

PIONEER NEWS

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

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

Treasurer: DON CRAWFORD

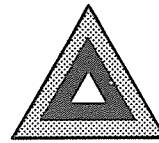
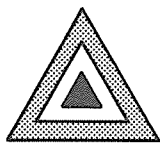
Editors: MAX & PEG HERRON

President: ALLAN McINNES

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Welfare: BILL TASKER, Phone 9718 6658



OUR INTREPID TRAVELLER

Readers will remember the article in the July 2005 "Pioneer News" by Ken Oliver reporting on his Government sponsored pilgrimage to Borneo in June of that year. Now Ken reports on a further trip last November when he and son Dean went on a private trip to New Guinea and made every endeavour to visit all the places where the 2/1sts served in their campaign in 1942/43.

The following is taken from Ken's report to the Association in which, firstly, he reminisces about his Borneo tour and then on to New Guinea.

"Watching the news on TV about the massive fire explosion and smoke from an oil depot near London took my mind back to the bombardment and shelling on our landing at Balikpapan in Borneo on 1st July 1945. This then took me back to my pilgrimage to Borneo last June, only this time I didn't have to carry my back pack as I had someone to carry it for me - and paid in full by the generosity of the Australian taxpayer.

For many years I always hoped to one day being able to make a return visit to New Guinea and when I was lucky enough, courtesy the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Btms. Association, of being selected for either the New Guinea or Borneo pilgrimages on the 60th Anniversary of the cessation of hostilities, I had hoped I would have been selected for New Guinea. However, I was selected for Borneo, so this left me with the urge to one day make my dream of going back to New Guinea a reality.

With a leave pass from my good wife, Beryl, my son Dean and I set out in November for the long awaited trip. First port of call was Milne Bay where my D Coy. had been detached from the 2/1st unit and landed at the Gili Gili wharf area on 6th September 1942 from the Chinese ship "Anshun". Later that evening, while unloading under flood lights, a Japanese cruiser shelled the area and the "Anshun", hit a number of times, rolled over and sank. Fortunately there were no casualties, but we lost all our equipment.

Milne Bay still exists, but the jungle has taken over so much of the area we were in, that to get to recognisable spots you would need to hack your way through. When the Japanese were disposed, D Coy. was given the task of building a road from the swamp land of Gili Gili up to the mountain behind and this was called the Mapo Road. My 17 Platoon had three tents on a hill, overlooking Milne Bay. In our day the area was a large coconut plantation, but today it has been taken over by the Palm Oil palm which has flattened nearly all the Bay.

The only town is called Alotau, with a population of 3,000 and very few cars - everyone walks. The people are so friendly and constantly wanted to hear any stories of the war, so I always tried to keep my stories short and humorous. I met and spoke at length with the very respected Elder of MAPO Village which is now called Awaduma. His name was Septimus and he was a boy during the campaign at Milne Bay - is now 79. It was great to hear his stories.

We then flew on to Port Moresby where Dean and I were the guests of my nephew, Lt. Colonel Craig Hinchcliffe. We stayed in the compound of the Australian High Commissioner which is fully fortified with

razor and electrified wire - even heavy metal bedroom doors. The "rascals" have made Moresby a dangerous place to live.

On our first day the Colonel organised a tour in a four-wheel drive up the mountain to Owers' Corner, which is the starting point of the Kokoda Track. It was from Owers' Corner that the 2/1sts moved up to Uberi, then up the "Golden Stairway" of 1,500 crudely built steps cradled with mud and rain through to Imita Ridge where they took up position alongside the 2/25th, 2/31st and 2/33rd Infantry Battalions on 20th September 1942.

It was here also at Owers' Corner that 5 Platoon of the Unit were attached to the 14th Field Regiment R.A.A. with our Lieut. John Gilchrist directing operations in man handling a 25-pounder artillery gun up to the foot of Imita Ridge so as to fire on the Japanese positions. According to the Regiment members the Japanese retreated when the 25-pounder opened fire.

We also visited the Quarry and the War Museum which we found most interesting, especially to see a German Junker aircraft, built of corrugated aluminium, which had crash landed on the Kokoda Track. The 9-mile Quarry is still there, and operating, in which the unit toiled in producing gravel for the building of Jackson Air Field so that the bombers could land. They worked three shifts per day, seven days a week and produced 76,000 yards of gravel until they were relieved in June 1943.

All told it was a great experience to go back and visit the places where we served and even today remain forever in our memories."

ANZAC ACTIVITIES - 2006

WREATH LAYING - 24TH APRIL AT 3.45PM

All members and their ladies are invited to attend the Wreath Laying Service at the Cenotaph on Monday, 24th April at 3.45pm.

Assemble at 3.30pm, on the corner of Martin Place and Pitt Street on the GPO side. Medals may be worn.

ANZAC DAY MARCH - TUESDAY 25TH APRIL

THE TWO UNITS WILL FORM UP TOGETHER and march as one group this year and in the future. This proposal was put forward at the November General Meeting, and was agreed upon. This decision was made because of the low attendance of seventeen 2/1sts and twelve 2/2nds at last year's march.

The two units will form up on Tuesday, 25th April outside the Leagues Club in Phillip Street, head on to King Street rear of the 6th Division.

This change of combining the two units has been approved by the RSL. TV Channel 2 have been given the details and have agreed to the following procedure of forming up:

The two banners, Australian Flags and the two Leaders will form up, with the 2/1sts on the left side and the 2/2nds on the right.

The front row will consist of three 2/1sts on the left flank and three 2/2nds on the right. The 2/1sts will then form up behind their 2/1st markers and 2/2nds will form up behind their 2/2nd markers. Carers may form up with their member. Channel Two have requested relatives to form up behind the veterans.

Relatives taking part in the march must be RSL age (18 years or older) and they must

report to the unit marshal Bill Tasker who will ensure relatives are wearing the deceased member's medals on the right breast.

ANZAC REUNION - TUESDAY 25TH APRIL

Venue for the Reunion Dinner is the Occidental Hotel, 43 York Street Sydney. Board the train at Museum Station, after the march, to Wynyard Station, up the lift and escalator, turn right into York Street along to Erskine Street and the hotel is on the corner.

In the hotel entrance you will be greeted by sons, Geoff Finlay, David Herron and Ray Law, who will accept the lunch fee and issue name tags.

LAST POST

GEORGE SAUER 2/1 of S.A. passed away on 2nd January 2005 at the age of 87 years. He had been unwell for a few years and then broke a hip, which resulted in an operation, from which he did not recover.

His widow Eulalie recently wrote to us and apologised for not writing sooner but she had not enjoyed good health herself in recent years. We extend sincere sympathy to you Eulalie and your daughter Elizabeth and son Geoffrey.

JOHN GORDON (BOB) MCGREGOR 2/2 of Brisbane passed away on 6th October 2005 at John Flynn Hospital, Brisbane. We are grateful to his daughter for sending the details.

DES GREEN 2/1 of Wattle Grove passed away on 21st November 2005 at the age of 81 years while in Frank Widdon Homes. He had not enjoyed good health for the past two years and suffered with Parkinsons Disease among other health problems.

The funeral was conducted at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium and the Eulogy was read by son Stephen. We thank Mrs Green for giving us the details and have extended our sincere sympathy to her and the family.

JOHN (JACK) MCGREGOR 2/2 of Shortland passed away on 31st December 2005. He served with the unit in New Guinea and Borneo. We thank son Ken for sending the details.

JOYCE DENNY of Lismore, widow of David 2/1 passed away 2nd January 2006. The funeral service was held at Lismore Memorial Gardens Crematorium and Pioneers in attendance were Ken/Ida Wilson, Terry/Claire McGuire, Dick Walker, Alf/Lil Bettens, Dot Priest and Betty Carter.

We thank Ken Wilson for sending the details and for extending sincere sympathy on behalf of the Association to her family.

CYRIL AMIES 2/1 of Forbes passed away on 6th January. He originally came from Epping, but moved to Forbes some years ago. Cyril had not been in the best of health for some time. We extend our sincere sympathy to his widow Doris and daughter Wendy.

FRANK MAHER 2/1 of Goolwa SA, formerly of Macarthur VIC passed away in December 2005. We thank Eric Causer for the details.

NELL LAUGHREN, widow of Pat 2/1, Qld passed away on 29th December 2005 and the funeral service was held at Nambour.

We thank Mollie-Jean Hunt for phoning in the details and giving the address of Mary who is the daughter of Nell. Mollie used to visit Nell in the St Paul de Chartres Village and she extended sincere sympathy to the family on behalf of the Association.

— continued on page 4

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

The first issue of the year and I hope our readers and their families were able to share a happy and healthy Festive Season. For some of our readers it would be a time of sadness after the loss of loved ones during the year. Let us never forget yesterday's memories, tomorrow's dreams or today's laughter and the hope that the coming year will bring peace to our troubled world.

DORIS AMIES, Forbes, widow of Cyril 2/1, with a welcome letter for Christmas and lots of news from her part of the country. Sadly to say, since her letter we have received a phone call to say that Cyril had passed away on 6th January, after failing health over the last couple of years. (Max has covered this in Last Post.) Our deepest sympathy is extended to you, Doris, and to Wendy and Stu.

At the time of writing they had been blessed with heavy falls of rain and their rose garden was really a picture, but strong winds and the heat had dried up the plants and grass. They have a new bore, 89 feet down, and far better quality of water, as the old one suddenly gave "up the ghost".

Says country life is certainly a relaxed environment until such things as this arise.

Doris says daughter Wendy has now retired as principal of Forbes High School and has been a great help to her while Cyril was so ill helping with her dad and lots of odd jobs around the garden.

The News will continue to be posted to you, Doris, and will look forward to a note from you whenever you have the time. Take care and our love and best wishes to all.

ROBYN BELL, Port Melbourne, daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1, with Christmas greetings to all and to say she was sorry to hear of the passing of Perc Penrose 2/1 in June. All going well, she hopes to make Sydney for ANZAC Day and sends her warm regards to all.

PAT BENTLEY, Yokine W.A., widow of Alf 2/1, with greetings and some cuttings she found amongst Alf's papers which she thought might be of interest in our "archives". The Bob Pawley mentioned is not on our mailing list, but recorded on our nominal roll, so must have had some contact with Alf in later years. Also thanks for your card re the luncheon, Pat, and we look forward to seeing you and Loma again. How the time slips by, seems no time since last ANZAC Day. Love and best wishes, see you soon.

JUNE BIRRELL, Mudgee, widow of Bob 2/1, with a donation to the News and Christmas greetings to the hard working staff of the Association. Many thanks June for your kind words and we hope the coming year brings you and yours good health and happiness. Your cheque was very much appreciated.

MAVIS BLANCH, Beaudesert Qld, widow of Ray (Joe) 2/1, with Christmas greetings to all and news of her activities since she wrote last. She leads a fairly busy life (good to see) lots of charity work and went on a War Widows trip to the Whitsundays and a bowls mystery tour, both very enjoyable. Mavis mentions that Ray's brother, Cecil, who was also a 2/1, was 93 on 3rd Jan. and doing well.

Having heard from Lexie Coates how pleased she was with the plaque Lex had organised at the Rose Garden at the Concord Kokoda Track, Mavis asked Max for details as to how to order. Alice Kang, secretary of the Track, was to send on details to you, Mavis, so hope by now you have been able to organise one for Ray.

Always good to hear from you and trust the coming year will be a happy and healthy one for you. Our love and best wishes.

JOHN BOYD, Narre Warren Vic, son of the late Stan Boyd 2/1, with quite a long letter and his thanks for the News. We shall be happy to put your sister Winifred on the mailing list, John, if you send us her address at Kellyville, and we do hope the coming year will be kinder to her and her family healthwise.

John seems to be fairly involved with Legacy and lots of celebrations for 75th Birthdays for both his wife Beverley and himself and a 50th wedding anniversary in October last. Trust all went well with all the activities and you were able to enjoy all the trimmings of champers and a few decent frothy topped beers.

John's Legacy Group covers several cities, shires and districts in their area and are currently responsible for approximately 2,000 widows, disabled dependants and children. Certainly a challenge and plenty of hard work ahead.

Many thanks for your letter, John, and keep up the good work.

VERA BRADLEY, Cairns, our ex-AAMWS friend, with her greetings to all for Christmas and the sad news that her husband Ron had passed away since she wrote last. We were both saddened to hear the news, as they had been very good to Max and I on our trips to Cairns and has kept us up-to-date on happenings, army wise, in the north.

All the best, my dear, and love from us both.

LES BRITT 2/1, Redlynch Qld, with a donation to funds and the news that he had been in hospital having a bowel operation, but was home and on the mend. His move to a retirement village at Redlynch has been good and he is happy in his new surrounds. He is sad to see so many of the old unit passing on due to sickness and old age – but I guess that's a sign of the times. Says he's one of the remaining few at 86. Keep well, Les, and thanks for the sub.

MARY BURNHAM, Forster, daughter of the late Lieut-Col. Arnold Brown 2/1, with greetings for the Festive Season to all Pioneers and a very healthy new year.

Did enjoy her trip to Sydney for the ANZAC Day activities last year, but was not sure if she would be able to repeat that this year unless she could find someone to stay with her husband, who was not in the best of health. We enjoyed your company, Mary, so do hope something will turn up. Our best wishes to you both and keep well.

GRETA CLIFFORD, Yagoona, widow of Daniel (Mick) Clifford 2/1, with a letter in December with a very generous donation to funds which was very much appreciated. At the time of writing, Daniel was very sick with Alzheimers and sadly to say he passed away late in February. (Max has reported this in Last Post.)

Greta looked forward to the News and read it to Daniel, even though he was not able to comprehend a lot of the time. Your name will be kept on the mailing list, Greta, until such time as you inform Max otherwise, and we thank you for your good wishes to all those who keep the News afloat. Our kind regards and sincere sympathy in your loss.

LEXIE COATES, Umina, widow of Jack 2/1, with Christmas greetings to all members of the Association and a cheque towards the News, many thanks. Plenty of Xmas activities on the Central Coast with trips, meetings and parties and a big War Widows "do" at the Wentworth Hotel in Sydney attended by 500 members. A great day. Also attended the War Widows' Walk on the Kokoda Track Walkway at Concord – 600 took part. This is a big day for the widows and they come from far and near to take part – mostly by buses.

