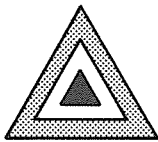


PIONEER NEWS



Phone 9759 5491

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

Per Annum: \$5

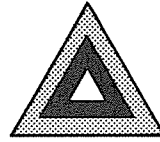
Typeset by Typesmith Pty Ltd, 12 Blakesley Road, Carlton NSW 2218 Printed by ABF Printers, 3 Argyle Street, Arncliffe NSW 2205

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**



Vol. 53 No. 1

APRIL 2007

Welfare: **BILL TASKER**, Phone 9718 6658

HISTORY OF THE ANZAC TRADITION

The following article was sent in by Association President Allan McInnes, who is a member of Kirribilli R.S.L. We gratefully acknowledge the research undertaken by Bob Cleworth.

The date of the Landing at ANZAC, the 25th April was chosen to be the day that would become our national day of commemoration. Initially it was as a mark of respect for those who served and sacrificed their lives in the Great War for Civilisation, the war as many hoped, to end all wars. However because of the vicissitudes of man the date has become the day on which the nation remembers those who served and those who made the ultimate sacrifice in all the conflicts that Australia has participated up to the present day in the continuing struggle to preserve our freedoms in the attempt to rid the world of tyranny.

ANZAC, originally an acronym for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps that was used by the clerks of General Birdwood's staff at his headquarters in Shephard's Hotel in Cairo, Egypt.

CODE WORD ANZAC

The word ANZAC was approved by General Birdwood as the code for the Corps when the word was proposed by a Major C M Wagstaff. It is thought the suggestion came from a Lieutenant A T White of the Royal Army Service Corps. It is recorded in the official history that "it was some time before the code word came into general use, and at the Landing (on the 25th April 1915) many men in the divisions had not heard of it." After the landing General Birdwood gained permission to use the name for the area occupied by the Australian & New Zealand Forces.

At ANZAC on the Dardanelles Peninsula, Australian and New Zealand troops landed on the 25th April 1915 where they, along with other commonwealth forces, held ground against almost impossible odds for the next eight months, against a Turkish force

determined to defend to the death their homeland. The British action planned to secure the heights overlooking the forts guarding the narrow straits at the entrance to the Sea of Marmora. The purpose to silence them and allow the French and British Navy to proceed to Constantinople (now Istanbul) and by a show of force convince the Turkish Government to capitulate and to come on the side of the Allies.

SERIES OF BATTLES

The plans did not bear fruit and what ensued was a tremendous series of battles by both sides over the next eight months. It was all the British forces (of which the Australian and New Zealand force were a part), could do to hold ground against a Turkish Army determined to drive them into the sea. It was a battlefield where no one, not even General Birdwood and his staff were safely out of the range of Turkish guns. The odds against them were tremendous, but they held on repulsing many Turkish counter attacks in conditions of hardship that tested the hardest. Both sides suffered horrendous casualties amongst the many ravines and gullies of that rugged battleground on which the ANZAC tradition was formed and that has become the benchmark for standards of courage, mateship, humour and a determination to complete a given task, and has set an example for all Australians to follow whenever faced with difficulties.

The ANZACs as they became known went on to continue that tradition on the Western Front and Palestine throughout the 1914-1918 conflict where conditions at times were a greater trial than at ANZAC. In that war the first Australia fought and proved themselves as a Nation to be reckoned, ANZAC forces in the field suffered over 270,000 casualties of which in excess of 78,000 Australians and New Zealanders were either killed in action or died of wounds. There have been many more since.

ANZAC ACTIVITIES

WREATH LAYING -

24th April at 3.45pm.

The Association will conduct their wreath laying service on Tuesday 24th April at 3.45 pm at the Cenotaph. All members and their relatives are invited to assemble at 3.30 pm on the corner of Martin Place and Pitt Street on the GPO side. Medals are requested to be worn.

ANZAC DAY MARCH - Wednesday, 25th April.

On Wednesday, 25th April the ANZAC Day March will be held and the forming up for both 2/1sts and 2/2nds will be the same as last year in Phillip Street head on to King Street, rear of the 6th Division. Both units will form up outside the Leagues Club in Phillip Street.

The two units will form up together and march as one group, the same as last year.

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 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 - Wednesday, 25th April.

Venue for both units for the 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.

Cost of the lunch will be \$20 and beer prices same as last year except for the Govt. added tax of 10 cents, making midday \$2.80, schooner \$3.70, jug \$13.50.

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.

MAX HERRON O.A.M.

PEG HERRON O.A.M.

Every 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneer will agree with me that there were no recipients of Australia Day Honours more deserving than our own Max and Peg Herron. I regret that I was not the nominator for the awards, but it gave me quiet pleasure to receive a request to support the nominations. In addition to the official form, it took me three foolscap pages to document the magnificent voluntary contributions made by Peg and Max over fifty years on behalf of their much loved 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneers. Some of the things I recorded were -

- The countless hours they devoted to the organization overall, and the many out-of-pocket expenses incurred but never claimed.
- The "Pioneer News" alone stands as an enduring monument of the thousands of hours involved in its production. Consider the letters processed by Peg as OC Mail Bag, the contents laid out by Max, the trips to the printer, the proof-reading, the addressing, enveloping and posting all around Australia. Importantly, the archive of newsletters over 60 years is a unique record of the history of the Association.
- When we were younger, the arranging of country reunions, attending and supervising to ensure smooth running.
- Visiting sick members at home and in hospital. Representing the Association at funerals.
- Arranging Anzac Eve and Anzac Day march, reunions and wreath-laying, involving seeking approval from Police and Cenotaph Committee at RSL.
- Countless phone calls and incoming mail attended to by Peg as Assistant Secretary and OC Mail Bag.
- All this done in a spirit of helpfulness, with courtesy and good humour, examples always of grace under pressure.

I waited confidently for the Queen's Birthday Honours list to be published. I was devastated when the name "Herron" was absent from the list. For two days, I fumed and cursed and tore up my submission. I am sure some ears were burning in Canberra.

January came, and the Australia Day Awards. There in its rightful place was the name of "Herron". I was as elated as I had been angry in June. All was forgiven, justice had been done.

GOD BLESS OUR WONDERFUL O.A.M's

Reported by **ALLAN McINNES**

EDITOR'S NOTE: Many thanks to Allan for the above article on the awards of our O.A.M's. We also thank him for filling out the official form in 2005 to support the nominations. We were both very thrilled and honoured when informed that we were to secure the awards. In our work for the Association, we have enjoyed helping to keep our readers informed through the pages of the Pioneer News.

MAX and PEG HERRON

SUBSCRIPTION DUE

With subscription send news of your family and happenings. Letter to contain name and address, Battalion (2/1 or 2/2) and Company.

All correspondence to **MAX HERRON**, 3 Enoggera Road, Beverly Hills, NSW 2209.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

The first issue of the Mail Bag for the year and I hope our readers and families were able to share a happy Christmas and New Year with their loved ones. Sadly we lost quite a few of our Pioneer friends over the months since last paper and we extend our sincere sympathy to their families in their sad loss. We hope that the coming year will bring peace to our troubled world and a return to good health to those who have been hospitalised or on the sick list.

DORIS AMIES, Forbes, widow of Cyril 2/1, with quite a long letter on her doings in the past year since Cyril passed away. She has made a lot of adjustments, but is now enjoying a very busy round of activities in her lovely comfortable home, which she and Cyril established when they moved to Forbes. The only problem facing her is the continuing drought, but the bore water system that they installed is a real boon. Her roses have been a picture and Doris was very successful in her displays at the Forbes Show.

Doris, along with daughter Wendy and her husband Stu, were going on a Murray River paddle cruise for four days in January and hopefully in June visiting the family in Brisbane. She has been away with the Probuss Club on several occasions and booked to go to Broken Hill in April. Good to hear, Doris, to do these things while still able to travel. Lots of folks leave it until it is too late and unable to enjoy this wonderful country.

Trust by now Wendy has recovered from all her mishaps and back at school. Teaching only three days a week allows her to enjoy a much less stressful life.

Always good to hear from you and maybe shall see you in Sydney for ANZAC Day. Take care.

ISABELL ANDERSON, widow of "Snowy" 2/2, with her thanks for the Pioneer News and fond love from Julie and herself for the Christmas Season. Always good to hear from you both and hope that the year ahead is kind to you. Many thanks for your generous donation to the News. Love to both.

PAT BENTLEY, Yokine W.A., widow of Alf 2/1, with news that she had booked to come to Sydney again for ANZAC Day and looking forward to the trip. She has recently taken on a couple of very interesting and enjoyable volunteer jobs, one as a roving ambassador for the City of Perth and the other with Tourism W.A. meeting and assisting (if required) at Perth Airports. Good for you, Pat, you may get to meet some interesting travellers.

Says not a lot more to report other than she has had her postage stamp size back yard paved and WHAT a mess the workers made.

However, it was well worth it as the small lawn she had had made up it's mind to die, no matter how hard she tried to coax it not to. One good thing, has no need to mow any more.

Take care, Pat, and looking forward to seeing you here in Sydney in April.

VAL BLAKENEY, Narrabeen, widow of Dick 2/1, with a welcome donation to the News and your name has been added to the mailing list for future issues.

Many thanks, Val, for your congratulations on our Australia Day awards and your very kind words. Seems as if Dick's brother, Rick, told you the news and he has rung Max a couple of times to see how his knee was progressing. Keep well and always happy to hear from you.

MAVIS BLANCH, Baudesert Qld., widow of Ray (Joe) 2/1, with Christmas greetings and a long letter on her doings since last she wrote. Her health has improved and she is back playing bowls and attending meetings. Still goes to Legacy and belongs to Southport Zone.

Mavis says she has been on a couple of day trips and late in February was going on a boat from Brisbane to farewell one of the big liners that was en route to Sydney. (Presume it may be the Queen Elizabeth II).

Mavis says she managed to get to Ballina for the Sunday reunion in October, daughter Dell and Peter took her down, and they had a very enjoyable

afternoon. Gloria Gray (widow of "Paddy" 2/1) was also there and Mavis and family took her home. Gloria's health hasn't been the best since her stroke, but she battles on.

Many thanks for the sub. for the News and hope you had no problems with your driving test. Max handed his in on his birthday in February – after 70 years – his eyes no longer fit to drive.

Do hope you have managed to get some rain since you wrote. Some of our North Coast towns had some good falls lately. Love and best wishes, keep well.

VERA BRADLEY, Cairns, our ex-AAMWS friend, with Christmas greetings and the news that she has sold the big home she had lived in with her late husband Ron for many years. Has moved into a top quality retirement village, about a mile from her old home, brand new and ground level – and she loves it.

For those who knew Cairns well during the war years, Vera said the City is still growing fast, plenty of high-rise etc., but the City Council has upgraded the Esplanade and made such a difference. In all, Cairns still a good place to live.

Glad to hear your health is improving, Vera, and happy with your new lifestyle. Always pleased to hear from you and we send you our love and best wishes for the coming year.

AUBREY (AUB) BRASIER, Dee Why, our long time bugler for our ANZAC Eve wreath laying, with Christmas greetings and his thanks for a photo I had sent him taken last year at the Cenotaph. Since then he reports that he had his trumpet, amplifier and music stolen. After a notice in the "Manly Daily" a Peter Stuart gave Aub his trumpet and a Martin Rippingale, a professional musician, gave him a good amplifier and a neighbour gave him a music book. Aub says he was very lucky, restores his faith in people.

Our best wishes to both Nancy and yourself, Aub, and hope you'll be on deck for ANZAC Eve.

MARY BURNHAM, Forster, daughter of the late Colonel Arnold Brown 2/1, with greetings for Christmas and a healthy and happy 2007. She is always pleased to receive the News and sends her thanks. Hopefully we may see you in Sydney again for the ANZAC activities. All the best.

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, Lex, and hope this finds you well and still able to enjoy your activities.

VERA COOK, Randwick, widow of Clem 2/1, with the news that she was spending Christmas down the South Coast with her sister and brother. Good to hear you are recovering from your heart problem, Vera, and your best wishes passed on to all Pioneers and their families for a healthy and happy 2007. Take care and always pleased to hear from you.

RON COYTE 2/1, Wentworthville, with a welcome donation for the News, many thanks. Ron and his wife, Eileen, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on 23rd November 2006 and had a lovely family gathering to mark the occasion. Also received congratulations from the Queen, the Governor-General, State Governor and several dignitaries to mark this special occasion. The good wishes of your fellow Pioneers are also passed on to you both and may you have many more happy years together. Well done!!

Ron's health has not been the best over the last 12 months – dropped an air conditioner on his leg and ripped an artery and still healing.

He had a trip to the War Memorial in Canberra for his 85th Birthday, thanks to his daughter, and says it was a wonderful experience. He could have spent a week there and still would not have seen everything.

Closes with best wishes to all Pioneers for the coming year and lots of good health.

ALLAN CRUTE 2/1, Woolgoolga, with greetings to all for the Festive Season and a later letter with the news of a change of address to a nursing home in Woolgoolga, only three blocks from his old home in High Street. He has kept his house and his son, Denny, is to use it as a holiday home.

He had several trips to hospital last year and, with age creeping on, decided to make the move to a nursing home. Is very happy with the care and free to come and go as he pleases. Still holds his

licence, which is an added bonus, and very happy with his move.

In his letter he mentions the passing of Tom Morrow 2/1 and would have gone to the funeral to represent the 2/1sts, but wasn't well at the time. Tom had heart problems a couple of years back and was never very well afterwards.

Good to hear from you, Allan, take care and our best wishes.

ARTHUR DAVIS 2/1, Berkeley Vale, with apologies for the late sending of his subs, but has a fall which has slowed him up. Mentions that Ken Oliver 2/1 had sent him a photo of the Milne Bay memorial which brought back lots of memories of D Coy's days in the area.

Many thanks for the sub. and for your good wishes to all those who keep the Association going.

ROSS DAWSON 2/2, Bayview, was in touch early December and, in passing, said he had another fall, but apart from a few bruises, was on the mend. (Better put more water with it, Ross).

