start of the march and reunion.

GEORGE GRANGER, Kandos, son of the late Bill 2/1, with a note enclosing a welcome donation to funds on behalf of his wife Jill and himself. Is looking forward to ANZAC Day and being able to march with his dad's old unit. Our best wishes to mum and hope she is still keeping well. Thanks for the sub.

BRIAN GUHL 2/1, Floreat, W.A., with a very short note enclosing his sub and greetings from the West. Our thanks, Brian, how about some news from your part of the country next time. All the best.

BEAU HANNAFORD 2/1, Umina, with a donation to funds and his apologies for once again being unable to attend the reunion on ANZAC Day due to physical disabilities. He

sends his best wishes to all for a great day and says he looks forward to receiving the Pioneer News. Thanks for the sub, Beau, and trust your health may show some improvement. Maybe next year.

RUSS HARRISON 2/2, Stirling, S.A., with good wishes from both Rona and himself for ANZAC Day. They are looking forward to their "big day" but, sadly, running out of Pioneers in their state. All the best to you both and thanks for the sub.

JOHN HAYDEN 2/1, Orange, a note, as usual, per pen of dear wife Wyn, and so glad John was able to at last be in Sydney for ANZAC Day, I believe both father and son, John Jnr, had a good day and were able to meet up with old mates at the reunion. Unfortunately, was not able to catch up with either as I wasn't well – did not make the wreath laying for the first time ever – and only by my daughter-in-law taking a chair was able to see a little of the march. Did make the ladies luncheon but very late to the Occidental and by then your menfolk had gone. I was glad to get home. Did hear you were able to see Bill Jollie the next day before you left for home.

Hope your skin problem has made some progress, Wyn, and that you are feeling a lot better. Perhaps we may have better luck next year – sorry I did not get to even talk to you on the phone.

Our warmest wishes to you both and hope John enjoyed the day with his old friends. Take care.

CHARLIE HENRY 2/2, Bodalla, with a short note enclosing his subs for the News and says all in his part of the country are well. He passed on the news that Roy Stubbs 2/2 had died recently in Moruya. Our thanks for the donation, Charlie.

IAN HODGE 2/1, Evans Head, sends best wishes with his donations to funds, but no news as he has had no contact with anyone from the Association for years. His health is good after a serious operation and says only family matters will get him down to the city.

JOAN JENSON, Rydalmere, widow of Allan 2/1, with thanks for the Pioneer News over the years and to the Committee for the job they do in keeping the Association afloat. Joan asked to be taken off the mailing list, but will always hold fond memories of the Association. Thank you for the donation, Joan, and our best wishes to you and family.

HAZEL JOHNS, Villawood, widow of George 2/1, with a generous donation to funds and her apologies for the delay in sending same – her pet aversion is writing letters. Hazel says age has caught up with her and her health is not the best, but she still lives on her own and copes with jobs around the house. She is lucky to have a grandson who is always willing to help with jobs she cannot cope with – except weeding the garden – but says that is good for her waistline.

Your good wishes are passed on to all and many thanks for the donation to funds.

BILL JOLLIE 2/1, Castle Hill, with his apologies for non-attendance at the march or reunion on ANZAC Day owing to health problems. However, his daughter was taking him to the service at the Kokoda Rose Garden, on the 24th. Sorry you could not make it, Bill, but our thanks for the generous donation and good wishes.

JACK KEMPNIH 2/1, Fingal Bay, a long letter per pen of good wife Maisie, with the news that Jack wasn't the best after a bout of viral pneumonia. Trust the small stouts may have helped the appetite to improve, Jack, and that you are feeling and looking much better. Perhaps given a few months, you may be able to make the Lismore reunion after all.

Age is catching up with us and long trips with bad knees and hips can be a bit daunting.

Good to hear you had the company of Vi Flynn and Noel Schomberg over the holiday season again and I'm sure Jack would have enjoyed their visits. We meet up with them at different times during the year, and Vi's knees weren't the best on the last occasion.

It would be a shame if you have to give up the house, but I guess there comes a time when you can no longer manage. Perhaps some outside assistance might be the best option, so many of the Pioneers have managed to stay in their own homes with help. At least it does save the trauma of having to pack up and move.

Hope you enjoyed the ANZAC Day march this year and the Channel 10 coverage at the start of

the march and the reunion. They had a good day and nice to see a good roll up.

Thanks for all the news, Mais, and do hope you both may be well enough for the trip to Lismore. Our very best wishes to both Jack and yourself.

JUNE KERR, Narrabeen, widow of Ken 2/1, with her sub for the News and her best wishes to all. Age and health problems have caught up with her and she has had many lonely years since Ken passed on in 1976. He would have been 100 this birthday. Have taken your name off the mailing list, June, as requested and hope your health problems improve.

GORDON KILLION, Sigs, RAAF, Ballina, a short note with cheque for the News and says he is still enjoying retirement in Ballina, despite the lack of fish and surf. Sends his kindest regards to all.

ENID LANNAM, Forster, daughter of the late Ron Hay 2/1, enclosing a cheque towards costs associated with the News and a copy of a 2/1st Pioneer plaque she had made in Taree from a drawing we had sent her some time back. He certainly made a good job of it, Enid, and so pleased you were at last able to get it made. Now hangs on what Enid calls her "War Wall" in pride of place with other army photos.

Hope your medical check-up went well and we send you our best wishes and thanks for the sub.

KIM LATHAM, Warriewood, daughter of the late Jack Howie 2/2, with best wishes for ANZAC Day from the Howie "Clan" and says they frequently recall the ritual for the early get-together of frankfurts, cheese and bikkies that her Dad took with him from the old shop on Falcon Street. Fond memories. Kim also extended special thanks to Gavin Todd for passing on such a lovely photo of her Dad taken at Trinity Beach in Qld. when he was training the football team. Many thanks, Kim, can assure you they all had a great day on the 25th and your donation to funds has been passed onto the treasurer.

E. LEE 2/2, Glen Innes (no record of your christian name on our records) with a welcome sub and the news that healthwise he is not doing so well after two major surgeries and unable to get about very much. However, sends his best wishes to all Pioneers and we hope your health continues to improve.

BOB LEHMANN 2/1, Miami, Qld, enclosing a welcome sub for the treasurer to keep the News afloat. He keeps well, but his wife Mavis had a stroke down the right side in July 2000 and cannot walk or talk. Bob still has her home and with the help of son John manages to look after her. A big job, but as he says she looked after them for nearly sixty years. They have a 60th wedding anniversary coming up in May next year and reminded Max and I of our approaching 60th a few weeks prior to that. A good memory, Bob, but I would be interested to hear of "remember ANZAC Day 1943". For the life of me I cannot remember where Max would have been with you then, but by the sound of it you must both have had a "big" day. Max went to Dubbo after we were married for a few weeks, but ANZAC Day 1943 has no memories for me – and of course he doesn't remember.

Bob passed on his best wishes to all ex 2/1sts and was sorry to hear of the passing of Jim Gray – they were pretty good mates and went on leave together quite a few times while in Palestine.

All the best to you Bob from both Max and I, good to hear from you again. Take care.

NANCY LINTON, Tuncurry, widow of Don 2/2, with her congratulations and thanks to all those who keep the Association going and says she is always pleased to see the News arrive. It helps keep her in touch with news of Don's army mates. Nancy also made mention of the valuable assistance given by Legacy, Laurel and War Widows Clubs to those in country areas. Thanks for the donation, Nancy, and hope you are keeping well.

ERNIE LUNN 2/2, Dubbo, with his sub enclosed and the news he had recently had a knee reconstruction so was unable to march on ANZAC Day. He went to the local Dawn Service and then watched the march on TV. Says you don't get much time to pick out faces.

Sorry to hear Norma is not well, but hope by September she may be well enough to make the trip to Lismore for the reunion. I hope so – it would be nice to meet up again. Take care and all the best to you both.