Lex had a plaque mounted in the Rose Garden at the Concord Hospital Memorial and was very pleased with the end result. She sent her thanks to Max for his help and also for continuing to send the News.

Many thanks, Lex, keep well and our best wishes.

RICHARD COBBLE 2/1, Banora Point, with a cheque for the Treasurer and his apologies for lateness. Says he dodges writing letters – use of phone and email so easy for a lazy man.

His health is good except for a hip replacement in recent years and has developed venous ulcers which have to be dressed twice a week by visiting nursing sisters. Sadly has had to give up golf and his lawn bowls.

Was sorry to hear of the passing of Perc Penrose during the year – sadly not too many of Don Coy on our mailing list anymore. All the best.

PAT COLLINS 2/2, Glenfield, with his dues for the News and his apologies for not sending it earlier. Pat has been in and out of Liverpool Hospital, losing a kidney in the process, also the loss of his dear wife Edna the previous year, that I'm sure he has had more than enough worries than remembering his Pioneer subs. Do hope your health has improved Pat and that the coming year will be brighter.

Many thanks for your kind wishes to both Max and myself, Pat, and as you say the Pioneers have become part of our life over so many years. Let's hope our health stands up to the years to come.

Hopefully may see you ANZAC Day. All the best.

RON COYTE 2/1, Wentworthville, with a welcome donation to funds and Christmas greetings to all. In regard to Harry Corby, Ron, we had noticed when they put his number in Last Post in Reveille it was different to our records. I always check for Max – both with the Nominal Roll in the Pioneer History and Army Records of the battalion which we also have in our possession. According to Army Records it is NX69865 – not NX69861 – and I doubt if the battalion records would be incorrect over six years of war. He has not been on our list for many years, as his Newsletter came back "Left Address".

In your mentioning Les Britt, I did ask him through the Mail Bag if he was the same Les you knew in Orange as a boy, but received no reply. Let's hope he sees your query, as he has a mention in this issue and still lives in Redlynch in Nth Queensland.

Good to hear you have been granted the EDA Pension, certainly make things easier healthwise. All the best to you and good wife Eileen, for the coming year.

ALLAN CRUTE 2/1, Woolgoolga, with a welcome donation to funds, for which many thanks, and Season's Greetings to all for a healthy and prosperous 2006. Allan says the years are going too quickly and the birthdays, too, mounting up – he turned 88 in November. However, still lives in his own house and has his driver's licence. (Worth it's weight in gold.) He has a "walker" to get about on account of his bad back, and gets around reasonably well. By using the mallet as a walking stick, he can even have a couple of games of croquet. Good for you, Allan, nice to at least try to keep active.

Do keep well, Allan, and best wishes to you, Dennis and family for the coming year.

ALBY DEAN 2/1, Shepparton Vic, with his apology for lateness of sub for the News. Many thanks, Alby, and all the best to you for the coming year.

BOB DONALD 2/1, Glen Innes, with a donation for the News – many thanks – and sends his best wishes to all Pioneers for healthy new year.

In his letter, Bob is trying to trace the whereabouts of an old B Coy mate by the name of Alf Green. We did have a Pioneer A. E. Green of 18 Beach Road, Bondi, on our roll approximately 15 years ago, but no longer have him registered. Whether he is the Alf Green the Pioneers knew as "Bull" Green, we are not sure and thought one of our readers might be able to help.

All this came about because Bob put a letter in the local Glen Innes paper just before Remembrance Day with a photo of Alf Green, with seven weeks growth of beard and describing the conditions in the jungle. After the paper came out a chap from Glen Innes rang to say he was Alf's nephew and was hoping to locate his uncle. The family had lost track of him and they did not know if he was still alive. He was hoping someone, somewhere, could perhaps be able to help. Max has been in touch with Bob Donald and hopes that one of our Pioneers might be able to help.

We will let you know if any of our readers can help, Bob, and glad to see you still like to receive the paper. All the best.

GRACE FOWKES, Wentworthville, widow of Dick ("Snowy") 2/1, with Christmas greetings to all Pioneers and a welcome donation to funds.

Many thanks, Grace, and nice to speak to you on the phone re the mounting of Dick's medals, and that you were pleased with the end result.

Kind regards and all the best for the coming year.

BOB GINNANE 2/2, Leumeah, with best wishes from Nell and himself for 2006 and the hope that, God willing, he will be able to attend the reunion on ANZAC Day. He has not been able to attend the meetings of the Committee because of the steps at Redfern Station and says the family have christened him "magnet" as he picks up every "wog" that is going about. He has thrombosis in both legs, but says he looks cute in his white stockings. At least you haven't lost your sense of humour, Bob, and we do hope your health continues to improve before the "big day". Fond wishes to both Nell and yourself and hope to see you soon.

CLIVE HARRIS 2/1, Aberdeen, with the news that he has been in and out of hospital most of the year with a cancer problem, but sends greetings to his Pioneer friends for the year ahead. Do hope your health will improve with treatment, Clive, and we send you our very best wishes. Take care.

JOHN HAYDEN 2/1, Orange, with two cards as usual per pen of dear wife Wyn, and much excitement of a move to a new UPA retirement village in Orange. They have a double unit beautifully furnished, breakfast in their room with lunch and dinner in the dining room, lots of help with showering, etc. and lovely gardens where John can get around on his walking frame. So good to hear that you have both made the move from your old home in Orange so happily.

Prior to Christmas, John had been flown to Sydney to Prince Alfred Hospital for a blood condition before being transferred back to Orange, where he spent some weeks under treatment. Wyn is still battling with arthritis in her hands and eye problems, so we hope the new move and less work does wonders for both of you. Take care and love to both.

MERCIA HEALY, "Keysborough" Vic, widow of Leo 2/1, with greetings for Christmas and made mention of a hip replacement during the year and perhaps further surgery on the other. She had not seen Doff and Eric Causer (he and Leo were fellow Sigs in the 2/1st) during the year, says their reunion is lacking numbers, plus the will to travel and nearing the 80 mark.

Trust the new grandchild has arrived safely. Mercia said Leo would have loved to have seen grandson Jack (aged 3) and the new baby, he was very good with children. Grandma will have to do all the spoiling. Our best wishes for the year ahead.

PAM HERRICK, Sutherland, daughter of the late George Bates 2/1, with her usual long Christmas letter of her "doings" during the year and greetings to all Pioneers and their families for a blessed and happy new year.

At the time of writing was off to the Philippines to stay with daughter Karen and her family and to spend Christmas with them. While there they will be teaching English again at Don Bosco School for street children at Alaya Alabang and once again enjoying the children. Daughter Tracey will join them in the Philippines before returning to Brisbane to prepare for her new teaching job and son Damian and his family have moved to Charlotte in North Carolina USA. This year Pam hopes to be off to the UK, Spain and hopefully the USA, a round the world air ticket is the way to go and far more economical.

Good to hear from you, Pam, and your "doings" for the year and hopefully may catch up with you for ANZAC Day. Take care and love.

GLORIA HUTCHINSON, Caringbah, widow of Bill 2/1, with a cheque enclosed for the News with her Christmas card. Many thanks, and hope the leg problem has cleared up since your fall. Always great to hear from you, take care and love.

BERT HUTTLEY 2/2, Proserpine Qld, with a cheque for the News, for which many thanks, and a cutting from their local paper with an article on the local veterans recognised for their war service during the VP Day celebrations in August. Coinciding with the 60th anniversary of VP Day,

they were individually presented by the Veterans' Affairs Minister De-Anne Kelly with a specially designed medal in recognition of their sacrifice in World War II. Bert was quite thrilled with the occasion and was happy that his wife and family were able to share the experience with him. He was asked, along with some of the others, to say a few words about where he was on VP Day – at Balikpapan in Borneo – and on his 22nd Birthday. Certainly two good reasons to celebrate, Bert.

He sends his regards to the Sigs of 2/2 and special thanks to all office bearers of the Association and those who keep the Pioneer News on the road. Many thanks, Bert, and good to hear from you again.

MAISIE KEMPNIICH, Shoal Bay, widow of Jack 2/1, with a cheery note for Christmas and says she is very happy in her new surrounds. Takes each day as it comes and sends her best to all Pioneers and the Newsletter staff. Would like to hear from any old friends who might be in the Shoal Bay area. She is in the Hostel of Harbourside Haven in Shoal Bay Road, Room 26. Vi Flynn and Noel Schomberg were hoping to see you while in the area over January, but I have not spoken to Vi since her return. All the best, Mais, and keep well.

JACK KERSLAKE 2/1, Collaroy, per pen of good wife Marj, with a note of thanks to both Max, Don and Val Crawford and myself for the luncheon at Pittwater RSL with them before Christmas. Jack enjoyed the outing and was happy to see some of his friends again. As soon as time permits will make a return visit, Jack. Keep well and hope to see you soon.

JOYCE LAW, Kareela, widow of Max 2/1, with greetings to all Pioneers for a Happy Christmas and loads of happiness and good health to all in the year ahead. Look forward to seeing you on ANZAC Day, Joyce, will be in touch before then.

ERNIE LUNN 2/2, Dubbo, with a welcome note written by Norma. It had been a long time between letters and we had been wondering how things were faring in their part of the country. Ernie wasn't well and they finally found he had Paget's Disease. Medication has helped a lot and his health shows some improvement. Norma has also been on the sick list with surgery during the year, no chemo so far, and hoping a check in January should convince the Drs all is well.. We hope so too, Norma, and can understand why we had not heard from you for so long. They had some welcome rain, but local people who lost their grain and fruit crops were hard hit. Molong had all its shopping centre destroyed, folks had to shop in Orange.

Take care both of you. Will be in touch soon.

JOYCE MCGREGOR, Bradbury, widow of Bob 2/1, with her Xmas letter and doings of the family over the last year. Always good to hear from you Joyce and catch up on all the News. Our paths don't seem to cross very much these days with age and distance, but you are often in our thoughts of the good times we shared in earlier years. Still have your great sense of humour – and jokes – and I have passed your joke sheet on to be shared amongst Pioneer friends.

Sorry to hear there is no improvement in your health, Joy, but still able to keep up with your War Widows and Legacy (with lots of help) and enjoy friends and family. I'm sure Joyce Walker always has some news for you when you meet.

Fond wishes to you and the girls, perhaps may be able to see Jill and Lynda over the ANZAC period.

JEAN MCINTYRE, Springwood, widow of John 2/2, with a welcome donation to funds enclosed with her Christmas letter. Many thanks, Jean, and lots of good health and happiness in the year ahead.

MATT ELLIOT 2/2, West Wollongong, with a very short note enclosing his subs for the year and his best wishes to all Pioneers, especially his mates in D Coy 2/2. Our thanks, Mat, and best wishes.

JEAN NICHOLS, Sutherland, widow of George 2/1, with a welcome donation to funds enclosed with her greeting card for Christmas. Many thanks, Jean, and your subscription covered until 2015.

Hope you still find the News of interest and trust that, in time, the pain you feel in the loss of George will get easier. Time cannot steal the treasures that we carry in our hearts.

Kindest regards and hope the year ahead will bring peace and good health.

BETTY O'CONNOR, Ballina, widow of Neville 2/2, with greetings for Christmas and lots of good health to all Pioneers in the coming year. She reports that her family are all well and she is looking forward to having them all home for Christmas. Thanks for your note, Bette, and love and best wishes from both of us.

ROSEMARY OLIVER, Killarney Vale, daughter of the late Sidney Luxford 2/1, with a query to Max in regard to obtaining her father's service records. This information he posted to you in early December, so we trust by now you have received a reply from Army Records in Canberra. They usually take some weeks.

He also sent you some past copies of the Pioneer News and a short history of both 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneer Battalions and placed your name on our mailing list. Trust this information will be of assistance.

ALLAN OLSON 2/2, Netherby SA, with the news that Russ Harrison 2/2 was in Daws Road Repat Hospital, at the time of writing, after suffering a stroke. A later phone call said Russ was home having speech therapy and Allan hoped to be able to visit him again shortly.

Allan also reported the passing of Harry Fenwick, an original 2/2nd and a P.O.W.

Sends his regards to all and hopes 2006 turns out a bit better.

MONA REINERS, Corryong Vic., widow of Bern 2/1, with a long family letter enclosed with her Christmas card and it was lovely to once again catch up with all her news. With all the news of Brian, Lex and Mandy and their grown up families, some working and only a couple left at Uni, it certainly makes Max and I feel our age. Trust Sally has had the results and did well. I presume WA has the Higher School Certificate as we do in the East. Fancy Tim already finished 2nd year of Medicine – will be good to have a doctor in the house.

Mona mentions their RSL is down in numbers (as most are these days) but a few younger ones are carrying on. They take the ladies out twice a year as a rule, but only once last year.

Pleased to hear Mandy is well after her cancer treatment and cannot believe that small girl we took on holidays so long ago is now 50.

Shall ring you soon and catch up – if I can find you home – in the meantime love to you all from Max and I and so pleased to hear all your news. Keep well, and keep walking that little dog.

FRANCES RHODES, Canberra, daughter of the late Jim Rhodes 2/1, with a lovely hand-made card by herself, with Christmas greetings. A long letter enclosed with the family "doings" for the year, camping through Cowra, Dubbo, Lithgow and Jenolan Caves and the kids (Meg and James) having a "ball". They loved the Dubbo Zoo, hiring push bikes and riding around all day.

In May, Frances finally found a public service job in Canberra only to have Meg on the sick list and off school for quite a while and then James decided he'd get in the act and broke both bones a the end of the wrist joint and in plaster for weeks. Luckily Fran's job was kept on hold and she is very happy in her new surrounds.

Send her thanks for the News and is busy sorting through some of her Dad's letters from the war years, handed on to her by an aunt, for a scrap book Fran is doing. Fond love to all Fran and always good to hear from you.

CHARLES RICHARDSON 2/2, Manly West Qld, with belated greetings for Christmas due to a number of problems, but nothing serious. Has had to surrender his driver's licence on account of the vision test, which is always a blow to someone who has driven for years.

To celebrate VP Day, the "Courier Mail" ran a special issue and Charles was featured in it – photo and story. Max would be pleased to secure a copy if still available, Charles, and it could be returned to you if necessary.