He wished to be remembered to all Pioneers and was grateful to the Executive for keeping the Association alive when so many are having to fold up. He also thanked the Editors of the News for the good job they are doing and especially mentioned the November issue – says it was "Tops".

Many thanks, Ross, good to see our efforts are appreciated. However, this can only be achieved if our readers write and tell us of their doings – especially now the ranks are thinning. All the best.

HAZEL EARNSHAW, Toormina, sister of the late Merv. Rees 2/1, with a letter of thanks to Max for including her on the mailing list for the News. She has been on the sick list for a while, but wrote to say she had the privilege of playing at the funeral of Tom Morrow 2/1 of Woolgoolga. It was while listening to the Eulogy that she discovered he had been a 2/1 Pioneer. Hazel mentions she plays for local funerals fairly regularly and quite a lot of them are for returned servicemen.

All the best to you and your husband and many thanks for your letter. Kindest regards.

ANDY ELLISTON, Narooma, son of the late Phil 2/1, with a donation to funds and although his dad passed away in 1968, he and wife Lexie still look forward to reading the News. Thank you for your Christmas greetings and your donation. Our best wishes to you both.

MARIE FOLEY, Horsham Vic., with a note advising us of the passing of her husband Jack Foley 2/2. Max has included your notes in Last Post, Marie, and we thanks you for letting us know and for your donation to funds. Many thanks and we shall continue to send you the News when published. Best wishes.

GRACE FOWKES, Wentworthville, widow of Dick ("Snowy") 2/1, with Christmas greetings to all Pioneers and her thanks to all those who keep the News and Association afloat. The ranks are thinning very rapidly, Grace, but the Committee are doing their best to hold the Association together – perhaps for a few more years. Sadly age is fast catching up with us all.

Thank you for your donation to funds and every good wish for the year ahead. Keep well and always good to hear from you.

BOB GINNANE 2/2, Leumeah, with Seasons Greetings to all for the coming year. Bob writes that Nell is now in a nursing home in Campbelltown with early stage dementia and can remember all the things he would like her to forget. After living with someone for 66 years in marriage, it is very lonely on your own. (Have to get yourself a parrot, Bob, and train him)

His family talked him into handing in his driver's licence when he turned 85 and a month later Nell took sick. Now he has to rely on one of his daughters to take him to the nursing home every week (which I am sure they are only too happy to do). Says he is lucky to have the two girls caring for him. They do two weeks apart, as one lives in Ulladulla. Lovely to see family helping out these days – so many young ones take the "oldies" for granted.

Our best wishes, Bob, and to Nell.

JOHN HAYDEN 2/1, Orange, with greetings for Christmas and to say he and Wyn have settled happily into "Ascot Gardens" village in Orange and they are very lucky to be in such lovely surroundings.

John also passes on his thanks to the Editors of the News for keeping members in touch with one another and he and Wyn always look forward to seeing it in the mail. Many thanks to you both and we'll try and keep up the good work. Our fond wishes and keep well.

MERCIA HEALY, Bonbeach Vic, widow of Leo 2/1, with a new address, as her unit in Keysborough was sold. She saw Eric Causer 2/1 at a mutual friend's funeral recently and remarked how the ranks were thinning. They certainly are, Mercia, our Last Post column seems to get longer each issue.

Good to see your new grandchild is doing well, Jemma Lily, and already 10 months old. How time flies when you get older.

All the best and take care. Had to look up the map to see where Bonbeach was located.

ELAINE HENDERSON, Epping, niece of late Ron Clarke 2/1, with a donation to funds and the best of good wishes for the coming year passed on to all Pioneers and their families. Thank you, Elaine, and for your cheque for the Treasurer. Kind regards to you and the family.

PAM HERRICK, Sutherland, daughter of the late George Bates 2/1, with her usual long breezy Christmas letter and news of her family and "doings" over the past year. Her greetings to all Pioneers and their families are passed on and hopes for a blessed and Happy New Year.

Pam and Edward have family spread around the world — Edward's in Darwin and the Gold Coast — Pam with a daughter in Brisbane, another in the Philippines and a son in the U.S.A., so plenty of places for holidays.

They are holidaying in the Philippines again this year — they love the Philippino culture and the people. Pam will be an assistant English teacher in Grades 1 and 2 at the Brent International School for part of the holiday and will visit Don Bosco Street Childrens' School as well, as she does most visits.

Good to hear from you, Pam, and maybe we will see Edward and yourself at our ANZAC Day functions. Take care God bless.

JACK HORE-LACY 2/2 Moss Vale, with a cheque enclosed for the treasurer, many thanks, and his best wishes to Max on his knee operation. The progress has been slow, mostly muscle problems, but hopefully will improve in coming weeks.

Jack rang Col Hamley (2/2 Pnr. Btn Association) in Melbourne about the passing of "George" Gladstone West, mentioned in our last newsletter.

Thank you Jack for your phone call and best wishes from Max and myself.

GLORIA HUTCHINSON, Caringbah, widow of Bill 2/1, with a cheque enclosed with her Christmas card, for which many thanks. Good to hear from you, Gloria, and hope you have a healthy and happy 2007.

ROY JARDINE 2/1, Gladesville, and wife Phyllis, were another couple celebrating their Golden Wedding last year and somehow or other the newspaper cutting was mixed up with some other notes I had put aside. My apologies to you and belated congratulations. They were married in 1946 and have lived in Gladesville for 55 years. Roy is a member of the Gladesville RSL Club and Vice-President of both the Association and the Rats of Tobruk. Hope you both have many more years together with your two daughters, six grandchildren and four great "grandies". Our best wishes to you both, and lots of good health.

BILL JOHNSON 2/1 East Bentleigh, Vic, with a long letter following on his phone call to Max and I on our Australia Day honours award and we thank you for the kind words contained therein. To someone living in another State, the Pioneer News has kept alive memories of his service years, and mates established over that period of time. Your kind thoughts were very much appreciated.

Bill and Mavis, their daughter Vivienne and husband Roger, will be coming up for ANZAC Day and a three day stay. Bill was hoping to march this year, but says the odds are pretty slim at the moment because of a recent trip to hospital lately with high blood pressure. Perhaps if in Sydney on ANZAC Eve, you may be able to make the wreath-laying at the Cenotaph, also the reunion at the Occidental Hotel on ANZAC Day.

Will look forward to seeing you and the family

and many thanks for your letter and enclosed cheque.

HARRY LAMERTON, Douglas Park, son of the late Jack 2/1, with a very generous donation to funds from the Lamerton family, for which the Association thank you most sincerely.

Many thanks for the news of your mum, Marie, as I had missed her phone calls every now and then. Have altered her address on the mailing list and copies will be forwarded when published. Very pleased to hear her operation was successful and hope her eyes have not deteriorated further.

Your kind words to Max and myself were very much appreciated and glad to see you were able to re-read the 2/1st Battalion history. So much was shared by the men in difficulty and danger.

Best wishes to you and the family and our love to your mum. Do hope she is happy in the new surrounds.

MAISIE KEMPNIICH, Shoal Bay, widow of Jack 2/1, with Christmas wishes to all the "Pioneer Family" — says she can't write these days but remembers all the good times we shared 20 or 30 years ago — wouldn't it be great to wind back the clock.

Do hope you are still able to get about the nursing home, Mais, and have a trip to town now and again. Since Max had his knee replacement in September, our travelling has been very restricted and we don't venture too far from Sydney. He has recently handed in his licence — after 70 years — and now depends on me to be the driver.

Take care and always happy to hear from you. Love and best wishes.

SAM LEWIS 2/1, Forster, is another Pioneer celebrating his Golden Wedding to Margaret. He enclosed with his note a news cutting from the "Advocate" (presume local paper) with details of their 60th Anniversary on 8th February 2007. Sam served with the 2/1sts in the Middle East, New Guinea and Borneo and they corresponded for many years before they married on 8th February, 1947.

They celebrated the special occasion with family and friends at Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club in Newport, Sydney.

Heartiest congratulations to you both and may you have many more happy years together.

Hope to see you in Sydney for ANZAC Day and that Margaret's back problem has improved. All the best, take care.

ERNIE LUNN 2/2, Dubbo, with a card per dear wife Norma, with best wishes to all for the Festive Season. Ernie was delighted to see the item in last News — loves to get a mention — and we hope this finds both of you in better health. Take care and love.

DON McCLELLAND 2/2, Bundaberg Qld., with a donation to funds and thanks to those who keep the Association and News going, especially as none of us are getting younger.

He was leaving Bundaberg on 1st March for his usual trip south to see family and friends in Melbourne for the ANZAC period. Driving as far as Inglewood, just north of Bendigo, where his son lives, is quite a long drive from Bundaberg. Says he may have to fly if he goes next year.

Many thanks for the donation to funds, Don, and we hope you have a safe trip and enjoy your time with family and friends.

JEAN MCINTYRE, Springwood, widow of John 2/2, with Christmas greetings to all and a welcome donation to the News. Many thanks and we hope you have a happy and healthy 2007.

JULIE McWILLIAM, Griffith, daughter of the late Steve Clarke 2/1, with thanks for the Pioneer News and for the support and friendship she has received from our "Pioneer Family". Steve is sadly missed around the ANZAC activities, as he was so much a part of the functions over so many years. Our best wishes at this special time.

MARGARET MUNRIGHT, Matraville, daughter of the late Jack Claypole 2/1, with a letter to the Association on the passing of her father in February. (Max has made mention of this in Last Post).

Margaret was anxious to receive the News and we have placed your name on the mailing list, also a copy will be sent to your mum as before.

Her dad's last ANZAC Day march was in 2003, which was attended by his two grandsons and two

great-grandsons. They missed seeing him in the march in the following years because his health wasn't the best. Even when not marching, he would still get his medals out and give them a polish.

Thank you for your letter, Margaret, and our kindest regards to your mum, Connie. Take care and God Bless.

JOHN PITMAN 2/1, Moree, with a welcome letter and cheque enclosed for the News. Many thanks. Mentions there is no news from his part of the country, says everyone is sick of hearing about the drought, over which the farmers have no control. There has been some rain about their area, but very little, and they have had to sell off a lot of their stock.

Max sends his best wishes to you, John, and says there are not too many of the old Sig. Pln. left in the 2/1sts. Hears regularly from Eric Causer and believes he will be in Sydney for ANZAC Day. All the best and thank you for your kind remarks on the job we are doing on the News.

DOT PRIEST, Ballina, widow of Peter 2/1, with a cheque for the News — many thanks. Our thanks too, Dot, for the news items included in your letter on the passing of Ken Wilson 2/2 and Bill Hoffman 2/1 — Dot attended both funerals and these are mentioned by Max in Last Post. She worked with Bill Hoffman after the war at the baker shop in Kyogle belonging to Col. McIntyre. Thanks Dot for phoning the Powells in Kyogle, we received the funeral service sheet from Maurice last week.

Dot also sends news of Jack Shearman 2/1 of Kyogle — he had a bad fall getting up to turn the T.V. off (or on) and hit his head, broke four ribs and fractured others, but is on the mend now. Our best wishes to you Jack and to Flo. Take care.

Good to know you look forward to the News, it does help to keep our "Pioneer Family" together, and our best wishes to Pam (daughter of late Ray Harris 2/2).

Looking forward to maybe seeing you in Sydney for ANZAC Day and many thanks again for your assistance after I phoned you. Love and best wishes.

MONA REINERS, Corryong, Vic, widow of Bern 2/1, with Christmas greetings to all and a welcome donation for the treasurer.

It is now ten years since Bern passed away and Mona says she has reasonably good health, two good feet and legs and can get about. She and son Lex spent some time in W.A. for the 21st birthday of Tim (daughter Mandy's son) who has just passed his 3rd year of medicine and his sister Sally has completed 1st year of dentistry.

We were delighted to see Brian when he called in on his way back from holidays up north and gave us news (and photos) of his girls Emma and Claire. Sorry we did not see Barbara as she had a visit from a friend. They were returning to Shepparton next day.

Lex and his wife were in Italy where their daughter is studying at Bologna Uni for a year.

How the years have flown, Mona, since those days we all holidayed together. Our love to you and the family, take care.

FRANCES RHODES, Canberra, daughter of late Jim 2/1, with a long Christmas letter and "doings" of her holidays with the family Meg and James. Fran has bought a camper trailer so they can camp in comfort and style. She has given it a test run down to Eden and was planning a trip to Stuart's Point, near Macksville, for the Christmas/January holidays. Hope all went well with the van, Fran, and I'm sure the young ones would have enjoyed the trip.

Great to keep in touch with you and our very best wishes for the coming year. Love to all.

OLIVE RICHARDS, Bribie Island, widow of Jack 2/1, with Christmas greetings and hoping Max's knee replacement was on the mend. He's still going to physio once a week, and not the best. Olive is able to go for long walks every day on the island and keeping well.

They need rain badly like most of the country and already on Level 4 restrictions. Hope the last couple of months may have been kinder to you.

Take care Olive and best wishes to you, Chris and Annette.

EULALIE SAUER, Lower Mitcham, S.A., widow of George 2/1, with a cheque enclosed with her Xmas greetings. Many thanks. She mentions going

to a Remembrance Day service at Centennial Park Cemetery in S.A. and it was very impressive. She saw a plaque for George in the R.S.L. Wall of Remembrance, not so far from where the service was held. The Scotch College Pipe Band preceded the official party and was lovely to hear the drums. Their son went to school there, and a grandson is there now. The College always place the flags on the RSL graves on ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day.

Eulalie has been to Queensland since she wrote last to see her family up there and may go again shortly, but has to do some maintenance on the house first. Has been having physio on a shoulder probably caused through helping George in and out of chairs etc.

Her best wishes are passed on to all Pioneers and their families for a healthy New Year.

BRYAN SMALLHORN 2/1, Armidale, with a note apologising for being remiss in sending his donation to the News – says it surely couldn't be "old age" setting in!! Sends his regards to all, and really has no news. Thanks for the cheque, Bryan, maybe some news next time.

WAL SMITH 2/1, East Gosford, with a cheque for the News and a note hoping Max's knee is improving. Many thanks – cannot make much news out of that Wal. Trust both you and good wife Yvonne are well.

