

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

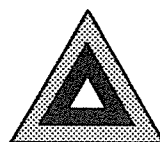
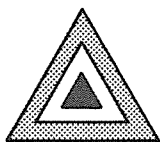
Editors: MAX & PEG HERRON O.A.M.'s

President: ALLAN McINNES

Vol. 54 No. 1

APRIL 2008

Welfare: BILL TASKER, Phone 9718 6658



PIONEER ANZAC FUNCTIONS 2008

WREATH LAYING

Thursday, 24th April at 3.45 p.m.

All members and their families are invited to the Wreath Laying Service at the Cenotaph on Thursday, 24th April at 3.45 p.m. The Association Executive consider this service to be the most important event of the year and would like to see a good roll up. Members and relatives are to assemble on the corner of Martin Place and Pitt Street on the GPO side at about 3.15 p.m. and then form up at 3.40 p.m. for the short march to the Cenotaph. Medals are requested to be worn.

ANZAC DAY MARCH

Friday, 25th April

Both units 2/1st and 2/2nd Pioneers will form up as in previous years outside the Leagues Club in Phillip Street on Friday 25th April.

This will be at the rear of the 6th Division and head on to King Street. The two units will form up in columns of three with the 2/1st banner, Australian flag and leaders on the left side and the 2/2nds on the right.

All details regarding members, carers and relatives is given below in the Chief Marshal's report.

MARCH MARSHAL'S REPORT

The Chief Marshal who is in charge of the RSL ANZAC DAY march made the following report in the Jan./Feb. '08 issue of Reveille:-

I am aware that some veterans are concerned that changes are planned for the Sydney ANZAC Day March, but I suggest that these concerns are largely based on misinformation and I would like to correct this.

The March Executive Committee believes that it is important that the March recognise the WWII veterans with a position of honour as they begin to pass from the scene. Eventually they will be honoured in the same way as the Boer War and WWI veterans and be represented by a WWII Memorial Horse.

To achieve this in the 2008 Sydney March, WWII veterans, in the order Navy/Army/Air Force, will be invited to march immediately behind the WWI memorial banners and standards and the New Zealand contingent and ahead of other veterans. The normal assembly areas for these veterans have not been changed significantly and associations affected have been advised of the new arrangements. The WWII veterans will be identified by their service with an RSL-supplied banner, and association banners may also be carried.

The committee also understands that generally veterans do not want descendants to march with them, because of their rapidly increasing numbers, which are beginning to demean the significance of the march. Accordingly the RSL State Council has agreed that in future descendants will participate at the rear of the march.

The Descendants of WWI Veterans Association has established a very successful precedent for this and the association has marched at the rear of the march for some years. A new association for Descendants of WWII and Post WWII Veterans has been formed and will organise participation by other descendants of veterans.

There are some WWII veterans who will

want to march with a service association, which consists of veterans who have served in post WWII conflicts. These veterans can of course march in the Post WWII section of the march. But veterans of post WWII conflicts only cannot march with WWII veterans.

Banner carriers and carers of any age will be welcome in any section of the march.

Aged or infirm veterans who have a strong desire to march but who may not be able to keep up with the normal pace of the march should take a position in the flanks/rear of their formation and fall out and proceed independently when they cannot keep up. Exit gates through the barriers, first aid stations and golf cart transport to taxis/public transport will be provided in King Street for those who are forced to leave the march early.

Ian Callaway, Chief Marshal

PRESIDENT'S REQUEST

Fellow Pioneers, if capable, do try and march on ANZAC Day - with a carer if necessary - even if you can only make it past the Cenotaph to the fall out zone in King Street.

IT'S LATER THAN YOU THINK.

ANZAC REUNION

Friday, 25th April

The Occidental Hotel is the venue for the ANZAC reunion, which is situated on the corner of York and Erskine Street, Sydney.

After the march board the train at Museum Station to Wynyard Station, up the lift and escalator to York Street and turn right to Erskine Street and the hotel is on the corner.

In the hotel entrance you will be greeted by sons Geoff Finlay, David Herron and Ray Law who will collect the lunch fee of \$20 and issue name tags.

Have a great day and enjoy the service kindly organised by Function Organiser Mary and her wonderful team of helpers.

REMEMBRANCE DAY, 2007

On 11th November, 1918, the Armistice was signed marking the end of the Great War, which was then thought to be the war to end all wars. This special day has since been set aside as a day of Remembrance to honour all the thousands of young men and women who have laid down their lives for their country.

In Sydney about 500 people gathered at the Cenotaph in Martin Place on the 89th anniversary of Remembrance Day, and in cities and towns throughout Australia, on the 11th hour of the 11th day of November, members of the public gathered to pay tribute to those who have fallen in conflict.

A special Remembrance Day Service was held at the 113th A.G.H. Memorial Chapel at Concord on Friday, 9th November, 2007, and the Association was represented by Don and Val Crawford and Max and Peg Herron.

The service was led by Rev. Paul Weaver, Anglican Chaplain of Concord Repatriation General Hospital, and the Remembrance Day Reflection by Mr. John Murphy M.P., Member for Lowe, was most interesting and informative.

The choir's rendition of "Sail Away" by the Z. Randall Stroope Meriden Intermediate Singers directed by Mr. Corin Bone and accompanied by Sue Elliott was a delight to listen to.

The Wreath Laying Ceremony was followed by Last Post and Reveille and a prayer for the Commemoration of the Fallen.

Organisation of the very moving service was in the capable hands of Alice Kang, Hon. Secretary of the Kokoda Track Walkway Committee and refreshments were served at the conclusion of the service by the staff of Concord Hospital.

THE ODE

Laurence Binyon, who wrote "The Ode To The Fallen", was a stretcher bearer during the First World War. Born in England in 1869 he died in 1943. Laurence Binyon was a poet, a keeper of paints and drawings of the British Museum, and was an authority on Oriental art.

His experience as a stretcher bearer moved him to write his "Ode To The Fallen", one verse of which has become a universal eulogy for the ex-servicemen and women when they meet and remember fallen comrades.

The reciting of the Ode each day in ex-service clubs affects people in different ways. To some it is probably only a routine to be endured, but to others it does stir up a feeling of reverence and possible memories of comrades and events of the years gone by, but do we stop to think of the meaning of the words as Binyon wrote them.

"They Shall Grow Not Old, As We That Are Left Grow Old". We remember people as we saw them last, and those who died so young and so many years ago, we still remember as young and virile, while those friends who have grown old alongside us, we shall remember when they are gone, as old and less active persons than when we first met them.

"Age Shall Not Weary Them Nor The Years (Contemn) Condemn". The trials and tribulations of life can no longer sicken or pall them. As the years go by we will still remember them in high esteem with respect for the cause for which they died.

They will never be despised or scorned.

"At The Going Down Of The Sun, And In The Morning We Will Remember Them". They will be remembered somewhere by someone each minute of the day. They are enshrined by our memory forever.

They went with song to the Battle;
they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye,
steady and aglow;
They were staunch to the end against
odds uncounted
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old,
as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them,
nor the years condemn,
At the going down of the sun
and in the morning
We will remember them.

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 General 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 p.m.

A cordial invitation is extended to all Pioneers to attend.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

The first issue of the Mail Bag for 2008 and we sincerely hope our Pioneer Family were able to have a Happy Christmas and New Year with their loved ones. Sadly, since last issue, we have lost a few of our Pioneer friends and we extend our sincere sympathy to their families in their sad loss. We hope that the coming year will bring good health and happiness to all our readers.

FRED ALWAY 2/1, Beaumaris, Vic., with his thanks for the latest copy of the News and sends his sub with apologies if it is late. Better late than never, Fred, and as he mentions he has been widowed for 30 years and finds it a little difficult to come up with news, doesn't get round to writing often. Ends his note with "God bless the Pioneers". Many thanks, Fred, and best wishes.

DORIS AMIES, formerly of Forbes, widow of Cyril 2/1, with Christmas greetings and a long letter telling of a move to Queensland, but at time of writing no fixed address. Her daughter, Wendy, and husband Stu, made the decision to move from Forbes where they had an olive grove and with Stu's back injury causing problems, both Doris and the family decided to sell both properties and relocate. Wendy and Stu have purchased a property in Upper Caboolture and Doris has yet to find an apartment for herself. They have lots of relatives in Queensland, so are more than happy about their new move.

The farm life in Forbes was catching up with Doris since Cyril passed away and, with the dry weather and heat, watering was a constant chore. Unfortunately, one slows up as the years pass and she now realises that all three of them are glad to be moving on to an easier life. Good for you, Doris, after all your years of teaching (and Wendy too) now is the time – enjoy it.

Will continue to send the News care of Wendy's address until we hear from you. Thank you for your kind thoughts on our O.A.M. awards and look forward to hearing from you when you are settled. Best wishes and take care.

ISABELL ANDERSON, Aspendale, Vic., widow of "Snowy" 2/2, with a note of good wishes for Christmas from both Julie and herself. Was good to talk to you on the phone recently and to hear you are both well and still enjoying your shopping trips. Love to Julie and yourself for the coming year.

BERT BEATON 2/2, Casterton Vic., with a very generous donation to the News and his apologies for being rather late with his dues. Many thanks. Our belated sympathy on the passing of your good wife, Olive, as we had not heard from you for several years since you sold your property, but were continuing to stay on in your house. It was good to hear you are being well looked after by your daughter and how you appreciate her care. Very best wishes and always good to hear from you.

PAT BENTLEY, Yokine W.A., widow of Alf 2/1, with several letters and cards since last issue – one just arriving as the November News was at the printer. Pat reports on recent gallivantings – a trip to Melbourne for the Cup – a very expensive brag. Stayed at St. Kilda, so to go anywhere more travel. Had a \$20 mystery bet, but no luck. Found an RSL in St Kilda – they were only too happy to take her money. No report of any winnings.

While in Melbourne called on Noel and Jean Grant who took her on a tour of their area on the rim of Port Phillip Bay. Also caught up with some "rellies" on her mother's side while tripping about. Said she arrived home with little voice, a heck of a headache AND hayfever. That was her trip to the Cup!!

Pat reports a phone call over Christmas from Neville ("Bindi") Moane 2/1 who lives at North Curl Curl, but spends a lot of the year on Hamilton Island. Says Neville maybe will be

joining the "boys" on ANZAC Day – but not betting on it.

In her volunteer work with W.A. Tourism, she gets lots of invites and "freebies" to resorts and sporting functions and lots of places that make tourists happy. One of these was to a session of the Hopman Cup – just wonderful – even got to try her hand at driving a Go-Cart (that I would have loved to see) but says definitely not for Patty.

Looking forward to seeing you for ANZAC Day, Pat, and will remember to order your vegetarian meal. All the best, take care.

ROBYN BELL, Port Melbourne, daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1, with best wishes from Bruce and herself for Christmas and is looking forward to making the trip to Sydney for ANZAC Day. Doesn't the time fly – seems no time since last year. All the best to you both.

TOM BLAINEY 2/1, Noble Park Vic., per pen of good wife Vi and enclosing a generous donation to the News. Many thanks and good to hear from you again.

Tom and Vi celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on the 1st November – hearty congratulations – and had a luncheon and afternoon tea for "rellies" and friends. Quite an achievement these days, isn't it, and I'm sure you were both thrilled with your congrats from the Queen and other dignitaries (Max and I are heading for 65 in March). Not so sure if too many of the young ones these days will last the distance.

Vi says Tom would love to come to Sydney for the ANZAC Day march, but thinks its not possible with his poor eyesight. Plenty in that position, but probably a bit had in a strange city. Very best wishes to you both and many thanks for your congratulations on our O.A.M. awards.

VAL BLAKENEY, Narrabeen, widow of Dick 2/1, with a letter of thanks for sending her copies of the News which she found very interesting.

She keeps in touch with Jan Callaghan (widow of Ron 2/1) who is living happily at Main Beach, Qld, not far from her son and his wife. Also spoke recently to Beryl Gillian, wife of Frank 2/1, who has not been seen at the reunions for the last couple of years. Val has also been in touch with Danny Sprouster who is now in Mowll Village at Castle Hill and quite happy. He gets the Pioneer News sent to his daughter, and she takes it along when she visits her dad.

Val hopes to be well enough to be able to come to the luncheon on ANZAC Day and sends best wishes to all for the coming year.

MAVIS BLANCH, Beaudesert Qld, widow of Joe 2/1, with her apologies for not writing for Christmas but says she has not been well with osteoporosis and it has been very painful. Also was waiting on a cataract operation at the end of January. Has had to give up driving her car, but daughter Dell picks her up on one of her days off and takes her shopping.

At time of writing, her area was still in a big drought and on Level 6 restrictions, but perhaps things have changed, Mavis, since Queensland had those dreadful floods. Do hope you were away from the worst of it.

Take care and I hope the cataract operations went well. Love and best wishes.

JOHN BOYD, Narre Warren Vic., son of late Stan Boyd 2/1, with a long letter and congratulations to Max and I on our O.A.M., awards last year. Many thanks.

John is heavily involved with Legacy in his part of the country and attended the funeral of a John Palmer in November last year and sent us along a copy of the Memorial Service with his photo. The colour patch was so like his late father, John thought he was a 2/1 Pioneer, but was not the case. He has loaned his Pioneer history to a former President of Berwick RSL, but thinks it is time to get it back as he wants it kept in the family. Rightly so, John, as they are no longer available.

Do hope both Beverley and yourself are keeping well and with your diabetic problems under control. Take care and always good to have a note from you from time to time.

MARY BURNHAM, Forster, daughter of the late Colonel Arnold Brown 2/1, with greetings for Christmas and a cheque enclosed for the News. Many thanks and every good wish for the coming year. Perhaps may see you in Sydney again for ANZAC DAY.

