

PIONEER NEWS

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

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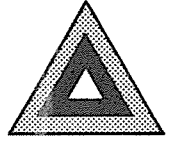
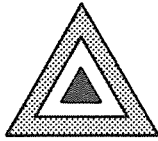
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SAD PASSING OF PRESIDENT

On 30th November, 2008, our Association President Allan (MAC) McInnes passed away in hospital aged 91 years.

The funeral service was conducted at the Star of the Sea Church in Kirribilli on the 5th December by Father Daven Day S.J. followed by a private cremation.

Pioneers in attendance at the service were Don and Val Crawford, Gavin Todd, Jack Allison, Mark Neasbey (son of Bert), Ken Oliver, Peg Herron (Max was unable to attend because of his accident) and Steve Carmody.

During the service the Lighting of the Candle was performed by Allan's granddaughter Ella McInnes and the Gospel Reading was read by son Peter. Sons David and Adam gave a resumé of their father's private life, stating what a wonderful father and friend he had been to them all their lives. Their beloved mother Mary passed away in November 2006 after a long illness.

The RSL tribute was given by David McDowell of Kirribilli RSL who then called on Association Treasurer Don Crawford to give the Eulogy on Allan's army career, as follows:-

Allan McInnes enlisted in the 2nd A.I.F. in July, 1940 and was posted to the 2/1 Pioneer Bn. Reinforcement Company at Warwick Farm, then to Wallgrove and Greta Camps. While at Greta he was promoted to Sergeant, then sent to an Officers' Training School. On completion he was posted to 2/1-2/2 Special Pioneer Companies in Darwin as Captain.

When the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion was reformed at Kapooka in June 1942, after the original unit was captured in Java, Allan was transferred to the 2/2nds as Captain Quarter Master. In September 1942 the 2/2nd Pioneers moved to Western Australia where they camped until January 1943 before moving once again to Mangalore in Victoria and then on to the Atherton Tablelands for intensive jungle training.

Embarking for New Guinea in July 1943 the Battalion was involved in hostilities with the Japanese at Nadzab, Markham and Ramu Valleys, Shaggy Ridge and Lae.

Early in 1944 the unit returned to Australia and spent the next twelve months once again training on the Atherton Tablelands and at Trinity Beach as 2nd Beach Group. In March 1945 the 2/2nd Pioneers carried out the

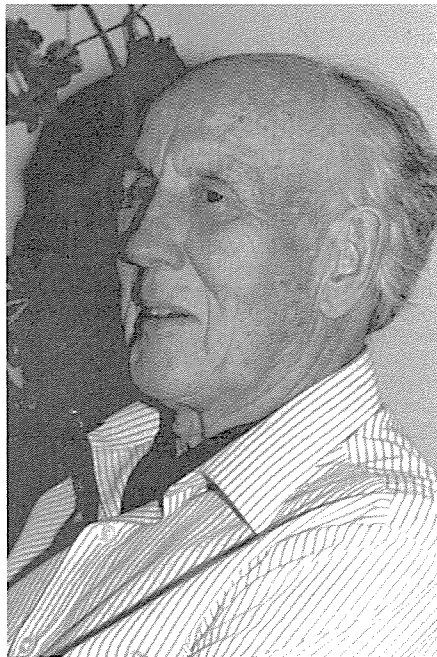
landing at Tarakan and then went on to do the landing in July 1945 at Balikpapan in Borneo until hostilities ceased.

After the war Allan joined the Committee of the newly formed 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Battalions Association in 1946 and, prior to his passing, was the only surviving member. Allan served two terms as President, firstly from 1959-1972 (when he moved to Queensland) and was elected again in 1996, a further 12 years, making a total of 25 years (which is quite a record) and held that position until his death.

He was also Chairman of the ANZAC Day reunion proceedings and march leader for the 2/2nds on ANZAC Day. He was made a Life Member for his outstanding service to the Association in 1979.

In conclusion, we thank God for the life of our friend and on behalf of the Executive, our deepest sympathy is extended to Allan's family - he will be sadly missed by all his Pioneer friends.

WE WILL REMEMBER HIM - LEST WE FORGET.



In past years the Association has strictly carried out the ANZAC march protocol as laid down regarding descendants by the RSL as follows:

1. Must be over RSL age of 18 years.
2. Must be well dressed.
3. Must report to the unit marshal.

This year the RSL has held two meetings with the unit organisations and the ANZAC Day Executive Committee which has been attended by our Treasurer, Don Crawford, and below are their decisions for the 2009 March.

1. Order of march changed to service seniority.
2. Descendants can march with units as carers, banner parties or flag carriers.
3. All other descendants to march with the descendants' associations in front of the Commonwealth and Allied Contingent in Pitt St. North.

ANZAC DAY REUNION

Saturday, 25th April

The Occidental Hotel is once again 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 or escalator to York Street and turn right to Erskine Street and the hotel is on the corner.

In the hotel foyer 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.

The Ladies Auxiliary will proceed upstairs and have their lunch fee of \$26 collected by Lynn Herron who will supply their name tags.

Enjoy your day and the service organised by Function Organiser Mary and her wonderful team of helpers.

LAURIE KELLY TURNS 90

From his birth in the closing days of World War I, Oxford Falls stalwart Laurie Kelly has witnessed many of the events that shaped modern Australia, wrote Marj Belessis in the Weekend section of the Manly Daily.

A well kept secret, Laurie and wife Daphne thought they were heading to Manly for a family lunch with their daughter Jenny and son Shaun, but instead finished up at Peace Park at Oxford Falls where close on 100 people were waiting. Laurie has led a very colourful life - during the depression rolled a swag and criss-crossed the backblocks of eastern Australia taking work where he could get it.

On returning to Sydney he signed up to go to war with the 2/1 Pioneer Battalion, firstly in the Middle East (including Tobruk), the jungles of New Guinea and Balikpapan in Borneo.

After the war he married and went to live at Oxford Falls. He still lives in the cottage he built in those years.

Laurie has been on the Committee of the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Bns Association for many years, attends every ANZAC Day march and reunion and is well known as one of their most colourful characters. Happy 90th Laurie.

(The copy of the Manly Daily was kindly sent to us by Joan Lake).

PIONEER ANZAC ACTIVITIES 2009

WREATH LAYING

Friday, 24th April at 3.45 pm

All members and their families are invited to the Wreath Laying Service at the Cenotaph on Friday, 24th April at 3.45pm. The Association Executive consider this service to be the most important event of the year and would like to see a good attendance of members.

Members and relatives to assemble on the corner of Pitt Street and Martin Place, on the GPO side, at about 3.15 pm, ready to form up at 3.40 pm for the short march to the Cenotaph. Medals are requested to be worn.

ANZAC DAY MARCH

Saturday, 25th April

Forming up for both 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneers will now be in KING STREET, near the corner of Phillip Street. The banners will be displayed on the southern side of King Street outside the old Law Court Building. This change has been made by the RSL in an endeavour to shorten the march. The head of 6th Division will be in King Street with head on to Castlereagh Street and the 7th Division will be in Phillip Street head on to King Street. In front of the Pioneers will be the 2/3 Machine Gunners and behind will be the 6th Div. A.A.S.C.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

The first issue of the Mail Bag for 2009 and we hope our Pioneer family were able to have a Happy and Holy Christmas and New Year with their loved ones. Sadly, since last issue we have lost many of our Pioneer friends – especially our President Allan McInnes, a great blow to the Association, and to Max and I personally. Our friendship with “Mac” goes back to July 1940 when he and Max were in Warwick Farm camp together and although their paths later on took separate directions they remained great friends, not only with “Mac” himself but with loved wife Mary and their family as they grew up. He will be sadly missed by both of us. To other members of the Pioneer family we extend our sincere sympathy in the loss of their loved ones, and trust the New Year brings good health and happiness to our readers.

We had so many cards at Christmas with messages and cheques enclosed that I have dealt with these first and shall follow with the letters received over the months since last issue, and the cards with Christmas greetings.

CHRIS ARNOLD, Elanora Heights, daughter of the late Col. Adrian Buckley 2/1, with a welcome cheque on behalf of her late father and mother, Barbara. Barbie is very well, although suffering dementia, and is in a nursing home in Sydney. Chris visits her daily, and says she looks “as bright as a button”.

Many thanks for your cheque, Chris, and for your kind regards to Max on his accident.

The recovery is slow, but he is gradually trying to do away with the walker.

Our very best wishes to you and hope mum continues to keep well.

ROBYN BELL, daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1, with a change of address to Camberwell Vic, and best wishes from Bruce and herself for Christmas. Sends warm regards to Max and hopes he is making good progress with his leg and all going well hopes to be in Sydney for the ANZAC activities. How time flies – more so the older one gets.

TOM BLAINEY 2/1, Noble Park, Vic., with Christmas greetings to all from Vi and himself and hoping Max is well on the road to recovery after his fall. Many thanks for your kind thoughts and trust you are both well. Take care.

AUB BRASIER, Dee Why, our long time bugler for our ANZAC Eve ceremony, with Christmas greetings and his apologies for not being able to attend the funeral of late Allan McInnes to play Last Post and Reveille. He was saddened to hear of his passing – came as a great shock.

Best wishes to Nancy and yourself and hope to see you on ANZAC Eve.

ERIC CAUSER 2/1, Hamilton Vic., with Christmas greetings and at the time of writing both were keeping well. His wife Doff had not been well in the middle of the year and was advised to slow down with her activities – hope you are taking notice Doff and much better.

Eric is still working at the Veterans' Centre in Warrnambool and with Legacy in his local area, so keeps busy.

Our very best wishes to you both.

KERRY CHRISTOPHER, Glenfield, daughter of the late Pat Collins 2/1 and 2/2, with best wishes for Christmas from her husband John and herself. Kerry says it is always a highlight to receive the “Pioneer News” and the updates about so many brave people to whom the young generations owe so much.

Many thanks for your kind words, Kerry and for your donation to funds. Will endeavour to keep up the good work. Our best wishes to you both.

BETTY CREASY, Killarney Vale, widow of George 2/1, with Seasons Greetings penned by daughter Joy Aracri. Both send best wishes to Max and hope he is on the mend – says it's a

struggle as they know from experience. Good to hear from you, Betty, and thank you Joy for writing on behalf of mum. Take care.

LEXIE COATES, Umina, widow of Jack 2/1, with greetings to all members of the Association for 2009 and hopes it will be a healthy and happy one for all. Says not much to write about, says she keeps busy and enjoys what she does. The Hearing Centre finally gave her a body level aid for the abutment and it is functioning very well. Some new procedure, it just took a little time, and plenty of patience.