GWEN STRODE, Yagoona, sister of the late Keith Jones 2/1, with Christmas greetings and a cheque for the News. Our thanks, Gwen, and best wishes for the coming year.

BILL THIELE 2/1, Port Hughes S.A., as usual per pen of good wife Betty, and to say Bill has started playing his Night Owl Bowls again in Moonta and quite a few young people are enjoying the game – once considered only for "oldies".

At the moment they have in their garden a couple of banana palms, one displaying a large bunch of bananas. Betty says perhaps they should consider hiring a security guard!! They certainly have been a price, but getting back to a little more realistic now.

Many thanks for your cheque for the News and your good wishes passed on to all Pioneers.

LES TUNKS 2/1, Mareeba, Qld., with a letter also one from wife Lesley. Les sent Max photos of some of the plaques erected at Rocky Creek Memorial Park by different units who were stationed on the Tablelands. He thought Max may find members of some of the units who would like a copy. So far he has given quite a few away at meetings. Many thanks, Les, and for the sub. to the News.

Christmas greetings were also sent by Lesley and to say they were going to family for the day. They have had a mixed year healthwise, taking it in turn to go into hospital, but were not too bad at time of writing. Were hoping for some rain, like the rest of the country, it was badly needed. All the best to you both. Keep well and our best wishes.

DOUG WATERS 2/1, West Croydon S.A., per pen of Maureen, enclosing his sub. for the News, many thanks. Doug had heard from Bill and Betty Thiele and all were well, considering the age, and hoped Max's operation showed good results. Very slow, Doug, but sure age has a lot to do with recovery. Best wishes to you both, keep well.

RON WEBSTER 2/1, Bass Hill, with a note to Max to say he could not recognise any of the photos sent by Alby Dean of the 2/1 R.A.P., especially as his eyes are not the best. Ron has had a couple of falls in recent months and is taking things more slowly these days.

Thanks for your kind words on the News and every good wish for the coming year.

IDA WILSON, Lismore, widow of Ken 2/2, was at the time of writing in Southport Hospital. It was thought at the time to be a slight stroke, but proved to be bleeding into the brain cavity. Latest reports from daughter Freda is that her mother is doing well and expects to be back in St. Vincents in Lismore during the week. Good to hear, Ida, and we thank Dot Priest of Ballina for passing on the news. Take care and our best wishes.

NEV WOODHAM 2/1, Cleveland Qld., with special greetings for Christmas (and your little Christmas prayer). He and Betty have good and bad days and realise that they have to slow down. Thought perhaps you may be coming to Sydney for

ANZAC Day this year, and look forward to seeing you. Love and best wishes from both of us.

■ That's all the Mail Bag for this issue and our thanks to all those who sent cards to us for Christmas, apart from those who had news for the Mail Bag. All were very much appreciated and our best wishes for the coming year. God Bless.

ROBYN/Bruce Bell, Pat Bentley, Eric/Doff Causer, Nita Ferris, Olive Finlay and family, Verdie/Connie Humphreys, Jack/Audrey Hearn, Marie Jenson, Jack/Marj Kerslake, Joan Lake, Joyce Law and family, Dawn Levy, Bert/May/Lynda Neasbey, Betty O'Connor, Allan Olson, Charles Richardson, Joyce Walker, Erika Peile, Toss Robertson/Janet O'Neill, Doug/Roma Shearston, Doug/Maureen Waters, Helen/Andrew Walker (daughter late Mary Lloyd), 2/4th Pioneer Bn.

LAST POST

JACK FOLEY 2/2 of Horsham Vic., passed away in Horsham Hospital on 14th November, 2006, aged 83 years. Although in ill-health for many years, he was still able to enjoy his regular Friday night visits to the local R.S.L. Club to meet old friends, also enjoyed a special luncheon hosted by the R.S.L. for WWII vets and their partners just two weeks before he died. We extend our sincere sympathy to his wife Marie and family on their loss.

REG BENTON 2/2 of Victoria passed away early in November as the result of an accident. The funeral was held at the Buchan Cemetery on 14th November, 2006 and the funeral director Steven Baggs of Bairnsdale conducted the service. Neville Jakins, President of the Lakes Entrance R.S.L. Sub-Branch was kind enough to send the details and was doing the R.S.L. Service and Military Eulogy. Thank you, Neville, for the above information.

DON MURRAY 2/2, Tinonee, passed away on 3rd November, 2006, aged 84. For the past 14 months he had been a resident of St. Paul's Hostel, Cundletown, and died in the Manning Base Hospital from a heart attack. The funeral service was held at the Free Presbyterian Church, Taree, on the 7th November.

Sincere sympathy is extended to his widow, Nancy, on her sad loss.

ELSA (BILLIE) DYNON, Booragul, widow of the late Capt. Frank Dynon 2/1, passed away on 25th October, 2006, after a three months illness, aged 90 years. Billie was a regular correspondent and enjoyed receiving and reading the News. We are grateful to her son, Tony Dynon of Carey Bay for passing on the sad news and we extend our sympathy to her loved ones.

PETER PEILE 2/1, Caringbah, passed away on 20th December, 2006, in Sutherland Hospital, aged 85 years. Peter had been in hospital with pneumonia and has had eyesight problems for years, caused through war service in Tobruk.

A Thanksgiving Service was held on Friday, 22nd December, and the Cronulla R.S.L. Sub-Branch carried out the Poppy Service.

His wife, Erika, and family were grateful to all those who were able to attend the service, and we extend our sincere sympathy to her and her family on their loss.

JACK STONE 2/1, Earlwood, passed away on 11th January, 2007, and the service was held at funeral parlours at Rockdale. Jack has been a committee man for many years and always attended the ANZAC Day march and reunion. Roy Jardine and Bill Tasker attended and Bill extended to the family sincere sympathy on behalf of the Association.

JACK CLAYPOLE 2/1, Matraville, passed away in Prince of Wales Hospital on 17th January, 2007, aged 90 years. The funeral was held at Eastern Suburbs Crematorium on the 22nd. The service was performed by Salvation Army Capt. Phil Gloyas and the R.S.L. Poppy Service by Frank Maher, Welfare Officer of Maroubra R.S.L.

Directors and members from the South Sydney Junior Rugby League Football Club, of which Jack was a Life Member, were present.

Our sympathy has been extended to wife Connie, daughter Margaret and family on their sad loss.

WILLIAM (BILL) HOFFMAN 2/1, Kyogle, passed away on 2nd February, 2007, aged 88. He was born and educated in Kyogle and, apart from army service, lived there all of his life. In 1948 he became Baths Manager of the Kyogle Pool and worked there until it was closed in 1974. He worked for the Council until his retirement.

He became a resident of Kyogle Masonic Hostel in 1993 and remained there until his death. The funeral was held at St James Anglican Church in Kyogle and officiated by Canon Brian Osborne. All of the activities of which Bill was a member took part in the service and the RSL carried out the Poppy Service.

We are grateful to Maurice and Joan Powell of Kyogle for writing and enclosing a copy of the funeral service and to Dot Priest of Ballina (widow of the late Peter Priest 2/1) for attending the service on behalf of the 2/1st Pioneers.

MARY MORRIS, widow of Leo Morris 2/1, passed away in Linton House, Yass, on 24th February, where she has been a patient for many years. She was almost 95 years old.

A service was held in the little St. Augustine Chapel, Yass, with many of the staff and residents in attendance, together with family members. To daughter Robyn Bell and her husband and family we extend our deepest sympathy in their sad loss.

VALE – KEN WILSON

KEN WILSON 2/2 of Lismore passed away on the 11th January, 2007, after a short illness. His funeral was held at the Lismore Memorial Gardens Crematorium and attended by many family and friends. Refreshments were later served at Alstonville R.S.L.

Pioneers in attendance were Terry and Clare McGuire, Albert and Lil Bettens, Pam Lee and her son, Betty O'Connor, Dot Priest, Ray and Nancy Robbins.

On 10th September, 1995, Ken Wilson assisted by Ray Harris, and with the sanction of the Association, formed the N.S.W. North Coast Branch.

A Committee was established with the purpose of having informal get-togethers and, at a later stage, of running country reunions at Lismore along the same lines as previously carried out by the Association.

On 13th September, 1997, the Branch held their first Lismore Reunion, organised by Ken and his Committee. Subsequent reunions were held at Lismore in 1999, 2000, 2002, 2004 and the last one in October, 2006.

The Executive of the Association have been very appreciative of the efforts of Ken and his Committee in keeping the Pioneers together by conducting these reunions.

Sincere sympathy has been extended to Ida and family on behalf of the Association.

NORTH COAST BRANCH

Owing to Ken Wilson's untimely death, Ron Cross was asked to arrange a meeting of the Branch, which he organised at the House of No Steps, on 14th March.

Thirteen members attended and Ron started the meeting by outlining the positions that needed to be filled, either a President or Chairman, and a second person to sign cheques etc. and details of their bank balance to be given to members. It was moved, after some discussion, that Ron Cross be Chairman, Sec/Treasurer, with Betty O'Connor as the assistant. This was carried and the meeting was able to continue.

Dates for subsequent meetings for the year were 13th June, 12th September and 14th November. It was also moved that no further reunions be held due to members getting older and unable to travel.

Ron then closed the meeting for lunch and agreed to meet again in June at the House of No Steps.

We thank Ron for sending us these notes.

PIONEER NEWS

Phone 9759 5491

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

Per Annum: \$5

Typeset by Typesmith Pty Ltd, PO Box 1264, Camden NSW 2570 Printed by ABF Printers, 3 Argyle Street, Arncliffe NSW 2205

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

Treasurer: DON CRAWFORD

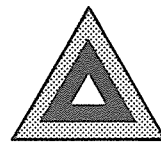
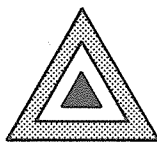
Editors: Max & Peg HERRON O.A.M.'s

President: ALLAN McINNES

Vol. 53 No. 2

JULY 2007

Welfare: BILL TASKER, Phone 9718 6658



PIONEERS BRAVE THE WEATHER

Over the ANZAC period it was recorded that Sydney had its heaviest rainfall in five years. Despite this, the attendance of both units was about the same as last year. It was reported by the press the following day that 150,000 spectators lined the route of the march.

WREATH LAYING SERVICE

On Tuesday, 24th April at 3.45 pm the Wreath Laying Service was conducted at the Cenotaph in Martin Place and despite the rain, before and after the service, the attendance was eleven Pioneers and fourteen relatives.

The march leader was President Allan McInnes and the 2/1st banner was carried by Noel Grant of Victoria, the 2/2nd by our treasurer, Don Crawford. The wreath for the Association was laid by Ken Oliver 2/1, who also recited the Ode to the Fallen, and Sharon Lynch (granddaughter of Noel Grant 2/1) laid the wreath on behalf of the Ladies Auxiliary. Aub Brasier played the bugle for Last Post and Reveille, a task he has undertaken for the last forty one years. Thank you Aub for your continued wonderful support.

Roy Jardine 2/1 was the Marshal, standing for Bill Tasker who had been in hospital and was unable to attend.

ANZAC DAY MARCH

Rain fell heavily for the Dawn Service and continued up to 8.30 am but held off for the Pioneers to complete the march.

The members were called to assembly by marshal Bill Tasker with Roy Jardine 2/1 and Allan McInnes 2/2 leading their respective units. Banners were carried by Tim Lloyd for 2/1sts and Ryan Crawford for 2/2nds. The Australian flag was carried by Ray Law 2/1. Attendance was twenty Pioneers and twenty eight relatives.

Upon marching off, the assembly were delayed at King Street for about thirty minutes and then had to move off at a brisk pace to catch up to the unit ahead. The rain held off until the units boarded the train then came down quite heavily for the rest of the marchers.

ANZAC REUNION

By Bill Lewis 2/2

The President Allan McInnes commenced proceedings for the Reunion Dinner at the Occidental Hotel by welcoming all present and then recited the Ode, followed by a toast to the Queen. He conveyed an apology from our Patron John Gilchrist, who was unable to attend due to his wife's illness.

Allan then expressed thanks to Hotel Manager Paulette West for her efforts in the preparation of the luncheon room and a special thank you to Function Co-ordinator Mary.

He also thanked the working sons at table three for once again doing all the work in collecting lunch fees, attending to the roll and issuing name tags – thank you Ray Law, Tim Lloyd, Geoff Finlay, David and Joshua Herron.

Our President acknowledged the inevitable decline in the ranks of our Pioneer veterans, but spoke of the strong bonds of mateship over the years which have united our Association. He recalled the early history, the work of Mrs O'Malley-Wood, Peg Herron and others with the Comforts Fund, the forerunner of the combined Associations in 1946, formally renamed the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Battalions Association. In the 61 years since, the Executive and Committee have given

sterling service to members. He remembered Max Law obtaining publicity in the press which led to an increase in membership.

In 1952, Max Law and Frank Cheal published the first newsletter, which was registered as a periodical in 1953. In 1958, there were 900 names on the mailing list, which grew to a peak of 1200, an outstanding contribution, by these two volunteers, given the work involved in writing, printing and mailing. Membership in those days was 2/6 per year and the cost of postage 3 1/2d. The editors found it hard to get enough news in 1952, but soon that was eliminated as names kept coming. In 1963 Bob Lake went on to be co-editor, ably assisted in later years by daughters Gail and Eileen typing his notes. At the old Redfern Town Hall reunions, while Bob tapped the kegs his boys manned the bar. He died in 1996, remembered as a great mate and a willing worker.

Allan went on to say that among many great supporters, too many to mention here, the Herrons, recently honoured with their OAM's are outstanding. Peg Herron has never paused in her work for the Association since Max became secretary in 1957 (a half-century of dedication to the Association) and has been Assistant Secretary and Co-editor of Pioneer News since 1996.

Don Crawford with wife Val assisting, has been an innovator since taking over as Treasurer. No-one has served the Association better than Bill Tasker, who has been tireless in his welfare duties, involving extensive travelling and considerable sacrifice of time. Our thanks are due to Ken Oliver, who was selected to revisit Borneo. Finally, in his expression of thanks, President Allan said he would be remiss not to include Wal Smith, who for many years has allowed us to use the facilities of Redfern RSL without cost, to hold our Committee meetings.