TED and MARY CARTER, Tamworth, have just celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary. Married on 13th February, 1948, in Wahroonga they later moved to Tamworth where they have lived for 50 years. They have six children scattered around Australia, so have had to postpone the family celebration until the last weekend in March to enable them all to be present.

Ted served as a Lieutenant with the 2/1sts in the Middle East, including Tobruk, later transferring to the 2/3rd Pioneers. Involved with the RSL and Probus in his home town, he has kept us in touch with Pioneers in his area over the years, also attending reunions of both 2/1sts and 2/3rds.

Ted rang us recently to say that Colonel Adrian Buckley, the last C.O. of the 2/1sts, had left Tamworth and was now staying with his daughter in Sydney.

Our very best wishes to you both and lots of good health and happiness in future years.

LEXIE COATES, Umina, widow of Jack 2/1, with a welcome donation for the News and said she cannot believe how time flies when you are busy. Being involved with several clubs and planning activities, the year just slips by. (I know that feeling Lex – or I'm just slowing in my old age.) She has been four years as treasurer of Woy Woy – Ettalong Branch of Legacy which keeps her busy, and the Rats of Tobruk widows have a luncheon each month to which she goes regularly. However, says the ranks are thinning, lucky sometimes to have only six ladies.

The War Widows Guild still have their outing to the Kokoda Track Walkway at Concord each year which she attends regularly, a very nice day and always enjoyable.

In August Lex had an operation on her ear, not a new procedure but not suitable for everyone. The specialist put a titanium screw in the bone at the back of the ear, which the hearing aid clips onto, it is called BA-HA. At time of writing, early December, she did not have the hearing aid as it takes months to settle. Certainly takes a long time, so hope it's a success.

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

RON COYTE 2/1, Wentworthville, with a short note enclosing a cheque to the News, many thanks. He has had a knee operation and not in the best of health after a trip to hospital, but sends his kindest regards to all and will write again when he feels better. Hope by now things have improved, Ron, and best wishes for the New Year.

ALLAN CRUTE 2/1, Woolgoolga, with Christmas greetings to all Pioneers and belated congratulations to Max and I on our O.A.M. awards. Apologises for his shakey writing, but says turning 90 in November had to expect things to get worse.

He no longer drives his car, but has a motor scooter, and spends his time between the nursing home and his old home, which is only three blocks away. Says it's OK if it doesn't rain.

Still looks forward to the News and was sorry to see Doug Shearston had passed away in September. They were fellow sigs in H.Q. Coy, 2/1.

Thanks for the sub, Allan, and all the best for the coming year – a big cheerio from Max and his kind wishes.

PAT EGAN 2/2, Turner, A.C.T., with a short note enclosing his sub for the News and his best wishes to all for the coming year. Must be some news from your part of the world, Pat, for your former mates, even if only a few lines. Take care and kind regards.

ANDY ELLISTON, Narooma, son of the late Phil 2/1, with a donation to funds and many thanks to both Lexie and yourself for your kind wishes for Christmas. Phil passed away in 1968 and Andy has been keeping in touch with

his dad's old mates ever since. Our best wishes to you both for a healthy and happy year ahead.

GRACE FOWKES, Wentworthville, widow of Dick ("Snowy") 2/1, with Christmas greetings to all Pioneers for a healthy and happy 2008 and enclosing a cheque for the News. Grace still loves to read – and remember – and sends her thanks to the Editors for keeping her on the mailing list. Nice to hear, Grace, and all the very best of health and happiness and thanks for the donation to funds. Take care.

MERCIA HEALEY, Bonbeach Vic., widow of Leo 2/1, with a welcome letter and some cash for our worthy treasurer. Many thanks. Pleased to hear the second hip replacement operation went well – you'll need to be on your toes with two young grandchildren to keep up with. Can't believe young Jack is ready for school and Jemma Lily close to two. How time flies when we are older.

Hope by now you have had some of the rain our State has been getting the last couple of months – badly needed, but not all at once. Even here in Beverly Hills we had over 200 mm in one week, some places received that much in a few hours. Still it is badly needed in parts of NSW, especially around the Riverina.

Take care and best wishes from both of us. **ELAINE HENDERSON**, Epping, niece of late Ron Clarke 2/1, with a donation to funds and her best wishes to all Pioneers and their families for the coming year. Sorry to hear your husband is not in the best of health and needs a lot of care. Take care yourself and many thanks for your continued support of the News. Kindest regards and best wishes.

JOHN HAYDEN 2/1, Orange, with greetings for Christmas from both Wyn and himself and many blessings to all Pioneers and their families. Sends thanks for the News, lots of reading and always good to catch up on doings of old battalion mates. John and Wyn were looking forward to Christmas with their family. Healthwise they were not too bad, just getting older. Take care both of you and love and best wishes from Max and myself.

PAM HERRICK, Sutherland, daughter of the late George Bates 2/1, with a long Christmas letter about all her escapades and ventures in 2007. Has travelled up to Brisbane and the Gold Coast to visit family and friends, and minded her granddaughter, Tess, for a week. Her daughter, Karen, and their three little girls have settled back in Aussie after living in the Philippines for 12 years and Karen is now teaching in Brisbane. Son Damien with his wife and two little boys have also returned to Australia from the USA where they have lived for seven years and Tracey and husband Sam have moved to a new home in Brisbane. You certainly have had a family on the move in the last year, Pam, and plenty of places to visit when you get some spare time.

Edward has been retired for over 20 years but keeps himself busy with seniors group meetings and jobs around the house. Pam is looking forward to the day she can retire and get that \$2.50 ticket on all forms of transport – all day!! Good life, Pam, if you don't get all the aches and pains that go with old age. All the best and maybe see you on ANZAC Day.

GLORIA HUTCHINSON, Caringbah, widow of Bill 2/1, with Christmas greetings and a cheque enclosed for the News. Many thanks, Gloria, and always pleased to hear from you.

JOYCE LAW, Kareela, widow of Max 2/1, with Christmas greetings and thanks to Max and I for our continued efforts on behalf of our Pioneer family. Your kind thoughts were very much appreciated. Also our thanks for the offer of the "driver service" to Concord when needed – we are very grateful for your help.

Joyce mentioned she had lunch just before Christmas with Rita Trefoni (widow of Noel 2/1) and Betty Kybert (widow of Brian 2/1) and both were well. It's good to see our widows keeping in touch, as their husbands were very good friends.

NANCY LINTON, Tuncurry, widow of Don 2/2, with a welcome cheque for the News

which she always enjoys reading from beginning to end. Our thanks, Nancy. The War Widows Guild members in Tuncurry-Forster are still very active and have just donated and installed a park bench seat, suitably inscribed, in Tuncurry Memorial Park next to the War Memorial so that the War Widows and others can sit and rest after paying their respects to loved ones on ANZAC Day or other occasions.

Her best wishes to all veterans marching on ANZAC Day and hope the weather is kind to them. Also passes on thanks to Max and I on the Pioneer News, for which many are grateful. Our kindest regards, Nancy, keep well.

VINCE LONGMORE 2/2, Eagle Vale, with a welcome letter – the first for many years – and a donation to the News. Our thanks, Vince, and good to hear from you again.

He apologised for not attending the ANZAC Day activities and reunions for the last few years but says his thoughts have been with his old mates as he watched them on TV. He used to travel in with Pat Collins to the march and was sorry to read of his passing in last issue.

Vince writes he has a balance problem, plus others, but he can still think (sometimes) and can look out the window and enjoy the green trees and hills, although he doesn't always hear the birds singing. (You've got plenty of mates with that problem, Vince, so many now have hearing aids.)

His very best wishes are passed on to all his old mates and their families for the year ahead, and is grateful for the Newsletter keeping members in touch over the years.

TED LYON 2/2, Broadwater WA, with a change of address from Busselton (courtesy of a note from his daughter Mrs E. Noakes). Ted is now in an aged care facility and we thank his family for writing and his new address. All the best, Ted, and take care.

ELIZABETH MAHY-BAILEY, Leeton, daughter of the late Phil Mahy 2/1, with a sub for the News and her best wishes to all Pioneers for the coming year. Many thanks.

ALLAN OLSON 2/2, Netherby SA, with Christmas greetings to all Pioneers in NSW and hopes that 2008 will be a happy and healthy one for all. Members are gradually falling in South Australia, but says those who are left will carry on with the help of a Junior Committee they have formed to look after the "Old and Bold". Thank you for your congratulations on our OAM's and your kind thoughts.

Allan passes on his best wishes and kindest regards to all Pioneers for the year ahead.

JOY PREEDY, Shenton Park WA, widow of Len 2/2 with her best wishes to all for a Happy Christmas and lots of good health in the coming year. Says time seems to be running away and for some reason, she seems to be slowing down and doesn't know why. Could it have anything to do with that old saying "must be getting old"? We all seem to be having the same problem Joy. Says all her family are well, which is a blessing, and looks forward to the News. Take care and good to hear from you.

FRANCES RHODES, Canberra, daughter of the late Jim Rhodes 2/1 with her yearly letter and news of family, Meg and James. What a year it has been for you, Fran, just as well you are young enough to keep up with the young ones.

Great to hear both Meg and James have been working well at school and with good results. Cannot believe Meg goes off to college for Years 11 and 12 and James into Year 10. The years seem to fly as you get older – your mum and dad would have been so pleased with their results.

Fran got her "L's" for a motorbike and bought a motor scooter to ride about and to work. Say's its cheaper than a car and parking so much easier. Meg and James giggle and call her "the bikie chook". She works in one of the Government Departments in Canberra in the finance sector, and despite all the remarks on public servants – is always busy.

Great to hear all your news, Fran, and hope the year ahead goes well for you, Meg and James. Love from Max and myself and take care.

EULALIE SAUER, Elanora Qld, widow of George 2/1, with news of a move to Queensland to be near her daughter and family – a big move after 54 years in the same house. She has bought a unit quite close to her daughter and was still busy unpacking when she wrote.

We have noted your address and phone number for our mailing list. and hope you will be happy in your new surrounds.

All going well, she hopes to be going back to South Australia for ANZAC Day. We have had a letter from Allan Olson mentioning they are carrying on the SA Branch with a Junior Committee.

Best wishes Eulalie in your new surroundings and always good to hear from you.

ROMA SHEARSTON, Stockton, widow of Doug 2/1, with a short note to say she has settled in very well at the Wescott Hostel in Stockton, and close to her son Paul and family at Hamilton. She has a nice room with television and her own phone and goes to the dining room for meals. The hostel has a small bus that goes to the local shops, so she is able to get about locally.

Roma rang Max recently to say she had been accepted as a War Widow and she hoped she may be able to later on join the War Widows Guild in Newcastle if transport was available.

Our love and best wishes, Roma, we will keep in touch. Take care.

BRYAN SMALLHORN 2/1, Armidale, with Christmas greetings and a welcome donation to funds, many thanks. He sends his thanks to the News and the unit for keeping him in touch with happenings that mean so much, after so many years, and regrets that he did not partake in activities of the old unit post-war – being a late comer his only excuse.

Bryan says nothing much to report from his part of the country, still looking after himself and hoping to "hang in" until April when he will be 90 years young and says he will be giving it the best he can. You will certainly have a lot of mates, Bryan, most of the 2/1sts are heading in the same direction, or have already passed (as they say) their "use by date".

Many thanks for your congratulations to Max and myself on our awards of the O.A.M. and your kind remarks much appreciated. We are hoping to keep the News afloat if we can, although so many associations have been forced to call it a day because lack of committees and editorial staff. Not easy to find as the years roll on. All the best and keep well.

GWEN STRODE, Yagoona, sister of late Keith Jones 2/1, with Christmas greetings to all and a welcome donation to the News. Do hope you are keeping well, Gwen, and we send you our best wishes for the coming year.

JOY TAYLOR, Allawah, daughter of the late Jack Harvey 2/1, with Christmas wishes to all Pioneers and hopes to be on deck for ANZAC Day. Trust the heel spur has cleared up by now – they can be very painful for a long time. All the best, Joy, and thanks for your good wishes.

BILL THIELE 2/1, Port Hughes SA, as usual by good wife, Betty, with Christmas greetings and a donation to the News. They are both keeping reasonably good health and Bill has joined the night bowls again and now and again has a game of golf.

They are (or were at the time of writing) still on water restrictions as other States and fail to understand how some politicians keep saying we need more population. They are also watching out for snakes in the dry weather – a neighbour spotted a metre long brown snake in Bill's front garden. Do hope you have received some of the rain we have had in the Eastern States.

Kind regards to you both – keep well.

LES TUNKS 2/1, Mareeba, per pen of Lesley, with a sub for the News and a letter which just missed last copy of the paper. Les had been in hospital with a fractured pelvis for three weeks and had to have a lot of help when he came home. At the time of writing, they were just starting to pick up, although Les is using his walker. He managed to pass for his

driver's licence, but only around their local area and no night driving. Lesley's daughter, Marsha, who lives about 45 kms away, comes in to stay overnight once a week to do the banking and other odd jobs for them.

Les did not get to Rocky Creek this year but Lesley's eldest daughter, Clare, had a plaque put on the Memorial Wall for her father. Lesley's first husband was in the R.A.A.F. and killed at Milne Bay. He is buried at Bomana War Cemetery in New Guinea.

The storms that hit Sydney and our Central Coast did no damage in Beverly Hills, but we did receive over 200mm of rain in a week – enough to make the weeds grow. The garden is lovely and green.

Many thanks for the fruit cake recipe, Lesley, I made a couple for family at Christmas and certainly quick and easy. Have passed it on to my friends.

Max's sight is just about the same, but he copes with the aid of his magnified light, sometimes with difficulty. Cannot read very much, but our Library send him tapes and talking discs every four weeks for which he is grateful.