Many thanks for the donation to funds, Lex, and for your message to Max.

OLIVE FINLAY, Mt Pritchard, widow of Gordon 2/1, with Christmas greetings and, at time of going to press, was in Port Macquarie for a fortnight's holiday with her daughter Jan and her husband Allan. Hope the weather is kind to you Olive and you enjoy the change.

GRACE FOWKES, Wentworthville, widow of Dick (“Snowy”) 2/1, with Christmas Greetings to all Pioneers for a healthy and happy 2009. Many thanks for your donation to funds and always pleased to hear from you. Take care.

BOB GINNANE 2/2, Leumeah, with Seasons Greetings to all his Pioneer mates and hopes the coming year will be kinder to all than 2008. We hope so too, Bob, we have lost so many old friends these last 12 months with age taking it's toll. Best wishes and good to hear from you.

JOHN HAYDEN 2/1, Orange, with a Thank You note to members of 2/1sts on the loss of his wife Wyn in October after a fall. John says she will be sadly missed by all the family, especially the children. Young John has been a tower of strength to him, also Lyn, and he is very grateful for their care.

Our kindest regards to you, John, and hope you are keeping well. Take care.

ANN HEALEY, Semaphore SA, daughter of the late Jim Hall 2/1, Kyogle, with Christmas greetings and a welcome donation to funds. Many thanks.

Ann had just returned from a trip overseas with her cousin Betty who did a sterling job with the organisation of the trip.

The War Graves tour in France was gruelling but so worthwhile. The younger generation seem to be showing much more interest in our World War I conflicts, perhaps they are more adventuresome, or maybe more money to travel than in our era. Good to see.

Max sends his best wishes and is slowly getting about after his fall. Is at the moment trying to organise ANZAC activities, which seems to come around all too quickly.

Fond love from both of us and always good to have news from you now and then.

MERCIA HEALEY, Bonbeach Vic, widow of Leo 2/1, with a welcome note and greetings for Christmas. At a recent 60th wedding anniversary, Mercia met up with Doff and Eric Causer – Mercia's husband Leo was best man 60 years ago at the wedding – and the celebrating couple were also friends of the Causers. Lots of memories exchanged and great to meet up again.

Thanks for your kind wishes, Mercia, and Max says to tell you he can still wash the dishes. All the best from both of us.

BERT HUMPHREYS, 6th Div. HQ, Punchbowl, a long time friend of the late Vic Whiteley, with Christmas greetings and a welcome donation to funds.

He and wife Connie pass on their thanks for the News and were especially interested in the last issue giving a condensed account of the A.I.F. and other services by the Chief of the Army Lieutenant-General Ken Gillespie.

Hope this finds you both well and many thanks for your donations to the News.

MAISIE KEMPENICH, Shoal Bay, widow of Jack 2/1, with a card of greeting to Max and myself and to all the “go places group”. Maisie and Jack were always included in our Pioneer reunion groups who holidayed anywhere and everywhere. Sadly, Mais, not too many left now and most not capable of travelling any distance. As you say though, we can just sit

and make out we are all together. Fond wishes from both of us.

JOYCE LAW, Kareela, widow of Max 2/1, with blessings for Christmas and a big thank you to both Max and myself for our services to our Pioneer family. Your kind words are very much appreciated, Joyce, and Max thanks you for your help over the past year. Take care and God Bless.

DAWN LEVY, Revesby, widow of Roy 2/2, with her love and best wishes and hopes Max is recovering from his broken leg. Very slow progress, Dawn, but not completely off the frame. Always pleased to hear from you, and of your holiday trips. Fond wishes.

BETTY O'CONNOR, West Ballina, widow of Neville 2/2, with Christmas greetings and wishing Max a speedy recovery with his broken leg. She is having family home for Christmas and looking forward to seeing everyone.

All the best and thank you for your Xmas note.

ERIKA PEILE, Caringbah, widow of Peter 2/1, with greetings for Christmas and further news on she and Peter's granddaughter Jacky's results in Germany. She had earned a place in the Youth Under 23 Rowing Regatta (World) Championships. They had a good time and managed to improve their time each race, but not quite enough. They got through to the B Final where they came second. She is still in training for London 2012, but there are not too many spots open for lightweights. We wish her well in her future training.

All the best Erika and your good wishes passed on to all Pioneers and families.

JOY PREEDY, Shenton Park WA, widow of Len 2/2, with her best wishes to all Pioneers and cannot believe how the year has flown. She is keeping reasonably well and looking forward to the cooler weather.

DOT PRIEST, Ballina, widow of Peter 2/1, with a cheque for the News and apology for being late with her Christmas greetings. However, says better late than never, so sends Easter greetings too to the Pioneer family. Trust Ballina is not suffering in the floods up north as I'm writing (late February). Perhaps may see you in Sydney for ANZAC Day. All the best from Max and myself.

JANET O'NEILL, Clovelly, daughter of late Bill Robertson 2/2, with a card to Max re his accident and hopes he is on the mend.

Fond wishes and may see you on Tobruk Sunday.

MONA REINERS, Corryong Vic, widow of Bern 2/1, with a welcome card with a few lines for Christmas and the promise of a letter when she gets her Xmas cards out of her hair.

Do hope all the family are well, Mona, and the young ones are doing well in their chosen fields. Our love to yourself and the family.

EULALIE SAUER, Elanora Qld, widow of George 2/1, with Christmas greetings and a cheque for the treasurer – many thanks.

She has settled in her new surrounds but still not sorted out in the unit with a few more jobs to be done. Says life is certainly different in Queensland compared to South Australia – very casual to the more formal SA. Perhaps the climate may have something to do with this.

Eulalie went back to Adelaide for ANZAC Day and it was good to see everyone at the luncheon, also to see her family down there. Her daughter in Queensland has been overseas a lot for Bond University – a very busy person.

Since the letter, we have received a phone call from Eulalie to see if we had a branch of the Association in her State and were able to have a long chat.

ROMA SHEARSTON, Stockton, widow of Doug 2/1, with greetings for Christmas and the news that she had a fall recently, tripped on an uneven path and broke a bone in her shoulder. When she wrote it was still in plaster, but latest news is that the plaster is off and no ill effects from the fall. Good to hear, Roma, and we both send you our love and take care when out walking.

DOROTHY STEAIN, Merewether, widow of

Arthur 2/1, with Christmas greetings and a cheque enclosed for the treasurer – many thanks. She wishes all Pioneers a happy, healthy 2009 and her thanks for the News which is much appreciated.

GWEN STODE, Yagoona, sister of the late Keith Jones 2/1, with Christmas greetings and a cheque for the News. Many thanks, Gwen, and we hope you are keeping well.

JOY TAYLOR, Allawah, daughter of the late Jack Harvey 2/1, with a cheque enclosed with her Christmas card for the News, plus some extra towards ongoing costs. Many thanks, Joy, and for your kind regards to Max – hope you may be able to make it for ANZAC Day. Take care.

DOUG WATERS 2/1, West Croydon SA, per pen of wife Maureen enclosing Doug's subscription to the News, many thanks. Hope Doug's problem is still steady and good to hear news of Allan Olson and the Thiele's. Both have been in touch with us for Christmas. Max and I send you our best wishes and hope 2009 will be a healthy one for both of you.

NEV WOODHAM 2/1, Cleveland Qld, with a welcome card written by Betty and enclosing a cheque for Nev's subscription to the News. Many thanks. They were going up to Bargara to their daughter's home for Christmas and we hope you had a lovely holiday.

Many thanks to you both for your very kind words re the News and happy to see it brings pleasure to those who read of the doings of those who were part of your lives for so many war years. Sadly, so few remain.

Fond love to you both and hope the coming year brings lots of good health and happiness.

FRED ALWAY 2/1, Beaumaris Vic, with a welcome letter enclosing a cheque for the News – and says he is always pleased to see it in the mail. Thanks, and receipt will be sent in due course.

He had his driver's licence suspended recently because of ill-health, but says when he considers the terrible loss of life and damage the fires have caused in Victoria it is really just insignificant. We sincerely hope none of our readers have been in the areas where the fires have so devastated the country.

DORIS AMIES, Sandgate, Qld, widow of Cyril 2/1, with Christmas greetings and a donation to the News, many thanks.

Since moving to Queensland, Doris had a heart attack in August and an angiogram has since cleared blockages in both femoral and temporal arteries and she is ever so much improved in health. Take care, Doris, and enjoy your leisurely lifestyle.

Our best wishes to you and the family, Doris, always pleased to hear from you – and thanks for the scenic card made by Cyril before he passed away.

ISABELL ANDERSON, Aspendale, Vic, widow of "Snowy" 2/2, with a welcome donation of a cheque and stamps for the News and her fond wishes for Christmas from both daughter Julie and herself. Always good to hear from you both and trust you are keeping well and nowhere near the fire area in your State. All the best from Max and myself, keep well, and our love to Julie.

BERT BEATON 2/2, Casterton Vic, with a very generous donation to the News for which many thanks. Bert is still living on the farm and lovingly cared for by daughter Pauline. So good to hear these days and we are sure very much appreciated. Bert says he has reached the ripe old age of 86 – take care and lots of good health in the coming year.

PAT BENTLEY, Yokine WA, widow of Alf 2/1, with a letter on her trip to Darwin in The Ghan and several postcards to say "Hello" with various scenes of Perth – Pat does voluntary work for Tourism WA and she certainly gets out and about. We get cards from anywhere and everywhere – and lots of them.

In November received card to say she was on The Ghan and would write on her return. Space does not allow her full letter, but a very interesting trip and says it has changed considerably since she and Alfie were there

several years ago. Will print your Ghan trip in next issue. Pat.

Many thanks for your cards and hope to see you in Sydney for ANZAC Day, maybe with Loma. A letter from "Bindi" Moane also in Mail Bag – perhaps may make ANZAC Day this year. Fond wishes from both Max and I. Take care.

MAVIS BLANCH, Beaudesert Qld, widow of Joe 2/1, with her fees for the News. Many thanks and sorry to hear you have not been in the best of health since we heard from you last. She has had osteoporosis for a long time and getting worse with age – has turned 85 – but has a lot of friends and able to go to meetings each Wednesday, so considers herself lucky.

Her doctor advised her to give up driving on account of her back, but still in her home and gets all her meals and free transport for \$72 a fortnight. She has to take a carer if she goes out.