At the conclusion of Allan's address, it was time for refreshments. It seemed that the usual suspects had been to the bar first, and the drinks flowed freely, and for free. This generosity was much appreciated by the gathering. Among the 2/2 contingent, Allan McInnes had some of his family at his table, as did Bert Neasbey with a family group of four. Ross Dawson had mustered three sons, while Andy Beebar enjoyed the company of son Allen. It was a busy time for Don Crawford, attending to his ongoing duties of treasurer. The remaining members of this small 2/2 band were Jack Allison, Clive Maddrell and Bill Lewis. The ranks were diminished because of the deaths during the year of regulars, Frank Locane and Ken Wilson, both colourful characters and sadly missed. Snowy Dodd was unable to make the trip down from the North Coast, and Gavin Todd was immobilised following a major operation.

REUNION TABLE TALK

By Jack Bertram 2/1

TIM LLOYD, seated alongside Max at the reunion, has proudly carried our banner for 25 years. A wonderful record and a proud achievement, remembering his father Jack who was in Don Coy with Max at Milne Bay. Good work, Tim.

ERIC CAUSER from Hamilton in Victoria was also seated with Max. They were in the Sig. Pln. 2/1sts in Borneo, and Eric rarely misses an ANZAC Day in Sydney. A very active Legatee –

Jack's mother in the early twenties had cause to be thankful of this great organisation.

DEAN OLIVER accompanied his dad, Ken, speaking of a visit to Milne Bay with his father. He tells of the banishment of many of the coconut trees in favour of a dwarf tree which is used to obtain oil – no more dodging falling coconuts.

JACK STONE's son Shawn and grandsons Nathan and Jason discussed some of Jack's activities with the Papuan Infantry Battalion (P.I.B. not P.B.I.), to which unit several 2/1 Pioneers transferred in early 1943. We thought it was great dodging pick and shovel work, but in many cases receiving no leave until late 1945. Still it was an interesting experience.

NOEL SCHOMBERG and his grandsons, were enjoying the day and being very attentive to grandfather. Noel told me of some of his stories while acting as driver to our three Colonels at various stages of their command of the 2/1sts and of his friend the late Mick Flynn.

NOEL GRANT's family marched with us and were at the reunion enjoying the hospitality.

PHIL CRAMSIE is with us again from sunny Queensland – I am looking out at the rain – so he invites us all to sunny Queensland – but don't rush, he only has room for one or two.

JACK KERSLAKE was on leave from War Vets at Narrabeen and was pushed in the march by granddaughters Jess and Elly. Great work, and good to see you looking after granddad. Sorry you were unable to make the reunion, Jack.

BILL TASKER, our great Welfare Officer, just out of hospital after a heart attack ('where he had to do as he was told') sends his regards and told me he will be 88 in August – "But don't send any presents".

LAURIE KELLY, still as garrulous as ever, related many anecdotes and kept us amused. He is as amusing as were his meals of bully beef, biscuits and Vitamin C tablets (which he called by various vegetable names) which earned him the name of Three-Course Kelly.

JIM MCGIVERN told of how he stayed in the Army after the war and went to Korea which was most hazardous. Good to hear of your doings, Jim.

ALLAN McINNES celebrated his 90th birthday on 23rd April, so son David produced a large chocolate birthday cake and, after singing Happy Birthday to our very popular President, invited those present to help themselves. Allan's son Adam and grandson Gavin were also present for the occasion.

LADIES TABLE TALK

The ladies enjoyed their second luncheon at the Occidental and were joined by several interstate visitors who had come with their Pioneer husbands, to the march and reunion. From Victoria came Robyn Bell (always a welcome visitor), Jean Grant with daughter Margaret Fleming and granddaughter Sharon Lynch, Mavis Johnson with daughter Vivian Henderson and her husband Roger (first time visitors). Bill Johnson came with them, was at the wreath laying but was not well enough to come to the luncheon.

Kathleen Dean came from Shepparton with her husband Alby and from WA came Pat Bentley and niece Lorna Servillo. Sydneysiders who were present were Olive Finlay and daughter-in-law Lyn, Joyce Law, Marie Jenson, Val Blakeney (widow of Dick 2/1), Barbara Allison, Marj Kerslake and daughter Margaret Stolp and Peg Herron and daughter-in-law Lynn.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

Another ANZAC Day has gone and, although the weather could have been kinder to both marchers and spectators, huge crowds lined the streets of Sydney to cheer them on. However, age and mobility is taking its toll on the veterans and most units were well down in numbers. Both units of the Pioneer Association marched behind the Castle Hill Youth Band, although the pace was a problem for ageing legs. To those who were unable to join in on the day they were able to make their way to the reunion at the Occidental Hotel for a meeting with their old mates.

Following ANZAC Day, Max and I were presented, with our O.A.M. awards at Government House, Sydney, by Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir A.C., C.V.O., Governor of NSW on 10th May and were accompanied by our family and Allan McInnes, President, and Don Crawford, Treasurer, of the Association. It was our pleasure to have them join us on this momentous occasion.

FRED ALWAYS 2/1, Beaumaris Vic., with a cheque for the News and his congratulations on our O.A.M. awards – many thanks. Fred marched with the 2/2nd Pioneers in Melbourne (Sydney too far away) and said it was a lovely day, and there was a huge crowd in attendance. We needed the rain here, Fred, but not on this special day.

DORA ANDERSON, Merimbula, widow of Don 2/1, with a long letter of her "doings" over the last 12 months and her generous sub for the News. Many thanks and for your congratulations on our O.A.M.'s

Earlier in the year – on New Year's Eve – Dora was on the trip of a lifetime, a flight over the Antarctic. They left Sydney at 5.30 and after flying over Tasmania reached the first sight of ice floes about four hours later. Says one can't explain the beauty of this part of the universe, so clear and pristine clean.

They were fortunate to have a sunny day and no cloud to obscure their vision and was something she will never forget. They spent four hours over the Antarctic so had plenty of time to enjoy the wonderful experience – was like looking down on a large "lemon meringue pie" in places and she marvelled at the huge glaciers that have formed.

In her letter, Dora enclosed a copy of the programme of an ANZAC Day tribute football match at Cheltenham, Vic., her home town. Her son Colin is the secretary of the club, which is about 12 miles out of Melbourne. The committee were to be congratulated on the ANZAC luncheon and the young guest speaker a delight to listen to. He directed his speech to the purpose of ANZAC Day and carrying on the tradition by the younger generation. The message is getting across.

A very interesting letter, Dora, and ends by thanking the Pioneer News for the privilege of being on the mailing list and sends best wishes to all.

PHIL BARNETT 2/1, Alstonville, with a very short note enclosing his sub to the News – many thanks – and said he and his wife look forward to seeing it in the mail. Sends his thanks to the Editors and the Committee on the work done for the Association, and passes on regards to Allan McInnes.

ALBERT BARTON 2/1, Gulgong, with a welcome donation to funds and his apologies for taking so long to send it along – what with trips to hospital for he and Gwen and having to sell his home and move into a retirement village. However, has settled in now with help of son Rob and his family. Says he needs a wheelie walker all the time, but as there are not many men in the village he has gone back to his voluntary work at the Gulgong Museum for half day a month to give him an outside interest. Good to see Alby and do hope you

and Gwen have settled in well and enjoying your new surroundings.

Always great to hear from you and Max joins me in wishing his old mate all the best – my love to Gwen. Many thanks for the subs.

ROBYN BELL, Port Melbourne, daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1, with a letter of thanks for a most memorable ANZAC Day. Given the depleting number of Pioneers, to have so many family to represent them was a wonderful honour.

Robyn is hoping to make the service at the Kokoda Track for V.P. Day in August and looking forward to catching up with her Pioneer friends. Many thanks for your best wishes to us both on our presentation at Government House – a great occasion – and hope to see you in August.

BERT BETTENS 2/1, Lennox Head, with a note enclosing his sub for the News – many thanks – also a cutting from Reveille regarding the whereabouts of Bill Jollie. I did see the par, Bert, and rang Bill's daughter, Sharon Tyler, and she has been in contact. Thank you for your trouble in sending it on.

Thank you also for the news of the passing of Ray Robbins 2/2 recently and our sympathy is extended to wife Nancy and family. Our members on the North Coast are sadly being depleted – age and sickness catching up with so many the last few years.

Take care and best wishes to Lily and yourself.

EVELYN BOOTH, Wagga, partner of the late Jack Morgan 2/2, with her welcome donation to the News and apologies for "dragging the chain", Ev says her health a bit patchy, but manages to still get about for which she is thankful. Sends a big Hello to all those she knows and good health and happiness to all Pioneers. Many thanks, Ev, for the donation and our best wishes.

VERA BRADLEY, Cairns, our ex-AAMWS friend, with a welcome letter enclosing a leaflet on the Yungaburra Memorial Gates in the Eacham Shire. Yungaburra is a small village on the Tablelands at the top of the Gillies Highway to Atherton. Recently the memorial gates were re-discovered and their history researched. They have been refurbished and opened and blessed on Remembrance Day.

It appears the Atherton/Eacham Shire Councils are promoting W.W.II sites for tourism and, as Vera thought "our boys" were up that way, it may be a point of interest if any members were in the area travelling. Many thanks, Vera, for the information.

Our thanks for your congratulations on our O.A.M.'s. It was a surprise and a great honour and we hope we may continue to carry on for some time.

Keep well and hope the shoulder has improved. Love and best wishes from both Max and myself.

MARY BURNHAM, Forster, daughter of the late Colonel Arnold Brown 2/1, with her apologies for her non-attendance on ANZAC Day, but had a prior commitment in Forster. Sorry you were unable to attend, but had a good roll-up of ladies who enjoyed their luncheon. Hope you can make it next year.

Many thanks, Mary, for your congratulations on our O.A.M. awards, and shall endeavour to keep up the good work. Max's knee is still a problem and he hopes the warmer weather may show some improvement. Best wishes from both of us – take care.

RAY BURROUGHS 2/2, Denhams Beach, with a short note enclosing his sub for the next few years and best wishes to all for ANZAC Day. Many thanks – perhaps next letter you may have some news from your part of the country.

KAY BURTON, Springwood, daughter of the late Bert Rayner 2/1, with a welcome sub. and congrats. to Max and I on our O.A.M. awards on behalf of her mother Margaret Rayner and herself. (Pam's words – "well-deserved, you are the glue that holds the Pioneer Family together"). Our thanks to you both for your kind words.

Kay marched on ANZAC Day again and said it was good to catch up with Robyn Bell and Pam Stubbings (Priest) who came from Warwick, and she waved to Dot Priest from Ballina who was standing on the corner of Market Street. She reports that her mum Margaret is still in Kyogle Aged Care and was 93 in June.

Many thanks, Kay, and all the best to your mother. Hope she keeps well.

BOB COLE, Wahroonga, son-in-law of the late Jack Tooker 2/1, with a welcome donation to the News on behalf of Kathleen – many thanks. Bob extends his thanks for the reunion at the Occidental Hotel and feels that after a number of years, representing his late father-in-law Jack, he has developed a friendship with Tim Lloyd, Neil Whiteley, Ray Law, together with the Herron lads. Good to see you enjoyed your day Bob and thanks for your offer to help if we need it any time. Will keep it in mind.

Best wishes and kindest regards to Ainslie.

VERA COOK, Randwick, widow of Clem 2/1, with a welcome donation to the News and a book of stamps to help with postage. Many thanks, Vera, and for your kind congratulations on our O.A.M. awards. It was good to talk to you on the phone since your letter arrived and hope the old arthritis is being a bit more "friendly". Hopefully the coming warmer weather might make a difference.

Take care and always good to hear from you. All the best from both of us.

BETTY CREASY, widow of George 2/1, has moved from Portland to be closer to family on the Central Coast owing to ill-health. Betty's daughter, Joy Aracri, has been in touch and sent along a donation to funds from her mother and to say how sorry Betty was to hear of the passing of Bill Hoffman of Kyogle.

The News will be sent care of your address, Joy, and our love and best wishes passed on to your mum with the hope that her health improves in the warmer months. Do keep in touch.

WINN DWYER, Waverley, widow of Mick 2/1, with a welcome sub. for the News and congratulations to Max and myself on our O.A.M. awards. Our thanks, Winn, and your donation has been passed on to our treasurer. Best wishes and lots of good health.

BILL FLEMING 2/1, Mittagong, per pen of good wife Maureen, with a generous donation for the News – many thanks.

Maureen says Bill is still managing to get around with the help of a walking frame, but a bit slower than 12 months ago. He managed to attend the local Dawn Service on ANZAC Day and the breakfast afterwards, supported by his wonderful family. (Great to hear the younger ones looking after Dad.)

For the past few years son Jim has represented Bill at the Sydney march and the lunch at the Occidental Hotel, but Jim and wife Julie have moved to Queensland so "no catch up with the boys". Sunny Queensland just the place for a holiday though – has to be warmer than Mittagong.

Bill celebrated his 86th birthday the weekend after ANZAC Day and the weather was perfect for a family gathering – congratulations and lots of good health in the year ahead.

Good to hear you look forward to the News – it does help to keep in touch with former mates, although lately the news has not been the best.

Age and time fast catching up. Thank you for writing on Bill's behalf, Maureen, and we wish you both all the best and keep well.

AVELINE GAMBLE, Chermerside, Qld., widow of Bill 2/1, with a welcome cheque for the treasurer and our thanks. Aveline wrote in April and said the main news from her part of the country was no rain in the catchment area and having to cope with Level 5 restrictions. Do hope you have received some of the deluge that has been dumped on Sydney and our Central Coast in the last few weeks, which has relieved our water shortage considerably. We don't always hear what happens in other States, so hope you have shared in the downpours.

Best wishes and hoping you are keeping well.

BETTY GAYDEN, Shoalhaven Heads, widow of Lance 2/1, with her donation to funds and congratulations to Max and I on our O.A.M. awards. Many thanks for your donation and your good wishes. She watched the march on ANZAC Day and still feels sad when she sees the men marching – it's now five years since Lance passed away, sometimes seems like yesterday.