Many thanks for your newsy letter and we both send you our love and best wishes. Keep well and always pleased to hear from you both.

JENNIFER TURNER, Springwood, daughter of the late Jack McIntyre 2/2, with the sad news that her mother Jean had passed away in August after spending most of 2007 in and out of Nepean Hospital. She was 87 years of age. Our sincere sympathy was passed on to Jennifer and family on their sad loss.

Thank you for your generous donation to the News and we are happy to hear that your mother was always pleased to receive her copy to help her keep in touch with friends from army days. Have left your name on our mailing list, Jennifer, for future copies. Our best wishes and thank you for your letter.

RON WEBSTER 2/1, Bass Hill, with a letter written in November about the passing of Doug Shearston and news of his wife Roma. Ron had been keeping in touch with Doug at Forster and was shocked to hear he had passed away. Roma and I were good friends, Ron, and keep in touch by phone every few weeks. She is keeping reasonably well and is happy at Stockton in the Hostel.

Our very best wishes to you and take care.

BETTY WOODHAM, Cleveland Qld, wife of Neville 2/1, with best wishes to all for Christmas. Says they are both coming good after a horror year – surely 2008 has to be better. Many thanks for your kind words re the News and will try and keep up the good work, with old age catching up. Hope we may get to see you in Sydney one of these days. Love and best wishes to you both.

JOYCE WALKER, Gilead, widow of George 2/1, was in hospital late February for a bowel operation and has to face up to more surgery in April. Trust the next trip to hospital will fix the problem. Joyce had recently been in touch with René and Tom Wood 2/2 and they were keeping as well as could be expected with time marching on and René had just returned to bowls after a break.

Joyce had also spoken recently to Joyce McGregor, widow of Bob 2/1, and says she has glaucoma and a recent eye operation was not very successful.

Thanks for the news, Joyce, it is good to hear of those who don't always get around to writing. Take care and will be in touch.

■ That's all the Mail Bag for this issue and many thanks to all those who sent cards of greetings, apart from those in the Mail Bag. All very much appreciated and God's blessings for the coming year.

Robyn/Bruce Bell, Eric/Doff Causer, Marie Jensen, Maisie Kempnich, Jack/Marj Kerslake, Joan Lake, Olive Finlay and family, Connie/Verdie Humphreys, Aubrey/Nancy Brasier, Joyce Walker, Lexie Coates, Dawn Levy, May/Bert/Lynda Neasbey, Janet O'Neill (Toss Robertson's daughter), Olive Richards and family, Erika Peile, Doug/Maureen Waters, Ron McIntosh, Betty O'Connor, Allan McInnes, Helen/Andrew Walker (Mary Lloyd's daughter).

VALE – KEVIN RAWARD

KEVIN RAWARD 2/2 of Ballina passed away on 22nd January, 2008, and his funeral was held at Ballina on the 25th. Kevin had been in ill-health for some time and in a wheelchair. The sincere sympathy of the Association was passed on to his daughters Christine Raward of Goonellabah, Elizabeth Campbell, Brisbane and son, John.

We have received a thank you card from Kevin's daughter Christine, on behalf of the family, expressing their sincere appreciation to members of the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Bn's Association for their kind words on the passing of their loved father, aged 90 years.

The following is a tribute by our President, Allan McInnes, who was 2 I/C of Don Company in which Kevin was the sergeant of 18 Platoon, 2/2 Pioneers.

"A great Pioneer and a great Australian has died. Kevin was a devoted Christian and he was accepted and admired by his peers. When things go wrong, almost all of us use B----y or somesuch. Kevin never used a swear word and would just say "Flog it". Kevin gave 100% and expected troops under his command to do the same, and they did.

On the rifle range Kevin's ability was awesome, he hardly ever missed hitting the bullseye at any distance. With his marksmanship and leadership qualities his peers called him 'Sgt. York', who was an American freedom fighter.

I remember Kevin on that epic 55 mile five day march from Tsili Tsili to Nadzab. Why? Because I was the 2 I/C D Coy. and as such last behind 760 native carriers and 780 troops. Days one, two and three were all tough going over very steep hills, Kunai grass and swamps, then more high hills. Days four and five were not so bad, except the weaker troops started to drop back and I got Kevin to assist. He had an exceptional way, always the right word and a slap on the back and between us we kept them moving. By day four we had four of our men who we came to sitting on the ground saying we can't go on. Kevin had a talk and explained they couldn't stay there and we will get you there. I said "Kev do you think we can manage two packs each, plus our own! His reply, "If you're game, let's go." I felt like a mule with just under 200 lbs on my back. Kevin was a marvel – a big man in structure and big in his life.

The campaign was followed by Shaggy Ridge, then on to Tarakan and Balikpapan where our army careers finished.

Kevin was a man I would want on my side in any fight or battle and knowing Kevin has since helped my life."

LAST POST

JOHN HUNT 2/1, New Farm Qld, passed away early in February, with pneumonia, after some months in a nursing home. A memorial service was held on Saturday, 16th February, attended by family and friends.

John was a frequent visitor, with his wife Mollie-Jean, to our 2/1-2/2 Pioneer reunions in Sydney for ANZAC Day and for many years, dating back to 1974 until 1991, he and Mollie held a Brisbane reunion at their home in New Farm for those members who could not attend the reunions in Sydney.

They both visited hospitals and nursing homes in the Brisbane area to visit members of both units who were ill and attended funerals representing the Association, for which we were very grateful.

Our sincere sympathy has been extended to his wife Mollie-Jean and family in their sad loss.

NELL GINNANE of Leumeah, wife of Bob 2/2, passed away in Kilbride Nursing Home on 8th January aged 85 years. Nell had been in ill-health for some time and had been lovingly cared for by Bob and her large family before moving into the nursing home. She and Bob had been married for 67 years.

The funeral service was held in the South Chapel of the Lawn Crematorium at Leppington, on 11th January and we thank our

Treasurer, Don Crawford and his wife Val for attending the funeral.

Our sympathy has been passed on to Bob and his family on behalf of the Association.

MUFTI – per Eric Causer 2/1 – Deceased: Allan Edsell VX50661, Frankston Vic., Edgar Ken Smith NX179495, Robin Vale, Vic.

DEAN OLIVER WINS AWARD

Artist Dean Oliver, son of Ken Oliver 2/1 of Earlwood, has been awarded "Best in Show" at the recent Annual Art of Sydney Awards Exhibition which was held at the National Maritime Museum in Darling Harbour in January.

Dean's painting "King Street, Newtown" is of the site at the old Brennan's department store in King Street which hasn't changed very much over the years.

A member of Bankstown Art Society, Dean started painting in the late 1980s. He studied under Julian Ashton and had private teaching with other artists such as David Wilson and Ian Chapman, where he learned so much.

Dean was introduced to painting by his mother, Beryl, who also had a painting in the Art of Sydney several years ago and was awarded the Best Oil Painting in the Division.

Congratulations Dean and we are sure your parents Ken and Beryl were thrilled with the news. Keep up the good work.

ASSOCIATION 62 YRS OLD

On 13th March, 2008, the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Bn. Association was 62 years old and the friendship of war years has welded together a very strong Association of both units.

The Inaugural Meeting of the Association was held on Wednesday, 13th March, 1946, at the Deaf and Dumb Adult Society Rooms, 5 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, of serving and ex-service personnel of the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Bns. Association, with Capt R Egan in the chair.

Looking at the attendance roll, Allan McInnes is the only surviving member of that meeting.

EXECUTIVE POSITIONS – 1946 TO 2008

The three top Executive positions have been held by members as follows:

President: Lt. Col. Macgillicuddy 1946, Lt. Col. Davis 1947, Capt. Egan 1948-49, Lt. Col. Davis 1950, Major F. Allan 1951, H. Page 1952-53, R. Pegg 1954, T. Crossman 1955-56, F. Callaway 1957-58, A. McInnes 1959-1972, J. Dodson 1973-1984, R. Dixon, 1985-88, W. Jollie 1988-95, A. McInnes 1996-.

Treasurer: R. Pegg 1946, I. Dodd 1947-49, R. Pegg 1950-53, W. Robertson 1954, H. Townsend 1955-56, R. McGregor 1957, D. Shearston 1958-74, V. Whiteley 1975-98, D. Crawford 1998-.

Secretary: R. Egan 1946, F. Whitney 1947, J. Morahan 1950, F. Cheal 1951, M. Law 1952-54, F. Callaway 1955-56, M. Herron 1957-.

REUNIONS BY THE COMMITTEE

Reunions over the years since 1946 have been a means of keeping this Association together. In the old days there used to be the Bi Annual Reunion held each year in addition to the Anzac Day Reunion. Then each year there has been the Brisbane Reunion by John and Mollie Hunt since 1974 until 1991.

The Country Reunions have also been a great success which first commenced in 1963 by the Committee, so that the Reunions were not restricted to Sydney but were taken to the country members – these have been held at the following places on the dates listed: Port Macquarie 1963; Grafton 1964; Newcastle and Greta 1972; Newcastle 1974; Newcastle 1978; Kyogle 1979; Dubbo 1980; Port Macquarie 1981; Wagga Wagga 1982; Coffs Harbour 1984; Dubbo 1986; Wagga Wagga 1988; Gosford 1990-1992.

SUBSCRIPTION DUE APRIL

Send with news to M. Herron, 3 Enoggera Road, Beverly Hills, NSW 2209.

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

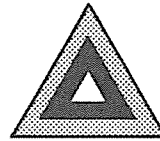
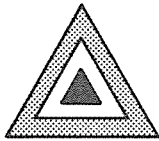
Editors: MAX & PEG HERRON O.A.M's

President: ALLAN McINNES

Vol. 54 No. 2

JULY 2008

Welfare: BILL TASKER



2/1-2/2 PIONEER ANZAC ACTIVITIES

WREATH LAYING SERVICE

This very important and solemn service was held on 24th April in Martin Place with an attendance of 10 Pioneers and 15 relatives and friends. The members were marshalled by Roy Jardine, Vice-President, with President Allan McInnes as leader and the banner bearers were Noel Grant 2/1 and Don Crawford 2/2. The wreaths were laid by Bert Neasbey for the Association and Val Crawford on behalf of the Ladies Auxiliary. Bert recited the Ode to the Fallen, followed by bugler Aub. Brasier who played Last Post and Reveille. We thank Aub for his continued support over the last 42 years, the solemn service would not be the same without Aub and his fine rendition of the bugle calls.

ANZAC DAY MARCH

Rain fell heavily for the Dawn Service, but by the time the ANZAC March was due to commence, the weather had improved and the 6th Division avoided the showers that the later Divisions had to contend with. However, despite the weather the crowds along the route were just as large as ever and estimated by Channel 2 to be close to 200,000.

At the assembly point in Phillip Street the members were called forward by Bill Tasker, who had been on the sick list for some time, but was determined to make the day. The banner bearers were Tim Lloyd 2/1sts (still on the job since 1982) and Ryan Crawford for the 2/2nds. The Australian flag was carried by Ray Law 2/1 and John Collins for the 2/2nds. Vice-President Roy Jardine was the leader of the 2/1sts and Association President Allan McInnes led the 2/2nds. There was an attendance of 15 Pioneers, numbers fast dwindling, and 22 relatives acting as carers.

Once again the Pioneers had the services of the Castle Hill RSL Youth Band, led by James Brice, who this year promised to keep the pace down a little for the 85 year old veterans. Many thanks James for a marvellous job, as the band and their music kept the members going.

ANZAC REUNION DINNER

President Allan McInnes welcomed members, recited the Ode to the Fallen, remembering all those who had passed away since last ANZAC Day including Colonel Adrian Buckley who was the last Commanding Officer of the 2/1sts and Jack Kerslake 2/1 who had been a staunch Committee member for the past twenty years and very involved with the Rats of Tobruk Association and their bowling club. Also Pat Collins who was always there on ANZAC Day with his minder sons. Pat was unique in that he had been a member of both 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneers.

Following the toast to the Queen he apologised for the absence of the Patron John Gilchrist who was unable to be present because of ill-health. John is now residing in War Veterans Village at Narrabeen.

In his announcements he thanked the Pioneer sons who once again took over the onerous task of collecting lunch monies and issuing name tags – Geoff Finlay, Ray Law, Tim Lloyd, David and Joshua Herron.

His thanks were also extended to the Occidental Hotel and their wonderful staff, led by Mary and her smiling assistants. A quality venue with quality staff.

Thanks were also extended to Max and Peg Herron, who are wonderful secretaries and publishers of the Pioneer News and to Don Crawford, our worthy Treasurer, who is always ready to help Max whenever needed.

We have been very fortunate over the years to have had such a strong Association with good office bearers and committee and mentioned that of the Inaugural meeting held in 1946, when the Association was formed, that he was the only surviving member.

Finally thanks to Ray Law for the gift to all for his beautifully presented "Pioneers and Other Heroes", and Allan said he would see this would be read by all his family and hoped that every reader gets as much enjoyment as he did. It will take pride of place on his coffee table where all his visitors can see it. Thank you Ray.

At the conclusion of Allan's address, it was time for lunch and refreshments. The usual donors had been to the bar first, which resulted in the Pioneers having drinks brought to them by the sons at no expense. An anonymous donor, who was not a Pioneer, rang Mary during the week with a very generous donation to the bar. Many thanks and very much appreciated.

REUNION ATTENDANCE

The total number attending the reunion was 85, consisting of 18 Pioneers, 21 ladies and 46 relatives. The 2/1sts numbers consisted of Jack Bertram, Noel Grant, Max Herron, Roy Jardine, Laurie Kelly, Sam Lewis, Ken Oliver, Bill Tasker, Ern Walker and Alby Dean. The 2/2nds had eight members – Andy Beebar, Don Crawford, Clive Maddrell, Allan McInnes, Bert Neasbey, Gavin Todd, Jack Allison and Ross Dawson.