Many thanks for your donation to the News and our best wishes.

TOSS ROBERTSON, Randwick, widow of Bill 2/2, and letter courtesy of daughter Janet O'Neill, to say Toss was in the War Memorial Hospital at Waverley after a fall and waiting for a bed in a nursing home. She can no longer manage at home as Janet is teaching. Toss is able to get about on a frame, but unable to take care of herself in the daytime. We send you our love, Toss, and take care.

EULALIE SAUER, Lower Mitcham SA, widow of George 2/1, with a donation to funds and the news that George had passed away earlier in the year after he broke a hip in a fall and did not recover. She realised it was for the best, as George had not known her for the last two years and had several falls.

Members of the local Probus Club have been a great help to her, also Legacy. Eulalie is coping and getting on with life, has a young man who comes to do the garden every four weeks, also the lawns, so leaves her time for household chores.

She went to Queensland in September to visit her daughter who is Ass. Professor in the School of Law at Bond University, with a practice at Robina. Was also good to see her grandchildren again.

Many thanks for your cheque and good wishes for Christmas and hope the New Year proves to be a healthy and happier one for you. Take Care.

BRYAN SMALLHORN 2/1, Armidale, with a cheque enclosed for the News and best wishes to all members for the Festive Season. Says the paper always full of news as usual, but continues to tell of the passing of old mates – time marching on and nothing we can do about it. Many thanks for the donation to funds.

Bryan was glad to see Bill Thiele's name in last issue (also in current one) along with that of Sam Lewis and John Hunt. Your good wishes are passed on to them through the News. John no longer comes down for ANZAC Day, but we do see Sam from time to time.

EDITH STONE, Raymond Terrace, widow of Allen 2/2, with a welcome letter enclosing a sub for the News and says she finds it most interesting reading and looks forward to receiving it in the mail. Thank you, Edith, for the kind words to the Editors – much appreciated – will endeavour to keep up the good work.

Her best wishes are passed on to all Pioneers for Christmas and a healthy and happy 2006.

GWEN STRODE, Yagoona, sister of the late Keith Jones 2/1, with Christmas greetings to all 2/1sts and a cheque for the News. Many thanks, Gwen, and maybe catch up with you one day soon. All the best.

BILL THIELE 2/1, Port Hughes SA, per pen of Betty (as usual) to say they are keeping fairly well, although age is creeping up fast these days. Bill has started his "Night Owl Bowls" a few miles out of Port Hughes as the golfing season has finished. The course at the moment looks much like a desert. Bill has a bad ankle and knee so bought himself a motor bike to get around – a Pioneer turned Biker!!

They had some late rains around their area and the farms have some good crops of wheat, barley and field peas. Good to hear, we could certainly do with some here.

The very best to you both and your kind regards passed on to all Pioneers. Many thanks for your cheque which has been handed on to Treasurer.

LES TUNKS 2/1, Mareeba, with greetings to all for the Festive Season, courtesy good wife Lesley. Les has been to Brisbane for an eye operation which has been successful, but at the time of writing was unable to drive. Lesley only drives when she has to, mainly because of P.M.R. and tells me she has been fighting it for years and can't get off the prednisone and hopes I have more luck. I have come down from 25mg daily to six (second time round) so here's hoping. Have a blood count every month, it's getting lower, but not quick enough for my liking – nor the doctors.

Trust the surprise birthday party for Les went off well and he enjoys reaching the grand

old age of 80. (Certainly has a few Pioneer mates keeping him company.) Best wishes, Les, for the big day. Fond love to both and keep well.

JOYCE WALKER, Gilead, widow of George 2/1, with greetings from the family for Christmas and hoping the New Year brings better health and happiness to all of our "Pioneer Family". Good to talk to you recently, Joyce, and hope by now Judith has the foot out of plaster. Love and best wishes to all and keep well. Hope to see you one day soon.

KEN WILSON 2/2, Lismore with sad news of the passing of Joyce Denny (widow of Dave 2/1) in January. Max has reported this in Last Post, Ken, and we thank you for sending on the details.

Ken also sent on some news of local Pioneers who have not been in the best of health – Kevin Raward 2/2 now in the Services Home in Ballina and Terry McGuire 2/1 had his hips operated on and is doing well. His doctor expects him to be able to be fully mobile in six weeks, which is good news. Sympathy is passed on to our Adelaide 2/2 – Allan Olson – on the death of his brother in January.

Many thanks, Ken, for your letter and for the Season Greetings card from Ida and yourself and the North Coast Pioneers. Your kind wishes were very much appreciated. Trust the New Year will bring lots of good health and happiness to all your members.

NEV WOODHAM 2/1, Cleveland Qld, with a few lines to say that a Rats of Tobruk reunion would be held in Brisbane at the Geebung RSL on 8/9/10 April. The organisers were hoping for a good roll up from interstate visitors.

Trust Betty's back has improved since you wrote last and our thanks to her for the trouble she went to regarding accommodation around Geebung should we decide to make the trip. At the moment very doubtful. Also many thanks for your Christmas greetings and we hope the coming year brings lots of good health and happiness. Take care and our love and best wishes.

BERT WOODHOUSE 2/1, Karridale WA, has finally been in touch re his Commemorative Mission to Papua New Guinea for the 60th Anniversary celebrations. The mission party left Brisbane on Sunday 11th September for Port Moresby and the following days found them attending ceremonies at Bomana War Cemetery, Wewak, Mission Hill, Coastwatcher Memorial at Madang, Rabaul Bita Paka War Cemetery and Owers' Corner at the start of the Kokoda Track, with a final dinner on the last evening. Bert gave us the data to log on to the website, which our daughter-in-law Lynn has done and for which we thank her. Readers interested can log on to website www.dva.gov.au/commem/2005 and follow the prompts. Made very interesting viewing.

■ That's all the Mail Bag for this issue and many thanks to all those members who sent cards to us for Christmas, apart from those mentioned in the Mail Bag. All were very much appreciated – best wishes from Max and myself for the coming year. God Bless.

Isabell/Julie Anderson, Aub/Nancy Brasier, Eric/Doff Causier, Nita Ferris, Olive Finlay, Verdie/Connie Humphreys, Elaine Henderson, Marie Jensen, Marie Lamerton, Joan Lake, Dawn Levy, Allan McInnes, Bert/May/Lynda Neasbey, Olive Richards/Chris/Annette, Doug/Roma Shearston, Bill/Win Tasker, Dick Wakely, Helen/Andrew Walker (daughter of late Mary Lloyd) and Doug/Maureen Waters.

SICK PARADE

JACK ALLISON 2/2 was in the San Hospital, Wahroonga, for a knee reconstruction in February after which he recuperated at Lady Davidson for two weeks. He is now home and getting around on a walking stick.

JOHN GILCHRIST 2/1 had an operation on his spine on 8th March at St Vincent's Hospital. After recovery he will be transferred to St Lukes at Kings Cross.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held on Friday 21st July at the Redfern RSL Club in the "Snooker Room". All Pioneers are invited to attend and will be most welcome.

LAST POST

DES EVANS 2/2 of Maidstone, Victoria passed away on 24th January, aged 84 years. At the time he resided at Trinity Gardens Aged Care Hostel in Melton. For many years he was a committee member of the 2/2nd Victorian Association and attended the ANZAC Day March and Reunion. He was very proud of his unit.

The funeral was held at the Altona Crematorium. We thank his son Ray, for sending the details and we extend sincere sympathy to the family.

DANIEL (MICK) CLIFFORD 2/1 of Yagoona passed away in February after a long illness. We thank widow Greta for giving us the details and extend to her our deepest sympathy.

2/1-2/2 LISMORE REUNION

The NSW North Coast Branch invite all Pioneers, wives, friends and adult family members to their Reunion on Saturday 14th October 2006 at Lismore and Sunday 15th October at Ballina for a luncheon.

On Saturday 14th October a Wreath Laying Service will be held at the Lismore Memorial Baths Cenotaph at 5pm. Medals to be worn.

The Reunion Dinner will be held at the Lismore Workers' Club in Keen Street at 7pm on 14th October and will be a smorgasbord at \$25 per head. Drinks will be at your own expense.

The lunch on the Sunday 15th will be a barbecue at the Ballina Ex-Services Home Complex at 12 noon, at 71/73 Norton Street Ballina at a cost of \$10 per head. Drinks at approx cost of \$1.50 per can or stubby of beer.

Accommodation in Lismore is available as follows:

1. OLYMPIC MOTEL Ph. (02) 6621 9900 Single \$70, Double \$80, Twin \$80
2. KARINGA MOTEL Ph (02) 6621 2787 is same price as Olympic Motel
3. CENTREPOINT MOTEL Ph (02) 6621 8877 - no rates to date.

These three motels are in Molesworth Street, within walking distance to the Workers' Club and Central Lismore.

Ballina Motels - no rates available at present and Ballina is 27kms from Lismore so own transport is needed. All accommodation is to be booked by yourself.

TRANSPORT to Lismore from Sydney - Trains:

1. Leaves Sydney at 7.15am arrives Lismore 7.20pm
2. Leaves Sydney at 4.20pm and arrives Lismore 4.25am next morning.

PLANES leave Sydney for Ballina and Lismore daily. All train travellers will be met at Lismore Station on arrival and taken to your Motel. Plane travellers will be met in Lismore as long as we are told. Ballina travellers would have to arrange own transport.

DEPOSIT of \$10 per head is requested with your application to reach K. Wilson before the 1st of October for catering purposes. Deposits to be made out to K. Wilson NOT the Association. Post form and deposit to K.A. Wilson at 9 Rosedale Square, Lismore NSW 2480. Phone (02) 6621 4762. No refund if non attendance. All donations appreciated.

CUT OUT - Fill in particulars

Full
Name:
Ladies
Name:

Phone: Unit:

Address:

No. ATTENDING ☐

TICK: CAR ☐ TRAIN ☐ PLANE ☐

PIONEER NEWS

Phone 9759 5491

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

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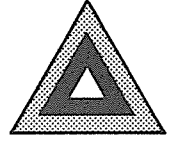
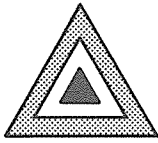
Editors: MAX & PEG HERRON

President: ALLAN McINNES

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Welfare: BILL TASKER, Phone 9718 6658



2/1-2/2 PIONEER ANZAC DAY ACTIVITIES

WREATH LAYING SERVICE

The service was held on Monday, 24 April at the Cenotaph, Martin Place, with an attendance of ten Pioneers and eighteen relatives. President Allan McInnes was march leader and Bill Tasker marshalled the assembly. The 2/1st banner was carried by Noel Grant 2/1 and Don Crawford 2/2 carried the 2/2nd banner.

Wreaths were laid by Ken Oliver for the Association, who also recited the Ode to the Fallen and Pat Bentley, WA widow of Alf 2/1 laid the wreath of the Ladies Auxiliary. Mary Burnham of Forster also laid a wreath in memory of her late father, Colonel Arnold Brown 2/1 and her brother who was killed at El Alamein.

The bugler was Aub Brasier, who played a fine rendition of Last Post and Reveille. We do thank Aub for his continued great support over the last forty years. We consider that a terrific effort, Aub, on our behalf.

ANZAC DAY MARCH

A cool day in the early twenties with only a sprinkle of rain, ensured comfortable conditions for the March. For the first time 2/1 on the left flank and 2/2 on the right, marched together behind the banners side-by-side up front. About twenty Pioneers formed up, behind them a large group (about 40) of "descendants". In front, the award-winning Castle Hill RSL Band, resplendent in blue and white, formed up in their usual position directly ahead. And then, in a surprise move, the space ahead was infiltrated by a contingent of Machine-Gunners who declined to give up ground. And so we moved off around the corner into King Street, there to wait for at least 50 minutes. Treasurer Don Crawford used this time to appeal to the Marshals. After consulting the order of march, the appeal was upheld and the interlopers were moved to their correct position. Another victory for the Pioneers over the Machine-Gunners.

Roy Jardine 2/1, and Allan McInnes 2/2 led the Pioneers. For 2/1, Ray Law was the Flag Bearer and Tim Lloyd carried the banner. For 2/2 Ryan Crawford was the Flag Bearer and Mark Neasbey carried the banner.

The march proceeded without further ado before a large and enthusiastic crowd. The march over, those attending the reunion, entrained at Museum, arriving at the Occidental Hotel before noon.

REUNION AT OCCIDENTAL HOTEL

It was business as usual at the Occidental with those indefatigable working sons Geoff Finlay, Ray Law and David Herron collecting luncheon monies and dispensing name tags, while upstairs Don Crawford and Gavin Todd issued receipts for Pioneer News contributions. Max Herron and grandson Joshua checked on reunion arrangements with Mary, the function room coordinator who together with her attentive staff are committed to making the reunion a success.

Allan McInnes recited the Ode and, referring to the combined marching of both units, briefly traced the history of the merged associations. He recalled that the reunions had now been held at the Occidental for twelve years, and made a small presentation to Manager,

Paulette West which in her absence was received, on her behalf, by Mary. Jack Bertram proposed an impromptu vote of thanks to the Executive Committee and the younger helpers, which was carried by acclamation.

Allan mentioned another "first", welcoming Peg Herron and her Ladies Auxiliary to this year's Occidental Reunion. It is a feature of ladies auxiliaries everywhere that they invariably make valuable contributions to the associated bodies and do so without fuss or fanfare. So it is with Peg and her Pioneer Ladies Auxiliary whose low-key contribution over the years has been outstanding. They are truly quiet achievers and their presence at the Reunion is well earned and most welcome.

Following with his address the President said he had received an apology for non-attendance from Patron, John Gilchrist, who had recently undergone an operation on his back and could not attend the march and Reunion.

Allan then went on to thank the working sons for their mighty effort in doing all the work in the foyer downstairs. He also went on to thank the younger generation for their generous donations at the bar, which kept the beer flowing all afternoon. A big thank you to the following: George Granger, Paul Maddrell, Don Crawford, Neil Whiteley, Josh Herron, Greg Neasbey, Ian Secombe, David Walker, Tim Maddrell, Dean Oliver, Tim Lloyd and the Noel Grant family.