Betty has very bad arthritis, so has bought herself an electric scooter which she finds wonderful. It's very handy for visits to the doctor and with a friend who also owns one they go for morning tea and sometimes lunch.

Kindest regards and hope the winter months are being kind to your aches and pains.

COL HAMLEY 2/2, North Balwyn Vic., on behalf of the 2/2 Pioneer Btn Association in Victoria with congratulations to Max and myself on our O.A.M. awards in the Australia Day honours list. To President Ted Hansen and the Committee of the Victorian 2/2nd Pioneers we thank you most sincerely for your kind remarks. We were very honoured to receive the award recently at Government House and were so pleased that we were able to take Allan McInnes and Don Crawford, both 2/2nds, with us for this special occasion. Thank you, Col, for your letter and we send you our best wishes.

PAM HERRICK, Sutherland, daughter of George Bates 2/1, with her apologies for non-attendance on ANZAC Day. Edward had a fall on his left shoulder and had to have an operation at Sutherland Hospital. The operation was a success, but the shoulder will take a while to heal – and then physio. Hope by now he is well on the mend.

The men had a great day, as usual, with a few regular faces missing, but lots of sons to add to the numbers. The ladies enjoyed their day with quite a few interstate visitors.

Thank you for your donation to funds, Pam, and hope your unit renovating is nearly completed. Love and best wishes.

JOHN HUNT 2/1, New Farm Qld., with a welcome donation to funds, many thanks. Mollie-Jean has taken over the job as writer, as well as lots of other "run around" errands. John is quite happy to stay at home with his nose in a good book. (Not a bad pastime either, John.) He had a spell in Greenslopes Hospital recently, but home now and seems well – brought home some menus to show Mollie-Jean how well he'd been fed!! Our best wishes to you both, take care.

MAISIE KEMPNIH, Shoal Bay, widow of Jack 2/1, with best wishes to all Pioneers for ANZAC Day and will be looking forward to watching the march on TV. There is not much to do in the Hostel where she now lives with about 40 elderlies, but they had an ANZAC Service the morning she wrote and well attended. Her daughter, Lenore, who lives at Bolton Point, is a great help and manages her affairs, banking etc., and has recently sent a welcome sub to the News. Many thanks, Lenore, receipt will be sent shortly.

Always good to hear from you Mais, and hope with the warmer weather coming you will be able to get about a lot more.

GORDON KILLION, R.A.A.F., Ballina, with a cheque for the News – many thanks – and says that he and wife Shirley are well despite advancing years and their health worries. Still enjoys a game of golf – what more could you ask.

Gordon was saddened to hear of the passing of Ken Wilson earlier in the year and has reports from a neighbour that Phil and Doreen Barnett of Alstonville are going along O.K. We hear from Phil occasionally.

Thank you, Gordon, for your congratulations to Max and I on our O.A.M. awards, will have to make sure we keep up the good work. It is very nice to hear that the hours we spend on our "Pioneer Family" are appreciated – makes the job worthwhile. Kind regards and enjoy your golfing.

BERYL LAW, Tahmoor, widow of Jim 2/1, with a very welcome letter of thanks for the Pioneer News, which we have continued to mail to her since Jim passed away seven years ago. We never remove the widows from our mailing list unless requested and at the moment would have close to 150 still receiving the News. They seem to like to keep in contact with the men with whom their husbands shared so much during their time in the services.

Beryl wrote of watching the march on T.V. on ANZAC Day and noted with sadness the decreasing number of veterans, time taking its toll on them so long after the war ended. Says she wakes each morning thankful that she can see, hear and move about, even if painfully. Good to hear, Beryl, and hope you are able to continue to keep reasonably good health for many more years.

Max values the help Ray gives him year after year, along with other sons, on ANZAC Day, and appreciates the assistance of the young ones as age catches up. The "boys" seem to actually enjoy helping out.

Your donation to the News was very much appreciated and receipt will be sent in due course. We do not expect dues from our widows, but they seem to be quite happy to still contribute to funds. Our very best wishes to you and many thanks for your letter and your congratulations on our O.A.M. awards – they were a big surprise and we feel very honoured that our work for our "Pioneer Family" was recognised in such a wonderful manner. Take care and God Bless.

JOYCE LAW, Kareela, widow of Max 2/1, with a copy of Win Tasker's funeral service, for which we thank Joyce for attending on our behalf on ANZAC Eve. With the wreath laying ceremony in Martin Place on the same time as the funeral, Joyce very kindly offered to represent the Association on this sad occasion.

Thank you also Joyce for the trouble you went to in regard to the photo copying of the first Pioneer News in 1953 and copy will be sent on to Allan McInnes as requested. The other copy will be filed away in our records for future reference – many thanks.

Your donation to funds was very much appreciated as were your congratulations on our O.A.M.'s. Joyce thought the tribute by Allan McInnes in last News was most deserving. (Will have to keep on our toes now after such a "wrap-up".) Love and best wishes, Joyce, and hope to see you soon.

DAWN LEVY, Revesby, widow of Roy 2/2, with thanks for the last issue of the News and enclosing her subscription to keep the show on the road.

Dawn had another short holiday with her Legacy ladies in March up in the New England area. They stayed at a very nice motel in Armidale and travelled each day to different places. She enjoyed her trip very much and looking forward to the next one in October to Crescent Head – also a lovely spot.

Good to see you getting out and about, Dawn, while you are able to travel and enjoy it.

She attended the ANZAC service at Padstow where Roy was a Life Member and after lunch at the Club on to Bankstown where some of the ladies from Legacy and War Widows marched.

Good to hear the family are all well, Dawn, and says grandson Ryan is school captain this year. Wouldn't Roy have been so proud!!

In closing, she wished Max and his Pioneer mates a great ANZAC Day and hoped Max's knee continues to improve. A slow process, Dawn, but hope the coming warm weather may improve his progress now that he has finished physio.

Fond love from both of us and hope to catch up with you in the near future.

ERNIE LUNN 2/2, Dubbo, with a welcome note from Norma on his behalf, a welcome donation to funds, and a book of stamps to help with postage. Many thanks and your subs paid up to 2009, so no worries Ern. Have noted your new address at Village Life, Norma, but not sure from your letter whether you are

both there, or only Ernie. As you did not include your phone number to check, will have to wait for your call to make sure. Good to hear he is keeping well and always pleased to hear from you.

Our sincere thanks on your congratulations on our O.A.M.'s. A very happy occasion and Ernie will be pleased to hear we took two 2/2nds with us to Government House – Allan McInnes and Don Crawford.

Your best wishes are passed on to the Kerslakes. Jack was 90 in May and still in War Vets at Narrabeen. His grand-daughters Jess and Elly pushed him in a wheel-chair in the ANZAC Day march, but he was not well enough to attend the reunion.

Looking forward to talking to you, Norma, and our love and best wishes to you both.

NANCY LINTON, Tuncurry, widow of Don 2/2, with a donation to funds and says she still enjoys receiving and reading the News with much pleasure. Many thanks, Nancy, and for your congratulations on our O.A.M. awards. Also extended thanks to Allan McInnes for his support and submission for our nominations – who ever said men couldn't keep a secret.

All the best to you and hope you are keeping well.

JOYCE MCGREGOR, Bradbury, widow of Bob 2/1, with a lovely card to Max and I on our awards and really very much appreciated. Just wish our readers could see it Joyce and all the lovely thoughts of your own so wonderfully expressed. (I was quite teary when it arrived). We both send you and the family our love and many thanks for all the kind words from such old friends.

Do hope your eyes have improved since your operation – Joyce Walker keeps me in touch if she sees you. Take care and fond love.

ROBERT PHILPOTS 2/2, Woodend VIC., enclosing a cheque for subs and his best wishes to Max and I on our awards. Many thanks.

His regards are passed on to all Pioneers, with special mention of Allan McInnes and Bill Lewis – both hale and hearty on ANZAC Day. Not too many 2/2nds on deck on the "big day", like all veterans, numbers are rapidly decreasing as age and sickness takes its toll.

REV. PETER PLAYSTED, Sq. Ldr R.A.A.F. (RET.), Wentworthville, with quite a long letter on the loss to the North Coast Branch of their President Ken Wilson, and his inability to attend the funeral in Lismore due to illness and the distance involved from Sydney.

Peter first met Ken in 1996 when Ken approached him to conduct the wreath laying service for the Pioneer re-union in Lismore and on three more occasions after that until Peter made a move to Sydney. He always noted that the Pioneer boys had a higher regard for Padres than Peter had seen with the Vietnam Vets on similar occasions.

In 2002, during a Pioneer dinner at Alstonville, they presented him with a framed Certificate of Appreciation embossed "For Dedicated Service as Padre", complete with the colour patches of the 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneers, and Peter says it sits on his desk as one of his most cherished possessions.

To Peter, Ken's death was a devastating blow all the more so because he was unable to attend the funeral and he shall never be forgotten.

Many thanks for your letter, Peter, and sorry we could not publish same in its entirety because of lack of space. Kindest regards and our best wishes.

JULIE MCWILLIAM, Griffith, daughter of the late Steve Clarke 2/1, with her thanks for sending her the Pioneer News keeping her in touch with the activities and news items of her father's old unit.

We had spoken by phone to Julie prior to ANZAC Day regarding her daughter, Karen, taking part in the march. Max was pleased to say that he spoke to her before the march and with our grandson, Josh, helped her pin up Steve's medals. Good to see she was able to take part, Julie, especially as you said she hadn't been well.

Our very best wishes to you and your family and hope you had some of the rainy weather in Griffith that we have been having in Sydney.

JOHN PAUL 2/1, Camira Qld., with a short note enclosing his sub. for the News and his congratulations to Max and I on our O.A.M.'s. Many thanks. Says hospital visits are the order of the day at present and for another month or so and then hopes to be back to his fighting best. Presume this has something to do with the "nasties" you had removed some months ago. Best of luck, John, and your good wishes passed on to all Pioneers for ANZAC Day.

DOT PRIEST, Ballina, widow of Peter 2/1, with a short note on the passing of Ray Robbins 2/2 recently (reported in Last Post) and to say she and her family had a lovely time in Sydney over the ANZAC period. It was good to see you again Dot and sorry you weren't able to join us for lunch at the Occidental. Dot also mentioned members of the North Coast Branch were meeting for lunch on the 13th June and then every three months. Good to hear and our best wishes to all.

FRANCES RHODES, Canberra, daughter of the late Jim 2/1, with a lovely card of congratulations to Max and I on our O.A.M. awards and we send our love and thanks for your kind thoughts. The investiture at Government House was a great moment and I will send you a photo when they are ready. Also many thanks for the sub. enclosed.

Fran learned to scrapbook and been researching her Dad's army days from letters and momentos sent home by Jim during the war - leaflets from the "West Point", a Palestinian (tourist) dollar note with Jim's photo on it and some Jap coins. (All in my boxes too, Fran.) Seems to be a great hobby and a good way to preserve family history. Hope all are well and Meg and James studying hard for final exams. Love and best wishes from both of us.

DOROTHY STEAIN, Merewether, widow of Arthur 2/1, with congratulations to Max and I on our awards, many thanks, and her subscription to the News. Says she is always pleased to receive the paper with the "doings" of members - how about some news from your part of the country. We hope Merewether wasn't affected by the terrible floods up the coast. Hope you are well and our best wishes, Dorothy.

JACK STEWART 2/1, Woodlands WA, with a short note with his sub. for the News - many thanks - and apologies for ANZAC Day on account of having an eye operation and advised not to travel on doctor's orders. Do hope all is well, Jack, and sorry you weren't able to join your mates for the march and reunion. Kind regards from all.

JOYCE TAYLOR, Allawah, daughter of the late Jack Harvey 2/1, with her apologies for not being able to attend the wreath laying or the ANZAC Day march owing to a very painful heel spur. Trust it has cleared up by now, Joy, nothing worse than trying to hobble about, especially on hard surfaces.

The men had a great day, as usual, but sad to see the numbers dwindling each year and familiar faces missing. Age fast catching up and legs not as good as they might be.

Many thanks for your cheque for the News and for your kind wishes on our O.A.M.'s, also the stamps enclosed. Hope to see you at next year's ANZAC activities. Best wishes.

LES TUNKS 2/1, Mareeba Qld., per pen of wife Lesley, keeping us up with the news in their part of North Queensland. Les and Lesley still manage to live at home, both in their eighties, with help with jobs about the house and a man to mow the lawns and prune the shrubs. The garden is well-mulched so not too much weeding.

Les did not go to the service there on ANZAC Day (the first time he has missed) as at the moment he is not too good on his legs, even though he has a walker. They see a lot of their family and have many friends who call, so don't have time to be lonely. Are both looking forward to their eldest great-grandson's wedding in August and had a christening for the youngest great grandie in April. Both were

also looking forward to a visit from a granddaughter in Sydney, who is an engineer for Broadcast Australia, so have more pleasures in store shortly.

Always happy to hear from you both and many thanks for the photos from Rocky Creek. Love and best wishes.

CATH TOLMIE, Canley Heights, widow of George 2/1, with a change of address and her best wishes to all for the coming year. Hope you are well and pleased to hear from you.

JOYCE WALKER, Gilead, widow of George 2/1, with a welcome sub for the News and plenty of house visitors to keep her busy. Many thanks for the sub.

Keeps in touch regularly with Olive Finlay, Jean Locane and Joyce McGregor (our Pioneer widows) and hoped to catch up with Rene and Tom Wood 2/2 shortly. Also mentioned she was on a "walker", so finds it difficult to get about on public transport, mostly relying on taxis.

Joyce has recently received a Defence Medal for George and given all the medals to son, Brian, as George requested. Has had miniatures made for herself.

Love and best wishes to you and the family, Joyce, and hope you have been to see about your eyes. Take care.

RON WEBSTER 2/1, Bass Hill, with a short note enclosing his sub. for the News and his thanks to those who keep the Association alive. Says it is much appreciated and he looks forward to seeing it in the mail. Our thanks, Ron, and all the best to you and family.

HARRY WEST 2/2, Lane Cove, with a generous donation to funds and best wishes to the Committee and any 2/2 Pioneers who may remember him. Harry was with D and then HQ Coys from Dubbo in March 1942 until Trinity Beach late 1944, then went to ANGAU and worked in PNG from 1946 until Independence in 1975, so spends his ANZAC Day with PNGVR/ANGAU members.