A large contingent came from Victoria including Don Grant, Frank Fleming, Wayne Fleming, Craig Lynch and Steve Maher (all part of the Grant family), Sam Lewis from Forster, Ern Walker of Penrose, Alby Dean of Shepparton, George Granger (son of the late Bill 2/1) who came from Blackwater Qld with his son Bill and Jack Bertram from Newcastle.

Quite a few of the Pioneers had their sons present, only too happy to be able to share the day with their dad. There were also quite a few sons of deceased members of both units and it was especially pleasing to welcome them on such an occasion.

LUNCH WITH LADIES

The ladies enjoyed their luncheon at the Occidental for the third year and were once again joined by several interstate visitors who had come with their Pioneer husbands, to the March and the reunion.

Jean Grant came from Victoria with the Grant contingent – Margaret Fleming, Katrina Fleming and Ann Grant, Robyn Bell from Port Melbourne, our long distance travellers from WA, Pat Bentley and Loma Savillo, Kath Dean from Shepparton, Bev Walker with Joy Jorgenson and her daughter Kylie, Joanna Whiteley from Nowra and Ainslie Cole from Toronto (daughter of the late Jack Tooker 2/1).

Sydneysiders present were Marie Jenson, Pam Herrick, Barbara Allison, Joyce Law, Olive Finlay and daughter-in-law Lynn and Peg Herron and her daughter-in-law Lynn.

Val Blakeney, widow of Dick 2/1, was to have joined us for lunch, but sadly was admitted to hospital and passed away on the 20th April.

VALE – COLONEL A. BUCKLEY

Adrian Buckley who was the last Commanding Officer of the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion passed away in Sydney on 3rd April, 2008, aged 91 years. The funeral service was conducted at Mona Vale, Sydney, and the Memorial Service was held in his home town of Tamworth on the 18th April.

The following is a brief resumé of Adrian's service in the A.I.F. and of the time he spent as C.O. of the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion.

A new era in the history of the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion began on the 10th May, 1944, when their Colonel, Geoff Graham, marched out and Lieut-Colonel Adrian Buckley marched in and assumed command of the battalion at Wondecla on the Atherton Tableland.

He enlisted very early upon the formation of the 2nd A.I.F. and was an original member of the 2/2nd Infantry Battalion. As an officer he saw service with that unit in all their Middle East campaigns, including the Western Desert, Greece and Crete. He received promotion during his further service in New Guinea with the 2/2nds, reaching the rank of Major. Being ready for further honours, after some time as 2.I.C. of the 2/2nds, he gained the next step to Lt/Colonel in January, 1944, and was posted to command the 2/1st Pioneer Bn.

No doubt it was quite an experience for the Pioneers to have the services of this young officer following the previous commanders who had all seen service in the 1st A.I.F.

After extensive jungle training on the Atherton Tablelands it was time to move out of Kairi with the 7th Division, on what was to be their final campaign. Embarking at Cairns and Townsville, the unit sailed for Morotai, staging for several days before leaving on 26th June for the landing at Balikpapan in Borneo on 1st July.

After fighting at the beachhead it was decided to place a reinforced company of 2/1 Pioneers under command of 18th Brigade to protect Balikpapan Harbour against possible enemy attacks from the north. On the 19th, B Coy was warned to prepare for movement up Balikpapan Bay to the beach area of Tempadeong which was occupied by the Japanese. On 26th July troops of the 2/4th Field Regiment laid harassing fire on Tempadeong Village and the Australian frigate HMAS Gascoyne, placed at Colonel Buckley's disposal, shelled Tempadeong and Pamaluan, a village seven miles to the north.

As a result of this visit, Adrian made an "on the spot" decision to bring the remaining companies to this forward area immediately.

At all times the safety of his men was of the utmost importance, only eighteen casualties were suffered through the whole of the Borneo campaign.

After the capitulation of the Japanese in the area on 15th August, a Japanese delegation of senior officers, led by Admiral Nomiyama came down by barge to Bn Headquarters at Tempadeong for a conference with the Commander of 25th Brigade and Colonel Buckley. The Japanese surrendered their swords and disclosed the disposition of their forces. The surrender ceremony was certainly a momentous occasion for the Battalion.

It was the first action to obtain surrender from the Japanese in this island area.

Our very sincere sympathy has been extended to his wife Barbara and to his daughter Chris Arnold and family in their loss.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

ANZAC Day has once again been and gone and our members were blessed with the best part of the weather. Later marchers were not so lucky, as quite heavy rain fell for the latter part of the March. Both units marched together under their own banners, but noticeably well down on numbers. However, there was a good roll up of "carers" looking after fathers and others who marched for deceased relatives. Once again the Castle Hill Band provided their wonderful music and the Association were very appreciative of their ongoing support over many years. Some of our members who could not join in the march were able to make their way to the Occidental Hotel for their reunion. All had a great day.

DORIS AMIES, Sandgate Qld, widow of Cyril 2/1 has finally settled into a brand new ground floor unit after her move from Forbes. It is part of a complex of 18 units which had been intended as a housing complex for the over 50's, but the response from this group was not satisfactory so it came on the open market.

Doris and daughter Wendy have been madly shopping for new furniture and grand nieces and nephews, who had recently married, were anxious to take anything that Auntie was giving away.

Because of the intended nature of the complex the building is heavily secured and very close to the shopping area. Her overview takes her to the lagoon with its birdlife and lovely big old evergreen trees. Having a southerly aspect she is fortunate with the lovely breezes which blow across Moreton Bay. Doris has given her car away and when she has grocery shopping to do rides down on her motorised scooter.

Your new life sounds just the place for retirement, Doris, and we are sure you will make the most of your move and handy to Wendy and Stu for company. We wish you the best, take care and always good to hear from you. Many thanks for the cheque enclosed in your letter.

DORA ANDERSON, Merimbula, widow of Don 2/1, with a welcome letter and a generous cheque for the News. Many thanks. Says it has been a quiet year for her so has not much to report, but keeps up her interest in the "Laurel Club" (for war widows) and says they are very well looked after by their branch of Legacy. They still have their picnics, trips to the movies, but sadly like a lot of activities which the older generation support, it is hard for the Legatees to find suitable people to fit the role of a Legatee because they have to have the interest at heart.

Dora keeps well and has a large garden to look after and enjoys working in it. One of her sons lives close by and with his help, and a mower man, manages to keep the garden neat and tidy.

Thank you Dora for the cutting on the passing of Bill Mayne, 2/2 Pioneers, which was in the Melbourne "Sun" on 24th March – feel sure some of our 2/2nd members will remember him.

Our best wishes, take care and happy gardening.

CHRIS ARNOLD, Elanora Heights, daughter of the late Col. Adrian Buckley 2/1, with a letter of thanks for the sympathy extended to her and her family on the loss of their loved father and grandfather on 3rd April.

Max was fortunate to have been able to speak to Adrian just a few weeks before he passed away and was shocked to hear of his death. They had spent some time on the phone recalling the time that the Colonel had spent with the 2/1sts on the Atherton Tableland and on their campaign in Borneo. Max who was a wireless operator attached to the Colonel at Tempadeong, found him to be an outstanding officer and a fine soldier and, in his opinion, the

Colonel's training and tactics saved a lot of casualties in the unit.

Many thanks, Chris, for the notes on your dad's life – they made very interesting reading and we feel sure will be remembered by those who shared the Memorial Service in Tamworth. Ted Carter sent us a copy of the notes he presented to the service and they were also very well received.

Hope by now you have been able to find time to read our Pioneer book and we send you our very best wishes and again many thanks for your letter.

ROBYN BELL, Port Melbourne, daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1, with a letter of thanks for another wonderful ANZAC Day in Sydney and for the luncheon at the Occidental. Robyn says it is fairly evident, from the crowd reaction and numbers lining the streets of Sydney, the great respect that is held for the men and women of the wartime years. Hopefully they, as sons and daughters, can continue to carry on their legacy well into the future. She is continuing to get phone calls re the march and some from people who previously showed little interest in ANZAC Day.

Closes with best wishes to all and sorry she won't be in Sydney for V.P. Day. Hope the finger operation went well, Robyn, all the best.

PAT BENTLEY, Yokine WA, widow of Alf 2/1, with a report on her trip to Sydney for the ANZAC weekend, which ended up in a series of disasters – completely beyond her control. Pat said she was very disappointed to miss the wreath laying owing to her flight being 4½ hours late from Perth, not to mention the half hour they hovered over Sydney on arrival before being allowed to land.

Her niece Loma (who comes each trip to Sydney with Pat) was also not without her problems too. Her flight back to Perth was due to take off about 6 am, so she and Pat leapt out of bed at 4.30 am to catch the first airport train at St James Station. All went according to plan until they discovered that Travelodge had not adjusted their clock back after daylight saving had finished and they had to wait an hour until the station opened. However, Pat said the stay was good and it was great once again to catch up with all her Sydney friends, and the Grant families from Melbourne.

After Loma returned to Perth, Pat caught up with other Sydney friends and had a great day at our Zoo, up to and including a ferry trip and a ride in the cable cars. Just wonderful.

Since arriving home has returned to her WA Tourism duties and driving outpatients from their homes to Royal Perth Hospital – says apart from that life goes on and she has no desires to rejoin the workforce again.

Good to hear from you, Pat, and hope all the problems won't stop you from your yearly visit. Both send you our best wishes and better luck next time. Keep well – and busy.

LILY BETTENS, Lennox Head, writing on behalf of her husband, Albert 2/1, with a cheque enclosed for her subs, for which many thanks. Lily said Albert had a stroke in June last year and is slowly recovering, and was pleased with the tribute paid to Kevin Raward in our last issue. Says he was a true gentleman.

Our kind wishes to you both and hope Albert keeps on progressing. Take care and God Bless.

EVELYN BOOTH, Wagga Wagga, partner of the late Jack Morgan 2/2, enclosing her subs to the News and sending best wishes to all Pioneers for ANZAC Day.

Ev was saddened to hear of the passing of Kevin Raward. Jack was a corporal in D Coy 2/2 and took part in the epic march from Tsili Tsili to Nadzab and beyond, and says she was fortunate to have known such a great man as Kevin Raward – a fitting tribute to a very respected Pioneer.

All the best, Evelyn, hope the winter months are kind to you.

TED CARTER, Tamworth, who served with 2/1sts in the Middle East before transferring to the 2/3rd Pioneers after Tobruk, wrote enclosing copy of an Eulogy he was asked to

give at the service in Tamworth to celebrate the life of the late Lieut/Colonel Adrian Buckley, the last Commanding Officer of the 2/1 Pioneer Battalion.

Max had compiled some information on the Colonel from the time the C.O. had joined the 2/1sts in Atherton until the cease fire in Borneo in August 1945 for Ted to include in his notes.

We have heard from his daughter, Chris, and she was looking forward to your Eulogy and to speaking to you while she was in Tamworth.

Glad to have been of help, Ted, and best wishes to Mary and yourself.

BOB COLE, Toronto, son-in-law of the late Jack Tooker 2/1, with a change of address from Wairoonga, and his thanks for the copies of the News which he regularly receives. Many thanks for your kind remarks on the work Max and I do for the Pioneers, Bob, and we shall endeavour to carry on – God willing. We shall keep in mind your kind offer to help if it is needed any time in the future.

Over lunch at the Occidental on ANZAC Day there was mention between some of the sons of a trip to retrace the war zones of the 2/1sts maybe in two or three years time and it would be great if some of the interested "boys" would join in. Those "boys" are nearly all heading for 60, Bob, so may have left their run a bit late.

Thanks for your letter and hope to see you next year. Best wishes to Ainsley.

BETTY CREASEY, Killarney Vale, widow of George 2/1, with a short note to say she won't be able to make ANZAC Day, but would be content to watch it on TV, as her health is still not the best. Her best wishes were passed on to the Pioneers for a great day.

A cheque was enclosed for the News which she still enjoys receiving, many thanks and her best wishes to both Max and myself. Take care, Betty, and thanks to Joy for passing on the News to you.

TOM CROSSMAN 2/1, North Turramurra, with a welcome letter from his son Robert enclosing a generous cheque to the Association and the news that his dad had been in hospital and unable to stay in touch. Tom is now settled in a nursing home and confined to a wheelchair.

Tom has been missed at the reunions for several years now, but in earlier years was a regular attendee of all Association functions and in the earlier 1950s was President and on the Committee for many years.

Many thanks for your kind wishes to Max and the committee on the continued work they do for the Association and the News, and pleased to hear you still enjoy reading it. A lot of water has gone under the bridge since those earlier years, and a lot of memories.

Good to hear from you, Tom, and our thanks to Robert for his letter. Take care, and cheque has been passed on to our worthy Treasurer.

BILL CUNNEEN 2/2, Banora Point, with a change of address at Darlington Retirement Village at Banora Point – now in a care ward. All the best to you, Bill, and to Berris.

WINN DWYER, Bronte, widow of Mick 2/1, with a donation to funds and the news that Frank Gillian was in and out of hospital when she wrote in April. Since then, Winn has sent us news that Frank has passed away and Max has included this in Last Post. Many thanks, Winn, both for your cheque to the News and the notes on Frank.

Best wishes and hope you are keeping well.

KEN FRANKS 2/1, Kirwan Qld, with a very short note with a change of address. This has been noted Ken and we send you our best wishes.

AVELINE GAMBLE, Chermerside Qld, widow of Bill 2/1, with a welcome cheque for the News and her congratulations to the Association on 62 active years and still going strong. What a record.

Our thanks for your kind words, Aveline, and for your cheque for the News. Kindest regards and hope you are keeping well.