Luncheon was again of the high standard we have come to accept. On this occasion the pipe bands which have attended on previous occasions were noticeable by their absence. About 3 pm the ranks began to thin as another successful reunion came to a close.

TABLE TALK

Jack Bertram was lucky to be taken from his sister's place at War Vets at Narrabeen – one of a procession of 80 taxis, with a police escort from Dee Why to Castlereagh Street. Jack says even George W Bush has not had a greater cavalcade. He passed on regards from Mollie-Jean and John Hunt from Brisbane and reported that Tom Wallace 2/1 is not riding winners at Broadmeadow any more, but still knows all the winners. Also was pleased to see the ladies with us on this occasion.

Jack Kerslake was pushed in his wheelchair in the march by grand-daughter Elly and made the distance. (Sorry he could not make the reunion.) A job well done Elly.

Eric Causer 2/1 of Hamilton Vic, rang with apologies for non-attendance – was in Brisbane and would be taking part in the march in that State. Also a message from Doug Shearston 2/1 of Forster with best wishes, age and distance now a problem.

The ladies enjoyed their new venue and hoped to make it again next year (God willing). Quite a few of the ladies were from interstate – Pat Bentley and niece Lorna Servillo from Western Australia, Jean Grant with daughter Margaret Fleming and daughter-in-law Ann Grant from Victoria, along with Robyn Bell from Melbourne, Doris Amies from Forbes, Mary Burnham from Forster and son Heath from Melbourne (just for the day) and Sydneysiders Joyce Law, Marj Kerslake, Barbara Allison, Marie Jensen, Kath Tooker and daughter Ainslie Cole, Olive

Finlay and daughter-in-law Lyn, Pam Herrick and Peg Herron and daughter-in-law Lynn.

Pam Herrick summed it up for the ladies with her note re the function – "We are now a complete family".

Ken Finlayson asks "Will Pioneers try to keep family/relatives marching with ex-service members in their unit?" Well, Ken, as Reunion Reporter I am not in a position to answer your question, but no doubt the Committee will consider it in due course. The RSL appears to have an agenda but firm guidelines would need to be established.

ROLL CALL AT REUNION

2/1st Jack Bertram (Hamilton), Dick Chalmers, Phil Cramsie (Buderim Qld), Laurie Kelly, Sam Lewis (Forster), Ken Oliver, Noel Schomberg, Jack Stone, Bill Tasker.

2/2nd Jack Allison, Andy Beebar, Don Crawford, Ross Dawson, Bob Ginnane, Bill Lewis, Clive Maddrell, Allan McInnes, Bert Neasbey (Davistown), Gavin Todd, Ken Wilson (Lismore).

SONS AND OTHERS

2/1st Heath Allison (Colonel Brown), Bob Cole (Jack Tooker), Geoff Finlay, Ken Finlayson (Alec George), Frank Fleming (Noel Grant), Don Grant, John Hayden Jnr, David and Joshua Herron, Ray Law, Gary and Chris Lewis (Sam), Dean Oliver, Ian and Nathan Secombe, Robert Stubbs (Noel Schomberg), Craig and David Walker, Neil Whiteley and Edward Cunningham.

2/2nd Ryan and Luke Crawford, Phil and John Dawson, Paul Geronimi (Jack McDonagh), Kim Ginnane, Phil and Tim Maddrell, Adam McInnes, Mark, Greg, Cath, and Kay Neasbey.

Finally many thanks to all who completed the questionnaire at luncheon time. The information contained in this report may not be complete for which we apologise but we can only go with what you tell us on the sheets we put out on the tables.

Reported by BILL LEWIS

LEST WE FORGET

By ALLAN McINNES

Why is the 25th April, ANZAC DAY, so special to Australians? It is the day we remember our gallant ANZACS from 91 years ago and future wars. Many Australian families lost family or relatives in WWI, WWII, Korea and Vietnam and that is what heritage is based on. It is a way of life with the word "Remembrance", plus free enterprise tolerance and most of all comradeship – mateship.

Each year the numbers of supporters for the marchers turn out far in excess of any other event. cheering and waving our flag. Many of these onlookers are children, teenagers and new Australians proving it to be the most respected day on our calendar, and the numbers are growing with passing years.

I missed this year's Dawn Service, but last year there was hardly room to stand and, according to the Press, 2006 was an even larger attendance. It means rising at 3.30 am or earlier to be in the city on time – once again proof of Sydney remembering.

My thanks to our Association members who were able to march and those who were at our Wreath Laying at the Cenotaph on 24th April. It was a very good roll-up and has been carried on for many years by our members, family and friends.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

Another ANZAC Day has gone and sadly both units well down in numbers as age fast catches up with our veterans. However, many family members proudly marched in place of their relatives. Both 2/1sts and 2/2nds marched alongside each other (so good to see) and behind the Castle Hill Youth Band who, over the past twelve years have been an inspiration for "ageing" legs. A brief shower early in the march soon cleared and made conditions ideal for the marchers. Not quite so many letters for the Mail Bag this issue, but always pleased to hear from those who have the time to put pen to paper.

FRED ALWAY 2/1, Beaumaris Vic., with a very short note with his donation to funds and his very best wishes passed on to all Pioneers. Says although it is so long ago, his thoughts turned to Balikpapan when he read Ken Oliver's article on his trip to Borneo in last News. Many thanks for sub, Fred, and our kind regards.

DORA ANDERSON, Merimbula, widow of Don 2/1, with quite a long letter of her "doings" of the last 12 months and her subs for 2006. Many thanks for the cheque enclosed, Dora, and that covers you for the next ten years.

Before joining (or being transferred) to the 2/1sts, Don had been a member of the 2/2nds and had taken part in the Nadzab campaign. He had been one of those who had to ferry boats down the Watut River to the Markham to provide the crossing for the troops.

In later years, Dora was fortunate enough to have an eight-week holiday in Lae where she stayed with Don's sister and her husband and whilst there visited Salamaua, Madang, Goroka, Bulolo and many other places. The Nadzab airfield was then being used as a go-cart track. She was very impressed with the beauty and care of the Lae War Cemetery.

Dora speaks very highly of the Legacy "boys" in her area – they really do a good job for the war widows and they do care. Very nice to hear, Dora, and glad you are still blessed with good health and able to take part in outings and your meetings.

Many thanks for your very kind wishes to those who keep the Association and newsletter going and we send you our kindest regards and lots of good health.

PHIL BARNETT 2/2, Alstonville, with a short note enclosing his sub and donations to funds. He and his wife both enjoy reading the News and were sorry to hear of Charles Richardson 2/2 and his vision problem. He passes on his thanks to Committee members and the editors for the time spent on behalf of all Pioneers. Thanks for the donation, Phil, and for your kind wishes.

PAT BENTLEY, Yokine W.A., widow of Alf 2/1, with greetings and to say she and niece Lorna Servillo were once again happy to share ANZAC Day with their Sydney friends. Pleased also to take part in the Ceremony at the Cenotaph where Pat was honoured to lay the Wreath for the Ladies. She and Lorna also attended the luncheon at the Occidental and hope to make the trip again next year.

Thanks for your notes on the trip to Egypt, Pat, and they are included in this issue.

Love and best wishes to you both, and you'd better start a "piggy bank" for next year's trip.

MAVIS BLANCH, Beaudesert Qld, widow of Ray 2/1, and many thanks for taking the time to contact the sister of the late Merv Rees 2/1 of Dorrigo, who had been killed in a tragic accident in 1970. Merv's sister, Hazel Earnshaw lives in Toormina, near Sawtell, and was anxious to hear from anyone who had known her brother in the army. She had mentioned Ray Blanch and Max sent her Mavis' address.

Good to hear your operation was a success, Mavis, and you are now playing bowls again. However, you don't want to overdo it. Also bought herself a new car and is very pleased with it.

Like most places they have not had much rain in her part of the country and says winter has set in with a vengeance, as low as -3, and cold westerly winds.

Mavis is very involved with the local Anglican Mothers' Union and has just received her 40 year certificate with four other ladies from her branch. Congratulations and hope you are well enough in October to go to the conference in Melbourne of the Men's Society – keeping in mind the reunion in Lismore and Ballina is also on in October.

Always good to hear from you and, perhaps, may see you at Ballina in October. Love and best wishes from both of us.

EVELYN BOOTH, Wagga Wagga, partner of the late Jack Morgan 2/2, with a welcome letter enclosing her dues for the News. Many thanks, Ev, and you can rest assured your name would not be struck off the mailing list.

Your kindest regards are passed on to Kevin Raward 2/2 who is now in the Services Home in Ballina and that you have happy memories of a trip with Kevin when he drove Jack and yourself to Dorrigo to spend a night with Ken Morgan and family – says it brought the Sergeant, Corporal and Cook together and what a "natter" they had.

Says she would like to attend the Lismore Reunion, but being on her own makes it a tall order.

Her very best wishes are passed on to all Pioneers and appreciates the work carried out by members of the Committee and the News editors. Many Thanks, Evelyn, take care and kind regards.

TED CARTER 2/1, Tamworth, with a very generous donation to funds – many thanks. We were in the process of trying to find Ted's new address as he had moved homes in Tamworth and his paper had been returned "address unknown". Good to have you back on the mailing list, Ted, and for the News contained in your letter.

The 2/1sts last Colonel, Adrian Buckley, is a resident of Tamworth, but Ted sees very little of him and Bill ("Peewee") Russell 2/2 he does see occasionally. Bill has been very active in the R.S.L. in Tamworth and Ted hoped to see him on ANZAC Day.

The ranks are thinning as you will see from the ANZAC Day report, a mere handful now making the march and the reunion lunch. However, those who attended had a good day.

Thank you for the invite to call in if in your part of the country – our trips to Walcha have been few and far between the last couple of years – but maybe one day. All the best to Mary and yourself, keep well and always good to hear from you.

GORDON CHRYSTALL 2/1, Larras Lee, per pen of good wife Eunice, with apologies for being late with their subs to the News. Many Thanks.

Molong is still recovering from the devastating floods of last November, but it has been a long, hard struggle. When Eunice wrote in March they had just opened a brand new supermarket and were hoping the newsagency would be back in business by early April. However, many businesses will not be opening again. They badly needed rain, but not to such an extent.

Pleased to see both look forward to the News and thank you for your good wishes. Kindest regards.

JACK CLAYPOLE 2/1, Matraville, with a short note enclosing his subs, for which many thanks. He saw the march on TV and said Bill Tasker certainly stood out with his Australian flag tie. (He also had socks to match.)

Jack recently celebrated his 90th birthday with family and friends, but doesn't get about

very much over the last couple of years because of the infection in his leg. Hope there has been some improvement since you wrote, Jack.

Also mentions he had received his 60 years medal and wishes all Pioneers the best of health.

VERA COOK, Randwick, widow of Clem 2/1, with a welcome donation to funds and a note to say she had been to visit Toss Robertson (widow of Bill 2/1 and 2/2) in Phillip House Nursing Home in Waverley and found her very bright and chirpy for her 90 odd years. Although not very mobile, she enjoyed Vera's visit, and we thank you, Vera, for your thoughtfulness. Good to talk to you on the phone, and will keep in touch. Best wishes from both of us.

BILL CUNNEEN 2/2, Burleigh Waters Qld, with his apologies for lateness in sending his subs, but it's very awkward writing with one hand. Many thanks for same and your best wishes are passed on to fellow Pioneers.

Bill mentions that his daughter is chasing up his war records and there were quite a few A.W.L.'s recorded – wouldn't be too many fellows who had a clean sheet, or hadn't spent time "confined to barracks", so join the "mob".

Hope you are keeping reasonably well since your stroke some years ago and that Beris keeps well. Kindest regards to you both.

ROSS DAWSON 2/2, Bayview, with his praise for ANZAC Day – picked up at Mona Vale in a stretch limousine, with comfort bar supplied and then marched with his three sons – John, Greig (from Queensland) and Phillip. The Association lunch was a great success and Ross would like to congratulate the Committee and helpers and says it was good to see the many ladies at the luncheon. Says his hip stood up well but was stiff next day (maybe too much fluid or not enough).

Thanks for your kind wishes to Max and myself, Ross, they were much appreciated.

WINN DWYER, Waverley, widow of "Mick" 2/1, with her donation to the News and best wishes to the Pioneer Men for ANZAC Day. Our thanks, Winn, and hope this finds you keeping good health and able to get out and about.

HAZEL EARNSHAW, Toormina, sister of the late Merv Rees 2/1, with a thank you letter to Max for the trouble he had gone to supply her with information on her brother after she had advertised in the VET Affairs newspaper for anyone who knew her brother during or after the war. Max was able to photocopy pars from earlier Pioneer News and able to fill her in on some of the activities that Merv had taken part in after the war until he was killed in an accident in 1970. Hazel had known Bill Jollie when he was a bank manager in Bellingen, also Sid Jopson, Ray Blanch and Bill Hoffman. All but Bill Hoffman have now passed on.

By a strange coincidence, Max's sister Peggy has recently moved to Marian Grove retirement village in Toormina and met Hazel at lunch recently, and her husband Bill. He was in the 2/7th Independent Co. (Commandos) 1942-1945 and has been a great support to Hazel in finding out information. Also Hazel's next door neighbour is a war widow of a 2/1st Pioneer, Lieut. Doug Painter, who was on our mailing list when he lived at Miranda in Sydney. Doug served in Borneo with the unit – what a small world!! Our kindest regards to you, Hazel, and will certainly call in if we are ever up your way.

BILL FLEMING 2/1, Mittagong, with a money order for subs and a few lines from good wife Maureen. Bill enjoyed meeting up with his Pioneer friends at the Cenotaph on ANZAC Eve and at the March on ANZAC Day. He also managed to attend the Dawn Service as well, thanks to the wonderful support of family members, a very memorable occasion.

As Bill has very bad eyesight and in a wheelchair we are grateful to family members who made the day special. I have a feeling someone told me it was his first trip in many, many years.

His family and friends were really impressed

by the special warmth and comradeship that still exists with the veterans and their families. We hope that one day people will understand why old soldiers like to get together occasionally – so much was shared in difficulty and danger.

Thanks for the letter, Maureen, and as written you the money order arrived safely in the second letter. We were a little concerned when the first one arrived empty and not sealed. Many thanks and best wishes to you both.