Harry is lucky enough to enjoy good health at 85 and lives in a self-care retirement village, travels frequently and walks, swims and drives most days. You'd be the envy of most of our readers, Harry, enjoy it while you can.

Your best wishes are passed on to any 2/2 Pioneers who may remember you and our kind regards and thanks for the sub.

NEIL WHITELEY, Terara, son of the late Vic 2/1, with a generous donation from both he and wife Joanna to the News and said it was good to see so many of his father's old friends at the wreath laying and the reunion on ANZAC Day. Nice to have you along, Neil, and sorry Joanna could not have joined you. Makes it a bit hard when these days crop up in a working week, especially when you live in Nowra and in business.

Many thanks for the sub and your kind words on our O.A.M. awards. All the best to you both and receipt will be posted with your next News.

NEV WOODHAM 2/1, Cleveland Qld., per pen of dear wife Betty with hearty congratulations to Max and I on our O.A.M. awards and some kind words of praise for what we have both done over the years for our "Pioneer Family". Many thanks to you both and much appreciated.

Nev has had a trip to Greenslopes recently for a haemorrhoid operation and we hope by now he is on the mend. Was very tired for several weeks after he returned home and we hope you picked up by your birthday Nev (87 in June) and were able to celebrate.

Love and best wishes to you both, take care and thanks for your note.

■ That's all the Mail Bag for this issue, and before closing send a special Birthday message to Kathleen Tooker, widow of Jack 2/1, who turned 90 on 27th May. Hope you had a great day with your family Kath and lots of good health in the coming year. Jack Kerslake also turned 90 on 20th May and celebrated with family and friends, Max and I included, at his daughter Margaret's home. A very happy occasion.

SICK PARADE

BILL TASKER 2/1, our Welfare Officer, was in Canterbury Hospital with a heart attack early in April. Sadly, his wife Win passed away while Bill was in hospital and his daughter Kay Schulz has been caring for him at her home until he returned to his Kingsgrove home recently. Trust you are now on the mend, Bill, and our best wishes.

BILL ("PEE WEE") RUSSELL 2/2, Tamworth, was in Tamworth Base Hospital in May, as reported by Ted Carter 2/1, and as we have had no further news presume Bill is on the mend. All the best, Bill, and thank you Ted for your call. Ted had also been in St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney for a heart problem but now back on deck. All the best.

DOUG SHEARSTON 2/1, late of Forster, was operated on in a Newcastle Hospital recently for an aneurism and suffered a stroke during the operation. He spent some time in respite care and has now been transferred to Westcott Nursing Home in Stockton. His wife Roma is staying with her son Paul at Hamilton until there is a vacancy in the Hostel. Speaking to Paul recently, he mentioned Doug had received a visit from Jack Bertram of Lambton and we are sure Doug would have been very pleased to see his old friend. All the best Doug, hope to see you soon.

LAST POST

WIN TASKER of Kingsgrove, wife of Bill 2/1, passed away in Rossmore Nursing Home, Kingsgrove, on 16th April. Win, aged 87, had been suffering a severe, debilitating back injury for many years.

The service was held at Woronora Crematorium on the 24th April. A beautiful moving tribute was read by two of Win's granddaughters on behalf of Bill, their mother Kay, and Kay's brother John and families.

Sincere sympathy was extended to the family at the service by Joyce Law, whom we thank for giving us the details and attending on behalf of the Association.

RAY ROBBINS 2/2 of Ballina passed away on 23rd May and the funeral was in Ballina on the 29th. Those in attendance were Claire and Terry McGuire, Lil and Albert Bettens, Betty O'Connor, Pam Lee and Dot Priest. Several other Pioneers could not attend owing to illness and Ron Cross was away.

We thank Dot Priest for sending on details and for passing on the sympathy of the Association to wife Nancy and family.

TOSS ROBERTSON, Clovelly, widow of Bill 2/2, passed away on 8th June in Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick, with pneumonia. Toss was 97 years of age and had been in aged care for some time due to ill-health. Her funeral was held at St Anthony's at Clovelly on Friday, 15th June.

Unfortunately, due to the inclement weather and sickness the Association was unable to be represented at the service and we extend to daughter Janet O'Neill and her family our very sincere sympathy in her sad loss. Our sympathy also extended to Janet on the sad loss of her brother some months ago.

BRUCE McNAUGHTON 2/1 of Casino passed away on 19th June and the funeral service was held in the Church of England, Casino, on 22nd June, with a large gathering of relatives and friends. A graveside service followed at Casino Cemetery.

Ron Cross attended on behalf of the Association and reported that Jean Felton (widow of Ted 2/1) was in attendance, along with several members of the Rats of Tobruk. Jack Shearman of Kyogle was to have attended, but Ron heard he was hospitalised.

Our sympathy is extended to wife Molly and family on behalf of the Association.

Thank you Ron for phoning us with the sad news.

PIONEER NEWS

Phone 9759 5491

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

Per Annum: \$5

Typeset by Typesmith Pty Ltd, PO Box 1264, Camden NSW 2570 Printed by ABF Printers, 3 Argyle Street, Arncliffe NSW 2205

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

Treasurer: DON CRAWFORD

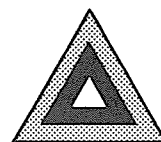
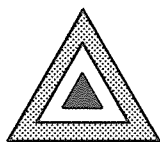
Editors: MAX & PEG HERRON O.A.M's

President: ALLAN McINNES

Vol. 53 No. 3

NOVEMBER 2007

Welfare: BILL TASKER, Phone 9718 6658



COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE - V.P. DAY

On Wednesday, 15th August, 2007, at 2.30 pm the Commemorative Service for Victory in the Pacific Day was held at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway at Concord, which marked the 62nd Anniversary of this day when Japan surrendered the war on 15th August, 1945.

The role of Master of Ceremonies was capably handled by Father Graeme Malone SSS, Honorary Chaplain of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, whose first task was to call on the Mayor of Canada Bay, Cr. Angelo Tserikas, to read the Prologue. The mayor went on to say his council were right behind the Track Committee in their upkeep of the Park and to know that the sacrifices of our veterans were not forgotten. He then called on "Rusty" Priest AM, Chairman of the Walkway Committee to give his Welcome Address.

In his usual inimitable style "Rusty" welcomed the Guest Speaker, Brigadier Stuart Smith AM, Chief of Staff Headquarters Training Command Army, and the many honoured guests and went on to speak of the importance of remembering Kokoda and the sacrifices made by our men in repelling the superior Japanese forces. He then called on Brigadier Smith to address the gathering.

ADDRESS BY BRIGADIER SMITH AM

"Distinguished guests, Directors of the Walkway, members of the Defence Forces past and present, Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls –

You and I walk in the footprints of a great generation. That is the generation that endured the Second World War from 1939 to 1945. Their footprints track from the shores of Australia, to desert sands in North Africa, on Navy ships across many oceans, through jungle paths in Malaya, inside combat aircraft above battlefields, and on muddy slopes in New Guinea. Each is a mark of service by a veteran, of sacrifice by a loved one who did not return, and of patience by one who waited at home. On this day, the 62nd anniversary of the end of the war in the Pacific, we recall the values these footprints will forever symbolise to all Australians.

The first value is that of determination in duty. By 1939, modern forces had learnt to bring death and destruction by lightning war, the blitzkrieg, by the mass movement and lodgement of military forces over the sea, by the application of massed air power. Australians answered the call to arms not in the eager and enthusiastic way of World War I but grimly, purposefully. The men and women of the 2nd AIF, of the RAN and the RAAF knew they were to experience a different war to that experienced by their forebears in the horrible trenches of the Great War. Their determination was personified in men like Lieutenant General Leslie Morshead at the Battle of Tobruk in 1941.

Morshead was directed by the Commander of British Forces to 'hold Tobruk for three weeks at all costs' using his 9th Division and remnant British troops against Rommel. With the same spirit of decisiveness and perseverance that he had demonstrated during the First World War, Morshead issued instructions to the 23,000 troops of the Tobruk Garrison:

'There'll be no Dunkirk here. If we should have to get out, we shall fight our way out. There is to be no surrender and no retreat.'

When Rommel attacked Tobruk, Morshead initiated a tactical plan to separate the enemy tanks from their supporting infantry and destroy

them through the use of artillery and minefields. This plan resulted in the first defeat of Nazi Germany forces during the Second World War. Rather than holding Tobruk for three weeks; Morshead and his magnificent Division held it for eight months. The Nazi propaganda machine, through the radio broadcasts of 'Lord Haw Haw', referred to the Australians as the 'Rats of Tobruk'. The success at Tobruk is now well written in the pages of Australian military history.

WAR COMES TO AUSTRALIA

However, with the bombing of Pearl Harbour in December 1941, war came to Australia for the first time. Australians faced the awful prospect of war on our shores, on our soil against an implacable foe. Accordingly, this great generation demonstrated their second enduring value – courage despite adversity.

This was especially evident in the early actions of the Royal Australian Navy and Royal Australian Air Force defending our territory.

The loss of the Australian light cruiser, HMAS *Perth*, during the battle of the Sunda Strait was one of the heaviest sacrifices made by the Royal Australian Navy during the tragic months of 1941-42 when Japanese forces advanced into south-east Asia.

Perth's captain, Hector Waller led his ship in a desperate night battle against invading Japanese Navy cruisers and destroyers. The crew of the *Perth* endured intense torpedo and shell fire. At about midnight a shell holed *Perth's* hull near the waterline and Waller ordered his crew to abandon ship. Twenty minutes later the *Perth* keeled over and sank.

Of *Perth's* crew of 680 men some 357 were lost during or just after its brief final action. They included Captain Waller. Survivors described how he was last seen 'courageously standing with his arms on the front of the bridge, looking down at the silent turrets'. Those who survived were gradually picked up by Japanese warships and became prisoners of war. They represented one portion of over 30,000 Australians who were taken prisoner during the Second World War. During their incarceration these prisoners endured interrogation, torture, beatings, abuse, disease and starvation.

The term 'tragedy' seems inadequate to describe their experience. Yet, even in their footprints we recognise courage despite adversity. Keith Botherill was one of six survivors from the 2500 Allied Prisoners of War held in Sandakan, North Borneo.

He reflected:

"You'd lie down at night and you'd say, 'This is it. I'm going to die.' You could feel yourself dying. You'd sort of give up, and then you'd say, 'Oh, no.' If you were alright in the morning, well, that was it. You would take the day as it came. Don't let the day beat you. Say, 'Well, it's going to be a good day today. I know I'm going to get a couple of thumpings, but that's alright.' Just cop it. Don't let nothing get you down."

Similar courage was demonstrated by Royal Australian Air Force pilots supporting ground forces on the Kokoda Track and Milne Bay in New Guinea. Kittyhawk Squadron Leader Peter Turnbull, a former jackaroo from northern NSW, was already a veteran of the Middle East when he arrived to defend Port Moresby. Despite fatigue and challenging tropical flying conditions, he led sortie after sortie against enemy forces. At the Battle of Milne Bay, flying in low to attack some Japanese infantry, he was

hit by ground fire and unable to pull his Kittyhawk out of a dive. His example inspired the remainder of his squadron to greater effort.

A final enduring value bequeathed by our Second World War generation was that of adaptability. This was especially evident on the home front in Australia. Labour shortages forced the government to allow women to take a more active role in war work and, in February 1941, the RAAF received cabinet approval to establish the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF). At the same time, the navy also began employing female telegraphists, a breakthrough that eventually led to the establishment of the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS) in 1942. The Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS) was established in October 1941, with the aim of releasing men from certain military duties in base units in Australia for assignment with fighting units overseas. Outside the armed services, the Women's Land Army (WLA) was established to encourage women to work in rural industries, such as munitions production. Without their adaptability, the troops deployed forward in defence of Australia would not have endured.

Half a million Australian men and women wore Khaki over these terrible years. 39,000 paid the supreme sacrifice. They fought hard and well. This Victory in the Pacific Day we imagine the collective sigh of relief they must have experienced after so much sacrifice. We reside in a peaceful and prosperous nation today thanks to the sacrifice, dedication and endurance of this generation of Australians that have gone before us. We must never forget their sacrifice. We must be guided by their values of determination, courage and adaptability marked in their footprints. We must explore our own soul and strive to be equally determined, courageous and adaptable as our world confronts new adversities. Above all, we must ensure that the spirit of humanity that our Second World War generation held dear continues to shine brightly in the hearts of future generations of Australians."

WREATH LAYING SERVICE

At the conclusion of the Commemorative Address, "Rusty" Priest led the wreath laying ceremony at the Memorial Centrepiece, accompanied by Brigadier Smith and the Mayor of Canada Bay, Cr. Angelo Tserikas, and other distinguished guests. While the wreaths were being laid "Highland Cathedral" was performed by Corrective Services Band and Pipes and Drums of the Royal NSW Regiment.

Following the wreath laying Don Rowe, President of the NSW State Branch of the R.S.L., recited the Ode which was followed by Last Post and Reveille.

Concluding the programme, Carole-Ann Priest (a Director of the Kokoda Track Walkway) was called upon to say a few words of thanks to all those who had contributed to the success of the programme. This was followed by the Australian Anthem, and visitors invited to afternoon tea.

Pioneers in attendance were Don and Val Crawford, Jack and Marj Kerslake with daughter Margaret Stolp, Robyn Bell (from Melbourne), Jack Bertram, Bill Tasker, Max and Peg Herron and Joyce Law who very kindly acted as driver for Bill Tasker and the Herrons – many thanks Joyce.

Our thanks to "Rusty" Priest, Chairman and Alice Kang, Hon Secretary, and the Walkway Committee in their organisation of the service and to "Rusty" for his prompt reply to our request for a copy of Brigadier Smith's address.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

The last Mail Bag for the year and, sadly, we have lost many of our long-time friends and regular correspondents with age and failing eyesight fast catching up. Others have been hospitalised with sickness and unable to put pen to paper anymore. However, we are always happy to hear from those of our "Pioneer Family" who are still able to keep in touch.