DON MURRAY 2/2, Tinonee, with a short note enclosing his subs for the News and his best wishes to all. He is still able to drive his car, on a restricted licence and is doing his own shopping and loving it – something he was unable to do before. Good for you, Don, hope you continue to keep well.

JACK MCGREGOR 2/2, Shortland, with his thanks for the News and his sub enclosed. Always pleased to get the News and sends his best wishes to all who keep it coming year after year. Trust you and Dot are both keeping well.

ROY MCGREGOR 2/2, Maitland, per pen of wife Marion, a short note enclosing Roy's sub and best wishes to all. Kind regards to you both and thank you Marion for the note on Roy's behalf.

TERRY MCGUIRE 2/1, Lismore, per pen of wife Clair, enclosing a cheque for the News and says they are busy in Lismore organising the coming reunion. Members of 2/1 and 2/2 in the area meet every few months for lunch and catch up with Ron Cross, Alec George, Ken Wilson and others – it's good to get together for a chat.

Terry is recovering from a knee replacement six months ago, so hopes he's finished with surgery for a while. He has played a lot of competition sport in his day so thinks maybe these may have contributed to his troubles. He won three State Championships in bowls, including singles in 1988.

Hoping to meet up again in September and thank you Clair for writing on Terry's behalf.

BOB PHILPOTS 2/2, Woodend, Vic, with a welcome donation for the News, many thanks. Bob was interested to read of Dick Wakely and it brought back good memories of a trip to Sydney in 1967. At the time Dick was Secretary/Manager of the United Services Club in Sydney and he organised a reunion dinner with Jim Drummond, Bill Hood, Allan McInnes and Bob. While having pre-dinner drinks at the bar Brigadier (later Major-General) Sir Ivan Dougherty came up and brought us a round of drinks and enquired after Lt-Col. Joe Lang. Bob's last recollection of Joe Lang was when he visited the battalion at Trinity Beach in 1944. It's surprising how a name can bring back memories of those far off days.

Bob sends his best wishes to all members and a special cheerio to Dick.

JOY PREEDY, Shenton Park, W.A., widow of Len 2/2, with a very welcome letter and cheque for the News. It was great to hear from you, Joy, and hope by now the new prosthesis is working much better. I guess they do take a while to get used to.

As far as I know (from our records) Greg did not make the march on ANZAC Day, but would have been assured of a warm welcome. Perhaps next year. Would be great if your trip to Sydney could coincide with the 25th. Would be lovely to see you again.

Glad to see you are still involved with your Subiaco RSL Auxiliary and are able to meet up with the ladies in your home after the march. However, like most organisations these days the numbers are thinning through age and ill-health.

We did not have Ron Watson 2/1 on our mailing list, Joy, but thanks for sending on the news cutting. Warm wishes from both Max and I, do take care and put that trip to Sydney high on your priority list.

KEITH PROSSER 2/1, Cranbrook, W.A., with a welcome letter and donation to funds. Thanks to the efforts of his daughter, Rebecca, Keith has, after so many years, made contact with his old unit and the 6th Machine Gunners with whom his old mate Ernie Lunn 2/2 also was a former member.

Through our 2/1st history loaned to Keith by Alf Bentley of Yokine, W.A., he has also made contact with Keith (Ken) Bignell with whom he shared a two-man tent near the end of the war. Keith found he has a farm only half an hour drive away – small world. Incidentally, Keith, we don't have Ken Bignell on our mailing list – perhaps he would also be interested in receiving News.

Sorry you were unable to make Sydney for ANZAC Day – he was celebrating his 80th birthday with his twin brother in Adelaide. Congratulations and best wishes.

FRANK RAY 2/2, Mont Albert, Vic., with just a few lines enclosing his sub and his best wishes to all Pioneers. Thank you, Frank, kindest regards.

CHARLES RICHARDSON 2/2, Manly West, Qld., with a letter wishing all Pioneers a very memorable ANZAC Day reunion and a healthy

year ahead. Says it is obvious from the News that the aging process is fast catching up on most of the unit members. Charles has just celebrated his 85th birthday with 20 family members and in reasonably good health, although the old joints need an oil change and grease.

Thank you for your kind words on the Mail Bag, Charles, and that news of so many both 2/1 and 2/2 take you back to those far off days of 60 years ago. Says it helps him overcome the feeling of isolation he has in Brisbane. Surprising really, as we seem to have so many former members now living in the Sunshine State.

Our best wishes to you and your donation to the News gratefully received.

GEOFF ROBINSON 2/1, Quaaama, with his apologies for ANZAC Day and a welcome cheque for the treasurer. His wife Enid is not well, so Geoff is unable to make the trip to Sydney. Your kind regards are passed on to former members and hopefully you may be able to make it next year. All the best to you both.

BILL SANDS 2/1, Condell Park, with thanks for the regular receipt of Pioneer News which keeps him in touch with the doings of many past friends of the army years. Your donation to funds was most welcome, Bill, and we send you our thanks and best wishes.

BOB SEFTON 2/2, Safety Bay, W.A., enjoys receiving the News but says he's afraid he is not a fruitful provider of news and, living up to previous form, has nothing to report. However, encloses his sub and best wishes to all Pioneers. Many thanks, Bob.

GIL SHORT 2/2, Caringbah, with his apologies for his absence on ANZAC Day. Is not as mobile as he would like to be, but sends his best wishes to all for a great day. Thanks for the donation to funds, Gil, perhaps you may be able to make it next year.

CEC SLOGGETT 2/2, Gunnedah, with a welcome note and a cheque for the News. He and May are keeping well and Cec is still busy around the home. They are hoping to go to Queensland shortly touring around and to visit "rellies". Should try and make it around September and put the Lismore reunion on your itinerary. Maisie Kempnich often looks for your names in the Mail Bag and asks after you. Thanks for the cheque and best wishes.

MICK SMITH 2/2, Bateau Bay, with a note enclosing his sub and says it is good to still receive the News. Apologies for not being a more active member, but says his old unit the 2/22 Bn. takes priority. Quite a few members have the same problem, and we understand. Good to hear your health is good, something to be thankful for these days. Thanks for the sub Mick, and your kind wishes to all.

BRYAN SMALLHORN 2/1, Armidale, with his best wishes for a happy reunion and his subs enclosed in his note. He noted with sadness the passing of Bill Chisholm, a fine soldier and a pleasure to have known. He had tried to contact his family to pass on his sympathy, so hope you were successful. All the best and thanks for the sub.

HUGH SORLEY 2/2, Canning Vale, W.A., a very short note enclosing his sub and his kind regards passed on to all fellow Pioneers. Lots of W.A. letters this Mail Bag, but all seem to be men of few words. There must be some news from your part of the country. See what you can do fellas.

DANNY SPROUSTER 2/1, Dundas, with his sub enclosed and was sorry to hear of the passing of Ron Callaghan 2/1. He had been in touch with Dick Blakeney and Brian Kybert to let them know – both are on the sick list. Thanks for your donation, Danny, and for your kind words to the editors.

RAY STIDIFORD 2/2, Berri, S.A., with a short note enclosing his subs, for which many thanks. You certainly won't get writer's cramp, Ray, see if you can't find some news next time.

TREVOR THOMSON 2/1, Kingswood, with a generous donation to funds, many thanks. Trevor is just recovering from a broken pelvis under good care from his wife Elsie and although walking unsteady is coming good. Hope by now you are well on the road to recovery. Kind regards to you both.

LES TUNKS 2/1, Mareeba, Qld., with a letter per pen of his wife Lesley, to say Les was going into hospital late in March for an operation on a ruptured tendon on his foot. Hope all went well, Les, and that you are well on the road to recovery.

You have both had your share of problems over the last 12 months.

Many thanks for the book "Windows 45" you so kindly sent us, will pass it around to fellow Pioneers who were on the Tablelands during the war years. We both found it most interesting. Also many thanks for the photos of the entrance to Rocky Creek Memorial Park, only hope we may get to see it once more before we're too old to travel. Our very best wishes to you both and keep well.