Take care, Mavis, and always pleased to have a note from you.

RON COYTE 2/1, Wentworthville, with a welcome donation to the News – many thanks.

He finds the News always of interest and appreciates the work and effort that we put in to keep members in touch with one another.

Ron had not been in the best of health at time of writing (early January) with six weeks in hospital and rehabilitation with leg problems, had to learn to walk again, and still going to rehab. two days a week for strength and balance. Hope by now you are much improved Ron and our very best wishes to you and your good wife.

ANNIE CRAMSIE, Buderim Qld, daughter of the late Phil Cramsie 2/1, with a very kind letter of thanks for the copies of the News sent to her on her dad's passing. Says he would have been very touched.

Thank you, Annie, for your very nice words to Max and I on the Pioneer News, they were much appreciated and we hope that we may continue, as long as health permits, with its publication.

Kindest regards and all the best for 2009.

ARTHUR DAVIS 2/1, Berkeley Vale, with a short note enclosing a cheque for the News, which he looks forward to receiving in the mail. Many thanks and receipt will be sent in due course.

He is still receiving treatment for his throat cancer and the radiation had weakened his voice. Since having his vocal cord scraped at North Gosford Private it has improved his voice.

Hope by now you are feeling a lot better, Arthur, and we send you our very best wishes. Take care and God Bless.

ANDY ELLISTON, Narooma, son of the late Phil Elliston 2/1, with greetings from both he and his wife Lexie for Christmas and a welcome donation to the News, many thanks.

They live in Andy's family home, as his parent's are both deceased (Phil passed away in 1968) and their lives revolve around their children and grandchildren. They have two granddaughters, Georgie is two and Mackenzie is six months. Also have a grandson Ozi who is four months.

Our very best wishes to you both for the coming year.

JACK HEARN 2/1, Howlong, with a welcome donation to the News and Christmas greetings from he and Audrey, whom we thank for writing this letter. They were expecting lots of family members for Christmas and we hope you all had a happy time together. Must have been quiet when they all went home. Best wishes to you both for the year ahead – take care.

PAM HERRICK, Sutherland, daughter of late George Bates 2/1, with her usual long Christmas letter with her "doings" and family news for the year. She and Edward had travelled up to Brisbane and Gold Coast to visit family and friends and mind three granddaughters for a week over Christmas.

Their nine-week overseas trip to the UK was fantastic and Edward caught up with all his family, except for two. They travelled to Scotland and then over to Ireland to trace Pam's family from Cork, altogether a wonderful holiday.

Our very best wishes to you both and hoping we may see you for ANZAC Day.

DICK HOBLEY 2/1, Bremer Bay, WA, with a long interesting letter and a welcome donation to funds. Many thanks. Also enclosed were photos he took in Borneo in 1945 that he thought may be of interest to fellow Pioneers. Max says he can show them around to 2/1 at meetings or when catching up with members at other functions.

He and Sheila still reckon they are reasonably fit and healthy all things considered and their family of seven children and twenty three grandchildren has increased with the addition of five great grandchildren – and says they haven't really got into gear yet. Maybe Christmas is a time to head for the bush.

They are still living on their 50 acre "hobby" block which has about 20 acres natural vegetation on it. They run a few sheep on the rest, plus some assorted trees and vegie garden, also a summer garden of melons and pumpkins when it rains enough.

Bremer, their nearest town, is 18km away by the shortest route which sometimes gets too wet, then have to travel 55km the long way round. Dentists, hospitals and car service in Albany are 200km away so can see it is vital to retain your driver's licence, which is an annual drama these days.

Early December he and Sheila celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary with family and friends in Katanning (240km away) and consider themselves fortunate to have made it this far. Congratulations.

Many thanks for the photos of "Glen Idle" and farming lands – a lovely view from your lounge room window. Who would want to leave a view like that!

Good letter, Dick, and we wish you both every happiness in the years ahead, with your extended family.

NORMA LUNN, Dubbo, widow of Ernie 2/2 with a letter of thanks for copies of the News to be handed to Ernie's family.

Norma is well and appreciates her new little unit which is easy to care for. Says she spends a lot of time watching the tennis and cricket – not a bad pastime.

She passes on her thanks to Max and myself for our help and caring and promises to keep in touch. Our love and best wishes – take care.

DON MCCLELLAND 2/2, Bundaberg Qld, with his apologies for lateness of sub to the News, which he enclosed in his letter. Sends his thanks to the editors and apologies for not writing often. Better late than never, Don, and cheque has been passed on to our treasurer. Many thanks and our best wishes.

NEVILLE ("BINDI") MOANE 2/1, North Curl Curl, with a cheque enclosed for the News, and belated congratulations to both Max and myself on our O.A.M. awards.

He says he has not attended ANZAC Day in Sydney since 2004, as his friend Heather owns a house on Hamilton Island and he has spent the last four ANZAC Days there. Says he and Heather spend the winters on the island and summers at his house in Curl Curl – a pretty good arrangement. However, he hopes to make ANZAC Day in the Big Smoke this year. Numbers are dwindling fast and there may not be too many more opportunities to catch up.

Many thanks for your cheque and for your kind words on my work for the News. Take care with your health problems and hope to see you in April.

ALLAN OLSON 2/2, Netherby SA, with his best wishes to Max and hopes it won't be too long before he makes a full recovery from his broken leg. A slow process, Allan, but getting there.

Good to hear your "chemo" treatment has shown good results and latest scan reveals 100% success. Do hope the tests stay positive and you can look forward to a healthy year ahead.

Your best wishes are passed on to all NSW Pioneers from their comrades in SA and I shall pass on your sympathy to Ernie Lunn's widow, Norma, who keeps in touch with us regularly.

Take care and good to hear your news.

FRANK RAY 2/2, Doncaster Vic, with a welcome cheque in anticipation he won't have the debt collector knocking on his door. Many thanks and same passed on to worthy treasurer.

Have noted your new address, Frank, from Mont Albert to Doncaster and have amended our roll accordingly. We trust you will be happy in your new apartment.

I presume your great mate Mick Smith you mention is Mick Smith 2/2, from Bateau Bay here in NSW – also a close friend of the late Allan McInnes. We have often heard Allan speak of him. We hear from Bob Philphot from time to time, but still have him on the role at Woodend.

Hope the legs are responding to surgery with some success and our best wishes to you both.

FRANCES RHODES, Canberra, daughter of late Jim 2/1, with a long newsy letter of her "doings" for the year. Spent last Christmas with family in Sydney and then headed off for Broken Hill – lovely clean friendly place and so interesting. From there to Wilpena, too hot to walk to the rim, so had a 15 minute joyflight instead. From Wilpena on to Barossa and Adelaide, thence on to Great Ocean Road and Lakes Entrance – did 4,000km in three weeks and it was terrific.

Meg and James have both finished high school and Fran wonders where the years have gone. Meg has started an apprenticeship this year and will work one day a week at a vet's practice and after 18 months she'll have a certificate in Vet Nursing. James has decided that he wants to be a pilot.

Space doesn't allow more of your letter, Fran, but we send you our love and best wishes to all. Always great to hear of your year's doings.

CHAS RYALL 2/2, West Pennant Hills, with a change of address from Cowan, made necessary by the illness, with dementia, of his loving wife Nola. They have moved to the Uniting Care Mawarra Retirement Village. All are self-care, but there is an alarm system if required for assistance.

Hope you have settled in and we thank you for your donation to the News and your kind words on its production. All the best.

NOELA SHEEN, Canberra, widow of Gordon 2/2, and says it is her first letter to the Pioneer News which she enjoys reading. She met Gordon after the war and the late Bill Lewis was Gordon's best man. She kept in touch with Bill and spoke to him a few weeks before he died. Gordon was in the same company with Bill along with Ray Burroughs (lives at Denhams Beach), Don Linton (deceased), along with Bob Philpot and Tom Brabin (both in rehabilitation care).

Thank you for your donation to funds, Noela, and your best wishes. Good to hear from you.

WAL SMITH 2/1, Gosford, with a welcome donation to funds and praise for the News which both he and wife Yvonne enjoy reading. Receipt has been sent, Wal, and perhaps may see you at the Annual meeting in March. Best wishes to you both.

BRYAN SMALLHORN 2/1, Armidale, with a very short note enclosing his sub. for the News and Seasons Greetings to all Pioneers. Says no news – must be starting to feel his age. Many thanks, Bryan, and our best wishes.

JACK STEWART 2/1, Woodlands WA, with a very generous donation to funds enclosed in a note from wife Yvonne. Thanks to you both and sorry that once again you will be unable to be in Sydney for ANZAC Day. We are sure you will be with us in spirit. Very best wishes to you both.

RON WEBSTER 2/1, Bass Hill, with both a welcome letter and a Christmas card with a donation to the News. Many thanks, Ron, and we are sure no one worries if it is done sooner or later – as long as it is done sometime. I think we all put off doing things until we need to.

Hope you have recovered from your fall up some stairs and we may perhaps see you at the wreath laying on ANZAC Eve.

Very best wishes from both Max and myself.

BILL THIELE 2/1, Port Hughes SA, per pen

of wife Betty, with a welcome donation to the News and their very best wishes to all Pioneers for Christmas and lots of good health in 2009.

Last June, Bill and Betty celebrated their Diamond Wedding (60 years) with family and friends and she said it is sad marriages don't seem to last these days. Congratulations and best wishes.

Bill has started his "Night Owl Bowls" again and despite difficulty standing for too long, really enjoys the company of other members.

Both enjoy reading the News and Bill keeps in touch occasionally with Allan Olson and Doug Waters.

Best wishes to you both, and a healthy year ahead.

DON CRAWFORD 2/2, Concord, and his good wife Val, also celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary in September with a lovely luncheon at the Concord Golf Club.

Robyn Bell flew up from Melbourne for the occasion and Max and I with our son David and wife Lynn were also able to join them.

Our heartiest congratulations to you both and lots of good health and happiness in the years ahead.

JAY SPAIN-TAYLOR, Australian Defence Force, Canberra, with an enquiry to Max re the history book of the 2/1st Pioneers the unit in which his great grandfather WO2 Bill Steers served during the war. Jay is an Officer/Cadet at the Aust Defence Force Academy. He is spending time at Puckapunyal before starting his final year of University before Duntroon and hopes to join the Engineers when he is commissioned in 2010.

Jay kindly made a donation to the Association and has been put on our mailing list for the News.