PAT BENTLEY, Yokine WA, widow of Alf 2/1, with a letter, card and a phone call since last issue and news of interest from her part of the country. Her volunteer jobs with the City of Perth Council in the Information Centre in the city keep her busy – says you meet some nice people – and some "stinkers". Has not been doing much swimming as it has been too cold, even if the pool is heated. She and Pool Management have a different idea of just what is warm. Pat has also joined a Kayak Club and is able to store her kayak at the club as it saves a lot of loading off and on to her car. You are certainly not letting the grass grow under your feet, Pat, I can see now why you paved your little back lawn – you've no time to mow it.

The phone call was for Jean and Noel Grant's phone number in Victoria, as she was off to Melbourne for the Cup and hoped to see them while she was there. Trust you backed a winner, Pat, and had a good trip. Better start saving up for ANZAC Day in Sydney.

Always good to hear from you and guess Loma wouldn't be too happy her West Coast Eagles were beaten. Better luck next year. Best wishes from both Max and myself – take care.

VERA BRADLEY, Cairns, our ex-AAMWS friend, with a long letter and news of a Memorial Wall recently installed at Rocky Creek on the Tablelands, giving relatives a chance to honour individuals who served in the area during the war. Previously the park only catered for plaques for different divisional units.

Vera has nearly finished selling off all her books ("I Didn't Know That") – which she published in 1995 and won't be having another print. However, she was interested in have the book put somewhere so it does not go the way of so many lost good books. She was enquiring from Max if he had had any dealings with a company called Antique CD Books. Will be in touch with you re this matter Vera. If the Cairns City Council and Historical Society are handing their records and books over to this firm, I presume they would be OK.

You did well with your new Microsoft Word 2007, even correcting your spelling – could have done with a new computer like that when writing your book. You can go to the top of the class. I am sure it will come in handy with work on your family tree. Talking of family history, when our name appeared in the newspapers re our O.A.M.s, a lady in Rockhampton saw the name of Maxwell David Herron and as she was a Herron before marriage found our number in the directory and rang and they were related. Their grandfathers were brothers, one settled in Nth Qld and one in New South Wales. They have been busy keeping in touch ever since. A small world!!

Hope this finds your health much improved and always great to hear from you. Love from both of us – take care.

KAY BURTON, Springwood, daughter of the late Bert Rayner 2/1, while visiting her mother Margaret in the nursing home in Kyogle recently, wrote to say she was privileged to attend the funeral of Jack Shearman 2/1, aged 89. (Max has included your notes on the service in Last Post, Kay, and many thanks for sending it on.) There are no Pioneers left in Kyogle except Cecil Blanch and, as you mentioned, he was away, and Ron Cross 2/1, of Ballina, who often attends on our behalf, was also on holiday, so we were grateful that you were able to be present. Many thanks.

Do hope mum is still keeping reasonably well and that you are able to see her fairly regularly. Perhaps may see you again for ANZAC Day – all the best.

ANNE CALDWELL, Artarmon, niece of the late John McKnight 2/2, with a very generous donation to funds and congratulations to Max and myself on our O.A.M. awards. A receipt has been sent, Anne, and your instructions re the delivery of the Pioneer News has been noted. Do hope this edition reaches you before you leave for overseas.

Her uncle passed away in 2004, aged 83, and is greatly missed by the family. Sadly, our members are all ageing, Anne, and very noticeable on ANZAC Day with so few now able to march.

Our best wishes to you and many thanks.

DOROTHY CAMPBELL, Inverell, widow of Claude Campbell 2/1, with a change of address from Froude Street to the McLean Village in Inverell. Dot has a hostel room and says she is being well cared for, especially with her failed eyesight, but can manage with a special lamp from the Blind Society.

Many thanks to your daughter for the phone call Dot, and for the donation to the News. Perhaps you may be able to get one of the family to read it to you.

Take care and good to hear from you again, and your good wishes passed on to all Pioneers.

KERRY CHRISTOPHER, Glenfield, daughter of the late Pat Collins 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneers, with a letter of appreciation for the card and letter sent to the family on the passing of their dad. Kerry said her father was very proud to be a Pioneer and told his family of his role with both units and stories of his comrades. The family were all very proud of him, in fact of all Pioneers, and greatly appreciative of the great sacrifices made by the servicemen.

He had not been able to march on the last few ANZAC Days, but there was always a grandson willing and proud to fill in for him and march with his comrades. However, he was able to join them at the reunion after the march.

Max has included Pat's passing in Last Post, Kerry, and we thank you for your caring letter and shall send you copies of the News when published. Our very best wishes to you and the family.

GORDON CHRYSTALL 2/1, Larras Lee, per pen of good wife Eunice, with a welcome note and a cheque enclosed for the News. Many thanks. Your letter arrived as the June issue was at the printer, hence the late acknowledgement.

We noted with interest that your son, Ralph, had just returned from walking the Kokoda Track and can imagine what an experience it must have been. So many of the walkers come home with more of an understanding of what their fathers and grandfathers went through during those dreadful times on the Track. Well done, Ralph, and that you were able to visit the War Cemetery at Buna – quite an experience.

We meet so many over at the Kokoda Track Walkway at Concord who come to the services for V.P. Day and other special days, and they all say it's an experience that will never be forgotten.

Hope your health problems have improved and that the drought conditions in your part of the country have shown signs of easing. Our dam levels are going down again despite the welcome rain we had some months ago. All the best to you both.

BILL CUNNEEN 2/2, Banora Point NSW, with a short note from his wife Berris to say they had sold their home and moved into a retirement village. Bill had a stroke about six years ago and in a wheelchair in the care ward of the village. It was good to talk to you later on the phone, Berris, and our best wishes passed on to Bill.

ALBY DEAN 2/1, Shepparton Vic, with a welcome note and his sub for the News. Says for the first time he and his wife Kathleen were able to join in the Sydney march and the reunion at the Occidental afterwards and felt most welcome. All being well, they hope to be

able to make the trip next year. Alby sends a special thank you to Noel Grant for getting in touch and filling them in with the information.

Good to hear from you both and, all going well, perhaps may see you next year.

OLIVE FINLAY, Mt Pritchard, widow of Gordon 2/1, who regularly keeps in touch with us and always has some news to impart from several of our Pioneer widows. Olive keeps busy – goes regularly two days each week to Senior Citz in Liverpool, one day to play indoor bowls and the other a meeting day. She also spends almost every second weekend with daughter Helen and son-in-law Keith at Menangle and says it's nice to get out into the country.

She flew up to Port Macquarie early in the year for a holiday with her eldest daughter Jan, and her husband Allan, and really enjoyed the break. Good to see Olive, nothing like a break in the country, and always happy to hear from you. Take care.

AVELINE GAMBLE, Chermiside Qld, widow of Bill 2/1, with some items from Rocky Creek Memorial Park on the Atherton Tablelands which she thought might be of interest to anyone from down south that was planning a trip up north. Many thanks, Aveline, we shall pass them on if we hear of any of our Pioneer friends who may be interested. Hope you are well and best wishes.

GEORGE GRANGER, Emerald Qld, son of late Bill 2/1, with an apology for his non-attendance on ANZAC Day, and to say that he had rung the Occidental Hotel with a donation to the bar for his dad's old mates on their special day. Many thanks, George, your gesture was very much appreciated.

He also passed on the sad news that his mother Stella had recently died and he and brother Bill had to spend the ANZAC period in packing up at her family home at Schofield. Our sympathy is passed on to you and Bill and hope to see you both in Sydney next year.

WYN HAYDEN, Orange, wife of John 2/1, celebrated her 90th birthday on 7th August with 20 family members helping her mark this special milestone. Despite a recent trip to hospital, Wyn says she is happy in the Ascott Gardens aged care home. John keeps reasonably well and always pleased to hear of former comrades through the News. Love and best wishes to you both.

JACK HEARN 2/1, Howlong, per pen of wife Audrey, with a few lines with his subs to the News and apologies for being late. Says there is nothing much to report from Howlong, but sends his best wishes to Max and I on our O.A.M.s and to all Pioneers. Many thanks and hope you are both well.

ANN HEALEY, Semaphore SA, daughter of the late Jim (Jumma) Hall 2/1 of Kyogle, with the sad news of the passing of her husband David in April after a long debilitating lung illness. Our sincere sympathy has been passed on to Ann in her very sad loss.

She is always glad to receive the News, especially with items of interest from her home town of Kyogle. Sadly, as you will see Ann, Jack Shearman passed away recently, and Flo not the best. Kay Burton (Rayner) was able to attend the funeral as she was visiting her mother Margaret, who is in Kyogle Nursing Home. Cecil Blanch is our only surviving Pioneer left in the town. I think he was 97 last birthday.

Many thanks for your generous donation to the News, Ann, and for your good wishes to Max and I on our O.A.M.s. With age catching up, our members are finding it increasingly difficult to attend meetings and social gatherings, so we are endeavouring to at least keep the News afloat as long as possible.

Our fond love to you and keep well. Always good to hear news from you.

GLORIA HUTCHINSON, Caringbah, widow of Bill 2/1, has been in touch several times recently and has had her share of problems after a fall and broken shoulder, necessitating a spell in hospital and several weeks of physio. Has been unable to drive and limited to what she can do around the house.

Her late husband, Bill, was a good mate of Doug Shearston and Gloria was able to get a friend to drive her to Newcastle to see Doug just a few days before he passed away. She was so pleased she had made the trip and was able to spend some time with Roma too.

Hope you get a good report from the specialist in November, Gloria, and do try and keep out of trouble in the kitchen. Love from Max and I and nice to hear from you.

HAZEL JOHNS, Villawood, widow of George 2/1, with a welcome donation to the News and how she looks forward to reading it and now and again recognising a familiar name. Our thanks, Hazel, and we are endeavouring to try and keep it going. As you can imagine, our readers are ageing and the paper is the only means they have of news of former mates and their families.

Thank you also for your kind thoughts on our O.A.M. awards, it was a very pleasant surprise and we felt very honoured.

Hope you are keeping well and always happy to hear from you. Take care.

JOAN LEE, North Strathfield, widow of Bob 2/2, with a note of thanks for the News which she is always happy to receive and enclosed a cheque to help keep it coming. She says the years are passing so quickly and watching the ANZAC march each year brings back lots of memories. Certainly does, Joan, and sad to see the ranks thinning each year. Time marches on and even though lots of the men can no longer march, they do try and attend the reunion to meet up with old mates.

Thank you for your donation to the News and our best wishes. Hope you are keeping well.

JEAN LOCANE, Prestons, widow of Frank 2/2, with a welcome letter from her new address in Blue Hills Village and enclosing a generous donation to the News. Many thanks, Jean, and for your congratulations on our O.A.M. awards. We will endeavour to carry on the good work, God willing, as long as our health permits.

Jean looks forward to the News and keeps in touch with Joyce Walker, but does not get to see her very much. Joyce phones fairly regularly, but as she needs a frame to get about, is restricted in her outings.

Good to see you are happy in your new surroundings, Jean, and we send our love and best wishes. Keep well.

JULIE McWILLIAM, Griffith, daughter of the late Steve Clarke 2/1, with a welcome note of thanks for sending her a newsletter from the Kokoda Track Walkway at Concord which was a project dear to Steve's heart. So much has been accomplished in the last year or two and it is quite a showpiece. Julie also sent thanks for the last issue of the News which had arrived while she and her husband were overseas.

They had a lovely trip, went to the USA for a wedding, then on to Italy for Griffith's Sister City tour. This was in Northern Italy and they were interested to learn of the history of the Alpine Association – they were partisans in the war and paid a heavy price. From here went to England and Germany where they enjoyed the generous hospitality of friends. (I presume some of this trip may have had a connection with wine growing, as Julie is married to Doug McWilliam of the well-known wine family).

Julie says Griffith is heading back into drought and the future is grim without a lot of water in the catchments of Burrinjuck and the Snowy Mtns. There was some rain while they were abroad, but they desperately need more. Must play havoc with your vines too, as I guess they need a good soaking to keep the vines productive.

Thanks for your letter, Julie, and we were very pleased to hear from you again. Love and best wishes.

BETTY O'CONNOR, West Ballina, widow of Neville 2/2, with a short note enclosing her subs for the year, but has very little news from her part of the country. Says her north coast Pioneer group met in September for lunch and they had eight in attendance. Caught up on all the news of everyone and made plans for their

Christmas lunch in December. Since the death of Ken Wilson and the closing of the North Coast Branch, they have been meeting for lunch and a chat and it helps to keep them in touch with each other.

Travelling was not on Betty's plans for the past year, but has kept herself busy. Will be spending Christmas at her daughter Cheryl's home in Murwillumbah, but is not sure if she's going to get out of the cooking!!

Many thanks for your kind words on our O.A.M.s Betty, and will endeavour to keep up with our Pioneer duties. She closes by wishing all Pioneers and their families a healthy and Happy Christmas and all the best for 2008. Take care and lots of good health – also thank you for the cheque enclosed in your letter for the News.

JANET O'NEILL, Clovelly, daughter of the late Bill Robertson 2/2, with her thanks for the kind card of condolence sent to her on the passing of her mother Toss some months ago. Can imagine how you are missing her, Janet, and hope to keep in touch through the Rats of Tobruk functions. Take care and our love.

ERIKA PEILE, Caringbah, widow of Peter 2/1, with a note enclosing her donation to the Association and her thanks for the latest issue and "doings" on ANZAC Day. Many thanks.

Erika says her memories of Welfare Officers goes back to Harry ("Monty") Montague who used to visit Peter a very long time ago. He had no car, Erika, and did all his visiting on public transport – often said he took his damper and billy of tea with him on some of the long distances. There were very few funerals – anywhere – that he failed to put in an appearance, or to visit someone in hospital. We still send Jean the News, but have not heard from her in years. Her son, Bruce, does usually turn up on ANZAC Day to march with the 2/1sts. Do pass on our best wishes to Jean when you write to her at Christmas.

Erika also keeps in touch with Pat Selwood (widow of Stan 2/1), by phone, to check on each other.

Hope the mobility clinic at Sutherland Hospital has been able to solve the problem of your falling over, Erika, as you say "it's too early for this lark." Take care and our very best wishes.