MOLLIE-JEAN HUNT, New Farm Qld, widow of John 2/1, with a thank you note to all Pioneers for their kind thoughts and support on

John's passing. John was very proud of the Battalion and enjoyed the many memories brought forward on ANZAC Day and with the newsletter.

He was a very sick boy at the end and, after 62 years, Mollie-Jean said she could not have asked him "to hang in there". She is sure he has joined the "retired Pioneers" in his new life.

Take care and our best wishes passed on to you and do keep in touch.

BILL JOHNSON 2/1, East Bentleigh Vic., with a welcome letter and cheque and his thanks for the Pioneer News. It's always welcome in their mail box with news of the old Battalion.

Bill says one of his nephews (also a William) has been in touch and would like to read Bill's copy of the Pioneer history and a few general questions – William is 16 and Bill is pleased for him to read all about uncle's wartime unit.

We were sorry to hear you were not able to join us again for ANZAC Day, but are sure you would have enjoyed your trip to Tassie, a different lifestyle to the other States. Max and I enjoyed three weeks there several years ago and covered most of the Island.

Trust your garage sale went well and not much left at the end of the day. It's amazing how much can be accumulated over the years.

Hope your trip to hospital in March found the cause of your continuous headaches and that you are well on the road to recovery. Our very best wishes to Mavis and yourself, and to Vivienne and Roger. Maybe see you in Sydney next ANZAC Day. Take care and many thanks for the donation to the News.

FRED KILLEN 2/1, Warners Bay, with just a cheque in the mail with no letter, so can only acknowledge receipt of same Fred and say thank you. Surely must be some news from your part of the world. Perhaps next time.

DAWN LEVY, Revesby, widow of Roy 2/2, with a short note enclosing a cheque for the News, for which many thanks. Dawn says she had just had two short holidays, one of six days to Eden with Legacy and to Port Macquarie for four days with the War Widows. They were lucky on both occasions with the weather and were very enjoyable. Unfortunately, their numbers are dwindling like the menfolk, whereas they used to almost fill the coach they had only 15 ladies on the Eden trip and 12 to Port Macquarie. Make the most of it while you can travel, Dawn, and hope to meet up again one day soon. Love from both of us.

MARGARET MUNRIGHT, Tea Gardens, daughter of the late Jack Claypole 2/1, with a welcome donation to the News on behalf of her mother Connie. Margaret says her mum is keeping well healthwise, despite her 95 years, and now spends regular holidays with Margaret and her husband Terry at their home in Tea Gardens.

The local RSL has had a silver plaque in honour of her Dad's war service placed on a bench near the War Memorial and on ANZAC Day the family plan to attend the service and Connie will have a special place to sit. Do hope you had a nice day.

Our best wishes to mum and many thanks for the cheque. As the subscription is only \$5 per year, your donation covers six years. The paper will continue to go to mum at Matraville until such time as we hear from you. All the best, Margaret, and thank you for keeping in touch.

JEAN MONTAGUE, Penrith, widow of Harry 2/1, our long-time Welfare Officer, with a phone call recently to say that, apart from a few aches and pains, she leads a fairly busy life. She is President of the local branch of Legacy and hopes to be able to carry on for a few more years. Good to hear from you, Jean, after such a long time and to hear Bruce was able to join the men on ANZAC Day.

JULIE McWILLIAM, Griffith, daughter of the late Steve Clarke 2/1, with a welcome note and her thanks for the recent issue of the News. She was not sure if her young ones would be attending the ANZAC march in Sydney, but she and husband Doug would attend the local service in Griffith.

Julie also mentioned that they were going

to be grandparents, with son Scott and wife Nora expecting in September. She and Doug recently visited them in their home at Bellbird in the Hunter Valley, and were anxiously awaiting the big event.

Good to hear from you Julie, and our love and best wishes.

JANET O'NEILL, Clovelly, daughter of the late Bill Robertson 2/2, with a donation to funds, many thanks, and says she looks forward to the News to keep up to date with "goings on". Janet was happy she was able to attend the wreath laying service this year, as it fell in school holidays. Being a teacher, most years she is not able to attend, but hopes to make it again next year.

Closes with best wishes to all and hopes all Pioneers had a great ANZAC Day with their mates.

JOHN PAUL 2/1, Camira Qld, with a very short note enclosing a donation to funds and a book of stamps. Says not much to report from his part of the country – his health generally good, able to play a few games of bowls, but slowing down. However, wishes all Pioneers and families the best of health in the year ahead. Thanks for your note Paul and the "goodies" enclosed.

ERIKA PEILE, Caringbah, widow of Peter 2/1, with a cheque enclosed for the News, many thanks, and says she is not looking forward to the cold weather. After such a warm summer and autumn it is a bit hard to take.

Erika was excited that she and Peter's granddaughter Jacky had earned a place in the Youth Under 23 Rowing Regatta (World) Championships in July-August, so is very busy training. We do hope that she does well and will be interested in the outcome. Peter would have been so proud. Good to hear from you, take care and our best wishes.

ROBERT PHILPOTS 2/2, Woodend Vic., with a very short note enclosing a cheque for the News and his kindest regards passed on to all Pioneers. Our thanks, Robert, and hope this finds you in good health.

FRANCES RHODES, Canberra, daughter of the late Jim Rhodes 2/1, with a cheque to keep the Pioneer News afloat, many thanks. Says she loves to see it in the mail and reading of the news of her dad's army mates. Only wishes her dad was still here to enjoy it.

Thank you for your kind words on the editorial side of the News. This can only be achieved if our readers find the time – and energy – to keep in touch. We usually manage to have enough news each issue to fill the Mail Bag and make it interesting reading (we hope). Keep up the good work.

Trust the "bikie chook" is still clocking up the miles (cheaper than putting petrol in the car) and that Meg and James are doing well at school. Love and best wishes from Max and myself.

ROMA SHEARSTON, Stockton, widow of Doug 2/1 with a welcome note to say she had settled in well at the hostel in Stockton and was glad she had made the decision to stay close to family. She had recently been on a trip to Sydney to stay with family for a few days – Trevor and family are at Katoomba and Kerrie in Engadine. Kerrie very kindly brought her here on her way back to Newcastle for morning tea, and it was lovely to see her and have time for a chat.

The Aged Care Hostel "Westcott" at Stockton, where Roma resides, held an ANZAC Commemoration Service on 17th April and Roma laid a wreath in Doug's memory. Was a very impressive service and well attended.

Take care Roma and will keep in touch. Love from both Max and myself.

JACK STEWART 2/1, Woodlands WA, with a letter, written by good wife Yvonne, enclosing a generous cheque for the Treasurer. Many thanks and good to see Jack still gets pleasure from seeing it in the mail. Sorry to hear Jack wasn't able to make it to Sydney for ANZAC Day, but we are sure he would have been with the men in spirit.

Take care and always pleased to have a

note from the west. Best wishes to you both.

DOROTHY STEAIN, Merewether, widow of Arthur 2/1, with her thanks for the News and a donation to help with printing costs.

Dorothy finds it a little difficult with her sight these days, so has no news to pass on for the Mail Bag. Living in Newcastle is a little different to Forster which she says is a lovely area and sadly missed. Take care and many thanks for the donation to funds.

JOY TAYLOR, Allawah, daughter of the late Jack Harvey 2/1, with a welcome letter apologising for being a little late on ANZAC Day to take part in the march and did not have time to say hello. Per the radio, the RSL on ANZAC Eve backed down in their decision not to allow relatives to march with their fathers' units, causing such an outcry. Max had so many calls saying if they couldn't march with their father's unit they would not march at all.

Joy was so pleased to be a part of the march and hopes to catch up again next year – even if you will be 71. Good for you. Sends her thanks for allowing her to be a part of the "Pioneer family", and enclosed a cheque towards expenses. Many thanks Joy and best wishes.

LES TUNKS 2/1, Mareeba Qld, per good wife Lesley, as Les was waiting for a taxi to take him for an X-ray on his back. He was in a lot of pain and having trouble getting around. Do hope he has improved since you wrote, Lesley.

They were lucky to be still in their own home, but get help from St Johns in their area and Lesley's daughter Marsha comes in often and does the banking and pays the bills. Good to have family who are willing enough to be of help when needed.

Many thanks for the sub enclosed, Les, and our love and best wishes to you both.

NEVILLE WOODHAM 2/1, Cleveland Qld, with a long letter written by Betty on his behalf. They would have loved to be in Sydney for ANZAC Day, but Nev is still on a walker as his balance is not good. However, will take part in the march in their local Redland City in a small "mini train" and his 6'4" grandson, Adam, will carry the R.O.T.A. Banner beside him. Over 6,000 people attended the Cenotaph in their local area last year, so were expecting a big crowd. Nev is the only Rat of Tobruk member left in their area, although there is one aged 90 in a nursing home 37 kms away.

There are lots of Vietnam veterans in their area and wonderful to the older returned men. Neville and Betty celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary on the 8th April (hearty congratulations) and several of the Vietnam friends wives surprised them with a lovely Chinese luncheon and champagne. These "boys" pointed out that none of them were even born when Nev and Betty were married.

Neville and Betty became great-grandparents on 19th December, a lovely Christmas present. The only problem the parents live at Harbord in Sydney, so have to see the little fellow grow by lots of photos. Good excuse for a trip to Sydney when health permits.

Good to hear all your news Betty and hope Nev has improved since you wrote. The boys had a great reunion ANZAC Day, although numbers getting less each year. Do take care and the very best to both of you.

BERT WOODHOUSE 2/1, Karridale WA, with quite a long letter with thanks for the copies of the News which he looks forward to reading and belated congratulations to Max and myself on our O.A.M. awards last year. Many thanks.

On ANZAC Day 2007, Harry Cable 2/1 and Bert were invited to take part in an ANZAC Day service at Woodbridge Primary School near Midland Junction. It was a wonderful experience laying the wreath and having the children recite the Ode, one line at a time, and then invited into the classrooms where we were asked so many questions – where did you sleep and what did you eat? They were invited to return this year, but Harry and Bert are off to Gallipoli, accompanied by twenty war widows for about eight days. Bert is also extending his tour to the battlefields of France. Harry would have liked to have gone, but having a pacemaker he said he wouldn't like to risk it.

After the trip to Woodbridge they were both presented with a book on the Kokoda Track by one of the teachers who had walked the Track and Bert was so impressed he purchased two copies, one he sent to Max and one for John Hayden of Orange. He feels sure John will enjoy the Rouna Pass section as they were lucky to escape the hateful Nine-Mile Quarry for a posting for a couple of months at Rouna. As mentioned to you on the phone, Bert, I contacted John Jnr, and he was taking it to his Dad for ANZAC Day. I have read our copy and read quite a lot to Max, as he has difficulty these days with smaller print with his eyesight problem. A very good book.

We will be interested to hear from you after your return from overseas with news of your trip, should be a great experience.

Looking forward to hearing from you on your return and again many thanks for the Kokoda Book – we shall share it around with our Pioneer friends who are interested. All the best and take care.

RON WEBSTER 2/1, Bass Hill, with Easter greetings to Max and I and the news that his wife will be moving into the new nursing home of the Salvation Army at Bass Hill opposite to where Ron lives – says it is more like a five-star hotel. As you probably are aware, Ron, Bill Tasker is also now in the same nursing home. So far we have not been able to visit him, with dental and doctors appointments the last few weeks, but will do so as soon as we can. Very best wishes from both of us.

JOYCE WALKER, Gilead, widow of George 2/1, is now home from another spell in hospital after surgery and slowly recovering. She is being lovingly cared for by daughters Judith and Susan and has carers who come to shower her three times a week. Take care, Joyce, and hope with the warmer weather coming you'll soon be on the mend. Will keep in touch.

RON CROSS 2/1, Ballina, with a call to say the Lismore Pioneers had met at Wollongbar Pioneer Tavern on 11th June with nine members in attendance. Reported Ossie Carter 2/1 was home after operation in Lismore Hospital and slowly improving. They would meet again on 12th November. Ron was off to Cooktown on holidays, via Winton and Longreach, and hoped to visit Rocky Creek and Atherton on the Tablelands. Hope you have a good trip, Ron, and thank you for the call.

BILL FLEMING 2/1, Mittagong, per good wife Maureen, with a welcome cheque for the Treasurer, many thanks, and the news that Bill had been in hospital with pneumonia, but was now home and slowly recovering. Maureen had been able to stay with him, which had been a big help.

Their kind regards are passed on to all Pioneers and we hope that by the time the News reaches you, Bill will be well on the mend. Take care and best wishes.

NORMA LUNN, Dubbo, wife of Ernie 2/2, with a call to say she had changed her address in Dubbo and that Ernie had also moved into a new unit at Bracken House where he had been for some time. Norma is close by and visits him regularly. Ken Prosser 2/2 from Cranbrook in WA had spoken to Norma recently re a photo of Ernie and himself taken during the war years and was sending it on for "old time sake". Good to hear from you, Norma, and our best wishes to Ernie and yourself. Keep well.

JOHN HAYDEN, Jnr, son of John 2/1, Orange, with the news that he had been in Orange for ANZAC Day and was able to take his father to lead the local march (in a wheelchair) a position his dad had occupied for many years, and to join in the activities afterwards.

Good to hear your mum is out of hospital, John, and our very best wishes passed on to both mum and dad. Thank you also for delivering to your dad the book on Kokoda, sent by Bert Woodhouse in WA. We are sure he will find it of great interest.

KEN PROSSER 2/2, Cranbrook WA, with a phone call to try and contact Ernie Lunn 2/2 of Dubbo, and we were able to put Ken in touch with Ernie's wife, Norma. Good to hear you were able to talk to Norma, Ken, and she has given you Ernie's phone number. All the best.

■ That's all the Mail Bag for this issue, I've used more space than permitted by the "Boss", so until next issue take care and best wishes.