ERN WALKER 2/1, Penrose, with a most interesting letter, enclosed with his sub, on his doings over the past 50 years. After his discharge from "Yaralla", built a house in Ryde and raised a son and a daughter before the home was resumed by the Council. Then built again at Luddenham and when the airport was rearing its ugly head at Badgerys Creek decided to move again. With his new partner, Bev, found a property in the Southern Highlands at Penrose and established a stud and training stable, where they breed horses mainly for show jumping, eventing and dressage, with reasonable success.

Neither he or Bev ride now, but operate with pupils concentrating on mostly show jumping. They lead a very satisfying life with Bev doing a fair bit of judging around the country and both officiated at the Katherine Show, N.T. a couple of times a few years ago.

Healthwise Ern has had a complete knee replacement and an inter-ocular lens inserted in his eye, so once more able to see. Good letter Ern, and most interesting to read. Hope the young horses you have bred show plenty of promise and we wish you both all the best.

RON WEBSTER 2/1, Bass Hill, with his sub for the News and was thrilled to hear interview on Channel 10 of some of his former 2/1st mates. He sends his thanks for the time and effort put into producing the News and the Committee for keeping the Association alive. Ron also mentioned he had received a letter from the daughter of Eric (Bombo) Reynolds to say both her parents were now in a nursing home.

Our best wishes, Ron, and thank you for the Easter greetings to Max and I.

TEMPLE WOOD 2/2, Terrigal, with his best wishes to members of both units and was pleased to see the news item on Channel 10 on ANZAC night. He enclosed his sub and always looks forward to receiving the News – although is saddened each time to see so many in Last Post. Temple is slowly losing his mobility and, although still driving, finds it very difficult getting in and out of his car. He has turned 86, so not doing too badly.

Take care and many thanks for your donation to funds.

NEV WOODHAM 2/1, Cleveland, Qld., with a few lines from up north to say he and Bett were reasonably well and enclosed his sub for the News. ANZAC Day saw the largest attendance ever at their Dawn Service, approximately 4,500, held in a lovely park opposite Redlands Services Club, now named Anzac Memorial Park. Nev was able to get a grant from Canberra to build a memorial wall. There was a good roll-up to the march from all services, but he and Harry Spreadborough 2/1 were the only Pioneers. Bett and Nev were joined at the march by daughter Gail, their son-in-law, Ashley, and two grandsons Ryan and Adam, who, after the service joined them for a picnic and a few beers by the Bay.

In regard to the news on Channel 10, Nev, Max was able to tape the segment on the Pioneers and will be in touch with you later in this regard.

Best wishes to you both and hopefully may see you once again at the Lismore reunion. Many thanks for the sub enclosed in your letter.

JACK CHALMERS 2/1 of Wentworthville informs us he is still in the land of the living, regardless of the fact there was a Sgt. J. Chalmers 2/1 posted as deceased in the Last Post of February Reveille.

LATE LETTERS were received after copy went to the typesetter, from Matt Elliot 2/2 of Wollongong and Les Britt 2/1 of Cairns – these will be acknowledged in the next issue. Les, your change of address has been noted.

• That concludes the Mail Bag for this issue with lots of letters and news from around the States. Trust the winter months will be kind to all the aching joints and look forward to lots of letters for the next issue. Best wishes to all.

NEWS ITEMS

MICHAEL O'CONNOR, son of Neville 2/1 of Ballina, was recently named Ballina's number one citizen for being regarded as an educational pioneer for his work in marine studies as High School Teacher at Ballina. Congratulations Michael on behalf of the Pioneer community.

JACK TOOKER 2/1 was in the news recently with an article and photo in the local Northern Courier. Jack was selling Anzac Day badges for his local Chatswood RSL Sub Branch, to remind fellow Australians how precious freedom and Anzac Day remains to us all.

RESPONSE from the appeal in the April issue Pioneer News was really great – seventy letters received which is a record – \$1,400 in donations – 15 members deciding to cancel. We sincerely thank all those members who responded to our appeal.

SICK PARADE

ROY LEVY, 2/2 of Revesby was operated on at Concord Hospital on 30th April to amputate his right leg below the knee, becoming necessary because of a blood clot. As at 28th May, Roy is still at Concord Hospital and has been progressing favourably.

He is regularly visited by close friend Don Crawford and has also had visits from Bill Tasker, Jack Allison and Max Herron.

ALF BENTLEY 2/1 of Yokine W.A. had to go to hospital on 20th April for an operation on the carotid artery in his neck. Close friend "Bindi" Moane has kept in touch with wife Pat who states Alf is recovering and they both hope to visit in June after cancelling their flight over for Anzac Day.

LAST POST

PERCY SCHOLZ 2/2 of Hervey Bay, Qld, formerly of Albury, passed away on 28th February aged 90 years. Wes Bennett 2/2 of Albury placed the following notice in his local paper the "Border Mail" – "Percy Scholz, ex Captain "D" Coy 2/2 Pioneer Battalion – farewell Sir, you will always be remembered by your leadership."

Wes sent regards to all Pioneers and especially to Bob Ginnane. We thank Wes for sending us the above details.

RON CALLAGHAN 2/1 of Main Beach, Qld and formerly of Sydney, passed away on 12th May in Brisbane Hospital after a blood circulation problem in both legs. He had recently had a pacemaker inserted because of heart trouble.

We are grateful to Don Barraclough of Burleigh Heads, who was a close friend, for ringing through the details and extending sympathy on our behalf to wife Jan and family.

REVEILLE – Deceased: T.B. Broadhurst 2/2; H.R. Burke 2/1, M.N. Gledhill 2/1; R. Watson 2/1.

2/1-2/2 LISMORE REUNION

Saturday 14th, Sunday 15th September, 2002

WREATH LAYING – Saturday 14th September

5pm at the Lismore Memorial Baths

Cenotaph, Market and Molesworth Streets.

REUNION DINNER – Saturday 14th September

7pm Smorgasbord Dinner, Lismore RSL Club,

Market Street. Cost \$25 each.

BARBECUE LUNCH – Sunday 15th September

12 noon for lunch at the Ballina

Ex-Servicemen's Home Complex, 71-73

Norton Street, Ballina. Cost \$10 per head.

ACCOMMODATION is to be booked by you.

See NRMA Accommodation Guide.

DEPOSIT – \$10 each, with application form by

7th September to Ken Wilson – 9 Rosedale

Square, Lismore, NSW 2480.

CUT OUT – Fill in particulars: LISMORE Reunion

FULL
NAME
LADIES
NAME..... PHONE UNIT.....

ADDRESS
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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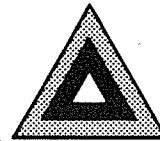
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Welfare: BILL TASKER, Phone 9718 6658



NEW GUINEA CAMPAIGN SERVICES

Victory in the Pacific Day this year was extraordinary in that three services were held to observe this annual event. It was significant to both units as the 2/1st served on the Kokoda Track at Uberl and Imita Ridge and the 2/2nds at Lae, Nadzab and Ramu Valley.

ISURAVA MEMORIAL

The first event which was held on the 14th August was most gratifying, and not before its time, took place on the Kokoda Track at the now historical location of Isurava. The memorial-four black marble obelisks marked courage, endurance, mateship, sacrifice was dedicated by the Prime Minister, John Howard. Amongst others in the official party was the RSL's National President, Major General Peter Phillips. Also included in the party were ex-army personnel who had fought on the Track, chosen mainly from the 2/14th, 2/16th and 39th Militia infantry battalions. These units were part of the force responsible for stemming the advance of the Japanese forces at Isurava in August 1942, sixty years ago.

It was here that Bruce Kingsbury of the 2/14th Inf. Bn was awarded the Victoria Cross. As Mr Howard said to the media, quote – "The dedication of this memorial will enshrine the Kokoda Track, like Gallipoli, as a place where new generations can pay tribute to what it means to be Australian".