AVELINE GAMBLE, Chermerside Qld, widow of Bill 2/1, with a note enclosing her subs and to say she was saddened to hear of the passing of Bill Jollie. He had visited them when in Brisbane some years ago.

Your letter arrived too late for last issue, Aveline, and we thank you for the subs and hope you are keeping well.

JOHN GILCHRIST 2/1, Assoc. Patron spent a few weeks in St Vincents Hospital in March after an operation on his back. He then recuperated at St Lukes and went home in April. He is now at home and slowly improving.

JACK ALLISON 2/2 had a knee operation in March and after recuperating at Lady Davidson came home in time for attendance at the ANZAC Day Reunion.

STAN SELWOOD 2/1 of Ashfield was in Concord Hospital in February and we thank his son for letting us know.

PAM HERRICK, Sutherland, daughter of the late George Bates 2/1, has recently been awarded an International English Teachers Certificate from the Australasian Training Academy enabling her to teach English in overseas countries. Pam often spends time teaching at Don Bosco School for Street Children at Alaya Alabang in the Philippines while on holidays in that country. Congratulations, Pam, and our very best wishes.

ALF HOLLOWAY 2/1, Grafton, with a few lines of thanks for the News and a cheque enclosed to keep the show on the road. He is recovering from a stroke which has left him blind in the left eye and not much sight in the other. Gets plenty of loving care from his wife of sixty years, Gladys, and they have had a lot of good years together. Always great to hear in these troubled times, Alf, and we wish you both many more happy years together. Hope your health continues to improve.

DAWN LEVY, Revesby, widow of Roy 2/2 with a welcome letter enclosing her subs for the News. Many thanks. Good to see you are still enjoying your trips with Legacy, Dawn – one way of getting around and seeing the country and making some lovely friends in the bargain.

Love and best wishes from both of us, take care.

DON MURRAY 2/2, Cundletown, with a short note from St Pauls Hostel enclosing his sub for the News. He sends his best wishes to all and we hope you have settled in to your new surroundings and keeping well. All the best from your Pioneer friends.

JANET O'NEILL, Clovelly, daughter of the late Bill Robertson 2/2, with a welcome donation to the News – many thanks. Also passes on her thanks for same and says how she and her mother, Toss Robertson, look forward to receiving it.

Our thanks, Janet, for the photos you sent of the wreath laying on ANZAC Eve, I have sent some of them on to the Pioneers pictured as a memento of the occasion.

Love and best wishes to mum and yourself, and always nice to hear from you.

BOB PHILPOTS 2/2 Woodend Vic., with a short note enclosing his sub for the News and sends his kindest regards to all Pioneers with special mention of 2/2nds Allan McInnes and Bill Lewis. Many thanks, Bob, and best wishes.

REV, PETER PLAYSTED, Wentworthville, with a brief note of thanks for the Pioneer News and enclosing a donation to funds. This is not

necessary, Peter, and we shall continue to send you copies in the future. Ken Wilson of Lismore arranged for the copies to be sent when you were invited to speak at the Lismore reunions. Perhaps now and then you may find mention of former parishioners. Best wishes and continued good health.

KEITH PROSSER 2/1, Cranbrook W.A., enclosing some photos he would like mailed on to Ernie Lunn 2/2 of Dubbo, which Max posted on 14th May.

Keith said he and Ernie would often take off if they had a few days to spare (I hope with a leave pass) and one time caught the Sydney Morning Herald truck at 4 am for a cold trip to Canberra. Returned to Sydney, first class, by train after giving the guard a pound or two. Those were they days!!

Thanks for the cheque for the News and to daughter Penny for making the initial contact with us some time ago. Kindest regards.

BILL SANDS 2/1, Condell Park, with our thanks for a generous donation to the News. As a comparative latecomer to the Btn., he still likes to read of their activities since the war years. Many thanks, Bill, and best wishes for continued good health.

DOUG SHEARSTON 2/1, Forster, with a brief note enclosing his subs and very best wishes from Roma and himself. Speak quite often on the phone and catch up with News and family doings. Both keep up with their daily swims and Roma has plenty of exercising walking the little dog every morning. We miss you at our ANZAC functions, but realise age and distance have caught up. Love and best wishes to you both and take care.

DOROTHY STEAIN, Merewether, widow of Arthur 2/1, with a short note of thanks for the News and a sub enclosed towards costs and postage. She is unable to contribute to News section due to a sight impairment, but always pleased to see it in the mail. Take care and our best wishes.

JACK STEWART 2/1, Woodlands W.A., with his apologies for ANZAC Day this year, but sends his very best wishes for a successful parade with the best of Sydney weather. Hopes to be on deck next year and encloses a cheque for Pioneer funds. Many thanks and best wishes to you both.

MICK TASSELL 2/1, Hay, per pen of his daughter Veronica Patroni once again, and good to see her dad is keeping reasonably well after his heart problems last year. Mick is living by himself now with his wife in full-time care. He is managing very well and still cooks the best stews and curries around.

He looks forward to the News which keeps him up-to-date with his fellow Pioneers, whose numbers are being sadly depleted as the years roll on.

On a personal note, Veronica and her husband were in Townsville for the 60th Anniversary of V.P. Day and were very impressed with the celebrations organised in that city. Good to see that the younger generation can share the memories.

Thank you for your nice card, Veronica, and give our best regards to dad and our thanks for his donation to funds. Hope you get some rain shortly, the country certainly needs it. All the best.

JOY TAYLOR, Allawah, daughter of the late Jack Harvey 2/1, with a nice note of thanks to Max to say what a great honour it was to be able to join in the wreath laying at the Cenotaph and the march on ANZAC Day and, all being well, will certainly be there again next year.

The men had a great day at the Occidental and there were some sore knees and feet after the march – but that's another story. Get behind a good band and the aches soon disappear.

With best wishes and many thanks for your letter, Joy and look forward to catching up with you one day.

NEVILLE WOODHAM 2/1, Cleveland Qld, with a long letter re "doings" in their part of the

country and for the copies of State and Branch RSL papers which made very interesting reading. The write-ups in both were a fine tribute to Nev's service to the community over many years.

He was recently presented with an Australia Day Achievement Award (sponsored by the National Australia Day Committee and awarded though the Qld Branch of the RSL) at his local Redlands RSL, of which he had served as sub-Branch Secretary. He was also a founding Qld member of the Rats of Tobruk Assn., served time as a Legatee as well as a member of the Cleveland Bowling Club for 25 years, several years as Secretary. Congratulations on a job well done, Nev.

Many thanks to you both for your letters and the news from sunny Queensland and hoping to see you soon, love and best wishes.

LES TUNKS 2/1, Mareeba Qld, with a short note enclosing some very acceptable stamps and to say he and Lesley were keeping as well as can be expected for their ages. Have had a couple of trips to Cairns for check-ups and so far OK.

They had recently heard from John Paul 2/1, Jack and Audrey Hearn 2/2 and Dot Priest and they were all well. He had not heard from Bert Huttley and Shirley for some time.

Good to hear from you both and hope you had no problems with the cyclone, in your area.

■ That's all the Mail Bag for this issue as I've just about used all the space I am permitted by the "Boss", so until next issue keep well and take care.

TRIP TO EGYPT

Early last year Pat Bentley of Yokine W.A. (widow of Alf 2/1) went on a trip to Egypt with a friend whose Dad was a "Rat of Tobruk" and promised to write a few lines that may be of interest to those of the Battalion who saw service in North Africa. As Pat was only a schoolgirl at that period of time, and with no immediate relatives in the forces, very little of their trip covered areas where the fighting took place.

"After a long flight from Kuala Lumpur we were met by our Egyptian guide, who steered us swiftly through what looked to me like a very run down airport and off to our hotel. From then on it was all go, go, go.

First was the Cairo Museum. Very crowded, hot and noisy, with all the guides shouting to be heard above all the others . . . the exhibits were mind boggling. The old time Egyptians did not stint themselves, and their favourite metal seemed to be gold.

Next we visited markets, of which there were no shortage, also crowded and noisy. Also fairly expensive. Our dollar was four to the Egyptian pound. Kept the brain busy dividing and multiplying to work out if the purchase was a bargain or not.

Our time at the Pyramids and the Sphinx was no so hectic, but very interesting. A couple from our tour entered one of the pyramids . . . at a price . . . nothing for nothing! Said it was worth the money. We also had a look at the beginning of the Sahara Desert. One side of the Pyramids overlooked a huge modern city (Cairo) and the other side the bleak outlook of the Sahara, which was covered with camels and cameleers, selling souvenirs and camel rides.

Our tour out into the country, included the Mediterranean and Red Sea . . . also through a tunnel under the Suez Canal . . . and dipped a foot in same, the canal, not the tunnel. The country people and farmers still use the humble donkey for transport and carting goods . . . AND by gee they load the poor little animals up! Then there was the Aswan Dam – magnificent. Also lots of temples and the Valley of the Kings. Then there were souvenir shops just everywhere we stopped, even on the beach where Moses had his well, and led his lot away from Egypt.

We did get to visit the El Alamein War

Cemetery, most impressive and very well kept considering it is out in the desert. The museum was closed which was a disappointment to my friend as her dad had been in action there with the A.I.F. (and survived).

Very little was said or visited to do with the war in the area, and not a sight of it either. Luxury holiday apartments have been built along the beaches where possibly a lot of the fighting took place. We were mainly exposed to all things 3000 BC which left one breathless to say the least."

Many thanks for the notes on your trip, Pat, and will be of interest to those who have visited that part of the world.

LAST POST

ENID ROBINSON of Quaama, wife of Geoff 2/1, passed away on 25th April and the funeral was held at Bega on 1st May. During the war Enid was a member of the W.A.A.F.

Sincere sympathy was extended to Geoff and daughters Susan and Judith by Olive Finlay, to whom we thank for giving us the details.

CLIVE HARRIS 2/1 of Aberdeen who passed away in April, was a regular attendee with his late wife Betty, at all our country reunions and the ANZAC Reunions.

JEAN DIXON of Merrylands, widow of the late Bob 2/2 passed away on 30th April and the funeral was held at Palmdale Crematorium on 4th May.

Sympathy has been extended to the family.

OUR BAND

All Pioneers join us in saying congratulations to James Brice our band's new conductor and to his two bands from the Castle Hill RSL, in winning the National Concert Bands Championship at Easter in Brisbane this year.

The Youth Band won the Junior A Grade National Title and the Senior Band the North West Wind Ensemble won very convincingly the Open A Grade Competition against stiff opposition from the two best bands.

We would like to thank James for flying down, from holidays, and obtaining leave from the RAAF Band of which he is a member, to lead our band on ANZAC Day.

The band has now marched with us for the past twelve years and holds the Trophy for the best Cadet Marching Band on Anzac Day.

We are grateful to "Friends of the Band" Coordinator Carolyn and Graeme Gould for sending us "Music Matters" and the Castle Hill RSL magazine "Insight" from which we obtained all the above details.

VALE - STEVE CLARKE

STEVE CLARKE 2/1 of Killara passed away on 16th May, aged 93 years in Carlingford Nursing Home.

The funeral service on 16th May was held at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium and filled with family, relatives, friends and members of his golf club. Pioneers in attendance were Bill Tasker, Don and Val Crawford, Max and Peg Herron, Roy Jardine, and Ken Oliver who kindly acted as driver for Bill.

The service was conducted by Chaplain Gary Southam, and the first reading was carried out by grand-daughter Karen McWilliam after which daughter Julie McWilliam gave an excellent eulogy of the great events in the family life of Stephen.

Bill Tasker, Welfare Officer then read the eulogy of Steve's army career with the 2/1sts and with the Association which is abridged as follows:

Steve Clark enlisted in the A.I.F. early in 1940 and whilst training at Dubbo Military Camp was sent to an Officers Training School. On the conclusion of the course he was promoted to Lieutenant and posted to the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion. Early in 1941 he sailed to the Middle East where he served with the unit until their return to Australia in March 1942.

After training in Australia, Steve went with the Pioneers to New Guinea in August, 1942 and saw action at Imita Ridge on the Kokoda Track.

In September, 1943 he was promoted to Captain and was transferred, as second in command, of Don Company of the 2/1sts who were stationed at Milne Bay for that campaign. The unit served in New Guinea until October 1943 before returning to Australia for leave and extensive training on the Atherton Tablelands.

On 21st May, 1945 the unit once again sailed for their final campaign at Balikpapan in Borneo and Steve was appointed as Regimental Quarter Master of the unit. After hostilities ceased, Steve was responsible for the winding up of the unit and was discharged in February 1946.

After the war, Steve took an active part in the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Battalions Association which had been formed in 1948. He was elected onto the Committee and assisted in the planning of all its activities and took great pleasure in attending the ANZAC Day march and the reunion with his mates.

In 1987 Steve was a member of the Editorial team that had been formed under the direction of Colonel Gordon Osborn to compile information for the publication of the 2/1st Pioneer Bn. history book "The Pioneers".

In 1996, Steve was also on the Committee formed to plan the placing of a plaque on the plinth at the Imita Ridge Station at the newly formed Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway at Concord. After raising funds from 2/1st members the plaque was unveiled in April 1998, with Steve in the official party. Steve regularly attended V.P. Day Services at the walkway during the ensuing years.

In conclusion the Association members here today thank God for the life of our departed friend and extend our sincere sympathy to Steve's daughter Julie and her family on their sad loss. He will be sadly missed by his fellow Pioneers. LEST WE FORGET.

Since the funeral, the Association has received a Thank You card from Steve's daughter Julie McWilliam with sincere thanks to those who were able to attend the service and said their presence was greatly appreciated.

NEW GUINEA MISSION

Bert Woodhouse of Karridale W.A., was nominated to be on the Government sponsored mission to New Guinea in September 2005.

Bert served with the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion in the Middle East and New Guinea and then transferred to a WA unit, the 2/11th Infantry Battalion, who nominated him for the mission. He served with the 2/11 at Aitape and Wewak where he was wounded.

BERT'S TRIP REFLECTIONS

Having been nominated and sworn to secrecy, I wondered how many others had been nominated from around Australia. One day a phone call from Canberra came and I learnt I was on the short list - much crossing of fingers. Finally, a call to say I had been accepted. All details of items of dress and injections followed.