RAY LAW – THE POET

RAY LAW, son of the late Jim 2/1, produced a 24-page book of poems called "Pioneers and Other Heroes". At the ANZAC Reunion dinner, Ray arranged that each member present secured a complimentary copy.

He is to be congratulated on the wonderful set of poems and the Executive of the Association, on behalf of their members, thank Ray for his fine gesture.

SICK PARADE

BILL TASKER 2/1, our Association Welfare Officer, developed a heart problem in April and spent two weeks in Canterbury Hospital where he was visited by Joyce Law and Peg and Max Herron. He was then transferred to the Metro Rehabilitation Hospital at Petersham where he spent another couple of weeks before his daughter Kay was able to move him to the Salvation Army Hostel at Bass Hill.

When Max rang him on 10th June, Bill was very happy with his private room and meals in the dining room and has settled in very well. He sends his regards to all Pioneers.

DON CRAWFORD 2/2, Association Treasurer, was admitted to Strathfield Private Hospital on 27th May for a hip replacement. He was discharged after eight days and was recuperating at home when Max spoke to him on 5th June. All the best, Don, and hope the twice weekly physio is getting you back to bowls and swimming fairly soon.

VALE – JACK KERSLAKE

JACK KERSLAKE 2/1, Collaroy, passed away on 18th April in the RSL Peter Cosgrove Nursing Home, Narrabeen, aged 91 years. The funeral service was conducted by the Rev. Kerry Nagel at St Faiths Anglican Church, Narrabeen, on 23rd April, with only family at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium for the cremation service.

Family reflections and Eulogy were given by his grandchildren and this was followed by a Welfare Officer of Dee Why RSL conducting the Poppy Service.

The Eulogy of Jack's service life with the 2/1st Pioneers and with the Association was given by Vice-President Roy Jardine as follows:-

Jack enlisted in the A.I.F. on 3rd June, 1940, and was posted to the 2/1 Pioneer Bn. After training at Greta and Dubbo camps he sailed with the unit in September 1940 to the Middle East. The unit moved to the Western Desert in Libya, then into Tobruk for the Siege for seven months.

Returning to Australia in 1942, Jack served in New Guinea, taking part in the battle at Imita Ridge on the Kokoda Track. After leave back in Australia, he was transferred to a Bakery Unit at Milne Bay until discharged in September 1945.

Jack joined the Committee of the Association after retiring in 1986 and attended the meetings for the past twenty years. Both he and Marj were regular attendees at our country reunions over the years and many happy hours were spent with former members of the Pioneers and their wives. Jack was also a keen supporter of the Rats of Tobruk Association and attended their meetings and functions. He was also a member of the RATS Bowling Club and travelled to many country towns as a team member.

Pioneers in attendance at the service were Roy Jardine, Don and Val Crawford, Laurie Kelly, Joan Lake, Max and Peg Herron, David and Lynn Herron and Joe Walker representing the Rats of Tobruk Association.

Our deepest sympathy was extended to his wife Marjorie and daughters Barbara, Margaret, Rhonda and their families. He will be sadly missed by both his fellow Pioneers and members of the Rats of Tobruk Assn.

Lest We Forget.

LAST POST

ALEC GEORGE 2/1 of South Lismore passed away peacefully, after a long illness, on 14th March 2008 and was privately cremated.

Alec was a well-known country member of the 2/1sts and missed very few trips to Sydney for ANZAC Day with his son-in-law Ken Finlayson. He was also very active with the Northern Rivers Branch of the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Bn Association, before its closure.

Our very sincere sympathy has been extended to Jean and her family on their very sad loss on behalf of the Association.

VALERIE BLAKENEY, widow of the late Dick 2/2, passed away at Neringah Hospital, on 20th April 2008 aged 86 years. Val had been living at War Vets Village at Narrabeen for the last 19 years until ill-health saw her enter Mona Vale Hospital in February.

Her funeral was held on 24th April at Northern Suburbs Crematorium, a kind and gentle woman loved by everyone she met. Val had kept in touch with a few Pioneers and their wives over the years and had intended to attend the Pioneer reunion on ANZAC Day this year.

Val is sadly missed by her daughter Sue McIlwraith and her family, to whom we have extended our sincere sympathy on the loss of their loved one.

FRANK GILLIAN 2/1 of Maroubra passed away at the Sacred Heart Hospital, Darlinghurst, with lung cancer, aged 87 years. He had been admitted to St Vincent's Hospital on 8th April before being transferred to Sacred Heart on the 29th, and passed away next day. So sudden and such a shock to his family.

The last couple of years he had not been well enough to march, but never failed to watch it on TV and pick out his Pioneer mates.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held at the Holy Trinity Church in Maroubra on 6th May before leaving for Eastern Suburbs Crematorium, where John Newcombe from Bondi Junction-Waverley RSL recited the Ode to the Fallen, followed by Last Post.

Our very sincere sympathy has been passed on to his wife Beryl and her family on the loss of their loved one. He will be sadly missed by his Pioneer mates.

GEOFF ROBINSON 2/1, Quaaama, passed away on 8th March 2008 aged 91 years. Geoff, a good friend of the late Gordon Finlay, served in the Middle East with the Pioneers and on gaining his Commission on return to Australia was posted to another unit.

To his daughters Judith, Susan and families we extend our sincere sympathy on their sad loss.

MUFTI of Victoria, per Eric Causer 2/1, reports as follows:- Deceased 2/2nds – Leslie Shiels, Mirboo North; Robert Koch, Bendigo; John Farley, Waverley; Colin Rae, Violet Town; Allan Strain, Warracknabeal.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The President Allan McInnes opened the meeting on 28th March 2008 with the Ode to the Fallen, remembering our fallen comrades and in particular those who had passed away since the last meeting. There were 10 members in attendance.

Yearly reports were given by the President, Secretary, Treasurer and the Welfare report was read by the Assistant Secretary in Bill Tasker's absence.

The Returning Officer, Vice-President Roy Jardine then occupied the chair and conducted the election of office bearers which resulted as follows: President – Allan McInnes; Vice Presidents – Roy Jardine and Jack Bertram; Secretary – Max Herron; Assistant Secretary – Peg Herron; Welfare Officer – Bill Tasker; Editors – Max and Peg Herron; Reporter – Bill Lewis.

In general business, Treasurer Don Crawford thanked all those members who made donations during the year. The cost of producing the Pioneer News is now \$2,350 per year, so all donations are very much appreciated.

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 McINNIS

Vol. 54 No. 3

NOVEMBER 2008

Welfare: BILL TASKER

V.P. DAY – COMMEMORATION

On Friday, 15th August, 2008, the service for Victory in the Pacific was held at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway at Concord, marking the 63rd Anniversary of the day when Japan surrendered and the war was finally over.

The service was in the capable hands of Father Graeme Malone SSS, Honorary Chaplain of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway who, after the arrival of the Official Party, invited the Mayor of the City of Canada Bay, Cr. Angelo Tsirekas, to read the Prologue. Following this, the Mayor 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, Chief of the Army Lieutenant-General Ken Gillespie AO, DSC, CSM, and other honoured guests and said it was important to remember Kokoda and the sacrifices made by our servicemen in repelling the superior Japanese forces. He then called on Lieut-General Gillespie to address the gathering.

ADDRESS BY GENERAL GILLESPIE

Cr Angelo Tsirekas – Mayor of the City of Canada Bay, Mr John Murphy – Member for Lowe, Ms Sue McDonald – rep NSW Treasurer, Mr Effie Cauchie – rep DVA, Mr Danny O'Connor – General Manager of Concord Hospital, Mr Don Rowe – NSW RSL State President, Mrs Diana Bland – President of the War Widows Guild, Mr Ron Brown – President of the NSW National Servicemen's Association, President and members of the Kokoda Memorial Walkway Board, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is an honour to be here with you today as we pause to reflect on the very real sacrifices and fabulous achievements of the Australian people in their contribution to the Allies' Victory in the Pacific in the Second World War.

On August 15, 1945, Prime Minister Chifley announced to the nation that the Japanese had agreed to unconditionally surrender, and as a consequence, the Second World War was over. Australians reacted to the surrender in a tremendous mood of joy, with spontaneous celebrations breaking out all over the nation. For a jubilant Australia wildly celebrating on 15 August one thought was paramount. The war was over. But, in the immediate aftermath of these celebrations, Australians began to appreciate that, because of the six years of war, the world had changed. And, Australia too, was forever changed by this most destructive of conflicts.

We gather here this morning to commemorate the end of war in the Pacific 63 years ago. Of the many occasions and anniversaries we commemorate in the course of each year, including those marking the conclusion of past conflicts, this one is of particular significance. The Pacific war was the first and only time in the short history of our nation when our territorial integrity was subject to threat, and when acts of war were carried out against our people on – and above – Australian soil.

VP Day is an important occasion for all Australians. But it holds special meaning for those who endured the Second World War, particularly for our veterans, and for those whose loved ones did not return or who returned suffering grave physical and mental

injury. Today, as we reflect on the service and sacrifice of our veterans we should take a moment to consider what it was they fought for sixty-three years ago.

While the early years of World War II in Europe and the Middle East brought little change to daily life for most Australian families, the bombing of Pearl Harbour in December 1941 signalled the start of Japan's rapid advance through the Pacific. The day after crippling the US Navy's Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbour, Japan landed its first troops in Malaya. A powerful Japanese offensive ensued, and Australia hastily prepared for possible invasion.

With the majority of our 2nd AIF, naval and air forces already heavily committed in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, Prime Minister John Curtin decided to withdraw most of them to meet the requirements of defending Australia.

In January, 1942, the Japanese forces captured Rabaul, the capital of the Australian-controlled territory of New Guinea. Within weeks, Australian and Dutch forces had surrendered the island of Ambon in the Netherlands East Indies. When Singapore fell on the 15th of February 1942, 15,000 men of Australia's 8th Division were taken captive which was the start of over three long years in captivity. The loss of Singapore meant the "Malay Barrier" had been breached, and Australia was in potential danger.

The war arrived on Australia's shores on the morning of 19 February 1942 with a devastating air raid on Darwin. Nearly 260 Japanese fighters and bombers attacked the port. They targeted the shipping in the harbour twice during that day, killing 252 Allied service personnel and civilians. In succeeding months air attacks were made on many towns in northern Australia including Wyndham, Port Hedland and Derby in Western Australia, Darwin and Katherine in the Northern Territory, Townsville and Mossman in Queensland, and Horn Island in the Torres Strait.

In May 1942, three Japanese midget submarines attacked Sydney Harbour, followed by several minor attacks on Australia's southern coastline by conventional Japanese submarines. This included the shelling of Newcastle. In the following months, Japanese submarines sank six Allied merchant ships off the east coast of Australia. Several more merchant ships were hit in 1943 and, in May that year, 268 perished when the Australian Hospital Ship Centaur was sunk in Queensland waters.

These attacks, and the Japanese landings in Papua New Guinea in July led to most Australians feeling a great sense of peril. While debate today questions whether the Japanese had really developed a coherent strategy to invade Australia, it would have been extremely difficult at that time not to imagine Australia being the next objective of the Japanese. The first six months of 1942 were indeed a grim time for Australians, and its allies in the Pacific.

But in September of that year, Australian forces achieved something that no other allied force had yet achieved. At Milne Bay, a combined force of Australian Army, Air Force and US forces defeated the Japanese for the first time. Victory here and a few weeks later the recapture of Ioribaiwa in New Guinea by

the Australians on 28th September, marked a turning point, the seemingly "unstoppable" Japanese had been stopped. This was an important psychological victory.

British Field-Marshal Sir William Slim, the brilliant commander of the XIV Army in Burma, later commented that:

"Australian troops had, at Milne Bay, inflicted on the Japanese their first undoubted defeat on land. Some of us may forget that, of all the allies, it was the Australians who first broke the invincibility of the Japanese Army."

Australian Brigadier John Field summed up Australian feelings more succinctly:

"Our troops have proved the Jap is not a superman."

After the defeat of the Japanese at Kokoda and Milne Bay, Australian and American units between November 1942 and January 1943 fought the Japanese in northern Papua at Buna, Gona, Sanananda, Finshaffen and Wewak in a series of costly battles, where no quarter was shown or expected. By early 1943, Allied forces had halted Japanese offensives in the Solomon Islands and New Guinea.

In 1945, Australian land, air and sea forces launched coordinated assaults against the Japanese at Tarakan, Labuan and Balikpapan. These were the biggest, most complex and the final Australian campaigns of World War II. Preparations were then being made for what would have been an extraordinarily costly assault on Japan itself. However, with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, the Emperor of Japan finally realised the futility of continuing the war and was persuaded to surrender unconditionally on 15 August.

On the home front, Australians wanted a return to normality as soon as possible. Commonwealth wartime regulations were terminated. And there was gradual end to rationing and manpower restrictions. Women started returning to their homes, but many remained in the jobs to which they had won grudging admittance during the times of manpower shortages in the war. But a priority for the government was the demobilisation of Australia's largest ever military force.

Almost one million Australian men and women enlisted during the Second World War. It remains the largest commitment of Australian soldiers, sailors and airmen in our history.

During the early years of the war, over 22,000 Australian servicemen and almost forty nurses were captured by the Japanese. Most were captured early in 1942 when Japanese forces captured Malaya, Singapore, New Britain, and the Netherlands East Indies. Hundreds of Australian civilians were also interned. Although it is difficult for us to understand what these brave Australians endured, the fact that one third of our POWs perished in captivity is some indication of the appalling conditions they suffered. Most became victims of their captors' indifference and brutality. Tragically, over a thousand died when Allied submarines torpedoed the unmarked ships carrying prisoners around Japan's wartime empire.