■ That's all for the Mail Bag for this issue and many thanks to all those who sent greetings, apart from those in the Mail Bag. All very much appreciated and God's blessings for the coming year – Vera Cook, Nita Ferris, Gloria Hutchinson, Marie Jenson, Marj Kerslake, Joan Lake, May/Bert/Lynda Neasbey, Bill Tasker, Helen/Andrew Walker (Mary Lloyd's daughter), Joyce Walker.

LAST POST

DANIEL SPROUSTER 2/1 of Dundas passed away on 24th November 2008, aged 88 years, while in hospital. His funeral service was held at Castlebrook Crematorium on the 31st November and the RSL tribute and Last Post were very moving.

Danny enjoyed attending the Pioneer reunions and catching up with old mates. He had a good life and is sadly missed by his three daughters and their families whom he loved.

Our thanks to daughter Karen Mulville for passing on the sad news and we send our sincere sympathy to his loving family.

RENEE WOOD, loving wife of Tom Wood 2/2, of East Nowra passed away suddenly on 24th January, 2009, aged 78 years. The funeral was held at Kembala Grange on Friday 30th January and we thank Joyce Walker and her son David for their attendance at the service.

Renee and Tom were regular attendees at our Pioneer functions before moving down south, and Renee was very involved with the bowling community of the South Coast. She will be sadly missed.

To Tom and her family we extend our sincere sympathy in their sad loss.

OLIVE BERNHARDT, widow of Mark 2/1, NX22907, passed away on 12th August, 2008, and the funeral service was held at the Botany Crematorium on the 19th.

Our sympathy is extended to her family and our thanks to daughter Annie Francis for passing on the sad news.

DUDLEY STANFORTH 2/2, of West Wyalong, passed away recently aged 91 years. We are grateful to Olive Finlay for passing on the news just as we were going to press, but have no further details.

MUFTI – per Eric Causer – Deceased 2/1 Ron Morley VX93922 – 2/2 T. R. Clarke.

TREKKING KOKODA

By Arthur Chapman

In November 2007, my brother phoned and asked if I wanted to join him on a trek along the Kokoda Track. "Sure", I said. After putting the phone down I thought: "What have I just let myself into? I am 60 years old – I am not unfit, but am I fit enough? Will I embarrass myself if I don't make it?"

Three months before we were to leave, we began 12 weeks of intensive training. The group we were going with "Executive Excellence" from Brisbane left nothing to chance. They won't take you unless you have passed a medical physical, along with their stringent fitness tests along the way.

Why were we so keen to do this? I asked myself that more than once before leaving. Our father served in New Guinea in 1943 – he was a member of the 2/1 Pioneer Battalion. Information from the archives told us that he had "Embarked per K" from Australian Corps Reinforcement camp on 21 December 1942 and then "Embarked 8 M.D." Port Moresby on 19 October 1943. We knew little else of his time in New Guinea other than a few little things he had told us – he didn't talk about his time in the army much at all. We knew he worked in a Quarry – he was an experienced blacksmith and was responsible for sharpening drill bits for laying charges. He spent some time as a powder monkey after the regular fellow had miss-counted the charges and had been killed or injured. He had spent some time in the jungle and he had helped build airstrips. He said they survived at times because the Yanks turned a blind eye to pilfering or had kicked rations off the back of a truck as they passed the camp. But other than that, we knew little.

Our 8 days on the track were very emotional – it was hard – very hard, largely due to the heat and humidity, but our fitness got us through. Our guides were both ex-army and medically trained (an SAS trainer and a sniper), and the whole exercise was run along military lines. Slowest at the front – everyone kept together – a buddy system with a mate to encourage you during the hardest parts – those long endless hills, and calls for "water up" every 10 minutes or so to counter dehydration. Our porters – descendants of the fuzzy-wuzzy angels were magnificent and without them, I am not sure that many of us would have made it – I cannot praise them enough.

At every battle site, our guides explained the details of the battle – where each company was, their equipment, where the Japanese were, etc. They brought it alive for us – as much as it could be for those of us that had never experienced the like. We had very moving memorial services at all the memorials. We met one of the last surviving "angels" at Naduri, and we got some appreciation of what those brave men of my father's generation went through.

There is not space here to give more, but we did visit the Bomana War Cemetery and spent a short time at the Quarry. Much of it is still as it was in 1943, and I have photos for those interested.

Was it worth it? You betcha! I now have a better appreciation of where Dad was and what he did. My father was NX91338 – Harry Chapman. I think he may have been in H.Q. Company – but I am not sure! He joined the Pioneers as part of the reinforcements that arrived on 4th January 1943. He was discharged in May 1944 due to medical problems and to revert to his reserved occupation of farming. I have left it very late to find anyone who may have known him – but perhaps someone reading this did. If so – I would love to have more information, anecdotes, anything!

Arthur Chapman, PO Box 7491, Toowoomba South, 4352. Phone (07) 4630 9065.

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.

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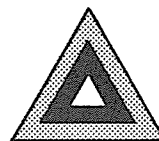
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PIONEERS ATTEND ANZAC ACTIVITIES

WREATH LAYING SERVICE

This function which the Executive consider to be the most important event on the Pioneer calendar was held on Friday 24th April and this year the weather was much more favourable than it was in 2008.

Members assembled at the corner of Martin Place and Pitt Street and at 3.40 pm were formed up by President Roy Jardine, who once again acted as marshal. At the Cenotaph orders were given for the wreath party, Ken Oliver for the Association and Marj Kerslake for the Ladies Auxiliary, to fall out and lay the wreaths. Ken then recited the Ode to the Fallen which was followed by Aub Brasier the bugler playing Last Post and Reveille. We once again thank Aub for his continued support over the past 43 years. The two banners were expertly carried by Don Grant (son of Noel) for the 2/1sts and by our Treasurer Don Crawford for the 2/2nds.

Before dismissal, the President thanked the eight Pioneers and twenty relatives for their attendance and bugler Aub Brasier for once again taking part in the ceremony. Amongst the relatives were Janet O'Neill (daughter of late Bill Robertson 2/2), Helen and Andrew Walker (daughter and son-in-law of late Jack Lloyd 2/1) and Jennifer Turner (daughter of late Jack McIntyre 2/2). Good to welcome you.

ANZAC DAY MARCH

This year the RSL March Committee changed the forming up place from Phillip Street to King Street so the Executive arranged the two banners on the south side of King Street opposite Phillip Street, outside the old Law Court building.

Mark Neasbey, son of Bert 2/2, was appointed Unit Marshal No. 1 by the Executive which entailed arranging the band into position, forming up the 20 veterans into the first three rows and then organising the descendants into position after checking their credentials as laid down by the RSL protocol.

Don Grant, son of Noel 2/1, was appointed Marshal No. 2 and his role was to arrange for the Land Rover and organise carers to assist the veterans on and off the Land Rover and to assist the veterans to the Occidental Hotel by train. Thank you Mark and Don for a job well done.

The Unit Commander was Roy Jardine while Tim Lloyd carried the 2/1st banner (which he has proudly carried since 1982) and John Collins for the 2/2nds, while the Australian flags were carried by Ray Law 2/1 and Jack Robinson for the 2/2. Twenty Pioneers were in attendance with twenty relatives acting as carers with another eight sons, all between 50-60 years, carrying out the tasks of banner and flag bearers and marshals.

Once again the Pioneers had the services of the Castle Hill RSL Youth Band (which they have had for the past 16 years), led by James Bryce. As usual their performance was excellent and all Pioneers state the band playing helped them to make the distance. Many thanks, James, and to your band for leading the Pioneers once again.

ANZAC REUNION DINNER

Vice-President Jack Allison commenced proceedings by reciting the Ode to the Fallen, remembering all those Pioneers who had

passed away since last ANZAC Day. Jack then paid a special tribute to our late President Allan McInnes.

TRIBUTE TO ALLAN MCINNES

ANZAC Day – a day of remembrance, especially our former and long serving President, Allan (Mac) McInnes. Allan, at age of 91, passed away in November 2008.

Allan was the President of our Association for 25 years. He had joined the newly-formed 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Battalions Association in 1946 and at time of his death was the only surviving member.

He was the Chairman of the ANZAC Day reunion proceedings and march leader for the 2/2nds on ANZAC Day. He was made a life member of the Association for his outstanding service to the Association in 1979.

Allan was a wonderful soldier and a friend of all in the Unit which he had served firstly as Captain Quartermaster and later as 2IC Don Company under Bill Robertson. He was ever the thoughtful, obliging commander unrelenting in his attention to detail.

A glimpse I especially retain of Allan was on a mountain trail in New Guinea. It was essential that the Markham Valley should be reached by a certain time to join up with the 1,100 American paratroops. The trek was sloshing it over part of the Owen Stanley Ranges. Any weakness on the part of any soldier meant, even if weak, he had to carry on.

Allan took it on to carry one failing soldier's backpack (60-70 lbs) as well as his own - a big man with a heart of gold.

Allan served in campaigns in New Guinea at Markham-Nadzab, Ramu, Shaggy Ridge and Tarakan and Balikpapan in Borneo.

He will not be forgotten.

WELCOME BY PRESIDENT

Newly elected President, Roy Jardine, extended a welcome to all Pioneers, our ladies and visitors. He apologised for the absence of our Patron John Gilchrist who was unable to be present because of ill-health, but sent his best wishes to all for this special occasion.

He then proceeded to make the following announcements.

1. Thanks to working sons Geoff Finlay, Ray Law, David Herron and son Joshua, Tim Lloyd, Mark Neasby and Don Grant. Their help in assisting the Pioneers on the day was very much appreciated.
2. Thanks also to those who "shouted the bar". An anonymous donor, who was not a Pioneer, rang Mary during the week with a very generous donation from he and his wife – we extend our many thanks to you both.
3. Thanks to function manager, Mary, and her team for making our reunion the success it was.

The President concluded his speech by thanking members for their attendance, including the ladies, and wished everyone an enjoyable day.

REUNION ATTENDANCE

The total number attending the reunion was 87 consisting of 18 Pioneers, 22 ladies and 3 A.A.S.C. and 44 relatives. The 2/1st members

consisted of Alby Dean, Noel Grant, Max Herron, Roy Jardine, Laurie Kelly, Sam Lewis, Ken Oliver, Jack Robinson, Noel Schomberg, Bill Tasker and Ern Walker. The 2/2nd members consisted of Jack Allison, Andy Beebar, Don Crawford, Ross Dawson, Clive Maddrill, Bert Neasbey and Gavin Todd.