CENOTAPH, MARTIN PLACE

The second event on this V.P. Day was the usual morning service at the Cenotaph in Martin Place where the Governor of NSW, Professor Marie Bashir attended by her husband, Sir Nicholas Shehadie, (well known in rugby circles and ex-President of S.C.G. Trust) delivered the address, urging, quote – "That the lessons of war be taught to successive generations of children". Wreaths were then laid at the Cenotaph.

KOKODA TRACK WALKWAY, CONCORD

The third event to commemorate Victory in the Pacific, also this year the 60th Anniversary of the New Guinea campaign, was held at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, Concord on the 15th August. The crowd of about 1,000 were provided with chairs and marquee cover. Following the Catafalque Party mounts, the service proceeded under the control of Master of Ceremonies, John Gatfield of RSL Anzac House.

The welcome address was in the capable hands of Rusty Priest, who recently retired as State President of the RSL, but has retained his position of Chairman of the Walkway Committee. In his breezy manner he said he was delighted to see such a good attendance and was most appreciative of the assistance received towards the upkeep of the Memorial, both in kind and financially, especially the recent generous donation of \$8,000 from Australia Post.

As usual the music was provided by the NSW Corrective Services Band and together with the Pipes and Drums, Royal NSW Regiment played during the inspection by Hon. Danna Vale, Minister for Veteran's Affairs and Rusty Priest, of the Guard of Honour, provided by members of the 233rd Regional Cadet unit St George.

Prayers were then rendered by Major Stan Morton (Salvation Army) and Rev. David Hayes who is a Director of the Walkway.

Hon. Danna Vale, who wore her father's World War II medals, delivered the address and acknowledged that it was a moving experience for her to be standing here at this marvellous memorial. She covered in her address a few historical facts relating to the Kokoda battle and made mention of the young Australians who made the supreme sacrifice to fight for the democratic ideals that we still cherish today.

The Ode was recited by a veteran from the 14th Field Regiment. The bugler from the band sounded the Last Post and Reveille, and Pipers played The Lament during the Wreath Laying ceremony.

A poem, "Kokoda Track", was written by Fred Homburg, otherwise known as "Barry from the Bush" was read by Rusty Priest, which is the first time the poem had been presented in the public arena.

At the conclusion of the service, guests were invited to an excellent afternoon tea provided by staff from the Concord Hospital. Pioneers in attendance were Allan McInnes and friend Pat Mitchell, Max and Peg Herron and daughter Lynn Berry, Don and Val Crawford, Roy Jardine, Rae Kean, Bill Tasker, Jack and Marj Kerslake, Perc Penrose, Jack Allison and Steve Clarke.

It was announced that the Kokoda Track Walkway have a new website. Members may not have the equipment necessary to be able to make use of this facility, but could call on their children to check it out like Max Herron did and found it to be excellent. However, it should be beneficial to family members who have the equipment. The website address is – <http://www.kokodawalkway.com.au>.

– Reported by STEVE CLARKE

2/1-2/2 LISMORE REUNION

On 14th/15th September, 2002 the Reunion at Lismore was organised by the North Coast Branch and most members arrived on the Friday night and had a get-together for a meal and refreshments at the Lismore RSL.

SUGAR CANE TOUR

On Saturday 14th September at 8.30am nine members boarded the bus for a tour to the cane fields at Empire Vale. Ken Wilson gave the commentary on the route through the outskirts of Lismore all the way to Wardell and Empire Vale.

On arrival at Empire Vale the group was met by Michael O'Connor, son of Neville, who gave a demonstration on the old method of cutting sugar cane by hand, then went on to explain the method using very expensive equipment.

He then invited the members to climb up the ladder to board his high open backed, converted six wheel drive army truck. This exercise needed a couple of the fitter men present to help the less fitter persons aboard. Michael then drove the truck out through the cane fields to where members of his Co-operative Company were cutting the cane with the modern equipment he had spoken of, and were actually harvesting the cane.

From here Michael drove the truck down to the sand dunes at the beach and drove along the beach, running from Evans Head, for five kms to Ballina then up the sand dunes on to the road and back to Empire Vale. All aboard voted it a very exhilarating experience and extended heartfelt thanks to Michael for a wonderful morning.

WREATH LAYING SERVICE

On Saturday afternoon the members were marshalled by Ray Harris at the Lismore Soldiers Memorial for the Wreath Laying Service. This was conducted by the Rev. Peter Playstead, Chaplain of the Amherly RAAF Base, who mentioned it was his fifth service he had conducted for the Pioneers, but was still able to give an outstanding address on the exploits of both units.

The Branch Banner was displayed by Peter Priest and Bert Neasbey, while the National Flag was lowered by Alec George.

Wreaths were laid by Peg Herron (Ladies Auxiliary) Max Herron (Assoc.) and Ken Wilson (North Coast Branch). The Benediction was given by Rev. Playstead.

THE REUNION DINNER

On arrival at the RSL name tags were issued by Pam Lee and fees were collected by Alec George and Terry McGuire.

Guests were welcomed by Master of Ceremonies, Ray Harris who called on Rev Playstead to say Grace. While the Royal Toast was in hands of Jack Allison. Ray Harris then proposed the toast to our departed comrades.

In proposing the Toast to the Guests, President Ken Wilson read a long list of apologies, and then called on Max Herron, Secretary, to respond. Max then thanked Ken for his toast and said it was sad to hear the long list of apologies, which no doubt was due to ill health. Among these was an apology from Association President Allan McInnes, whose wife Mary has just been admitted to a nursing home, but son David was attending on behalf of his father. Max then went on to pay special tribute to those members who had travelled long distances to be present tonight such as Bert Woodhouse, WA; Allan Olson, SA; Robyn Bell, Vic; Mona and Don Barraclough and Mollie-Jean and John Hunt, Qld.

BARBECUE AT BALLINA

Next morning the Pioneers and their ladies converged on the Ballina Ex-Servicemen's Home Complex and, as soon as the bar opened, it was refreshment time among pleasant surroundings and excellent company.

The members were then called upon to move up to the large eating area which presented a very happy atmosphere, with the group enjoying an excellent prepared barbecue.

Ken Wilson then called on Secretary Max Herron to give an appreciation of the weekend and in response Max said he thanked Ken Wilson and his Committee for once again turning on a wonderful weekend.

Max also thanked the ladies, sons and daughters for their attendance and support. He was particularly proud of the six Association Committee members who were present, such as Don Crawford, Treasurer; Peg Herron, Mail Bag Editor; Bob Ginnane, Gavin Todd, Bert Neasbey and Jack Allison.

ATTENDANCE FOR WEEKEND

There were twenty six Pioneers in attendance consisting of twelve 2/1sts and fourteen 2/2nds and their ladies as follows –

2/1sts: Alf/Lil Bettens, Don/Mona Barraclough, Alex/Jean George, Frank/Beryl Gillian, John/Mollie Hunt, Max/Peg Herron, Terry/Claire McGuire, Peter/Dot Priest, Noel Schomberg, Bert Woodhouse and friend Flo Collier ex WAAF, Cecil Blanch and Jack/Flo Shearman.

2/2nds: Jack/Barbara Allison, Don/Val Crawford and sister Noelene, Snow Dodd, Bob Ginnane, Ray Harris, Bert Neasbey, Nev/Betty O'Connor, Allan Olson, Kevin Raward, Ray/Nancy Robbins, Gavin Todd, Ken/Ida Wilson, Dick/Alison Walker and Jack/Beryl Crouch.

It was also pleasing to see in attendance the following – Widows: Joyce Denny, Vi Flynn, Mavis Blanch, Gloria Gray and Peg Wells. Sons: David McInnes, Ray Walker. Daughters: Pam Herrick (Late George Bates 2/1), Pam Lee (Ray Harris 2/2), Jaqueline McCann (Late Bill Wells 2/2), Pam Stubbings (Peter Priest 2/1), Robyn Bell (Late Leo Morris 2/1) and Joan Schweigert (Frank Gillian 2/1).