For Australia, Victory in the Pacific Day ended six years of hardship, sacrifice and anguish. It heralded the start of what many people hoped would be a new era of peace. So in remembering the nearly one million Australian men and women who served,

(continued on page 4 – column 3)

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

* The last Mail Bag for the year and running a bit behind schedule. Max broke his leg in late August and after seven weeks in hospital and rehabilitation is home, but slow in recovery. He is on a walker and with aid in showering and physio several times a week, not a lot of time for other tasks. However, better late than never and quite a lot of mail from those who are still able to put pen to paper.

ALBIE BARTON 2/1, Gulgong, with a letter of apology for not writing earlier and enclosed a welcome donation to Association funds. Many thanks.

He was pleased to read in the last issue of our ANZAC Day activities and it reminded him of the great attendance in his local area - the largest in his 18 years in Gulgong. He still made the march, travelling this year in a wheelchair pushed by his son Rob. It was a place of honour, as he led the march with the pipe band.

He and wife Gwen have now been in residence in Wononah Lodge in Gulgong for two years and it is only recently that they are feeling settled. Albie uses a wheelie walker, but they get about fairly well. Both send their best wishes to all.

PAT BENTLEY, Yokine WA, widow of Alf 2/1, with two notes since last paper, one from a bed in hospital where she had a "nasty" taken off her leg (which I hope has cleared up by now) and the other written while waiting for the detailer to finish cleaning her car.

Sorry for not dropping you a note before this, Pat, but time seems to have been non-existent over the last couple of months since Max's accident.

Says the weather in the west has been very cold and some badly needed rain has fallen in some parts of the country.

Her travelling companion to Sydney each year, niece Loma, has recently retired and when Pat wrote Loma was "swanning" around Italy with her daughters. Do hope she had a lovely holiday and we may see her in Sydney again next year.

Good to hear from you, Pat, and hope all your problems have cleared up. Take care and love.

SID BOOTH 2/2, Minyana Qld, with a very welcome letter - which according to him is a rare occasion as he never writes to a soul. Always a first time, Sid, and it did you proud. Many thanks for the very nice remarks in your note to both Max and myself - much appreciated - and for your donation to the News. It has been handed on to Don, our Treasurer, and receipt will be sent in due course.

Our sincere sympathy on the loss of your loved wife, Jean, in April after 66 years of marriage. A rare occurrence these days and I can imagine how much she is missed.

Shall pass on your best wishes to Allan McInnes when next speaking to him (as you say a "champion person"). Max and I have been friends with him since July 1940 when they were in camp together at Warwick Farm here in Sydney.

What a strange coincidence you being the building inspector on the big R. C. Church in Beverly Hills, Regina Coeli, less than 10 minutes walk from here. It is used frequently by the American Navy when here around the Battle of the Coral Sea celebrations, as the first priest Father O'Brien was connected with the Yankee navy. As you lived in Lakemba and Earlwood you would know our area well. Small world!

Good to hear from you Sid, and for someone who says they never write a letter, you did well. Perhaps may hear again one day. Very best wishes and take care.

PHIL BRABBIN, Blackburn Vic, son of Tom 2/2, phoned to say his dad was now in a nursing home and asked for the News to be sent to him in future. He also would like to have

contact with someone who may have known his father, so gave him the phone number of our President Allan McInnes whom I was sure would be of help. Also sent him the brief history of the reformed 2/2 Pioneer Bn.

Trust you had some luck with your enquiries, Tom, and the News will be sent on to your address. Best wishes.

MARY BURNHAM, Forster, daughter of the late Colonel Arnold Brown 2/1, with a thank you note for several items we had in our possession after the publication of the 2/1 history and were able to return them to the family. Mary was most grateful as they were the citations of her father's M.I.D. and O.B.E. and a photo of her brother who was killed at El-Alamein.

Many thanks for your donation to funds and hope you had a great holiday overseas. Take care and good to hear from you.

KAY BURTON, Springwood, daughter of the late Bert Rayner 2/1, with a welcome note after a recent trip to Kyogle to see her mother, Margaret, and to attend the 100th Anniversary of "The Risk" Hall and School, a small settlement on the outskirts of Kyogle. There was a church service on the Sunday to honour eight young men who enlisted from the area and did not return. The late Jack Shearman's brother Stan was one of these young men - he died on the Sandakan death march.

A book was published by Bryson and Kay Wilson on the area and the local young men ("Ladies Please Provide") and Kay sent us some photocopies of some of the pages that were of interest to their Pioneer friends, including the story of Ted Wilks 2/1sts who was killed in Tobruk. As soon as space permits we will publish them in a future issue.

Thank you, Kay, and pass on our best wishes to mum and hope she keeps well.

ARTHUR CHAPMAN, Sth Toowoomba, Qld, son of the late Harold William Chapman, 2/1, was in touch with the Association recently re some information on his father and to inform us that he and his brother were planning to walk the Kokoda Track.

On his return, he was in Sydney and called on Ken Oliver 2/1 who had made a trip to New Guinea in recent years and also visited Max, since his return from hospital. Arthur has mailed us an article on his Kokoda trek and this will be published in next issue.

Many thanks, Arthur, and we hope your article may bring some response from any Pioneer who may have known your dad.

RON CROSS 2/1, Ballina, has been in touch since his trip to Cooktown and the Atherton Tablelands and thoroughly enjoyed the experience, despite some very cold weather.

While in Mareeba he was made very welcome at the home of Les and Lesley Tunks and enjoyed the time he was able to spend with them. Also visited Rocky Creek Memorial Park and very impressed with the 2/1-2/2 plaque which Max and Les Tunks 2/1 unveiled in 2001. Jack Hearn 2/2 of Howlong was also present for the occasion.

Ron also passed on to the Kerslake family his sympathy on the passing of his Tobruk mate Jack Kerslake - one of nature's gentlemen.

Good to see you enjoyed the trip Ron and we send you our best wishes.

ANNIE CRAMSIE, Buderim Qld, daughter of the late Phil Cramsie 2/1, with several notes on the passing of her dad and a short obituary for inclusion in Last Post.

She said it was nice to hear the warm regard that her dad enjoyed with his Pioneer friends - his mates and Battalion Association were very important to him. They were like a second family - the bonds of war are very strong.

Many thanks for your letters Annie - he will be sadly missed by his Sydney fellow Pioneers at the march and reunion. Take care and fond wishes.

BOB CROSSMAN, Taree, son of the late Tom Crossman 2/1, with a note to say his dad had passed away, peacefully, on the 31st July. His cremation, family only, was on the 4th August. Tom had been missed at the reunions for several years, but in earlier years he was a

regular attendee and on the Committee for many years.

Our sympathy has been extended to Bob and the Crossman family.

ALBY DEAN 2/1, Shepparton Vic., with a welcome donation to funds, as he was not sure if he had paid his dues earlier. You had paid in November, last year, Alby, so thanks once again. Says, God willing, hopes to be in Sydney next ANZAC Day. All the best to Kath and yourself, take care.

KEN FRASER 2/2, St Helena Vic., who is treasurer of the 2/2 Pioneer Battalion Association in Victoria, with a very complimentary letter on our Pioneer News - for which many thanks. It is nice to hear occasionally that your efforts are appreciated.

When Ken wrote in August, it was lovely weather down south with some decent rain, but says their dams are still only at 31%. We are faring a little better with Warragamba at 60%, but can only water Wednesdays and Sundays before 10 o'clock and after 4pm. When he wrote was busy preparing a base for his 3,000 litre water tank, so by now should be installed and lots of vegies on the move.

Many thanks for your donation, Ken, and very best wishes from Max and myself for the coming year with lots of good health.

JOHN GILCHRIST 2/1, Narrabeen, and worthy Patron of the 2/1sts and 2/2nds in Sydney, with his best wishes to Max following his accident and hopes he is now well on the road to recovery. Has been a slow process, John, but getting there gradually.

After Barbara, his wife, passed away he started to sort out a few things and came across his prized medal made in Tobruk by Lofty Barlow and his men in 5 Platoon. As time was marching on, he decided that he would pass on his medal to Max as a tangible thank you for all he has done for the Pioneers over the past 50 years. I cannot tell you how overcome he was, John, and was most grateful for your kind words. Many thanks and in due course he will be in touch to speak with you.

BOB GINNANE 2/2, Leumeah, with a note to Max following his accident and hopes Max will be fit and ready for the 2012 Olympic Games in London. He is making slow progress, Bob, but I certainly hope it won't take that long.

As a full time member of the Tumbler's Club, Bob tells of the many occasions he has fallen and refused to go to hospital for check-ups. Owing to his size (his words, not mine) he can't get his big backside off the ground and has to wait for the ambo's to lift him. However, his health generally is good and says if he had two new knees he could fight any three stone woman in the Police Force. (Certainly still have your sense of humour, Bob.)

Daughter Dianne comes in every day and cooks his three meals which helps to keep him out of a nursing home. Eldest daughter Pauline has just had a kidney operation and we do hope she is making a good recovery. You are lucky to have such a caring family, Bob, a lot to be thankful for, as I guess you are.

Many thanks for the cheque for the News and very best wishes. Keep well and take care.

ANN HEALEY, Semaphore SA, daughter of the late Jim ("Jumma") Hall of Kyogle, with her thanks for the News which keeps her in touch with friends in the East.

At time of writing, Ann was off to Europe for two months with her cousin. They were going to Paris, via Singapore, for three weeks and intending to visit the War Graves in Normandy. Her cousin, Betty, has a Masters in International Politics and is interested in all things military. From there on to the UK for five weeks. Her nephew lives in London, so a chance to catch up with him too.

In regard to the Shearmans, Ann, both have now passed on. Jack in September last year and Flo only a week ago (late October). I presume by Molly you refer to Molly McNaughton, if so, she still lives in Casino, but we have not heard from her for ages.

Do hope you had a great holiday, Ann, and we both send you our fond love.

PAM HERRICK, Sutherland, daughter of the late George Bates 2/1, with a card from the United Kingdom while she and Edward were on holidays. Says no wonder the country is always green – it had rained every day since they arrived.

There were off to Ireland for a week then up into Scotland. Visited Cornwall, Leeds, York (we nearly lost our car in York – could not find the parking station where we left it) and at time of writing were in Cumbria. Just loved the country.

Good to hear from you, Pat, and no doubt will hear from you when home in Aussie. Love and best wishes.

MOLLIE-JEAN HUNT, New Farm Qld, widow of John 2/1, with some Pioneer photos sent to her by Annie Cramsie which she thought would be of interest. Many thanks, and will file them away in our albums. Very hard to recognise the young faces from photos taken so long ago.

Good to hear all your legal work has finally been completed – they certainly don't move very quickly. Do hope you are keeping well, Mollie, and always nice to have a line or two from you to keep in touch.

NORMA LUNN, Dubbo, widow of Ernie 2/2, with her thanks for our message of sympathy on the passing of Ernie in August. Max has included the eulogy in Last Post, Norma, and many thanks for sending it on.

Have noted your new address on our mailing list and will send you a couple of extra copies for the family.

Take care and will be in touch by phone when time permits. Marj Kerslake sent her best wishes and hopes you are keeping well. She is kept busy with family.

JOYCE MCGREGOR, Bradbury, widow of Bob 2/1, with a welcome card with family news. Joyce's health has not been the best over the last four years with cataract problems, glaucoma and says her closest companion is her "walker".

For her 85th birthday celebrations she had a great holiday – a 10 day cruise on the "Pacific Dawn" accompanied by daughters Jill and Lynda and Jill's husband Pat. Said they were treated like royalty by staff and had three birthday cakes – also a proposal of marriage, says must have thought she had money. Goes to show never too old, Joyce.

It was good to hear all your family news and can see you are being well cared for by the girls. Where have all the years gone since Glamis Street?

Many thanks for the donation to the News and the article enclosed in your letter. Had a good laugh and will pass it on.

Love to all the family, Joyce, and hope your "new arrival" in December brings lots of happiness. Do take care, often think of those early days and our friendship over many years.

JULIE MCWILLIAM, Griffith, daughter of the late Steve Clarke 2/1, with a very generous donation to the News and says it is always good to receive an update on the Pioneer family.

Julie and Doug caught up with family in Canberra recently when they were there for Steve's sister's 97th birthday. Son Scott and his wife Nora were "expecting" in September so guess Julie and Doug are happy "grandies" by now. Daughter Karen has a new man in her life and he lives in Amsterdam, so Karen has resigned from her job in Sydney and gone overseas. There's a big wide world out there these days and the young ones like to spread their wings. You will miss her.

Fond wishes Julie and always good to hear from you.

ELIZABETH MAHY-BAILEY, Leeton, daughter of the late Phil Mahy 2/1, with a welcome subscription to the News and sends regards to all Pioneers for the coming year. Best wishes, Elizabeth, and many thanks.

IRIS MARSTON, North Buderim Qld, widow of the late Stan Marston 2/1, with the sad news that Stan had passed away earlier in the year aged 89, and her apologies for not letting us know sooner.

Iris says that when they retired from farming

at Willbriggie, near Griffith, and moved to Queensland nearly 16 years ago, they always said when "their time came" they would go back home. Stan's funeral was held in Griffith and the RSL attended, for which the family were very grateful.

Enclosed in her letter was a welcome donation to the News which they had both looked forward to seeing in the mail. Many thanks, Iris, and we will keep you on the mailing list until you no longer wish to receive it.

Take care and our belated sympathy on Stan's passing. Very best wishes from Max and myself.

BETTY O'CONNOR, West Ballina, widow of Neville 2/2, with a note to say that she had spent ANZAC Day in Gallipoli this year with a group from the RSL. It was only an eight day trip but well worth going, but so cold. She nearly froze to death waiting for the Dawn Service. After leaving Istanbul and booking into Canakkale they spent the next three days touring the Gallipoli battlefields.