Australian Army Service Corps members Joe Walker, Les Evenett, who are also members of the Rats of Tobruk Association, were invited to the reunion by Ern Walker 2/1. They all enjoyed their day with the Pioneers.

Quite a few of the Pioneers had their sons present, only too happy 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.

Thanks to Gordon Collins, son of the late Pat Collins 2/1 and 2/2, for his tots of rum before the march and the very generous donation from he and his family to the Association.

LUNCH WITH THE LADIES

For the fourth year the ladies enjoyed their luncheon at the Occidental and were joined by several interstate visitors who had come to the march and reunion.

Long distance travellers were Pat Bentley and Loma Savillo from WA, Jean Grant and Margaret Fleming, Robyn Bell and Kath Dean all from Victoria, Bev Walker with daughter Joy Jorgenson and her daughter Kylie and friend Doy Hough, Kay Burton from Springwood, Marj Kerslake with daughters Margaret Stolp and Rhonda Foulds, Joyce Law, Barbara Allison, Janet O'Neill, Olive Finlay and daughter-in-law Lyn, Marie Jensen, Natalie and Catherine Neasbey and Peg Herron and daughter-in-law Lynn Herron.

Margaret Lewis and Olive Robinson were also welcomed and seated with their husbands.

OUR NEW PRESIDENT

At the Annual General Meeting held on 20th March, 2009, at the Redfern RSL Club, Roy Jardine was elected to the position of President. This followed the passing of our long time President, Allan McInnes.

Roy has been a committee member for the past twenty years and, as Senior Vice-President has been the Returning Officer for the Annual meetings. For the past five years he has been the 2/1st march leader for the ANZAC Day march and has acted as marshal for the ANZAC wreath laying service.

Roy is also Vice-President of the Rats of Tobruk Association who regularly meet at the Five Dock RSL and is also their delegate to the 9th Division Council.

In 1940 Roy enlisted and served as an original member of the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion. He served with that unit in the Western Desert Libya and following this campaign was in the Siege of Tobruk for seven months. Upon return to Australia he then saw action with the unit at Imita Ridge on the Kokoda Track in New Guinea, before transferring to another unit.

After discharge in 1946 Roy worked with the Yellow Express Transport Company until retirement.

At the Annual Meeting, Roy was thanked by members present for accepting the position of President and stated they were most appreciative of his achievements on behalf of the Association.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

• ANZAC Day was once again blessed with good weather and a larger than usual crowd lined the Sydney streets waving our Australian flag handed out by Australia Post employees. It was again great to see the 2/1 and 2/2 marching together, although down in numbers, but their ranks boosted by sons and daughters of departed members of both units, some acting as carers for their relative. However, we have received quite a few letters from members who were not able to join their mates on the day due to age and illness.

DORA ANDERSON, Merimbula, widow of Don 2/1 and 2/2, with a welcome note and a donation to the News. Many thanks. Says there is not much news from her part of the country, but passed on some family "doings".

At the moment Dora has two grandsons who are both overseas on holidays. Brett is giving the USA a look over with the help of the Government's "stimulus package" and enjoying the experience, and Darren is in the UK hoping to see as much of the Australian cricket team as he can. As he works for Cricket Victoria he has an added interest in the sport. After the 20/20 debacle they have to show some kind of form to "hold their heads up".

In her letter Dora enclosed a cutting from the Melbourne "Sun" with a death notice of VX4413 Murray William McCallum, 2/2 Pioneer Bn and thought it may be of interest to our 2/2 members. Thank you, Dora.

Good to hear you are keeping well and still in your own home, which counts for a lot, and hope you are still finding plenty to do in the garden. Best wishes and take care.

PHIL BARNETT 2/2, Alstonville, with a welcome donation for worthy Treasurer and his thanks for the News which both he and his wife find most interesting. Surely must be some news from your part of the world Phil, so perhaps a longer note next time. Trust your part of the country was out of reach of the floods that were up around the Lismore area.

Your best wishes passed on to fellow Pioneers and many thanks for the donation to the News.

ROBYN BELL, Camberwell Vic, daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1, with congratulations once again on another successful ANZAC Day. She thought it particularly special in seeing the increase in extended family members and is sure the Pioneers would be very proud. She also had several sons speak to her of not letting the tradition of the ANZAC Day march and luncheon fade away – the day means so much to so many.

Robyn was pleased to meet up with Sam and Margaret Lewis once again and to catch up with Kay Burton and Janet O'Neill and, at their suggestion, marched with them on the day.

All going well, Robyn hopes to be in Sydney for VP Day in August and will let Don and Val Crawford know of her arrangements.

Fond wishes Robyn and all the best to Bruce.

JOHN BOYD, Narre Warren, Vic, son of late Stan Boyd 2/1, with apologies for being late with his sub to the News and enclosing a cutting from the Melbourne "Age" of the passing of Colonel Murray Hamilton, former member of both 2/2 and 2/3 Pioneer Bns. Murray served as a Lieutenant in 2/2 Pioneers in Syria in June 1941 and was wounded in both legs near Merdjayoun. He later was transferred to the 2/3 Pioneers and ended the war as a Major with that unit.

John states his Legacy activities have been seriously curtailed by not being able to drive, as a result of a diabetic condition, but otherwise all is well. However, he says he is still argumentative (occasionally in a loud voice) with his wife

Beverley. Better watch out John, or you'll end up chief cook and bottle washer.

Many thanks for your donation to funds and good to hear from you again.

PAT BENTLEY, Yokine WA, widow of Alf 2/1, with a couple of postcards since last issue and, of course, was in Sydney with niece Lorna for the ANZAC Day activities. Pat was sporting a broken wrist caused by a fall off her bike, and I hope by now it is fully mended.

In a previous letter Pat had mentioned a trip to Darwin on The Ghan, but as space was limited last issue, we promised to hold her notes over until July.

She left Adelaide at noon on Wednesday, 12th November, and arrived in Darwin late evening on the Friday. Was warned single compartments were quite small – and thinks that is an understatement!! Meals were included in the fare, but no drinks. Says she enjoys a beer, but NOT on The Ghan. Beer was \$5.50 a can, nearly made a teetotaler out of her, and a broke one at that.

They had several hours in Alice Springs and very hot. At Katherine they did a tour of the gorges and they were magnificent. The males on her boat were livened up by a young woman in a kayak – paddling along minus a shirt or bra. It's a wonder there was not a man overboard!!

They spent a couple of days in Darwin and it had also changed a bit since she and Alfie were there. Hopes to return, finances permitting, again next year.

Your letter bought back a lot of memories to Max and I too, Pat. We did a four week camping safari over 30 years ago from Sydney to Darwin, through South Australia and all places in between, with Australian Pacific. It was the funniest holiday in our lifetime. The return trip was through outback Queensland – and never to be forgotten. Thanks for a lot of memories, Pat.

Always good to hear of your doings, Pat, and sorry we didn't have more time for a chat while you were in Sydney and such a crowd at the reunion. Take care and fond wishes. All the best to Lorna.

AUB BRASIER, Dee Why, our ever faithful bugler for ANZAC Eve, with a thank you note for the invitation to play the calls at the Cenotaph. After the wreath laying, Ron Webster 2/1 invited Aub for a coffee – they met several years ago when their wives were patients in the Elizabeth Jenkins Nursing Home at Collaroy.

Reminiscing about his boyhood, Aub mentions marching with his father and finishing in The Domain some time in the 60's. It was in 1967 that the ANZAC march finished at Hyde Park, Aub, and I guess by then your young legs would have had enough anyway.

All the best, Aub, and our best wishes.

VERA COOK, Randwick, widow of Clem 2/1, with a welcome donation of stamps and money order for the News. Many thanks, Vera, and for your many phone calls over the months. It was good to hear from you and hope the cold weather is not giving you too much of a problem with your arthritis. Take care and Max sends his best wishes – on his feet, but very slow moving.

BOB COLE, Toronto (son-in-law of late Jack Tooker 2/1) with a note to Max and was looking forward to catching up with the "boys" on ANZAC Day. He has developed a good relationship with the reunion "working" sons and was looking forward to the day.

Bob reports that Kathleen Tooker is now out of hospital after breaking her shoulder and is now back in the Wirreanda Retirement Village at West Pennant Hills. Good to hear Bob and we hope she continues to keep well. Our best wishes to Ainsley.

ALBY DEAN 2/1, Shepparton Vic, with a welcome donation to the News and says both he and Kathleen would be in Sydney for ANZAC Day and would be attending the reunion at the Occidental.

Thanks for the subscription, Alby, and our best wishes to you both.

WINN DWYER, Bronte, widow of Mick 2/1, with a short note enclosing a donation to the News and was sorry to read of the passing of Tom Crossman in a recent News.

Many thanks, Winn, and hope this finds you well and able to get out and about. Take care.

BILL FLEMING 2/1, Mittagong, per good wife Maureen, with a welcome donation to the News for worthy treasurer, Don.

They have had a quiet year as Bill now has to use the wheelchair for outings, but have family to help and daughter Maureen has also moved back home which is a great comfort.

Bill had his 88th birthday in April but as he was recovering from a chest infection it was a quiet celebration, but nevertheless enjoyable. He and Maureen are celebrating their 66th wedding anniversary this month (June) and looking forward to a family celebration. Hope you both had a great day and many more to come.

Many thanks for your donation and our very best wishes to you both. Good to hear from you.

AVELINE GAMBLE, Chermide Qld, widow of Bill 2/1, with a very short note enclosing her subs for 2009 and her best wishes. Trust you are keeping well, Aveline, and getting better weather than we are having in Sydney. All the best and take care.

BERYL GILLIAN, Maroubra, widow of Frank 2/1 with a welcome donation to the News which she looks forward to seeing in the mail and catching up on Frank's mates. Unfortunately, Beryl, not too many B Coy fellows left now apart from Bill Tasker and Jack Robinson that I know of, with the recent passing of Tom Crossman.

How the time has passed since Frank's death – cannot believe it has been a year. After sixty years together I can see he is sorely missed. Good to see you keep in touch with Winn Dwyer, especially as your boys and hers grew up together. I speak with Joyce Law frequently and see her at most functions at the Kokoda Track. Her Max was another of B Coy as you would remember.

All the best, Beryl, and many thanks for your donation to the News.

ALF HOLLOWAY 2/1, Grafton, with a very welcome letter of appreciation to Max and myself on our work for the Association and the Pioneer News. Many thanks, Alf, and for your donation to funds. It is pleasing to see that our efforts in trying to keep the Association and News alive still mean such a lot to former members of both units.