Finally, the big day arrived. Department of Veterans' Affairs HQ in Perth was the first stop, for morning tea with the Deputy Commissioner and other staff. Then off to Kings Park for photographs by the West Australian newspaper. DVA provided a car to take me to the airport where I flew to Brisbane.

Saturday, 10th September - A free day then a farewell dinner by the former minister for Veterans Affairs the Hon. De Anne Kelly MP at the Conrad Treasury Building in Brisbane. This was for the ten delegates and escorts.

Sunday, 11th September - Flew from Brisbane to Port Moresby, where we stayed overnight. and during that day attended a Ceremony at the Bomona War Cemetery. The Australian Governor-General, Major General Jeffrey and Mrs Jeffrey also attended this ceremony. There are about 3,400 graves here. I took several photos of graves of people I served with. The cemetery is beautifully laid out.

**KOKODA TRACK MEMORIAL WALKWAY
VP DAY SERVICE - Tuesday, 15th August -
2.30 p.m.**

Monday, 12th September - Travelled via Madang for Wewak. (I was wounded here on the 15th May, 1945. I was 21 years old and my best friend D. Caporn 2/11 Bn and ex 2/1 Pioneer Bn was killed in action on previous day.) At 10 am we attended a ceremony at Cape Wom Peninsula where the final Australian campaign in Papua New Guinea ended with the formal surrender of the Japanese 18th Army on the 13th September. At this ceremony I was called upon to recite the Ode to the Fallen.

Then at the Moem Barracks Officers Mess I had the pleasure of presenting the Veterans Party Biography book to the New Guinea Prime Minister Michael Somare in the presence of Maj. General Jeffrey.

We then departed Wom Peninsula for Mission Hill to see the Australian and Japanese Memorials.

Wednesday, 14th September - Travelled to Madang and our hotel was the Resort Hotel right on the waterfront and at 9 am we attended a ceremony at the Coast Watchers Memorial.

We then travelled to Nadzab and on to Lae War Cemetery where there was another ceremony. I took photos of the graves of 2/11 Bn men - -- approximately, 60 graves including my best mate. We stayed overnight at the Lae International Hotel.

Thursday, 15th September - We left Lae and travelled via Nadzab to Rabaul and at 11 am we attended a ceremony at Bita Paka War Cemetery and at 2 pm another ceremony was held at the 2/22nd Bn Memorial. (A sad place, as it rained heavily and was covered in black dust from a volcano.) Then at 3 pm we returned to Port Moresby.

Friday, 16th September - We went on a trip up to Owers Corner which is the start of the Kokoda Track. I was very grateful for this trip as it was not on the itinerary. A lot of memories for me as I served for fourteen months in this area and in Port Moresby with the 2/1st Pioneer Bn.

Saturday, 17th September - Flew home to Perth and being lucky enough to be selected for this Commemoration Tour and to visit the graves of my comrades-in-arms was a "pinnacle of my life" for which I am most grateful.

WX12790, BERT WOODHOUSE

SICK PARADE

JACK ALLISON 2/2 had a knee operation in March and after recuperating at Lady Davidson came home in time for attendance at the ANZAC Day March and Reunion.

2/1-2/2 LISMORE REUNION

Saturday 14th, Sunday 15th October, 2006
WREATH LAYING - Saturday, 14th October, 5 pm at the Lismore Memorial Baths Cenotaph. Medals to be worn.

REUNION DINNER - Saturday, 14th October, 7 pm. Smorgasbord Dinner at Lismore Workers Club in Keen Street. \$25 per head.

BARBECUE LUNCH - Sunday, 15th October, 12 noon for lunch at Ballina Ex-Servicemens Home complex. 71-73 Norton Street, Ballina. \$10 per head.

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

DEPOSIT of \$10 per head with application form by 1st October to Ken Wilson, 9 Rosedale Square, Lismore 2480. Cancellation - no refund.

CUT OUT - Fill in particulars

Full
Name:
Ladies
Name:

Phone: Unit:

Address:

No. ATTENDING ☐

TICK: CAR ☐ TRAIN ☐ PLANE ☐

PIONEER NEWS

Phone 9759 5491

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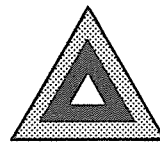
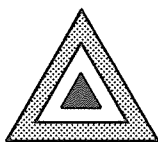
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VICTORY IN PACIFIC KOKODA SERVICE

The Commemorative Service of V.P. Day was held at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway at Concord on Tuesday, 15th August, 2006, at 2.30 p.m. in the presence of Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC, CVO, Governor of New South Wales.

The role of Master of Ceremonies was very capably handled by Rev. Paul Weaver and in the prayers and hymns was assisted by Father Graeme Malone SSS, Chaplains at Concord Hospital.

The M.C. firstly called on Cr. Angelo Tsirekas, Mayor of the City of Canada Bay, to deliver the Prologue. The Mayor spoke of how gratifying it was to know that the sacrifices made by our veterans were appreciated and not forgotten. He went on to say that his Council were right behind the Kokoda Track Committee in the upkeep of the Park and were at this stage extending the kiosk which had been such a successful project.

He then congratulated "Rusty" Priest A.M. Chairman of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway Committee, on the wonderful work he and his committee have carried out on the progress of the Track and called on "Rusty" to give his address of welcome.

In his usual inimitable style "Rusty" welcomed Her Excellency the Governor, Professor Marie Bashir and her husband Sir Nicholas Shehadie and extended a warm welcome to Lady Cutler and the many honoured guests. He then went on to speak of the importance of remembering Kokoda and the sacrifice of the troops in repelling the superior force of the Japanese. He particularly mentioned the efforts of the 39th Militia Battalion who, under the leadership of Lt.Col. Ralph Honner, were the first troops to come in contact with the Japanese forces. It has been said "they gave their lives today, so we may enjoy our tomorrow". They died so young. They missed so much - their hopes, their dreams, their loved ones. They laid down their lives that their friends might live. Greater love hath no man than this."

"Rusty" then called on Her Excellency to address the gathering.

ADDRESS BY GOVERNOR

"Distinguished guests, Directors of the Walkway, members past and present of our Defence Forces -

Thank you Mr "Rusty" Priest for your warm welcome.

It is indeed a privilege to join you with my husband Nicholas today, as we gather in this most beautiful environment of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, united by a deep sense of gratitude to celebrate the 61st anniversary of the ending of a terrible war - a war which touched the lives of all Australians. As the news broke on August 15, 1945 that the Pacific War was over, Australia's joy was boundless. We must never forget those dark days when Australia faced invasion, Darwin was bombed, Newcastle and Rose Bay were shelled and enemy submarines entered Sydney Harbour.

The Second World War had been a time of exceptional loss and cruelty. It had cost the lives of almost 40,000 Australians, from a national population of only seven million. Around 17,000 had died in the war against Japan, serving in Malaya, Singapore, the Netherlands East Indies, Papua New Guinea,

Borneo and the Philippines, often in the most appalling conditions which struck at the heart of their fellow Australians.

Eight thousand died in captivity as prisoners of war from brutality, starvation and disease. And from that suffering, and the memories of the survivors, a unique chapter in Australia's history is enshrined. The epic of Kokoda, which we also honour this week, was a critical turning point 63 years ago in the (Pacific) War when a troop of 400 young Australians - some barely out of school - fought a monumental rearguard action against 6,000 of the enemy.

In the most appalling terrain and debilitating environmental conditions, many affected by malaria and dysentery - and other tropical scourges our valiant young Australians though outnumbered and at times outgunned, tenaciously defended, sometimes retreated and then counter-attacked. With extraordinary fortitude they were ultimately able to fight the Japanese to a standstill, first at Isurava, and a few days later at Brigade Butcher's Hill. Their extreme courage prevented the enemy's access to Port Moresby, within easy striking distance of our nation.

We remember also with eternal gratitude, the compassionate loyalty and skill of the New Guinean villagers, the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels. Those events of 63 years ago must never be allowed to fade from this nation's consciousness, nor must our gratitude ever diminish.

It is integral to our sense of honour and to our identity as a mature nation, that these epic events are commemorated and our indebtedness to those who turned impending catastrophe into victory must be taught to all Australian children down the generations, and never be forgotten.

In recent years, historians including former servicemen of those campaigns have enriched our greater understanding of the extraordinary endurance and courage sustained. Many heroic examples of this are eloquently documented in "The Grim Glory", the official history of the 2/19th battalion of the Royal New South Wales Regiment.

It is important to remember also that Australian men and women had served alongside British and Indian forces in Malaya and Burma, and in the Pacific Fleet. Their contribution was considerable, providing a secure base for the United States in the south west Pacific, from Papua New Guinea to the Solomons and the Philippines into Japan. From this shared baptism of fire, a much valued alliance has grown.

Through this war and the deeds of our serving men and women, Australia subsequently entered a new and significant phase of its history with its Asian neighbours. Australian service men and women had encountered people of Asia in virtually every part of the region, in some settings as Prisoners of War, and in others as liberators.

In remembering, with endless gratitude, the sacrifice of our military men and women of those years, and before them in World War I, we contemplate today the precious inheritance of freedom, the good and bountiful Australian way of life, and the unique Australian character which has flourished.

As we pay homage to this proud Australian heritage, it is essential, that we commit ourselves to upholding the principles by which they fought and so many died. We should determine that each of us will make every effort

in our daily lives to contribute to a fair, inclusive, stable and vigilant Australia. This will be their lasting memorial. LEST WE FORGET.

WREATH LAYING SERVICE

At the conclusion of the Commemorative Address, the Governor led the wreath laying ceremony at the Memorial Centrepiece, accompanied by "Rusty" Priest and the Mayor of Canada Bay, Cr. Angelo Tsirekas. While the wreaths were being laid a young soloist of the McDonald College sang a beautiful rendition of Ave Maria.

Following the wreath laying, John Haines OAM, Metropolitan Vice-President of the N.S.W. State Branch R.S.L., recited the Ode which was followed by Last Post and Reveille.

At the conclusion of the programme the Master of Ceremonies called upon Charlie Lynn M.L.C. a Director of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, to say a few words of thanks to all those who had contributed to the success of the programme.

Firstly, Charlie Lynn spoke of the wonderful day it has been and this was due to the Master of Ceremonies, Rev. Paul Weaver and to "Rusty" Priest, Chairman, and Secretary Alice Kang and all those responsible for the day's activities. Father Graeme Malone SSS was then called upon to say Benediction.

Pioneers in attendance were Don and Val Crawford, Allan McInnes, Robyn Bell (from Melbourne), Bill Tasker, Max and Peg Herron and Joyce Law, who kindly acted as driver for Bill, Max and Peg. A group came down by bus from Newcastle and included Jack Bertram, Vi Flynn, Noel Schomberg and Ann Griffiths.

LAST POST

DARREL REID 2/1 of Swansea passed away on 26th April, aged 84 years, while in the John Hunter Hospital. He had been in ill health for many years. We extend sincere sympathy to his wife, Velma, and her family.

DICK WAKELEY 2/2 of Waratah passed away in June and we thank Nancy Linton for sending us the news.

BEAU HANNAFORD 2/1 of Umina passed away in Gosford Hospital on 4th July and the funeral was held at Palmdale Lawn Cemetery and Memorial Park.

WINSTON "MAC" McKIBBIN 2/1, who has for several years been in the Ballina Ex-Services Home, passed away early in October, and his funeral was attended by Ron Cross, Alex George and Alf Bettens, former members of 2/1 Pioneers.

JACK CHARTERS of Gundagai, a former member of 18 Platoon, D Coy 2/1, passed away in August. We thank Roy Jardine for passing on the news.

GEORGE WEST 2/2, Bairnsdale, Vic., passed away on 1st November, as reported to us by Jack Hore-Lacey, who was a close mate to George in No 3 Platoon of 2/2. Thank you, Jack, for passing on the news of your friend.

MUFTI per Eric Causer: Rex Theodore Kiellerup, Bentleigh Vic., 2/1, Archibald James Tait, Apollo Bay, Vic., 2/2 and Robert Sutton, Robinvale Vic., 2/2.

MARY McINNES, wife of Allan 2/2, President of our Association, passed away in North Shore Hospital on 10th November after a long illness, aged 84 years. The funeral service was held at Star of the Sea Church, Kirribilli, on the 17th.

Deepest sympathy is extended to Allan and his family on their very sad loss.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

The last Mail Bag for the year - and how it has flown. With age catching up, news from our readers is not always good, but most manage to write a few lines. Sadly, so many of our regular correspondents have passed on and some lost loved ones during the year, that writing has been "put on the shelf" for the time being. However, we are always happy to hear from those of our "Pioneer Family" who are still able to keep in touch.

ALBERT BARTON 2/1, Gulgong, with a very welcome letter and a change of address after what he describes as a horror year. He had a trip to hospital for a bowel problem and when he arrived home Gwen had a fall and broke her hip. While hospitalised, Albie went back into hospital and they eventually spent a month or more in a Mudgee Hostel on respite. At this stage both he and Gwen had to make a decision on their living arrangements and eventually decided to sell their home and seek alternative accommodation.

They are now settled in "Wenonah Lodge" in Gulgong and very happy in their new surroundings. Good to hear Alby and that D.V.A. have been a big help in many ways.

Many thanks for your donation to the news and glad you still look forward to hearing news of your old mates (those few who are left) and of the activities of the Association. Also my personal thanks for your kind words and to Max for his friendship over the past many years. Always good to hear from old friends.

Take care and we hope that 2007 will be kinder to you both and continue to be happy in your new home.

ROBYN BELL, Port Melbourne, daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1, with a welcome note and her thanks for the wonderful day she had on ANZAC Day and to see the growing interest within families and the Australian community for this special day. Says the luncheon at the Occidental was an excellent idea and a very special day for all.

Robyn was hoping to make it to Sydney for V.P. Day, which she did, and our thanks to Don and Val Crawford for taking her to their home after the service and for dinner at night. Robyn is involved with the Victorian R.S.L. on a committee, Battle for Australia, and said it would be good to take back news of the Kokoda function. We feel sure that she would have been very impressed with the service at Concord.

Thanks for your letter, Robyn, and good to see both you and Bruce were able to attend the Lismore reunion. Both send you our best wishes.