FRANK RAY 2/2, Mont Albert Vic, with a generous donation to funds and apologies for not sending it before to assist in the good work the Association is doing. Thank you, much appreciated.

Frank says very few, if any, of the old mates who trained at Pucka in the forties are still on deck – unfortunately, Frank, signs of the times. He has regular contact with Bob Philpots of Woodend who he phones weekly (and from whom we hear quite often) and Mick Smith of Bateau Bay in NSW who he used to visit annually, but now keeps in contact by letter and Fred Tubb who attended the 2/2 march in Melbourne but now unable to do so due to health reasons. He also had contact with our President Allan McInnes (Big Mac) in his time with the 2/2nds and reads with interest his work for the Sydney Association. (A tower of strength to us here, Frank, and he and Max have been friends since their first days in camp in 1940 – in the horse stalls at Warwick Farm racecourse. A long-time friendship.)

Frank reports that Bob Philpots turned 90 in October 2006, Frank was 90 in May 2007 and the third one of their clan hopes to make his 90th in October 2007. Hope he made it, Frank. You have certainly clocked up some years together.

The ranks are certainly thinning both in Melbourne and here in Sydney, but those that can make the march, even if slow, try and make the reunions to have a beer with a mate.

All the best, Frank, take care and good health.

OLIVE RICHARDS, Bribie Island, Qld, with a welcome cheque for the News and a book of stamps for which many thanks. Was going to write that you HAD another birthday, Olive, but you beat me to it. (Olive always writes on her birthday and sends her subs.) Was 88 this year and keeps well – still has lots of energy and

goes for a 40 minute walk each day – must be something in that Bribie Island air, Olive.

They have had a very cold winter, but the days are getting a little warmer. Still no sign of any rain (unless you have had some since you wrote), and are on Level 6 restrictions, with Level 7 not far away. (Says she can't get used to these four-minute showers.) I'm not sure how these water level restrictions vary with NSW Olive, as we are able to use water on Wednesdays and Sundays on restricted hours, but very hard to keep gardens and lawns looking green. Still we are a lot better off than country NSW who badly need a good soaking.

It was good to hear you had heard from Noel Schomberg recently, we see both he and Vi at some of the functions of the Rats of Tobruk. They both look well. Marj and Jack Kerslake were able to attend one of the Kokoda Track days, with the help of daughter Margaret, and we speak on the phone to Marj quite frequently. Jack spends most of his days now in a wheelchair.

They have had their first great-grandchild, a little boy Charlie, so much excitement.

It is good that you have Chris and Annette close by to keep an eye on you if you need help. Says Chris is busy working for Ray White the real estate agents and Annette works from home with the Herbalife products.

Lovely to hear from you, Olive, and shall pass on the news to Marj and Jack who are always pleased to hear news from you. Take care and fond love from Max and I.

IVY SHORT, Merrylands, widow of Gil 2/2, with a change of address from Caringbah to Cardinal Gilroy Village at Merrylands. Ivy was unable to use her right hand at the time of writing and her niece Glenda Rogers kindly let us know of Ivy's change of address. Our thanks Glenda and we hope by now your hand is on the mend Ivy. Best wishes and take care.

LESLEY TUNKS, Mareeba, wife of Les 2/1, with a short note and some cuttings from the "Tablelander", Atherton, on the opening of a memorial wall at Rocky Creek for V.P. Day to honour thirty World War II servicemen and women who had served time on the Tablelands during the war years. Plaques only applied to service people in the units of 6th, 7th and 9th Divisions who trained on the Tablelands. Five unit plaques were also unveiled on the day.

Leslie said Les was unable to attend as he had been in hospital with a fractured pelvis. Do hope he is OK again now – has certainly had a few "ups and downs" the last few years. Hope you were both able to make the wedding of your eldest great-grandson in August that you were so looking forward to.

Love and best wishes to you both and always glad to hear news from up north. Take care.

BETTY WOODHAM, Cleveland Qld, wife of Neville 2/1, with a phone call in September to say Nev was back in Greenslopes Hospital with a broken femur, caused when he tried to pull a limb off a tree in his front yard and the limb broke and fell on him. He was not long home from hospital after a haemorrhoid operation, so you can say Nev that it has not been one of your better years. Do hope by now you are back on your feet at home.

Betty had a knee replacement in July and recovering slowly. They say it never rains but it pours – and you have certainly had your share of problems the last year.

Do hope you are both recovering, even if slowly, and that the coming months must have a silver lining. Love and best wishes from both of us and nice to have a chat to you on the phone.

■ 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 loved ones 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.

LONE PINE SERVICE

On the Sunday before ANZAC Day a service was held at the Tuncurry War Memorial for the planting of a Lone Pine seedling. A joint venture by the Rotary Club of Forster and the Great Lakes Vietnam Veterans, the seedling was planted by four young people descended from World War I diggers.

Mary Burnham, daughter of the late Colonel Arnold Brown 2/1, was also involved in the planting. Her father enlisted in Western Australia in 1914, was at the landing at Gallipoli and fought in the battle of Lone Pine before moving on to France.

Colonel Brown was awarded a Distinguished Service Order, a Military Cross and five times Mentioned in Despatches during the campaign. He was the only original soldier of the 28th Bn to make it home. Colonel Brown served with the 2/1 Pioneers in the Second A.I.F. and was again Mentioned three times in Despatches for service in Tobruk and New Guinea.

Holidaying from Melbourne, Mary's granddaughter Jameela Allison, took part in the Lone Pine planting, as a tribute to her great, great grandfather, along with three other local children descended from W.W.I. veterans.

A crowd of over 200 people gathered for the occasion and enjoyed refreshments following the service provided by the Vietnam Vets.

We thank Mary Burnham for sending on a cutting from the local "Advocate News".

VALE - DOUG SHEARSTON

DOUG SHEARSTON 2/1 of Forster passed away in hospital at Newcastle on 17th September, aged 93 years. He had been in a nursing home in Stockton following a stroke earlier in the year.

The funeral service on 20th September, was held in Tuncurry, conducted by Rev. Audrey de Witte of Forster Tuncurry Uniting Church, and was attended by friends from Forster, RSL Members and family members. Doug's children Trevor, Kerrie and Paul all spoke lovingly of their father and all his grandchildren - Carla and Dan, Kate and Luke and Corin were there to say farewell to their grandfather.

The Sub-Branch Vice-President gave a moving tribute before Last Post and Reveille were played and the Sub-Branch formed a guard of honour outside the church as the coffin was carried to the hearse by Trevor, Paul, Luke and Daniel. Friends and family then returned to the family home in Forster to celebrate Doug's life.

Before moving to Forster in 1975, Roma and Doug lived in Beverly Hills and Doug was Treasurer of the Association from 1958 to 1975 when a farewell function was held at North Sydney RSL in appreciation of Doug's service to the Association. As both Doug and Max lived in Beverly Hills they were close friends from army days, and Roma and Peg were involved in school committees, canteen duties and played golf together.

Prior to joining the Pioneers, Doug served with the 5th Machine Gun Battalion at Wewak and Shaggy Ridge in New Guinea and was posted to the 2/1sts in 1944 on the Atherton Tablelands. He joined the Sig. Platoon and served in the Balikpapan campaign attached to Don Coy in action around Tempadoeng.

Our sincere sympathy has been extended to Roma and the family in their sad loss. He will be sadly missed by members of the Association. LEST WE FORGET.

LAST POST

JACK SHEARMAN 2/1of Kyogle passed away on 15th September and his funeral service was held at St Andrews Presbyterian Church on the 18th with a large attendance of family and friends and members of the local RSL. Jack was 89 and died peacefully in Kyogle Hospital.

The President of the Kyogle RSL, Ken Smith, gave a moving Eulogy on Jack's army

life with the 2/1sts in Tobruk and New Guinea (and a few deeds in between). There was a large attendance of RSL members, including two of Jack's grandsons who had served with the forces. Poppies from the RSL members were placed on the casket after Last Post and Reveille, alongside Jack's medals, Rats of Tobruk shield, army hat and bayonet and a beautiful wildflower arrangement.

The interment took place in the Kyogle Cemetery and the family acted as pallbearers, including two of Jack's brothers.

Our sympathy has been extended to his wife, Flo, and the family on the Association's behalf. We are grateful to Kay Burton, formerly Kay Rayner from Kyogle, for sending us a copy of the service and for attending the funeral and passing on details. Many thanks, Kay.

PAT COLLINS, 2/1 and 2/2 of Glenfield passed away in Liverpool Hospital on 24th August while in hospital with a kidney problem. The funeral service was held at Macquarie Fields on the 3rd September and the burial took place at Kemps Creek Cemetery. Refreshments were later partaken of at the Catholic Club in Liverpool.

Noel Schomberg 2/1 and his daughter Karen Whitney attended the service at the church, also the service and Last Post at the graveside on behalf of the Association and apologised for the absence of committee members due to distance and ill-health. Many thanks, Noel, for representing the Association, and for your phone calls.

Sincere sympathy has been extended to Pat's family, especially to sons Gordon and John who often attended the ANZAC Day reunions with their father, and Pat's daughters Kerry Christopher, Sandra Nicholls and Carol Corrigan. We have been pleased to receive a very kind letter from Kerry on behalf of the family which we have acknowledged in our Mail Bag.

SNOWY DODD 2/2 of Forster passed away in a nursing home on 5th October, aged 94 years. He had fallen and broken his femur some months earlier and was unable to return to his home.

Until recently, Snowy had spent one day a week with other RSL volunteers working at Darawank War Memorial Park in Tuncurry, but age and failing health had forced him to take things more quietly. He has been living with his son, David and his wife in Forster for many years, and we thank David for phoning us the sad news. He will be sadly missed by his 2/2 mates in Sydney, who always sat as a group at the ANZAC Day luncheon.

Our sincere sympathy has been extended to the family on behalf of the Association.

MAJOR STAN MORTON O.A.M., Salvation Army and Padre to the Rats of Tobruk Association, passed away on 27th September, aged 91 years. Stan had not been in the best of health for some time after suffering hospitalisation during a trip overseas last year, but continued his duties at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway functions at Concord on their special days and the Rats Tobruk Sunday service at Five Dock, which he has been attending for many years.

In 1940 Stan was appointed Red Shield Welfare Officer to Dubbo army camp, then to Singleton, prior to being posted to the Australian 9th Division in the Western Desert. He served as Red Shield Officer during the battle of El Alamein, afterwards serving with the 9th Division in New Guinea, Borneo and Moratai.

A service of Thanksgiving was held at the Rockdale Salvation Army Citadel on Wednesday, 3rd October, and amongst the hundreds of mourners were most of the members of the Rats of Tobruk Association who attend the meetings at Five Dock including Pioneers Roy Jardine and Max and Peg Herron.

Stan will be greatly missed and our sincere sympathy has been passed on to his wife Eva and family in their sad loss.

RAY WIDDOWS O.A.M., 2/2 Field Regt and Vice-President of the Sydney Branch of the Rats of Tobruk Association, passed away in October while on an overseas trip which included Tobruk and El Alamein.

Ray was also President of the 9th Division Council and President of the Federal Council of the Rats of Tobruk Association.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to his family in the sad loss of a good friend and a fine soldier.

WORLD WAR I DIARY

By Ken Oliver

"With the passing of my brother-in-law recently I was rather excited to acquire his father's diary of his army service in W.W.I. and the fact that he served with the 2nd Pioneer Bn.

Embarking in Brisbane they spent six weeks at sea before landing at Alexandria and made camp at Heliopolis training and route marching and occasional leaves into Cairo and the Pyramids.

After a month was posted to C Coy of the 2nd Pioneers and embarked with 2,000 troops with destroyer escorts into the Mediterranean, passing Malta and arriving at Marseilles in five days. Entrained for the front and mentioned having a bath!! Started work on communication trenches, there was shelling daily - sometimes all night, then worked on wire entanglements. Next was a march to Pozieres and then into action on the Somme - trench digging - one day worked 15 hours without a break from shelling. Volunteered to trench dig in No Man's Land, got knocked out with concussion - one killed, three wounded in my section - later in week only nine came back from a platoon of 40.

Much of the diary is written in pencil and has faded over the years. He mentions Amiens and Ypres where he was gassed. Was hospitalised in Scotland before being repatriated back to Australia.

I had the pleasure of my father-in-law Stan Jarratt's company for some ten years, but never discussed our experiences - as like Stan's diary my four are away in a tin and hardly see the light of day."

BATTLE OF ISURAVA

Kokoda Track Walkway at Concord was the scene for a Commemorative Service and Wreath Laying for the 65th Anniversary of the Battle of Isurava on Sunday 26th August.

The Battle of Isurava was one of the bloodiest battles on the Kokoda Track, delaying the Japanese force by 14 days and inflicting heavy losses on them. The remarkable courage and resilience demonstrated by the 39th and 2/14th Battalions over that period was regarded, not only critical to the Battle of Isurava, but to the fortunes of the whole Kokoda campaign.

Mr "Rusty" Priest AM, Chairman of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway welcomed 2GB radio announcer Alan Jones as Master of Ceremonies and a very enlightening Commemorative Address was given by Lt. General Ken Gillespie AO, DSC, CSM, Vice Chief of the Defence Force, who spoke of the heroic Diggers who had repulsed a much larger and better equipped Japanese army under extraordinary hardship on the bloody Kokoda Track in 1942.

Following his address, the Hon. Morris Iemma MP, Premier of New South Wales, unveiled a memorial plaque to be placed on the education centre that is to be built in the grounds of the park close to the Walkway.

At the conclusion of the Service, following the Wreath Laying and Last Post and Reveille, the choir of Concord West Public School entertained the audience with their fine singing. Pioneers in attendance were Don and Val Crawford and Max and Peg Herron.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Due to lack of business to discuss, and to ease the workload on the Secretary, the Executive made the decision to only hold the one meeting in the year - which was the Annual Meeting in March, 2007.

They have decided to again adopt this policy in future so have made the date for the Annual General Meeting to be held at Redfern R.S.L. Club on Friday, 28th March, 2008, at 1 pm.

A cordial invitation is extended to all Pioneers to attend.