With age and disabilities slowly restricting his activities, Alf says it is difficult to write but we appreciate your efforts and always good to hear from you. Since his stroke, has to use a walker to get about. So many fellow Pioneers are in the same boat.

In closing sends his very best wishes to all 2/1sts and special regards to Max and myself.

MOLLIE-JEAN HUNT, New Farm Qld, widow of John 2/1, with a welcome note and thanks for the News which she had just received – how time flies, it seems no time since the April issue. Thank you for your good wishes for ANZAC Day. Ranks are getting very thin now, we were lucky to have 20 marching between the two units.

Mollie-Jean had been trying her wings and had been over to Lord Howe Island – says it was very pleasant, quiet and "different". Still, as long as you enjoyed the trip and came home refreshed, that's the main thing.

Thank you for your donation to the News and hope the weather at New Farm is better than we are getting here at the moment. Both send you our best wishes. Take care.

BILL JOHNSON 2/1, East Bentleigh Vic, apologising for lateness of sub to the News, but it is always great to see it delivered and catch up with the News. Many thanks.

Since last writing he has seen quite a few hospitals and terrific doctors whom he says have got him back on track. It was a bad year with two heart attacks and shingles, so was happy to see 2009 – only good thing was a 12 kilo loss in weight.

Hope things have improved, Bill, and best wishes to Mavis and yourself. Our thanks for the welcome donation to the News and hope it continues to keep you in touch with your old unit.

GORDON KILLION, RAAF, Ballina, with a short note enclosing a sub for the News, and we were sorry to hear of the passing of your wife Shirley in August last year. Says he now has only the budgie for company – at least he makes a noise.

Phil Barnett's wife, Doreen, had telephoned him recently and we also had a letter from Phil which we have acknowledged in this issue.

Thank you Gordon for your donation and kindest regards.

DAWN LEVY, Revesby, widow of Roy 2/2, with a very welcome letter of her "doings" since we heard from her last and a cheque for the News. Many thanks.

She is well and kept busy. Had a ten day holiday in September with her War Widows Club. Went to Melbourne and came back on the Great Ocean Road, which was just beautiful. The highlight of the trip for her was the joy flight in a helicopter which she had always wanted to do. When the opportunity was there she thought "why not" and said it was just magic.

In March this year she went to Nambucca Heads with her Legacy Club for six days and had a lovely time with perfect weather. They were so lucky – got there not long after the first flood up that way, and before the last one. She really looks forward to these holidays, they are a lovely group of ladies and they all get along very well. Good to hear, Dawn, make the most of it while you are able to travel. We often look back on all our trips and Pioneer reunion outings and so glad that we did them while more mobile. Max would find it hard now since his accident – would need a walker.

Very best wishes from both of us and hope to catch up one of these days.

NANCY LINTON, Tuncurry, widow of Don 2/2, with a welcome note and a cheque for the treasurer. Nancy was pleased to read in last News a letter from Noela Sheen, which brought back memories of the lasting mateships of her husband Don and Bill Lewis, Ray Burroughs, Bill Holmes, Tom Brabin, Dick Wakeley. Sadly, only Ray Burroughs and Tom Brabin are still alive – Tom in a nursing home. Living in Tuncurry, the war widows are very appreciative of the dedication shown by local legatees who keep in close touch. Good to hear Nancy.

Her sincere sympathy is passed on to the families of Allan McInnes and Bill Lewis in their sad loss.

With best wishes and many thanks for your cheque.

NORMA LUNN, Dubbo, widow of Ernie 2/2, with a welcome note and her thanks for the Pioneer News which keeps her in touch. She watched the Sydney march on TV and said she saw both the banners of 2/1 and 2/2 – but very few men. Asks was that all, or were they overshadowed? I'm afraid that was all, Norma, five were in the Land Rover and about 20 marched with carers. It is sad that the ranks are thinning.

Max, with the help of our grandson Joshua, and his walker, managed the first part of the march, but he was happy he made it past the Cenotaph and up to Market Street. Also was able to make his way to the reunion. They had a good day.

Love and best wishes and have passed on your message to Marj Kerslake – at the moment away with her sister for two weeks up the coast.

JOYCE MCGREGOR, Bradbury, widow of Bob 2/1, with lots of family news since we heard from her last. Her eyes are a problem for writing, but we manage to have a chat (or a long conversation) on the phone. She depends on her faithful "walker" to get about and lots of loving family close by helping her to stay in her own home.

Good to hear from you, Joyce, and will keep in touch. Fond love from both of us.

MARGARET MUNRIGHT, Tea Gardens, daughter of late Jack Claypole 2/1, with a note written since last News telling us of the passing of her dear mother Connie Claypole, on the 17th February 2009, aged 96 years. She was staying at Tea Gardens with Margaret and husband Terry and enjoyed good health until not long before she passed away.

Margaret said both Jack and Connie were wonderful parents, grandparents and great-grandparents and they will be sorely missed.

Our sympathy is extended to you and the family, Margaret, and we shall keep you on our mailing list until no longer required.

Fond wishes from both Max and myself.

ERIKA PEILE, Caringbah, widow of Peter 2/1, with a welcome note and donation to the News. Many thanks Erika, and for your kind wishes for Mother's Day. The donation will cover you for several years.

The Pioneers had a very successful ANZAC luncheon in the city after the march and, although down in numbers, the "younger generation" were there in strength. Good to have them along.

Max is still able to get about with the aid of his "walker" and a walking stick, but outings are limited since his accident. Still able to give me orders re the News and keeps check on what I write. Happy to say he is NOT a bad boss!!

Our best wishes, Erika, and hope you are still afloat after the rain we have been having. Thankfully, it has eased the water restrictions, but sure has made the weeds grow.

FRANCES RHODES, Canberra, daughter of the late Jim Rhodes 2/1, with a thank you note for the Pioneer News, which she loves to read, and a generous donation towards funds. Also sends "Many Hobbies" to Laurie (Three Course) Kelly on his 90th birthday – said her dad often spoke of him and how good he was at "acquiring" things.

Fran was hoping to be in Sydney for ANZAC Day depending on family commitments, but hopes the Pioneers had a great day. They certainly did, Fran, with a lot of help from the generous donations to the "bar".

Good to see you enjoyed the article on the Kokoda Track – Arthur Chapman was there on ANZAC Day, together with his brothers, and I mentioned you may be in touch. They arrived late, so I didn't get much time to chat. Fran was so interested she would one day like to tackle it, too. She didn't think her dad and the "boys" could be held in any higher esteem, but would love to see for herself what the Track was like. Says it's great that young people are keen to learn about what was done to retain the freedoms we enjoy today. Well spoken, Fran, and I wouldn't be a bit surprised to see you make it one day.

Fond wishes to you, Meg and James and many thanks for your friendly letter.

BILL TASKER 2/1, now residing at the Weeroona Village Aged Care Plus in Bass Hill keeps in touch regularly with Max, as does his daughter, Kay. He has been the Association Welfare Officer for many years, but finds he can no longer carry on for health reasons. He speaks well of the village and is able to visit the Bass Hill RSL for a meal and a drink as it is in walking distance. Ron Webster 2/1 lives in a unit nearby and visits Bill and our treasurer, Don Crawford has called in to see him, too.

On ANZAC Day, Bill accepted the offer to ride in the RSL Land Rover and was joined by Laurie Kelly and Gavin Todd in the back of the open vehicle.

Good to see you, Bill, and our best wishes.

LES TUNKS 2/1, Mareeba Qld, per pen of good wife Lesley, with a welcome letter and a donation to the News. Many thanks.

Lesley said Les was not very strong on his legs and would miss ANZAC Day, but would watch the Brisbane march on TV. She has also not been in the best of health and has had a

couple of trips to hospital in Cairns for tests. Hope the tests were OK and you are feeling better.

Hope you enjoyed your birthday outing, Lesley, and didn't eat too many of those yummy things. Got to break loose once in a while.

Les sends his best wishes to all Pioneers and hopes Max is still battling on.

Has his days, Les, but enjoyed the ANZAC activities and was able to take part in the early stages of the march with help from our grandson and his "walker". Likes to at least get past the Cenotaph and a little way up George Street.

NEV WOODHAM 2/1, Cleveland Qld, with a letter written on his behalf by good wife Betty. Always great to hear from you both – not too many of the old 2/1sts left now. Says Nev was 89 on the 3rd June and has just got his licence again to keep driving, but has to have his walker when going out.

He is still treasurer of the Venture Club where about 80 or 90 members are picked up by the RSL bus, if not able to drive. They play indoor bowls, cards and bingo – naturally all "oldies", but they all enjoy their outing. Nev keeps the books, has been doing so for five years, and it keeps his brain active.

He and Betty were not sure if the News was still functioning with the loss of so many of the Committee and were saddened to hear of the passing of Allan McInnes who had done such a wonderful job for all those years. Only a few left on the Committee, but at the moment with a lot of help from our treasurer, Don Crawford (who attends meetings which Max has difficulty doing) and with Roy Jardine elected as the new President, we are able to carry on as long as our readers are prepared to keep the letters coming for the Mail Bag. I guess only time will tell.

Hope your twin great-grandchildren have arrived safely by now and all well. Be an excuse for another trip.

Nev will read all about ANZAC Day in this issue and, although way down in numbers, it was a good day. Hope he enjoyed his day.

Love and best wishes to you both and always great to hear from you and that all is well in your part of the country. Take care.

HARRY YOUNG 2/2, Aberfeldie Vic, with a welcome letter after such a long time and enclosing a donation to the News. Many thanks.

Mentions that the 2/2nds in Victoria were having their general meeting on the 8th April and he hoped to be able to attend. Our committee here in Sydney sadly has lost most of its members, but at the moment are endeavouring to carry on. Age is fast catching up.

Good to see your son has sold his pub at Humpty Doo and has come home to take care of Norma and yourself. Both he and his wife are doing a great job it seems – nice to have family close by and helpful in our old age.

On a camping safari to Darwin many years ago, I remember the coach pulling up at a pub in Humpty Doo for the passengers to have a beer. I think in those days, only one pub. Probably not too many there now.

All the best to both Norma and yourself and always pleased to have a few lines from you.

■ That's all the Mail Bag for this issue, but we did have a couple of phone calls from family of departed Pioneers who keep in touch.