They had a war historian from Canberra travelling with them to explain everything which was great. Nancy Robbins, widow of Ray 2/2, was also there on a different tour, but happened to meet in the hotel lobby in Istanbul the night before Betty flew back. However, Betty was glad to get home, but said it was a wonderful experience.

She had also had a trip to Orange recently for a family reunion on her father's side of the family and had a great weekend.

In closing she, like many others, would like to pay tribute to Kevin Raward – a good friend and Pioneer. Also sent Christmas greetings to all Pioneers and the very best of health and happiness in the New Year.

JOHN PITMAN 2/1, Moree, with his thanks to the Editors for the Pioneer News and enclosed a cheque to keep the show on the road. He was very sorry to read of the death of Colonel Buckley, as he would not have known of his passing only for the News.

Max sends his best wishes and hopes the drought conditions in your part of the country have improved since you wrote last.

There's not many old Sigs. to correspond these days but he does hear fairly regularly from Eric Causer and Allan Crute. Thanks for your cheque, John and good to hear from you.

Rev. PETER PLAYSTED, South Windsor, with a correction to his address, which has been noted, and his congratulations on producing such an outstanding newsletter. Many thanks, Peter, age is catching up, but I guess it does keep members of the old units and their families in touch. So many of your old Lismore folk have passed on in the last couple of years.

Max sends his best wishes and good to hear from you again.

KEITH PROSSER 2/2, Cranbrook WA, with a couple of letters in his effort to contact his old mate Ernie Lunn 2/2. We were able to put him in touch with Norma, Ern's wife, and he was able to speak to them before Ernie passed away.

Norma has moved once again in Dubbo, Keith, and the following is her new address – 5 Masonic Village, Darby Close, Dubbo, NSW 2830.

Glad you were able to make contact and many thanks for your cheque to the Association. Take care and best wishes.

OLIVE RICHARDS, Bribie Island, widow of Jack 2/1, with a welcome note and cheque for the News. Another birthday come and gone, Olive, says her general health is very good – still able to look after herself and go for long walks each day. Chris and Annette are always on hand if she needs help. Both are very busy selling real estate on the Island.

Olive mentions being in touch with good friend Marj Kerslake, also Noel Schomberg for his 90th birthday. Also has another little great-grandson in Mackay and Chris is grandfather to three and another expected. Your family is growing, Olive, and I guess Bribie Island is a great place for a holiday.

All the very best to the family and hope you have a blessed and happy Christmas. Love from both of us and keep well.

CHARLES RICHARDSON 2/2 with a change of address from 20th October and says visitors would be most welcome at any time. There are quite a few 2/2nds moving to Qld, Charles, so you may have company.

His address is Room 25, Anzac Cottage, RSL (Qld) War Veterans Homes, 2603 Moggill Rd, Pinjarra Hills, Qld 4069 and his new phone number 07 3378 8210, and he is looking forward to hearing from some of his old friends.

Have amended our mailing list, Charles, and hope you will be happy in your new surrounds. All the best and take care.

ROBERT STUBBS, Springwood, nephew in law of 2/1 Noel Schomberg, with a cheque to funds, for which many thanks. Robert comes each ANZAC Day to keep an eye on Noel, which we are sure is much appreciated.

BILL TASKER 2/1, our Welfare Officer, is now residing at Weeroona Village Aged Care Plus in Bass Hill and has settled in very well. Says the village is a very nice place (run by the Salvation Army), the rooms are excellent, food good, service also good and staff very efficient and capable. Says what more can you want and he's very lucky to be there.

He has the phone – 9738 9037 – and can be contacted in his room. Daughter Kay keeps an eagle eye on him and says he would welcome visitors.

Thanks Kay for keeping in touch and will bring Max to see him as soon as he is mobile again.

Take care, Bill, and our best wishes.

MICK TASSELL 2/1, Hay, with a long overdue letter and good to hear you are still able to write a short note. He is 91 and lives alone, as his wife has been in hospital for four years. He goes up every second day to see her. His family all live in Newcastle and he doesn't see them very often.

Mick is very thankful for the News as it keeps him in touch with his old mates of the unit. Thanks for your sub and all the best, keep well.

LESLEY TUNKS, Mareeba Qld, wife of Les 2/1 with a short note enclosing the Rocky Creek News. Les did not go to the service at Rocky Creek Memorial Park for the celebration of V.P. Day as he was not 100%. Heroes long on years and long on memories came back to celebrate the day, some had not been back to the Tablelands since young servicemen 65 years ago.

Four more plaques were unveiled and several families placed plaques for family members who had served on the Tablelands during the war.

Lesley and Les have had his brother and wife up from Brisbane and they enjoyed the few days together. They also had their daughter Marsha in to stay a couple of days a week while her husband Barry was away in the Northern Territory. Daughter Clare has also been over and it was lovely to have the family together.

I had meant to drop you a note when the paper arrived, but with Max's accident and seven weeks in hospital, time just ran out.

Fond wishes to you both and take care.

NEV WOODHAM 2/1, Cleveland Qld, with a welcome letter written by Betty on his behalf. It is now 14 months since Nev came out of hospital and he is able to do a lot more around the house. Takes time as you get older and don't pick up so quickly.

They have just had two days with their grand-daughter Karen and husband Alistair, who were up from Sydney, and their first great-grandchild Joshua who is 10 months old. Can just imagine how happy you both were to have them with you, if only for a few days.

Nev is still Treasurer for the Venture Club, about 90 people each Wednesday morning come and play indoor bowls, cards or a small group play bingo.

The Vietnam boys and their wives are very involved in the RSL and do a great job looking

after the "oldies". Good to see, especially after the rough time they received when they arrived home all those years ago.

Thank you for the news on Wyn Hayden's passing. Have spoken to John Jnr and he has promised a par for the News when he returns from Orange. Also for the message for Max, he is progressing slowly and having lots of physio.

Fond wishes to you both and always good to have a note from you. Take care.

■ 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 coming year. To those who have lost loved ones during the year we send special thoughts, so many old friends are no longer with us. Have a Happy and Holy Christmas and may the New Year bring Peace and Goodwill.

MANY THANKS

My thanks to all those who visited me while I was hospitalised with a broken leg, Don Crawford, Bill Tasker and daughter Kay, Ron Webster, Ken Oliver, Marj Kerslake and daughter Margaret Stolph. Their visits were most welcome. Peg had lots of phone calls – Bert Neasbey, Jack Allison, Allan McInnes, Vera Cook, Olive Finlay, John Gilchrist, our typesetter Peter Smith and Roy Jardine – which she passed on. All were very much appreciated. – Max Herron.

LAST POST

PHIL CRAMSIE 2/1 of Buderim Qld, passed away on 20th June, 2008, aged 88 years. Annie Cramsie, his daughter, in her letter says her dad outlived the ghastly cough he developed sleeping in the rain every night on the Kokoda Track and passed away quickly from heart failure. He attended the last ANZAC Day March in Sydney in 2007. He was very frail, but managed to fly alone from the Sunshine Coast, stay with his 93 year-old sister and catch public transport around Sydney. He would not have missed a march for anything, and managed to play golf until two years ago.

The Last Post and RSL tribute at his funeral were very moving. It is a tribute to all our diggers and conveys how much your efforts are appreciated by all.

Annie wishes to thank all Pioneers for their friendship and support to her dad over the years and gathers you are a wonderful group of people.

Our sincere sympathy has been extended to Annie and Phil's family in their sad loss and he will be sadly missed by his fellow Pioneers.

KEN FRANKS 2/1, Kirwan Qld, passed away on 30th April, 2008, while in hospital. His daughter, Dianne Fanti, kindly notified us of his passing.

After suffering a massive stroke in June 2003, Ken was admitted to a nursing home and when able to walk unaided, went to live with Dianne in Townsville. After a couple of years he was able to go back to Brisbane to live happily with son Brian. He attended the last ANZAC March at Beenleigh in a bus, but suffered another seizure and passed away a few days later in hospital.

Dianne said he had a very good life and was sadly missed by his two children, three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, whom he loved.

Our sincere sympathy was extended to Dianne and thanks for sending us the details of Ken's passing.

BARBARA GILCHRIST, Narrabeen, wife of our Patron John Gilchrist 2/1 passed away in Mona Vale Hospital on 6th June, aged 83 years. Barbara had not been well for some time and had been living at the RSL Veterans Village at Narrabeen. A Thanksgiving Service was held at the War Veterans Chapel.

Our sincere sympathy was extended to John in his sad loss.

DAPHNE WEBSTER, Bass Hill, wife of Ron Webster 2/1, passed away on 5th September, aged 84 years. She had been in the Elizabeth Jenkins Place Nursing Home in Collaroy since August 2003 and later in the Salvation Army Weeroona Village at Bass Hill since April 2008.

A Thanksgiving Service was held at the Weeroona Village at Bass Hill, following the graveside service at Macquarie Park Cemetery.

Our sympathy was extended to Ron and his family in their sad loss.

FLO SHEARMAN, Kyogle, wife of the late Jack 2/1, passed away in Casino Hospital on the 21st October, aged 89 years. Flo had been in Richmond Lodge Nursing Home in Casino for some time. Her funeral was held on the 27th October, but at time of going to press had no further details.

We thank Kay Burton (Rayner) for phoning us the sad news.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to her family.

BILL ("PEE WEE") RUSSELL 2/2 of Tamworth passed away recently after a long period in hospital. Bill's funeral was on the 9th September and he was farewelled by members of the Tamworth RSL where he had given sterling service for many years.

Our sympathy is extended to his wife Nell on behalf of the Association.

ERNIE LUNN 2/2 of Dubbo passed away on 12th August aged 88 years. Originally he was a member of the 6th Machine Gun Bn and spent a year in New Guinea with that unit. On returning to Australia in 1944 their battalion was disbanded and after further training at Canungra reinforced other battalions.

Ernie joined the 2/2 Pioneer Battalion, training at Cairns, and served with them at Moratai, Tarakan and Balikpapan until February 1946.

He was very proud to have fought for his country and while he was able he marched on ANZAC Day in Sydney with his 2/2 Pioneer mates.

Ernie and wife Norma attended many of our army reunions at Lismore, Ballina and Wagga and were able to renew friendships with former members of the battalion.

His funeral service was held in Dubbo on the 18th August at St Brigid's Church, followed by a burial in the new Dubbo Cemetery.

To Norma and members of Ernie's family we have extended our very sincere sympathy in their loss.

WYN HAYDEN, Orange, wife of John Hayden 2/1, passed away in Orange Base Hospital on 24th October after a fall in which she broke her hip, aged 91 years.

The funeral service was held in the Uniting Church in Orange, of which John was a staunch supporter over many years. She was buried in the Uniting Section of Orange Cemetery on the 28th October.

Win is survived by John, son John Jnr and daughter Helen, six grandchildren (four boys and two girls) and six great-grandchildren (four girls and two boys).

Our deepest sympathy is extended to John and family.

VALE BILL LEWIS

BILL LEWIS, 2/2 of Carlton passed away on 13th September, aged 85 years, after a short illness. His funeral service was held at Woronora Crematorium.

For many years Bill was a member of the Committee of the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Battalions and for the last 12 years acted as reporter at the ANZAC Day reunions. Before both units combined and marched independently, Bill assisted Gavin Todd in collecting subs from the 2/2nds before the start of the march.

Bill is survived by his wife Shirley, who is now in a nursing home, and their four sons and their families.

We thank his eldest son Ed for sending us the news of Bill's passing and extend our sincere sympathy to the family on their sad loss.

V.P. DAY COMMEMORATION

(continued from page 1)

and the 40,000 who died fighting to protect the freedom we enjoy today, it is worth reflecting on the legacies of that great generation of Australians.

In the post-war period, Australia emerged as a more confident nation, one more open to the world. The slogan *populate or perish* won widespread acceptance and prepared Australians for a massive immigration program that would double the population within a generation.

The immigration program required a great expansion of employment and this was achieved by building on the industrial base created by the war. Steelmaking had become a major industry turning sleepy seaside villages such as Whyalla into massive industrial complexes. Places like this continued to expand in the post-war years.

One of the great legacies of the war is that Australia had forged a close relationship with the United States throughout the Pacific Campaign. It is a relationship that endures to this day, and is central to the economic health and security of our nation.

At the end of hostilities, Australia was able to forge a new relationship with Japan. Their post-war democratisation resulted in stronger economic ties with Australia, and today Japan rates among our closest trading and dialogue partners.

These are among the most important legacies of the many Australians who sacrificed so much in the lead up to the Victory in the Pacific. But there were other legacies as well.

We commemorate and treasure the spirit of service before self that these wonderful Australians showed. They showed their firm belief that true democratic freedom must be nurtured and protected; and when threatened, is worth fighting and if necessary, dying for. This legacy is one that subsequent generations of Australians must continue to nurture and cherish as we struggle against those who would subvert democracy and challenge the individual freedoms that are so very fundamental to our culture and society.

The war in the Pacific tested the character and commitment of the Australian people. Whether they served in the sands of North Africa, the jungles of New Guinea, in the air over Europe on the high seas, or in the factories and farms of the home front, we remember today a generation of magnificent Australians who fought to protect our way of life; our democracy, our culture, our land.

We appreciate that through their valour, our country emerged from the Second World War with a new sense of economic, political and social independence. They inspire us with their example and our nation rightly owes them its deepest and most sincere gratitude.

Lest We Forget.

Concluding the programme, Mr John Haines OAM, Deputy Chairman of the Walkway, was called upon to thank all those who contributed to the success of the programme. This was followed by the National Anthem.

Pioneers who attended were Don and Val Crawford, Max and Peg Herron and Joyce Law, who very kindly acted as driver for 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 our special thanks to "Rusty" for his prompt reply to our request for a copy of General Gillespie's address.

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.