PAT BENTLEY, Yokine W.A., widow of Alf 2/1, with a welcome note from the West and her greetings to all. Has recently been on a bus trip to Albany on their south coast and says one of its claims to fame being the last sight of Australia for a lot of W.W.I. soldiers - but not a whale did they see. (Presume it must have been a whale watching excursion.) There have been plenty of them up and down our east coast over recent weeks.

Pat has also had her swimming on hold the last few months - says she has lost interest without Alfie - but says she will get back to it sooner or later.

Their weather in W.A. has been very changeable - hot one day, freezing the next - and on water restrictions, but not as severe as they are in the east. Says she pruned the roses for the first time this year (something Alfie would never let her do, or even go near, and much to her surprise they have bloomed beautifully. WOW!! And says don't dampen her by saying that roses are very hardy!! Keep up the good work, Pat, and enjoy.

She is off to the War Widows 60th Anniversary next month and then it's Christmas again and won't be long to April. Do hope you can make it to Sydney again. Our love and best wishes and thanks for the news from Lorna in London.

JOHN BOYD, Narre Warren, Vic., son of the late Stan Boyd 2/1, with a long letter and welcome donation to funds, many thanks. The addresses of your sisters Winifred Gavan,

Kellyville, and June Hyland, Illawong, have been added to our mailing list and will be sent future copies of the News. Both Win and June are certainly having their health problems and we hope that Win's son, David, has had success with his treatment. Must be a very worrying time for the family. Trust you were able to celebrate Win's 80th Birthday in September and she has recovered fully from the stroke.

Good to hear your wife Bev is able to keep up her music as a pianist, alternating with your regular church organist and accompanist to two or three choirs. She obviously gets great satisfaction entertaining the elderly at several nursing homes and loves to describe the reactions and happiness given to these dementia patients or the elderly in these homes. It's amazing how music can affect these people and how much pleasure it brings to their lives.

Do hope your chemo has been successful, John, and we wish you better health in the coming months. Keep up your good work with Legacy - always someone needing a helping hand - and our best wishes to you and the family. Let's hope the New Year will be brighter for you and your loved ones.

RAY BURROUGHS 2/2, Denhams Beach, with a change of address from Canberra to the coast, and our mailing list amended as requested. Certainly notice a difference in the climate, Ray, and we wish you well in your new surrounds.

TED CARTER 2/1, Tamworth, with a reply to yours truly for some information he had requested on a 2/1 member, J. A. Harper, who was K.I.A. in Tobruk in May 1941. Ted had met his daughter at a function in Tamworth and was anxious to find out some details of her father.

Ted was pleased to hear that Max and I had met his nephew, Peter Fitzsimons at a Literary luncheon at the launch of his book "Tobruk" in August and, along with 2/1sts Roy Jardine and wife Phyllis, Tom Wallace and daughter Helen Ramsay, were invited guests with several other members of the Rats of Tobruk Association. I have just finished reading the book, Ted, and found it very interesting. Max has yet to read it, as his eyes have been affected by the operation on his knee and is waiting on a visit to the eye specialist to find out the problem.

Thanks for the news on Bill ("Pee Wee") Russell 2/2 and his wife Nell and hope things have improved. We have not heard from him for some time.

Sorry to hear you could not make the Lismore reunion, along with quite a few others. Age and distance catching up with so many of us these days. We did not go either, as Max's knee was a problem and too far for me to drive on my own.

Our kindest regards to Mary and yourself and pleased you were able to catch up with your 2/3rd Pioneer mates.

TOM CROSSMAN 2/1, Turrumurra, with his apologies for non-attendance on ANZAC Day. Changing address has been a struggle, but now settled in. Many thanks for the cheque for the news and hope to see you next year.

ALBY DEAN 2/1, Shepparton Vic., with a letter to Max enclosing a photo of members of the R.A.P. in Balikpapan in front of their tent and asking for help in trying to identify them. He has written you, Alby, and will do his best to help, but from our records very few are now living. Will be in touch after Max has done his best to help you and will return the photo.

SNOWY DODD 2/2, Forster, has been in the news, with a write-up in the "Great Lakes Advocate" and sent to us by Nancy Linton, widow of Don 2/2. At 93 years of age, Snowy and his fellow R.S.L. volunteers have spent one day a week working hard to transform four acres of overgrown farmland into Darawank War Memorial Park. Along with 350 trees, the volunteers erected two picnic shelters, one of which has been named after Snowy and officially opened by the then Federal Member M.P. Mark Vaile and dedicated to "those who served their country and to the peace we enjoy as a result of their sacrifices".

Well done, Snowy, to you and your group of volunteers on a job well done. Hope you are keeping well and best wishes from your Pioneer friends in the south.

PAULA DOW, Umina Beach, daughter of the late Beau Hannafor 2/1, with a letter on behalf of her mother to advise that Beau had passed away in July (see notice Last Post) and is sadly missed and loved by his wife Jean and daughter Paula.

Thank you for your letter, Paula, and for the cheque enclosed from your mother. The News will continue to be posted to her until she no longer wishes to receive it. Kindest regards and take care.

BILL FLEMING 2/1, Mittagong, per good wife Maureen, with a letter of explanation about a letter sent in June and accidentally posted by a family member without the money order which was to have been enclosed. Thanks for the note, Maureen, all's well that ends well.

Do hope you and Bill are keeping well and enjoying some rain in your part of the world. Take care and best wishes from both of us.

FRANK GILLIAN 2/1 Maroubra, with a welcome donation for the News - many thanks. Frank doesn't get around very much these days, but a couple of months ago his son, Paul, drove him out to Eastwood to meet up with Danny Sprouster 2/1 for a bite to eat and a good old yarn of the old days. I can just imagine what a session that would be.

All the best to Beryl and yourself and always good to hear from you.

ANN HEALEY, Semaphore S.A., daughter of the late Jim (Jumma) Hall 2/1 of Kyogle, with a generous donation to the News and it was good to hear from you again. Ann doesn't recognise many of the names now in the News, but saw Sid Jopson's name in last issue and remembered the happy times when the Jopsons lived in Kyogle (presumed Sid was in the bank there) and said she catches up with son Brian from time to time when she goes through Dubbo.

There's not too many left in Kyogle now, Ann, to my knowledge Jack Shearman, Cecil Blanch, Bill Hoffman and Nita Ferris both in Kyogle Court. Son David and Lynn (Downes) were in Kyogle a few weeks ago for Joan and Maurie Powell's 50th Wedding Anniversary and enjoyed their visit and the occasion. Was good to hear news of Margaret, John and family.

We are both keeping reasonably well, although Max has just had a knee replacement (eight weeks ago) and still hobbling. Always seems to be plenty to do, but age catching up.

Good to hear from you, Ann, and trust you and David are still enjoying life in South Aussie and keeping well. Love to you and many thanks for the cheque for the News.

MAISIE KEMPINICH, Shoal Bay, widow of Jack 2/1, with a welcome letter apologising for not being able to go to the Lismore reunion in October. There were quite a few, who could not make the trip, Mais, including Max and I, owing to a knee replacement on Max in September and he was unable to travel. Jack Bertram, Laurie Kelly, Vi Flynn and Noel Schomberg were able to make the trip, along with Bert Neasbey and his son Glen of the 2/2. Age and distance now a problem and quite a few no longer hold licences. However, those who were able to attend were very happy with the weekend. I think from the roll of the reunion there were only about a dozen Pioneers, both 2/1 and 2/2, present, so you can see age catching up. They no longer have a R.S.L. Club at Lismore so the dinner was held at the Workers Club.

Fond wishes to you and keep well.

DAWN LEVY, Revesby, widow of Roy 2/2, with two letters of great interest as a member of both Legacy and the War Widows' Club and the Editors have decided to print them as Dawn wrote them. We are sure our readers will find them of interest, as we did. Dawn writes:

"My latest holiday with Legacy was at the end of August. We usually have two a year but it took me two years at the club before I started to go but I am so glad I did. We go for six days, stay at very nice motels, so far the food has always been lovely. And we go on a day trip each day. This time we went to Scone. Being a rural area I wasn't sure what to expect but it was a really lovely holiday. There are so many Vineyards and racehorse studs in the area you could spend all the time just looking at them. Scone is the "Racehorse capital of Australia" and apparently only second to Kentucky in the world. The country is just

beautiful and makes you very glad to be an Aussie.

We spent quite some time at a Stud and learned all about breeding, which I might say is very technical - no hit and miss! We "met" one of the stallions, which is valued at \$14,000,000 and commands \$45,000 a service. At that time he had a waiting list of 135 mares. He services three a day, four if necessary. When I told my young brother he said he is going to start eating grass!! As you can imagine the stallion is a magnificent animal. There were lots of mares-in-waiting and a few new foals. I enjoyed it very much.

Another day, while touring the area, we drove past part of Kerry Packer's property - it's huge. There were beautiful polo horses everywhere but we didn't get to see the homestead - that's way out of view.

I had a really lovely Labour Day weekend with my War Widows' Club to Floriade in Canberra. We left early Saturday morning with a full bus load - 21 of us and 21 others, mostly couples. After stopping for morning tea and lunch we arrived in Canberra and went straight to the Australian Mint. We spent nearly two hours there and it was very interesting - unfortunately they didn't give us any samples!!!!

We booked into our motel in Queanbeyan. After dinner at the Leagues Club we went to the Observatory and got back to the motel at about 8.45 p.m. It was a long day.

After breakfast on Sunday we went straight to Floriade. It was a very hot day and the gardens looked beautiful. It was everything I expected and more. The tulips were magnificent but there was much more there - demonstrations, buskers and lots of stalls. I was glad we went there first because, being the long weekend, it wasn't long before there were thousands of people arriving. There were buses coming from all over. It was a lovely carnival atmosphere. We spent about two hours there and then had lunch on the banks of Lake Burley Griffin, after which we headed to Cockington Green, which was amazing. Then on to the War Museum and Mt. Ainslie lookout, where we had "happy hour". We got back just in time for dinner at 6.00 p.m.

We left at 9.00 a.m. on Monday morning, stopped for a couple of hours at the National Museum and then at the Screen Sound Australia Museum. I enjoyed the latter - they screen bits of old films and TV and it brought back lots of memories.

As you can tell, it was an action-packed weekend and it was very tiring but I loved it.

In conclusion, Peg, my life without Roy is not the same and would have been very different had I not been able to join Legacy and War Widows. I might tell you I hated it at first and did not want to be there but I'm so glad I joined. I have made some lovely friends and had some lovely holidays. I'm very grateful to Roy for that. I still miss him terribly and I always will but I know he would be very happy that I'm getting out and not sitting at home feeling sad and lonely ALL the time. I'm also happy my girls don't have to worry about me being on my own. I speak to them most days and see them as often as possible but they have young children and with school and weekend sport it's not always easy."

Many thanks, Dawn, and for your good wishes to Max. Keep well and our love.

NANCY LINTON, Tuncurry, widow of Don 2/2, with a welcome cheque for the News and appreciation for the last issue with ANZAC Day activities by Bill Lewis. She always looks forward to the paper which keeps her in touch with Don's old mates. Nancy also passed on news of the passing of Dick Wakeley 2/2 of Waratah.

Nancy reports that the local War Widows' Guild and Laurel Club are very active in her area holding meetings and various social functions. The Laurel Club recently organised a seven day holiday down the south coast to Merimbula, which was very much appreciated by the war widows. It's good to see that the war widows are being so well looked after and able to enjoy some wonderful outings with others with the same interests.

Many thanks for the cutting on Snowy Dodd, Nancy, and it has been included in my notes. Her best wishes are passed on to all Pioneers, especially mates of her late husband Don, and

her thanks to all those who carry on the work of the Association and the publication of the News. Kindest regards.

ALLAN OLSON 2/2, Netherby S.A., with a get-well card to Max after his recent operation and very best wishes for a speedy recovery. Many thanks, Allan, and sorry to see you were also unable to make the Lismore reunion. Our warm regards to all our Pioneers in South Aussie. Keep well.

JULIE McWILLIAM, Griffith, daughter of the late Steve Clarke 2/1, with a thank you note for the notice in Last Post on her loved dad and a generous cheque for the News.

Many thanks, Julie, and we can assure you Steve will be sadly missed at our functions and meetings. A good committeeman and friend over many, many years. Fond regards to you and your family.

BETTY O'CONNOR, West Ballina, widow of Neville 2/2, with a welcome note and a cheque for the News enclosed. Says she hasn't much news from her part of the country but looking forward to the Lismore reunion (which unfortunately we were not able to attend on account of Max's operation). Rain (what's that) had interfered with her golf and every now and then, when sick of her own company, goes for a trip to Murwillumbah or to Tallebudgera Valley to have a few days with her daughters. Good to see you out and about, Betty, and hope you continue to keep good health and enjoy your golf. Love and take care.

JOHN PAUL 2/1, Camira Qld., enclosing a donation for the News with his short note, and is getting back on track after having a couple of "nasties" taken off his head and back which had set him back. Hope by now all is well, John, and our very best wishes. Many thanks for the cheque.

PETER PEILE 2/1, Caringbah, per pen of good wife, Erika, and they send their thanks for the last News with the "doings" for ANZAC Day. Erika reads the paper to Peter, on account of his failed sight, and he is always happy to hear of the news of his old battalion and mates.

Good to hear your grand-daughter and her Girl Guide friends were able to march on ANZAC Day and had a great day. The "Fuzzy Wuzzies" certainly got a wonderful reception from the crowd. Only too pleased to have been able to help - my pleasure.

Trust Peter is still keeping reasonably well and his very best wishes are passed on to his Pioneer friends. Many thanks to you for keeping in touch.

VELMA REID, Swansea, widow of Darrel 2/1, with a note to say her husband had passed away in April. (Max has made mention of this in Last Post.) We will keep your name on our mailing list, Velma, and if you do not wish to go on receiving the News, please let us know. Thank you for your note and our best wishes.

OLIVE RICHARDS, Bribie Island, widow of Jack 2/1, with a welcome donation and a book of stamps - many thanks. Also happy birthday Olive. (Good that your birthday is a great reminder of Pioneer News - you never forget.)