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

The last Mail Bag for the year and letters very light on after the record number in the July issue. The winter months must have taken their toll with very cold days and lots of sickness in our aging veterans and wives. However, we are grateful to those who put pen to paper to keep me on the job, and my "boss" happy.

TOM BLAINEY 2/1, Noble Park, Vic., per pen of wife Vi, with a welcome donation to funds and good to hear from you once again. As you say, time goes so quickly these days and writing letters seems to be one job that can easily be postponed.

We do not have Ted Budge on our roll, but his name is in the Pioneer history – NX55887, G. E. Budge. I'm sure he would have been interested to read the history of his old unit that you kindly gave him. Vi mentions that their friend who visits Ted is a member of a Vintage Car Club and invited she and Tom to go on one of their outings in a 1920 Chev and they had a great day.

Sorry to hear the tape of the 2000 Sydney March showed little of your old unit, Tom, but this year's March was covered very well by Channel 10 and we had phone calls from far and wide from many Pioneers and families who saw quite a few well known faces on TV. They also covered the reunion at the Occidental Hotel, too.

All the best to you both and thank you for your cheque enclosed in your letter.

JOHN BOYD, Narre Warren, Vic., son of the late Stan Boyd 2/1, with a long newsy letter and copies of newsletters produced in their area for Max's perusal – as Max was a printer by trade he was interested to see what can be done by a computer these days. John's son, Andrew, produces a newsletter mailed out to members/parents of AH/HD children and he and wife, Kerry, are committed members of the Victorian State organisation.

John mentions that he and his wife Beverly recognised Max and other Pioneers on the news on ANZAC Day and said all appeared in good cheer. Says a cause for jealous approval as he would dearly love to bring his sons to meet their grandfather's old comrades. Better not leave it too long, John, time is marching on very quickly.

Thank you for your kind wishes and congratulations and will try and keep up the good work. Hope to see you once again for a "cuppa" if in our part of the world. All the best.

LES BRITT 2/1, Earville, Nth. Qld., with a change of address to a retirement village. A good move at your time of life, Les, and the need to save yourself a lot of work looking after a home and lawns to mow. You even had time to pen quite a few lines for the Mail Bag this time. It's not easy to always find news I guess, but a few words now and again keeps members in touch.

Les remembers when he joined up, he and the family were living just across the road from our street in Beverly Hills in a small house on a good size block of land and grew all their own veges – says things were bad in the depression years and you had to survive the best you could. They eventually moved to Dumbleton (now Beverly Hills) where there were a few houses but no shops, nothing but bush and scrub. A motor train ran once every hour and a couple of steam trains twice a day. Times certainly have changed, Les, but it's good you are able to remember these things at 83 years young.

Trust you are now settled in your new home and Max has altered your address on his mailing list.

TED CARTER 2/1, Tamworth, with a note re the passing of Archie McTavish, late of 2/1st, which Max has taken care of in Last Post. Ted served with the 2/1sts in the Middle East before transferring to 2/3 Pioneers, but still keeps in touch with his former unit. He mentions he will be at the 9th Div, reunion in Muswellbrook in November.

Ted was sorry to hear of the passing of Gordon Finlay and sends his sympathy to the family.

He and Mary are basically keeping well, with old age catching up on a daily basis, but a lot better than most and can still get around.

All the best, Ted, and thanks for the information on Archie and his death notice. Regards to Mary. Hope you enjoyed the reunion in November.

ERIC CAUSER 2/1, Hamilton, Vic., with a cheque enclosed for the treasurer, for which many thanks. Must be busy in your part of the country, Eric, not even a note, have to do better than that next time. Our warm wishes to both you and Doff, hope both are well.

RON COYTE 2/1, Wentworthville, with a cheque for the News and his thanks for the time and effort put into its production. Thank you, Ron, for your kind words, from both Max and yours truly.

We do not have Ron Murray on our mailing list these days, perhaps when he moved from Hill End his paper may have come back. We do have an Alf Holloway of Grafton on the roll, a 2/1st. (but not Roy) and the only Holloway in our Nominal Roll.

Thank you for the information and for your donation to funds.

BETTY CREASY, Portland, widow of George 2/1, with a few lines and enclosing some stamps to help with our postage. Many thanks, Bet, and hope the weather has improved in your part of the country now the days are warmer. Trust all the family are well and that you are still able to get out and about. Will pass on your regards to Olive Finlay – as you will see from Last Post, Gordon passed away in July. He had been in ill health for some time. Kindest regards, hope to catch up again soon.

ARTHUR DAVIS 2/1, Granville, with his thanks for the News and enclosing his subs per money order.

In regard to your query re the quarry mentioned in last issue, Arthur, Colonel Brown was referring to the 3 Mile Quarry in Moresby, not the Mapo Road in Milne Bay.

We do not have Norm Bevin of D Coy on our list, so cannot help you in that regard. Perhaps someone in the unit may know of his whereabouts or whether he has passed on.

Best wishes and thank you for your donation to funds.

MATT ELLIOTT 2/2, West Wollongong, with best wishes to all old mates in D Coy 2/2 and says it's great to get the News and hear of the doings of old friends. Also sent along a welcome donation to funds – many thanks. Your letter arrived just too late for last issue Matt.

KEN FRANKS 2/1, Waterford West, Qld, with his donation to funds, says last News jotted his memory. He is full of arthritis and can't drive to the RATS meetings any more, so does not meet up with old mates.

His eyes are not the best either, but still soldiering on – can still deal with a stubby or three, so can't complain.

Thanks for your donation, Ken, good to hear from you once again.

LIONEL FULLARTON 2/2, Orbest, Vic., with his apologies for lateness of subs. Time gets away these days, so he thought he had better make an effort. Cheque has been passed on to our worthy treasurer – many thanks.

In his letter, Lionel mentions the recent death of an old friend from the 2/2 Mortar Platoon, Jack Fraser – the numbers are thinning. He still keeps in touch with Jack Hore-Lacey, Geoff Barwick (Tas.) and Bob Sefton (W.A.) and it is good to get Christmas greetings from Jean Dixon (widow of Bob), Dorothy Hansen and Grace O'Hehir as well.

He was interested to read of the 2/1 P.O.W.'s in Italy as his brother, Jack Fullarton, 2/23 Bn., was in some of the camps mentioned. He escaped and it took Jack and two mates nine months to get to Monte Cassino where they reached allied lines.

Healthwise Lionel has been quite well apart from some eye problems, but they seem to be on the improve.

He mentions that after the death of Fred Lay 2/2 in Orbest, the only connection with the old battalion is Rita Bailey (widow of Bill who was a 2/2 P.O.W. in Japanese hands). Lionel wonders if some readers might have known him.

Closes with his best wishes to all members and says to keep up the good work.

Dr. STAN GOULSTON 2/1 R.M.O., Chatswood, with a welcome cheque for the News and how he still enjoys reading news of old friends. Stan says it was a great pleasure to meet Colonel Brown's daughter, Mary Burnham, on

ANZAC Day, and to have her march with members of the unit.

He says it was a privilege to meet and talk with our remaining stalwarts and remember those far off days of 1940-42 when he was R.M.O. of the 2/1sts. Says the "boys" taught him so much.

Our very best wishes to you, Stan, and thank you for your kind words.

MOLLIE JEAN HUNT, New Farm, Qld., wife of John 2/1, with a welcome note after she and John returned from the reunion in Lismore. Mollie had phoned Betty Woodham to see if she and Neville were OK, also Jean and Harry Spreadborough. The Spreadboroughs had talked of making the trip to Lismore, but too many Dr's appointments and the Woodhams busy with RATS meetings and bowls. However, hoped to make Sydney for next ANZAC Day. Harry Spreadborough had been having new blood tests, so hope everything went OK.