Ruth Bosanko, daughter of the late Jim Field 2/2, with a call near ANZAC Day to pass on her good wishes to all her dad's old friends and hoped they had a good day. She and family are well and she still likes to receive the News. Many thanks, Ruth, and nice to speak to you again. We also spoke to Sharon Tyler, daughter of late Bill Jollie 2/1, who passed on best wishes to all Pioneers for their special day. Says she has passed on Bill's war medals to her daughter, who is very pleased to have them. Our thanks for your call Sharon – keep in touch.

LAST POST

JOHN CROUCH 2/2 of Ballina passed away on 27th December in the Ballina Hospital after a short illness. His wife Betty said he was diagnosed with Alzheimers about two years ago. Betty still had him at home, but he had a minor stroke and he spent twelve days in hospital before he passed away.

He is sadly missed by his family of four sons and their families.

To Betty and the family we extend our sincere sympathy on behalf of his 2/2 Pioneer mates and the Association.

DUDLEY STANFORTH 2/2, of West Wyalong, as briefly reported in last issue in April, passed away on 10th February aged 91 years. Dudley grew up in the West Wyalong area and, apart from the years in the army, spent all his life in the district. He and his wife later settled in Wagga and when Betty died in 1979 Dudley remained in his home at Lake Albert until 1998 before returning to live at West Wyalong.

He led a very active life with the local community – Farmers and Settlers Assn, P&C Associations and Past Master of the Masonic Lodge.

It was a very big funeral at the church with RSL and Masons forming a guard of honour. Our condolences are passed on to his family in their sad loss.

DOUG TURNER 2/1, of Kingscliff, passed away on 17th March, 2009, aged 91 years. Doug was an early enlistment in the 2/1 Pioneers and served with them during the Libyan campaign, Tobruk and New Guinea as a driver in the Transport Platoon – in his truck called "Cuddle".

Doug was a banana grower on the Tweed prior to his enlistment and following WWII until he moved to Kingscliff in 1967, where he worked for the Tweed Shire Council until retirement.

He was a good family man – loved his family, gardening and fishing – sometimes the family got the feeling fishing came first!!

His wife passed away in 1993 and Doug stayed on at his home, enjoyed good health, until just before he passed away.

Doug's eldest daughter, Annette Donnelly of Binalong, supplied us with details of Doug's passing and funeral and asked if anyone could fill in "gaps" of her dad's army life they would love to hear from them.

The Association extend our sincere sympathy to the family in the loss of Doug and hope perhaps one of the few surviving 2/1sts may be able to fill in some of the gaps.

ALLAN CRUTE 2/1, Woolgoolga, passed away on ANZAC Day, aged 91 years. Allan had been in a nursing home for over two years, just down the road from his home. He had been suffering from bad circulation in his leg, which in the end caused serious problems. In his last month he couldn't walk at all, and son Denis used to put him in his float chair and wheel him out in the garden. On ANZAC Day he was bright and alert but slipped away peacefully in his sleep that night.

Allan had served in the 2/1 Signal Platoon with Max, John Pitman, Eric Causer and Jack Comerford until the cessation of hostilities in Borneo. To Max's knowledge they are the only surviving members of the Sig. Platoon.

Thank you Denis for passing on the news of your dad's passing – they were great mates as you know – and we send our sympathy to you and your family in your sad loss. We will remember.

TOM WOOD 2/2 East Nowra, passed away on 9th May in a nursing home after a long illness. Tom had been on the Association Committee for many years before his move down south and he and his wife Renee (who died suddenly in January) were very involved in our Pioneer activities.

The funeral service was held at the

Shoalhaven Memorial Park Chapel in Worrigee, on 14th May.

Our sincere sympathy is passed on to his family in their sad loss.

LETTERS TO EDITORS

Dear Max and Peg,

I wish to say thank you for the privilege of marching with 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Bn on ANZAC Day. I have never met a greater bunch of fellows, and their families in all my life. They greeted me with smiling faces and made me very welcome. I was very emotional and nervous because I know what this event and you people meant to my father, Bill Robertson. I have a little more understanding of what he felt when he met up with you all. I feel very honoured, proud, and humbled that I was able to do this. The luncheon gathering after was wonderful and very happy. The company and meal was very enjoyable. I hope to join you again next year.

I love receiving the Pioneer News and I gave Don Crawford my donation on ANZAC Day. I look forward to reading it each time. I have enclosed some photos of the day. Hope you enjoy these.

The wreath laying at the Cenotaph on Friday 24th April, was a moving ceremony, one that I always attend and appreciate and find it very emotional. Thanks once again for the privilege. This will always be close to my heart.

– Kindest regards

Janet O'Neill

(Daughter late Bill Robertson 2/2)

Dear Max and Peg,

Just a very brief note of thanks for once again affording me the honour of carrying the 2/1 Pioneer banner in the ANZAC Day march. Please extend my sincere appreciation to the Committee – it is a privilege that I regard as very special in my life.

You are well aware of the great love and respect Dad and Mum had for the Pioneers. To Dad the battalion was the equivalent in terms of love – of his own family. His "boys" as he often called them were the most courageous and honourable men in his life. I know he died thinking that he was blessed to have served with the Pioneers and always a living part of his spirit.

I shall write in more detail soon to share my experiences of more than a quarter of a century marching with the Pioneers.

Love always

TIM LLOYD

(Son of late Jack Lloyd 2/1)

Dear Max and Peg,

Thank you and the Association so much for the donation to the Band. I have forwarded it on to the Band's treasurer.

It is with a sense of enormous pride that the Band marches in front of the 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneers. The association between us is often

explained to the young members of the band, as each year there is a new intake of players. I just did some mental arithmetic and realised that 2009 was the sixteenth year of marching with you.

The Band plays for the Castle Hill RSL sub-branch on the previous Sunday and also supplies several drummers for the Castle Hill dawn service on ANZAC Day. As you know, the awareness of ANZAC Day and what it means is important to our organisation.

I was sad not to be in the city this year, and will hopefully make up for that in the years to come. However, I was delighted to watch the ABC TV broadcast.

Graeme and I hope the year ahead is good to you and Peg and look forward to future contacts.

– Regards

CAROLYN GOULD

Secretary, Castle Hill RSL Youth Band

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This meeting was held on 20th March, 2009, at the Redfern RSL Club and the attendance was the lowest since the Association was formed in 1948.

The treasurer gave a detailed report on the Balance Sheet, which is listed below.

The election of office bearers resulted as follows:- President – Roy Jardine, Vice-Presidents – Jack Allison and Jack Bertram, Secretary – Max Herron, Assistant Secretary – Peg Herron, Treasurer – Don Crawford and Welfare Officer – Bill Tasker.

MEETINGS DISCONTINUED

In General Business the future of the Association was fully discussed and it was resolved that Association meetings not be held in future. Instead the Executive, consisting of President, two Secretaries and Treasurer would meet in March and formulate arrangements for the ANZAC activities and for their findings to be published in the Pioneer News.

The main reason for this resolution is that the attendance of nine members is well below the quorum of fifteen members for an Annual Meeting as required by the Constitution.

Also in General Business it was resolved by the Treasurer and Secretary that the out-of-pocket expenses cease. The Secretary stated that this had been introduced originally in order to cover the hidden expenses such as transport to typesetter, printer, hospital visits and funerals by Executives. He stated that our typesetter Peter Smith, who picks up and delivers copy and proofs three times per issue and ABF Printers who now deliver the Pioneer News is a saving to the Association of \$525, which would help towards the cost of \$1850 in producing the Pioneer News per year.

In closing the meeting, the President hoped the resolutions made by the meeting would keep the Association solvent and keep the Pioneer News afloat.

2/1-2/2 PIONEER BATTALIONS ASSOCIATION • GENERAL AND WELFARE A/C 80-105-103

Statement of Income and Expenditure for Year Ended 13/3/09

EXPENDITURE

Pioneer News	– Printing	1,545.00
	– Postage	307.15
Out of Pocket Expenses	– Secretary	192.00
	– Treasurer	110.00
	– Welfare	110.00
	– Co-Editor	110.00
Petty Cash		300.00
Telephone rental – M Herron		158.76
Aub Brasier – Bugler ANZAC Day		50.00
Castle Hill RSL Band ANZAC Day		400.00
		<u>\$3,283.41</u>

INCOME

Donations	3,778.33
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Cash at Bank 25-3-08	\$5,634.28
2008-2009 Income	<u>3,778.33</u>
	\$9,412.61
Less Expenditure	<u>3,283.41</u>
Balance	<u>\$6,129.20</u>
Excess Income Over Expenditure	<u>\$496.94</u>

D. Crawford
Hon. Treasurer

PIONEER NEWS

Phone 9759 5491

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

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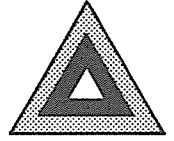
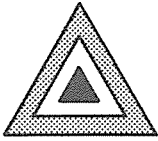
Editors: MAX & PEG HERRON O.A.M's

President: ROY JARDINE

Vol. 55 No. 3

NOVEMBER 2009

Welfare: BILL TASKER



V.P. DAY AT ROCKY CREEK 2009

By RAY LAW, son of late JIM LAW 2/1

Late in July Mrs Gamble, widow of Bill, wrote to me explaining that she had received an invitation to attend the Rocky Creek War Memorial Park for the V.P. Day commemoration service. As she was unable to attend she offered to nominate me to represent her. The honour of doing so was immensely magnified when, on conferring with Max Herron I was also asked to be the representative of the association.

Without a great deal of time to organise everything my ever supporting wife Sue, took on the responsibility of making all the arrangements. She planned it to perfection. Saturday the fifteenth saw her driving me to Mascot for an early flight to Cairns. In our thirty-two years of marriage we have spent very little time apart so it seemed strange to be leaving her at the airport. I cannot imagine what it must have been like for those of you who were married during the war years to have had to say goodbye to your spouses for an undetermined time and an uncertain future! After an uneventful flight (the kind I like) I arrived in Cairns mid-morning to a beautiful warm day with not a cloud in sight. Sue's planning saw me quickly into a hire car and then to a beachfront motel where the staff had kindly placed the wreath I had ordered through our local florist in the kitchen coolroom. After settling in and unpacking it was time for lunch and then a drive to Mareeba to reconnoitre the location of the next day's commemorations. After the drive back to Cairns and dinner it was time for some sleep in advance of the V.P. Day activities.