Very pleased to hear your health keeps good since your move to sunny Queensland and perhaps, in time, the climate up there might fix those aching joints. She is still able to be independent and look after herself and I'm sure you are happy to have your own brand new self-contained unit, with Chris and Annette close if you need them. Olive walks regularly twice a day and is grateful to D.V.A. for the good walking shoes they make for her.

In June, had her great-grandson and his mother stay with them for a couple of weeks. As they live in Canberra it was a nice warm break for them and Olive said she had forgotten how full of life a two year old boy could be. Tell me about it - my garden ornaments are a real attraction and most of them finish up with pieces missing.

Your good wishes passed on to the Kerslakes, Olive. Marj has just had a cataract operation and Jack keeps as well as can be expected and still in War Vets at Narrabeen. They send you their best.

Did not make Lismore this year, but a report elsewhere in the News. So many now unable to travel. Fond wishes from both of us.

MARJORIE RODGERS, Bangor, niece of the late George Owler 2/1, has been in touch with Max in regard to the history of the 2/1sts, which is now out of print. Marj has been doing the "family tree" and was interested in her Uncle George's army life. If any of our early members remember him or can throw some light on his movements after they returned to Australia after service in Tobruk, we would be pleased to hear from them. Our records only show his return on the "West Point" and then no mention in Routine Orders, so obviously transferred to another unit.

Any help would be appreciated.

Do hope we may be able to help you, Marj, and will keep in touch.

EURALIE SAUER, Lower Mitcham S.A., widow of George 2/1, with her thanks for the last edition of the News and was sad to read of the passing of Steve Clarke, as George had always spoken very highly of him. Steve had been in touch with her just before last Christmas and they had a long chat - Steve's calls were nearly all long chats and both Max and I enjoyed speaking with him.

Euralie was very pleased to hear from Steve's daughter, Julie McWilliam, who happened to be in Adelaide a couple of months ago and phoned her. Julie had seen Euralie's name on her dad's Xmas list and took the opportunity to make contact while she was in Adelaide.

A trip to Queensland to see her daughter and grandchildren (22, 20 and 17) was on the list in the near future and was looking forward to the trip. Her daughter has just returned from Hawaii after a legal conference - she is Assoc. Professor in the School of Law at Bond University. The family would like Euralie to move to Queensland and she is thinking along those lines, but would like to be near the water, perhaps Burleigh Waters or nearby.

Euralie enclosed news of their son, Geoffrey, and thinks of her son and daughter as George's legacy. Geoffrey is Alumni Relations Co-Ordinator at Flinders University in South Australia, where his work focuses on building and development links between the Uni and its graduates. He is one of Australia's most experienced advancement professionals with an extensive background in alumni relations in Australian higher education, with a particular focus on South East Asia. Geoffrey has held many executive positions with the University of Adelaide from 1985 to the present day and since 2003 he has been undertaking a Master's Degree in Asian Studies at Murdoch University.

We are sure both you and George would have been very proud of their achievements, and we wish them well in their chosen careers.

Many thanks for the cheque enclosed in your letter, Euralie, and our best wishes.

JOYCE WALKER, Gilead, widow of George 2/1, with a welcome donation to the News and said it was nice to read and think back on all the great times we had in the past. We certainly did have such a lot of happy outings and holidays together, Joyce, and lots of memories. Sadly most of our dear friends have all passed on.

Joyce keeps in touch with Joyce McGregor, René Wood and Jean Locane. Jean is doing a coach trip with Highway Tours to Perth and back by train later this year. Quite a few of our "Pioneer Family" stayed with the owners of the Highway Tours when they had the motel in my home town of Walcha and had a great holiday.

Good to hear from you Joyce, and many thanks for the donation to funds. Love and keep well.

BETTY WOODHAM, Cleveland Qld., wife of Neville 2/1, with a couple of letters since last we heard from Nev and plenty of news from their part of the world. Nev was surprised to hear so many of his old mates were on walking sticks, but 66 years down the track hardly surprising. Most of the old Tobruk crowd now in their late 80's or early 90's - Nev himself had his 21st in Tobruk and was 86 in June. Time certainly marches on.

Sorry to hear you weren't able to go to the Lismore reunion, along with lots of others, including Max and I, but as you say travelling not so easy at our age.

Good to hear news of Jean Spreadborough and Dorothy Mowbray. Neither get the News now, so pass on our best wishes.

Betty and Nev met up with John Hayden Jnr. At a family wedding recently and says his dad John 2/1 and wife Wyn are very happy in their new retirement village and John has lots of mates to come and visit. Good to hear, as so many older folks do not adjust to their new surroundings.

Neville is still Secretary at Cleveland for R.O.T.A. and both he and Betty are kept busy with doings at the Redland R.S.L. They are lucky having a lot of Vietnam boys and their wives who are now in charge of Redlands Club with nearly 1,000 Sub-Branch members and still increasing. Sadly, the same cannot be said for Sydney who are struggling to keep up their membership in most clubs.

Many thanks for your letters and for the very kind thoughts expressed to Max and I on the News and we hope to be able to continue for a few more issues, God willing. Our love and best wishes to both of you and hope to meet up in the not too distant future.

ERNIE LUNN 2/2, Dubbo, per pen of good wife Norma, and so good to hear from you again. Think of you often and wonder how you both are. Norma says Ernie keeping reasonably well and says there is a chance of a move to Bracken House proper and get relief from things in the "too hard" basket.

He still likes to come over to the local bowling club each Friday night for the members' draw and every Sunday evening. Good to hear, Ern, and I'm sure you enjoy seeing your old friends.

Norma said Dubbo had 68 points of rain the week she wrote - very welcome, but not enough. Good to see the powers that be are at last giving some assistance as the farmers are really struggling.

They have been able to make two small trips to Mendooran (72km) for family birthdays, but cannot venture too far afield and enjoyed their outing.

Do hope you enjoy your local "do's" for the oldies, good to get out and meet up with friends. Enjoy!!

Will pass on your best wishes to the Kerslakes. Jack still in War Vets and Marj visits every day.

Both send you our very best wishes and love, will drop you a note soon.

■ That's all the Mail Bag for this issue. On behalf of President Allan, Treasurer Don, Max and myself we wish all Pioneers and their loved ones good health and happiness in the year ahead. We have lost many old friends during the past 12 months and to their families we send our special thoughts. Have a Happy and Holy Christmas and may the New Year be blessed with Peace and Goodwill in our troubled world.

UNKNOWN CHEQUE

In August we received a Bank cheque for \$20, dated 11/8/06, drawn on Newcastle Permanent Building Society No. 209020-9 made out to Max Herron and addressed to 3 Enoggera Road, Beverly Hills, but no identity of the sender. The postmark was not distinct. The cheque has been handed to the Treasurer, but receipt cannot be sent until we identify the owner. Would the sender kindly let us know. Thank you.

2/1-2/2 LISMORE REUNION

The North Coast Branch organised the seventh reunion at Lismore on 14th/15th October and the first event on the programme was the wreath laying ceremony at the Soldiers' Memorial on the 14th October, carried out in very fine weather and with a good attendance of Pioneers and their families.

The President of the Branch, Ken Wilson, was the Marshal in Charge and opened the proceedings with the playing of Last Post and Reveille and reciting of the Ode to the Fallen. The National flag was attended by Ron Cross. Wreaths were laid by Dot Priest (widow of Peter 2/1) and Alex George and Terry McGuire for the two Battalions.

The service was conducted by Rev. Bob Rutherford of the Lismore Uniting Church who gave an outstanding address. Unfortunately, we were not able to obtain a copy for publication and we sincerely thank Alex George 2/1 for all the

trouble he went to on several occasions to try and procure a copy for the News. Many thanks, Alex.

REUNION DINNER

After the wreath laying, guests adjourned to the Workers' Club in Lismore for the reunion dinner with Ron Cross acting as Master of Ceremonies for the evening. Rev. Rutherford was called upon to say Grace, followed by the Loyal Toast and a Toast to the Guests by Ron Cross.

Apologies were many, owing to age and members not in the best of health, but all passing on their good wishes for a successful weekend.

The meal was a smorgasbord, including sweets, and enjoyed by all present. At the conclusion of the dinner, those present settled down to catch up with old friends whom they rarely see - and a few drinks to finish off the evening.

BARBECUE AT BALLINA

The Ballina Ex-Service Complex was the venue next morning and refreshments were served amongst very pleasant surroundings and excellent company. It was a very informal barbecue luncheon and several who were unable to attend the Reunion Dinner in Lismore were able to join in the day out at Ballina.

Congratulations to the Organising Committee for a most successful weekend and very much appreciated by all those who were able to attend.

ATTENDANCE AT THE WEEKEND

There were only thirteen Pioneers, plus their ladies in attendance, consisting of seven from 2/1sts and six from 2/2nds.

2/1st: Jack Bertram, Albert/Lil Bettens, Ron Cross, Alex/Jean George, Laurie Kelly, Terry/Claire McGuire and Noel Schomberg.

2/2nds: Sid/Jean Booth, Bert Neasbey, Kevin Raward, Ray/Nancy Robbins, Dick/Alison Walker and Ken/Ida Wilson.

Widows: Mavis Blanch, Vi Flynn, Gloria Gray, Betty O'Connor and Dot Priest.

It was also pleasing to have in attendance the following relations and friends: Robyn/Bruce Bell, Mrs Bonner, Jack/Cheryl Carter, Heather Crighton, Neil Frogley/wife, D and K Gray, Pam Lee, N and D Mulder, Greg Neasbey, Christine Raward, Rev. Bob Rutherford and his daughter, Kevin/Pam Stubbings, Norma Taylor, Joyce/Kevin Wilson and Ray/Narelle Walker.

NORTH COAST NEWS

Ken Wilson reports the following: Kevin Raward 2/2 did not attend the Saturday functions of the Lismore reunion, but he and his daughter were able to attend the luncheon at Ballina. Kevin is not very well and in a wheelchair. Ossie Carter 2/1 has not enjoyed the best of health lately suffering from diabetes and apologised for his non-attendance. Terry McGuire 2/1 is still having hip trouble but was on deck for the reunion. Both Ken and Ida Wilson have also been on the sick list - Ken with an eye problem that seems to be going along OK at the moment and Ida with an infection in her legs caused by the tablets she had taken.

Do hope by the time the News arrives that there has been a return to good health for former members.

JOHN GILCHRIST - V.P. DAY

The following is the address given by Patron John Gilchrist on V.P. Day to the Rose Bay R.S.L. members at their V.P. Service.

President, Distinguished Guests and Fellow Members of the Rose Bay R.S.L.

When I decided to give this talk I realised that I would have a lot in common with my fellow members.

Firstly, we had all had the privilege of serving our country in war or peace and in many different locations and uniform. Secondly, with the exception perhaps of some of our overseas members and our National Servicemen in Vietnam we had all been volunteers. This applies to all our various military operations over the years and to peace-time missions - something to be proud about. Thirdly, we all have a sentimental streak which is illustrated by the number of remembrance ceremonies which are held each year at the many war memorials which are spread throughout the country and our cities.

The principal ceremony is, of course, ANZAC

Day but there are many others of special interest to different groups such as the Battle of Britain, V.E. Day, Alamein, the Coral Sea Battle, Kap Yong in Korea and Long Tan in Vietnam.

But our principal reference place of remembrance is the National War Memorial in Canberra. Started in 1941 this has grown over the years with many new buildings and exhibitions and details the story of all Australian Military Missions overseas with a remarkable and comprehensive display of memorabilia relevant to each period of action. The whole atmosphere of the building is one of quiet reverence. These exhibits are now augmented by a computerised record of ex-servicemen and women and details of many smaller but important incidents which occurred during operations which are readily available at the press of a button.

Impressive as they are these exhibits do not cover the principal aim of the complex . . . to become a National Memorial. This was achieved at 11 a.m. on 11 November 1993 - Remembrance Day - when the remains of an Australian soldier killed in W.W.I. recovered from an unknown grave in a French war cemetery, was brought to Australia where it lay in state in the Kings Hall of the old Parliament House in Canberra and after proceeding along ANZAC Parade past the many memorials to individual units, arrived at the War Memorial. After a very sombre and dignified ceremony was finally laid to rest in a tomb in THE HALL OF REMEMBRANCE.

It is significant that over the years many visiting Heads of State and dignitaries have found time to pay homage and respect at the Tomb in acknowledgement of Australian Servicemen's contribution to the peace of the World. The epitaph on the tomb simply reads "AN UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER KILLED IN THE WAR OF 1914-1918. He symbolises all Australians who have died in War."

There is a continuing contribution by Australia to World Peace as there are at present 4,000 personnel from the Regular and Reserve Defence Forces deployed overseas in peace keeping as well as many civilian humanitarian missions . . . once again all volunteers.

Reserve Forces will play an increasing role in Australian defence activities because of the necessity for highly qualified experts in modern technology but will only be able to do so if the Government clearly defines their conditions of service and pay and guarantees their job security and that they have the full support of industry, the understanding and cooperation of their families, the best of equipment and their own dedication.

So at last we come to the reason for today's lunch . . . the remembrance and celebration of VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC and THE END OF WORLD WAR II. We have all seen documentaries of the material damage caused in the War and heard of the unspeakable atrocities which occurred as well as the tragic loss of life on land, sea and in the air which includes so many Australians.

This makes us realise that Australia got out of it all very lightly with the closest action being the bombing of Darwin and the North Coast of Western Australia and, something not very well known, the sinking of 23 ships off the NSW coast and closer to home, the sinking of KUTTABUL with, of course, loss of many lives.

We are now a nation of 20 million made up of many different nationalities, ethnic groups and religions and we had learned to live together with tolerance and understanding of each others ways of life but with the terrorist attacks on New York and subsequent attacks, Bali and more recently England, the world has changed.

The threat to Australia from terrorist activities is very real and we must all assist in lessening its effect by watching and reporting to the Terrorist Activity Hot Line all suspicious activities such as leaving unattended parcels and bags, unusual behaviour, subversive talk, but the principal deterrent must come from within the ethnic groups themselves who have a duty to weed out and eliminate the subversive elements who wish us harm.

So, we are basically a nation of patriotic sentimental volunteers. Yes, Australia certainly is a lucky country. Let us all work together to keep it that way.