Many thanks Mollie for your help in contacting them and all the best to John.

JOHN HAYDEN 2/1, Orange, per pen of good wife Wyn, with a long note and a cutting from their local newspaper with a write-up of John receiving a framed RSL Certificate of Appreciation commemorating 26 years service as an ANZAC Day march marshal in his home town. The presentation was at RSL Headquarters in Sydney and was attended by the Mayor of Orange and Peter Andrew, Member for their electorate of Calare. He presented John with an Australian flag and when he and Wyn arrived back in Orange a flag pole had been erected at the side of their home. Well done, John, and we offer our congratulations and best wishes.

Do hope you are a lot better Wyn and your health improving with the warmer weather. Take care both of you and always glad to hear from you.

JACK HORE-LACY 2/2, Moss Vale, with a cheque enclosed for the News. Many thanks. Jack apologised for delay in sending same, but family health problems have been a worry and has just got round to writing. Hope by now things have improved with your daughter's sugar levels and she is much better.

Thanks for Tom Dunstan's christian name, as we only had him on our list with initials. Tom was in the same mortar platoon as John who hasn't seen him since 1945.

John sends best wishes to all Pioneers, especially those of his old 2/2 mates and says it is always good to hear news of them through the News. (Not too many letters from the 2/2nds this issue. John, must have all been hibernating during the winter).

BILL JOHNSTON 2/1, Benteigh, Vic., with a cheque for the News and his thanks to all those who make the effort to keep members up with the current activities of the old battalion. This can only be done by the letters we get for the Mail Bag and our members taking the time and effort to write.

Our sincere sympathy to both Mavis and yourself on the loss of your loved daughter at such a young age and hope that helping to look after her two lovely girls, where possible, helps in the healing process.

Your trip away on the Great Southern Express was just what you needed after your problems and your trip sounded great. The train was magnificent and was built and fitted out at the Townsville Railway Workshops. The trip started from Sydney and took in the Hunter Valley vineyards – with plenty of wine tastings – also dinner and a concert on the train to make it a day to remember.

Bill and Mavis then went through to Brisbane where they met a nephew who looked after them and drove them to Noosa and they finally stayed two weeks at Alexander Headlands. I'm sure the change of scenery did wonders for you both and your daughter Vivienne and her husband Roger were wonderful to provide you both with such a lovely break after the tragic loss of your daughter. Hope Mavis is also recovering from her car accident.

Many thanks for your cheque, Bill, and your good wishes to battalion mates. Hope you can make it to Sydney next ANZAC Day, you can be assured of a warm welcome. Regards to you both.

MAISIE KEMPINICH, Shoal Bay, widow of Jack 2/1, with a kind letter of thanks for sympathy extended to her on Jack's recent death. Mais, has sold the house at Fingal Bay and moved into a hostel at Harbourside Haven in Shoal Bay and

has settled in very well. She sent her thanks to all her Pioneer "family" and will not forget their kindness to her over many years. We all send our love, Mais, and do keep in touch.

BRIAN KYBERT 2/1, Long Jetty, per pen of good wife Betty, with a welcome cheque for the treasurer and the news that Brian was moving into Killarney Vale Nursing Home on the day she wrote (14th October). He really appreciates getting the News and keeping up with the activities and doings of his old mates. Betty says age is taking its toll of us all, and Brian finds it hard to do anything very much now. However, his brain is still very active, so they have that to be thankful for.

Good to hear from you both. Thank you for the cheque (this one received OK) and receipt will be sent in due course. Our best wishes and hope Brian is happy in his new surroundings.

JOYCE LAW, Kareela, widow of Max 2/1, with a welcome donation to funds, and her best wishes to all Pioneers. Joyce keeps in touch with Rita Trefoni, Betty and Brian Kybert, Win Dwyer and the Taskers, all special friends of her husband Max, who was a sergeant in B Coy 2/1. Hope by now you have had your back operation. Joyce, will be in touch.

FRANK MAHER 2/2, Goolwa, S.A., with a cheque for the News which he looks forward to receiving and enjoys reading. Says it keeps him in touch with old friends separated by distance. Frank says his health has not been the best over the last couple of years, but not doing too badly lately. He has had to slow down a little, but can still drive in the daytime and play bowls. At least that is a bonus, Frank, especially if you can have a small beer with your friends. Take care and many thanks for the cheque.

BRUCE METCALF 2/2, Condell Park. Sadly to say since we received the letter from Bruce with a cheque for the News, he has passed away. Max has made mention of this in Last Post. He had been ill for some time and unable to attend the march or reunion, but was always pleased to get news of his old mates.

PETER PRIEST 2/1, Ballina, per pen of wife Dot, with a welcome letter and a couple of photos taken on the Tablelands on a recent trip they had made to North Queensland. They were good photos, Dot, and a few more for our Pioneer album. The 2/1 and 2/2 plaque at Rocky Creek was excellent and I'm sure Peter was glad he had made the trip. I know Max and I thought it was worthwhile making such a long journey to see it and only wish more of both units were able to go. Sadly most are getting too old to make the trip.

So glad you were able to meet up with Lesley and Les Tunks and know they would have made you very welcome. We also shared a welcome "cuppa" and wonderful company with them. It's not often Les gets to meet any Pioneers and I know he would be pleased to show you around.

It was good to meet up again at Lismore although sad to see how age is catching up with the men. There are not too many of the early 2/1sts who have not reached that 80 mark – congrats to Pete on his O.B.E. – although they all looked good in the line-up at the Memorial.

We enjoyed our trip and the company over the reunion week-end and if I remember rightly you were hoping to get to Sydney for ANZAC Day. Hope you can make it. All the best to you both and keep well. Thanks for the photos.

OLIVE RICHARDS, Lennox Head, widow of Jack 2/1, with a welcome cheque for the News and some stamps to help with postage. Many thanks, Olive. Glad you have fully recovered from your operation and I can imagine at your age it would have been rather a shock to the system. I'm sure Chris and Annette keep a close watch over you.

Sorry we did not get to see you at Ballina on the reunion week-end. Noel and Vi told us they were off to see you on the Monday and that Chris and Annette were also going so thought you would have enough visitors without Max and I, too. Hopefully we will catch up on a visit next trip north. I passed on your message to the Kerslakes and Marj was going to ring you. We missed their company on the trip, but family problems forced them to cancel. All the best to you and continue to keep well. Hope to see you soon.

RAY SMITH 2/1, Glen Iris, Vic., with a very short note enclosing a donation to funds and his best wishes to all. Can't make much news out of that Ray, maybe a longer note next time. Our thanks for the cheque.

DOROTHY STEAIN, Merewether, widow of Arthur 2/1, with a change of address from Forster and a donation to the News. Many thanks. Dorothy had to make the move from Forster on account of failing health and eyesight problems and is now residing in a retirement unit in Merewether – so different to the last 24 years in Forster.

She was able to attend Tobruk Sunday in Civic Park in Newcastle for the service and wreath laying and afterwards luncheon at the Gallipoli Legion Club at Hamilton, which she enjoyed. Says Arthur would have enjoyed meeting up with old comrades. Unfortunately the Newcastle "Rats" have not many Pioneers left in their area, most have passed on in recent years.

Glad to see you still enjoy the News, Dorothy, and it will be forwarded on to your new address when published. Best wishes.

LES TUNKS 2/1, Mareeba, with two letters, one enclosing a donation to funds and some postage stamps and the other a programme of the V.P. Day at Rocky Creek. Many thanks for both, Les.

Glad to hear you were able to meet up with Peter and Dot Priest from Ballina and they were very pleased with the warm welcome you and Lesley gave them, along with the welcome "cuppa". Peter has also sent us photos taken with you and others he took at Rocky Creek and out at the 2/1st campsite. He really enjoyed his trip and was still talking about it when we met up at the Lismore reunion.

We did hear a couple of 2/3rd Pioneers made the trip for their plaque unveiling, also Ted Iddles from the 7th Div. Engineers. Ted was very impressed with Rocky Creek and thanked Max for his help with ideas for their plaque and the procedure to follow with the Shire at Atherton and Vet. Affairs. Believe they had a good day with lots of visitors and pleased you were able to meet up with the wife and daughter of the late Rex Francis 2/1. It must be rather an impressive sight now.

Do hope you are both over your health problems at the moment and we send you our best wishes and thanks for the time and effort of keeping us informed of doings at Rocky Creek.

DICK WAKELEY 2/2, Waratah, with a short note for which he apologises – waiting on new glasses. Thank you for your donation enclosed, Dick, and your good wishes passed on to all Pioneers and their families. All the best, keep well.

RON WEBSTER 2/1, Bass Hill, with a short letter enclosing a photo taken by some American friends at the last ANZAC wreath laying ceremony. Max will pass it on to Jack McDonagh of the 2/2 with your compliments. Hope you are keeping well. Ron, and that you heard from Gwen Strobe, sister of the late Keith Jones 2/1, (K.I.A. Borneo), as I gave her your address when she phoned. All the best.

TOM WELCH 2/1, Tuncurry, with a very short letter enclosing his sub and a promise to try and do better next time. Good to hear you are still in the land of the living Tom and thanks for the donation to the News.

"SNOWY" YOUENS 2/2, Essendon, Vic., with apologies for lateness in his dues. Says his only excuse is that his wife forgets to remind him and he's sticking to it. Sends his thanks for the News which he enjoys reading and passes on his regards to all Pioneers and their families. Many thanks for your cheque and our best wishes.

JACK BERTRAM 2/1, Hamilton, with a welcome card from Egypt, where he is at present on an overseas trip with the Rats of Tobruk to attend the El Alamein commemorative functions, marking 60 years since the Battle of Alamein in 1942. At the time of writing, Jack was sitting in his hotel room watching a magnificent sunrise over Tobruk Harbour – the 2/1sts would remember it well – and said the town as such has now vanished, buried under roads and high rise development. There is a big oil refinery on the eastern headland and Jack was wondering what he would see on the perimeter when they made the trip that day. He is enjoying the experience and we look forward to hearing from you, Jack, on your return to Australia. All the best.

DOUG SHEARSTON 2/1, Forster, with the news that he and Roma are well at the moment. Roma after cataract operations and Doug from problems with his legs. Says age is fast catching up – and you certainly don't have that on your own. Doug was sorry to hear of the passing of Max's scout friend, Reg Ward O.A.M., in July.

Reg used to march with Max on ANZAC Day and attended the reunion dinner where he sat with Max, Doug and George Walker. The funeral was at Woronora Crematorium and Max and George represented the Association.

Good to hear from you, Doug, our love to Roma and hope the legs continue to improve.

GEORGE WALKER 2/1, Rosemeadow, after many years at Culburra Beach, has moved back to the Sydney area to be closer to family and hospital care. They are now in a villa and very happy in their new surroundings, with good medical facilities close at hand. Hope the leg is improving Joyce, all the best.

JOHN HARDY, North Qld., Secretary of the Rocky Creek Memorial Park, with a copy of their Annual Report and programme from the Annual V.P. Day "Military Muster". Fourteen more plaques were unveiled on this day, bringing the total in the Park to 63 and a further nine planned for 2003. Excellent progress has been made including new toilet block, garden beds, irrigation system. 100 native trees planted and new signs on highway and park entrance.

Thank you, John, and best wishes to all on a job well done.

KERRY ROLLESTON, Fairfield Qld., daughter-in-law of the late Wally ("Desso") Page 2/1, with a request for three copies of the 2/1st history "The Pioneers". Kerry was hoping to give her children a copy of this remarkable story so they could have the opportunity to read of a time in their grandfather's life that seems so very distant now, yet extremely significant to who they are and their family heritage. She said their grandfather was a wonderful man, loyal and dedicated to his family, as she was sure he was a soldier. He was certainly that, Kerry, and a great Committeeman over many years.

As Max has written you, Kerry, there are no copies of the book available, but he has written you with the name of a firm who may be able to help you if they reprint the book in the future. Thank you, Kerry, and best wishes.

That's all the Mail Bag for this issue and on behalf of President Allan, Treasurer Don, Max and myself we wish all our members and their families the very best of health and happiness in the coming year. To those who have lost loved ones during the year we send special thoughts and hope your happy memories will remain with you in the years ahead. A very Happy and Holy Christmas and every good wish for the New Year.

SICK PARADE

Welfare Officer Bill Tasker has visited the following members, who had been notified to him as being in hospital.

BOB LAMB 2/1 Smithfield Hospital in June.

PAT COLLINS 2/2 Liverpool Hospital in July

JACK STONE 2/1 Concord Hospital in July

Notification to Secretary came from:

JACK TOOKER 2/1 in hospital in July

BILL JOLLIE 2/1 in hospital in June

ANZAC DAY MARCH RULES

At the Annual General Meeting in June the Secretary raised the subject of children marching with the members on Anzac Day. This resulted from the Secretary receiving a phone call from a member the day after Anzac Day who stated he frowned upon seeing two young children marching with the 2/1st Pioneer Group.

The Secretary explained he could not understand how this had come about, because for years this has been policed. The Committee then resolved that the policy, as in the past, should be continued, and that the RSL ruling as follows be carried out: *"Any relative of a member taking part in the Anzac Day March must be of RSL age, that is eighteen years or older. Furthermore that person must report to the unit marshal, who will ensure the relative, if wearing the deceased member's medals, must wear them on the right breast"*.

SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE APRIL

Send news of your family and happenings to:

**M. HERRON, 3 Enoggera Road
Beverly Hills NSW 2209**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The following is the report by the President Allan McInnes to the Annual General Meeting held on Friday, 28th June at Redfern RSL Club.

Many things contribute to success and the main thing is co-operation and being 100% united. Our committee and very hard working Executive have given many hours of their time on our behalf and we never have failures, because whatever the event, it is always well organised by our Secretary and Treasurer.

Our main events of the year centre around Anzac Day and it was pleasing to see such a good roll up for the Wreath Laying Service where we paid tribute to all Pioneers who have passed on. The Anzac Day March 2002 was a very important one as the 2/2nds marched under their own Banner behind the 2/1sts, which was hailed as a great success by members attending the Reunion.

The Anzac March is getting harder, but it is important that those fit enough keep marching in order to keep up the tradition. I found the going very hard and I really had to concentrate on making it. For next year I will go into training. Sons of Pioneers turned up to assist carrying the banners and flags at the March, and collecting the meal fee as well as issuing name tags at the Reunion, which all gave the Committee a chance to relax. Thank you boys, you gave us a great day.

The success of the Anzac Reunion was thanks to the organisation put into it by our Secretary and Treasurer who had spent time talking over the details with the Occidental Hotel manager.

The big event held in August 2001 was the dedication of the plaque for the two units at the Rocky Creek Memorial Park near Atherton, Qld and we thank Max and Peg Herron for carrying out all the arrangements and attending as the Association representatives. Photos of the plaque showed it to be impressive with the purple and white triangles standing out very vividly, which makes one proud to have served under either battalion.

Don Crawford, our treasurer, has a healthy balance and is always available to do other duties. Bill Tasker's job as Welfare Officer is getting harder because of the age of our members and Bill is to be commended for his hospital visits and the funerals he attends on our behalf.

The Lismore reunion is once more being organised by Ken Wilson of the Northern Rivers Branch and are hoping for a good roll up of members.

We are also very grateful to Peg Herron for continuing with her work as Mail Bag Editor, and we thank you Peg for your efforts in this regard.

In conclusion, I have no hesitation in saying our Association is one of the best in Australia largely due to the efforts of our Secretary Max and his committee. Many thanks to all who have given of their time to make our Association one of which we are justly proud.

— ALLAN MCINNES

ON THE BUSES WITH JACK PEARCE

We acknowledge the following article which was written by student Carl Holm for publication in the Manly Daily after he interviewed Jack Pearce 2/1st Pioneer at the age of 97 years.

Back in the heady days of the 1920's, Manly (the Village as it was known) had a permanent holiday atmosphere, according to Jack "Hellfire" Pearce. He then drove buses, which took campers from Manly on their way to the beachside huts tucked away in the bush at Freshwater and Queenscliff.

As a teenager in 1923, Jack landed a job with Manly Diggers Motor Service, first as a conductor and later as a driver. On wages of 3 pounds a week he plied the blue buses from The Corso, at Manly Town Hall, to Queenscliff and Freshwater. Competition was very keen in those days. The rival North Harbour Bus Company ran white buses and as the two buses arrived at the rank there was a battle to grab fares. Cries of "White bus leaving first" were met by Jack's response, "Blue bus will get there first".

The buses, usually carrying two or three times the thirty passengers they were designed for, would tear up Whistler Street and on to Freshwater. Some passengers would have paid their fare, others simply grabbed a toe-hold on the running board and hung on for grim life and Jack remembers those days fondly.

On weekends campers came from all parts of Sydney and when the conductor would call "Fares please", some would say "give me a dozen" or "give me half a dozen" and it was impossible to find out who paid or didn't. If you accused any person of fare evasion, all you got was "Bill paid mine! Hey, Bill, did you get my ticket?" The answer was always "Yes". With five or ten gallon kegs perched on the mudguards the campers would lurch up Queenscliff Road, with solid tyres jarring in potholes.

A lot of busmen had open invitations to the "camps", where Jack remembers a dozen party houses. The boys who came over from Balmain, Leichhardt, Marrickville and places, used to bring their girls over to Freshwater, and if the girls didn't oblige, they'd often dump them out in the street half naked."

Back then, all the buses had names – Nil Desperandum, The Bolter and Artilleryman, but perhaps the most intriguing was one called Crazy Cottage.

Built before legislation governed the design of passenger vehicles, the body was locally manufactured. "We had a garage at the bottom of Whistler Street where the parking area is now," Jack said. "They bought this machine, put it in the shed and asked a bloke to come along and make a bus out of it. Well, he did, and they invited all the friends and relatives around to come and see the bus launched." They said to the driver – "Right, take it away", but he couldn't take it away, because it was too big. They had to turn around and take the workshop doors off. The strange design had the driver perched above the motor, with the radiator behind him. This had its advantages, "On Saturday nights we'd put in half a dozen saveloys, tie a string around 'em and dangle 'em down into the radiator. When we got up the top, we'd have hot saveloys", Jack said.

Despite the odd design of some of the early buses, with their wooden coachwork and solid rubber tyres, the overcrowding and the speeds at which they were driven through the streets of Manly, the most serious accident Jack can remember was the collision of an opposition bus with a milk float. "There was a horse and cart going across to the beach and the other bloke had run into him. When we came on the scene the horse was knocked about and had to be put down," Jack recalled.

"In the 1920's the pressures of the job were quite different to those of today. The owners put an ad in the paper for a bus driver," Jack said. "This bloke came along and they said to him, 'Why do you think you'd be a good bus driver?' and he said he'd been driving in the fire brigade and the boss said, 'You're the bloke we're looking for'.

Anyhow this bloke gets the job and the boss said to him, "When you are coming back from Queenscliff, you must beat the other bus back to the wharf, so you're first on the rank." Anyhow, at the corner of Raglan Street and Whistler Street he took out four posts that were holding the roof over the footpath and the whole shop awning came down, Wallop!

"Gee it was funny!" he said to the boss, "If that's what I've got to do, I don't want the job".

LAST POST

ROY LEVY 2/1 of Revesby passed away in Concord Hospital on 15th June, aged 79 years, after a stay in hospital of six weeks. He had undergone two operations – one on 30th April when they amputated his right leg below the knee, then a second operation on 7th June when they amputated above the knee.

The funeral at Rookwood Crematorium on 18th June was attended by twelve Pioneers, with Padstow RSL carrying out the Poppy Service.

The Eulogy was read by Welfare Officer Bill Tasker in which he gave details of Roy's service with the 53rd Infantry Battalion on the Kokoda Track and his service with the 2/2nd Pioneers at Nadzab, Lae and Shaggy Ridge. He also spoke of Roy having been a staunch

Committee member of twelve years and was delegate to the 7th Division.

Daughter Joanne then read a beautiful Eulogy on Roy which was headed, "Dad, you're my hero".

Sincere sympathy was extended to wife Dawn, daughters Susan and Joanne by Don Crawford who had visited Roy twice weekly in hospital.

GORDON FINLAY 2/1 of Mt Pritchard passed away on 8th July in Liverpool Hospital at age of 88 years.

The funeral at Forest Lawn Gardens Crematorium at Leppington was attended by fourteen Pioneers.

The Liverpool RSL delivered the Poppy Service and Welfare Officer Bill Tasker read the Eulogy in which he spoke of Gordon's service with the 2/1st Pioneers at Tobruk and then in the Kokoda Campaign. After being commissioned he was transferred to the 14/32 Infantry Battalion.

Bill also spoke of Gordon's involvement as a Committee member since 1948 having been Social Secretary for six years – Vice President for thirty-eight years and assisted in running the Anzac Day Reunions and Country Reunions since 1963.

In 1982 he was made a Life Member for his services to the Association, Committee and Pioneer News wrapping Committee for forty years.

The private Eulogy was read by granddaughter Shelley and was most touching.

Sincere sympathy was extended by Bill Tasker to wife Olive, daughters Jan and Helen and son Geoff.

DICK BLAKENEY 2/1 of RSL Retirement Village, Narrabeen passed away on 28th July and the funeral service at Northern Suburbs Crematorium on 1st August was conducted by celebrant Phillip Grace.

The first Eulogy was given by Dick's son in law who mentioned Dick was known as "Pancho" to the family and he related some funny incidents of Dick's life.

The second Eulogy was given by Dick's grand-daughter who related that Dick passed away peacefully in Mona Vale Hospital with the family present.

Pioneers in attendance were Frank and Beryl Gillian, Dan Sprouster and Steve Clarke who extended sincere sympathy to wife Val and her family.

HUGH (ARCHIE) MacTAVISH 2/1 of Tamworth passed away on 9th August at Tamworth Base Hospital aged 80 years.

The funeral service on 13th August was conducted at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, West Tamworth and was attended by Bill Russell and Ted Carter to whom we thank for sending the details.

JACK KEMPNIICH 2/1 of Fingal Bay passed away on 21st August, aged 90 years, and the funeral was held at Beresfield Crematorium, in the presence of many of his mates from the services and the Newcastle area.

Jack was regarded by all as a quiet achiever and was very well respected. The service was conducted by the President of Waratah/Mayfield RSL assisted by Nelson Bay RSL, Jack being a member of both clubs.

Pioneers in attendance were Noel Schomberg, Vi Flynn and Jack Bertram who expressed to wife Maisie, sincere sympathy on behalf of the Association. We thank Jack Bertram for this report.

LEN O'CONNOR 2/1 of Wollongbah, formerly of Tumbulghum, passed away on 20th September and the funeral on 26th September was attended by Ron Cross to whom we thank for sending in the details.

GEORGE DENT 2/1 of East Hills, formerly of Forbes, passed away on 1st October.

BRUCE METCALF 2/2 of Condell Park passed away on 29th September after a long illness with cancer.

The funeral service took place on 2nd October and Nell and Bob Ginnane represented the Association and extended our deepest sympathy to wife Rita.

DON GALVIN 2/1 of Mt Coolum Shores, Qld., and formerly of Gloucester, passed away in October, aged 86 years, and we are grateful to his nephew James Murray in giving us the details.