VISIT TO LES TUNKS

Sunday the sixteenth arrived with another perfect day, clear and sunny but not too hot. After collecting the wreath from the kitchen staff I headed back to Mareeba once more. On arrival I took the liberty of telephoning Les Tunks, a local pioneer whose details Max Herron had given me to see if he was attending the service. Although he was unable to do so due to the unsuitability of the terrain for his walking frame he generously invited me to visit him prior to going to Rocky Creek. The time I spent with him and Mrs Tunks was both enjoyable and informative. It was a real advantage to receive the benefit of their local knowledge and I thank them for their hospitality.

After leaving the Tunks' I continued the short drive to the Rocky Creek Memorial Park. I was very impressed with the layout of the park and the memorial itself, it is a real credit to the local council and staff. It is so good to see that a permanent reminder of all that took place there during such a desperate period of Australia's history has been established and is so beautifully maintained.

A short walk into the park brings one to the memorial wall. Here the families of veterans who spent time on the Atherton Tablelands during the war are able to have a plaque with their details placed as constant testimony of their service. I soon located that which was placed in honour of Lt Bill Gamble of 13 Platoon, C Company 2/1 Pioneers and who was my father's Platoon Commander for the Borneo campaign. I quietly paid my respects to this wonderful

gentleman with whom I had several telephone conversations and correspondence exchanges resulting in his entrusting me with some of his wartime mementos and photos which I treasure. It was a real tragedy that he was unable to fulfil his desire to attend a Sydney reunion before he passed away. I have always regretted not meeting him in person.

Still having time before the service commenced I located the obelisk bearing the very familiar colour patches of the 2/1st and 2/2nd Pioneers. I spent some time reflecting on your service and sacrifice all those years ago which have ensured our ability to enjoy the lifestyle we have today.

I was fortunate enough to be introduced to two locals, one a keen historian who was able to pinpoint exactly on a map the location of the campsite of the 2/1sts and another who at one stage owned that particular property. He told me of the existing remains of a suspension bridge constructed by the Pioneers using barbed wire twisted together to make the necessary cables. He has offered to show them to me if I am able to go back, something which is very much on my mind.

LAYING OF WREATHS

As the time for the service approached the crowd gathered around the memorial as the Deputy Mayor read out the names of those whose plaques had been added to the Wall of Remembrance in the preceding twelve months. At the calling of each name a bell was rung, a solemn and fitting tribute. The main address was given by the chaplain of the Far North Queensland Regiment who are tasked with patrolling and surveillance of Australia's most northern points. He spoke with great respect and admiration of all those who had served in the defence of this great country and in particular of those who had passed through the Atherton region. The service was simple but sincere and very moving. The time had come for the laying of wreaths and there was no prouder person in Australia than me when the Association's name was called and I moved forward to place a tribute to all of who have come to mean so much to me. I was able to spend some time simply moving around the park and imagining what it must have been like for you as you waited to again go into action in defence of your country, as you had done so many times before. The park has a real and sobering atmosphere which installed a sense of closeness to those who had been there so long ago. I am sure that I could feel my father's presence and it was a wonderful experience.

I am ever grateful to Mrs Gamble for nominating me and the Association's permission to represent it. I have come away from Rocky Creek further humbled and in awe of what I have been given and what it has cost. I sincerely hope that you will allow me the honour again next year.

EDITOR'S NOTE. We thank Ray for his excellent report on his trip to Rocky Creek on the Atherton Tablelands. Many thanks also to his wife, Sue, for the organising of the trip.

We apologise to Ray for not having the space to include his poem "Rocky Creek", but will endeavour to print it next issue.

KOKODA TRACK V.P. DAY RALPH HONNER CENTRE

On Friday, 14th August, 2009, a service was held at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, Concord, to commemorate Victory in the Pacific. Also on this occasion the Official Opening of the Ralph Honner Education Centre, built in Rotary Park in memory of the late Lt-Colonel Ralph Honner DSO, MC, Commanding Officer of the 39th Battalion who fought so bravely on the Kokoda Track.

The service was in the capable hands of Master of Ceremonies, John Hatfield, who after the mounting of the Catafalque Party and 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 the Chairman of the Walkway Committee Mr "Rusty" Priest AM to deliver his welcome address.

In his usual inimitable style "Rusty" welcomed the guests including the Premier of NSW Mr Nathan Rees, members of Ralph Honner's family from Victoria and other honoured guests and said it was important to remember Kokoda and the sacrifices made by our servicemen in their fight against superior Japanese forces in New Guinea. He then called on the Premier to address the gathering.

In delivering his address to the assembly, Premier Rees paid a glowing tribute to Colonel Honner and his heroic 39th Battalion, several members coming from Victoria for the occasion. They were to hear that their actions in WWII were described as the "stuff" that legends were made of.

With the support of the State Government, Canada Bay Council and the Australian War Memorial, The Ralph Honner Education Centre has been built as a centre where groups of schoolchildren can be taught about the Papua-New Guinea campaign. This makes the Walkway one of the most significant memorials in New South Wales.

At the conclusion of the Premier's speech, Colonel Honner's son reflected on the life of his father, a lawyer and a family man before the Second World War. He served with distinction in the Western Desert, Greece, Crete and New Guinea. His most enduring legacy was the leadership he showed when in command of the 39th Battalion on the Kokoda Track. He was severely wounded at Wampun in 1943 but continued to serve Australia after the war in public service and as a diplomat.

Concluding the programme, Mr Charlie Lynn MLC was called upon to thank all those who contributed to the success of the programme – the Corrective Services Band, 39th Support Bn., St Ambrose and Concord West Primary Schools, Illawarra Branch of the Ex-Servicemen's Association, Concord Repatriation Catering Department, Piper W. Campbell, and Pastoral Care Department of Concord Hospital.

Pioneers who attended included Don and Val Crawford, Robyn Bell from Melbourne who flew up for the occasion, Marj Kerslake and daughter Margaret Stolp and Max and Peg Herron.

Our thanks to Chairman "Rusty" Priest, Alice Kang, Hon. Secretary and the Walkway Committee on their organisation of the service.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

• The Last Mail Bag for the year and running a bit behind schedule. Not so many letters from our readers, perhaps the cold winter months not very conducive for letter writing. However, our thanks to all those who put pen to paper and to those who sent along donations for the News.

FRED ALWAYS 2/1, Beaumaris Vic, with his apologies for lateness in sending his sub for the News and his thanks. He always enjoys reading it. Fred has not enjoyed the best of health for some time, but says he is fortunate that his RSL Club is within walking distance from his home so he spends quite a bit of time there.

Many thanks for your donation to the News, Fred, and we hope your health improves with the warmer weather. All the best.

EVELYN BOOTH, Wagga Wagga, partner of the late Jack Morgan 2/2, with her subs for the News and sorry to be so long-winded in sending it along. Does like to be kept up to date with news of the Pioneer "family", even though the news is not always good.

She keeps herself busy, being involved in so many things and feels she pushes herself to the limit, but keeps reasonably well.

Many thanks for your kind thoughts to Max and myself on our work for the Association, Evelyn, it is nice to hear when your efforts are appreciated. Take care and best wishes.

ERIC CAUSER 2/1, Hamilton Vic, with a copy of the latest issue of the Victorian RSL magazine "Mufti" with a report on the 94th State Annual Conference. Amongst the presentations made during the Official Opening was an award of the Meritorious Service Medal to Eric – the League's highest honour. In addition to Life Membership, nominees must have at least 30 years continuous membership, including 25 years outstanding service to the RSL.

The Association extend our heartfelt congratulations to you Eric on a job well done and we are sure very well deserved. Max has been in touch with Eric extending his best wishes and Noel Grant also rang to tell us of the good news. Many thanks Noel.

From Last Post in "Mufti", Eric also mentioned the passing of Murray McCallum 2/2 who came back to the Hamilton district after war service and farmed around Henty into the 60's.

Eric and Doff were off to Brisbane for a couple of weeks and we hope you had a happy time with your family. Fond wishes to you both and keep well.

GORDON (TOM) CHRYSTALL 2/1, Larras Lee, per pen of good wife Eunice, a welcome letter apologising for lateness in sending along some subs for the News. The cheque you sent, Eunice, was more than enough for many years, so no need to send anymore, and many thanks.

Gordon seems to be busier than ever these days. Son Ralph has bought a small farm, so Gordon goes there every day and administers TLC to the few cattle and sheep on the property. It was lambing time when she wrote and most of the ewes were dropping twins and they all have to be looked at regularly. The big worry is the lack of rain, but the area is better off than many.

Gordon has been keeping reasonably well and Eunice says only really suffers from age, along with all his former mates. They have been doing renovations lately which has also kept them busy. Like most country folk, never enough hours in the day.

Many thanks for your kind words on the paper Eunice, and glad that Gordon still looks forward to seeing it in the mail. Does help those who do not live in the city to keep in touch. Kindest regards to you both.

RON CROSS 2/1, Ballina, with a letter advising of the closure of the Northern Rivers

Branch of the Association. As Treasurer, and in consultation with the remaining members, it has been found necessary to close the Branch due to falling membership and members unable to travel with mobility problems.

In winding up the affairs of the Branch, the members made the decision to transfer their bank balance of \$3,340.29 to the Association to use as they see fit. This generous donation has been gratefully accepted and will be used towards expenses for the continuance of the Pioneer News.

In 1995 the late Ken Wilson 2/2 of Lismore applied to the Association to form a branch and the Association agreed to their request. Ken was appointed President and a committee mainly consisting of Ray Harris and Kevin Raward 2/2 and Alec George and Ron Cross 2/1 was duly elected. Ken's first task was to organise a Lismore reunion which they held in 1997 and then at regular two year intervals until his death in 2006. Upon Ken's passing, the remaining members had been meeting for luncheons three times a year until closure.

The Executive thank Ron for his letter and enclosed cheque and our sincere thanks to all members of the Lismore branch for their generous donation. Hope we may see you in Sydney some ANZAC Day, Ron, and our very best wishes. Keep well.

VERA COOK, Randwick, widow of Clem 2/1, with a welcome call to see if all is well in the Herron house and to say she is still battling on despite her arthritis. Trust the warmer weather is being kinder to you, Vera, and thanks for keeping in touch. Take care and love.

BOB DONALD 2/1, Glen Innes, with a welcome letter, after several years, enclosing a cheque for the News. Good to know you are still in the land of the living Bob and always good to hear that you are keeping reasonably well. Says he doesn't travel much these days – has his 90th birthday coming up in April 2010 and his 60th wedding anniversary – plenty of reasons to celebrate and we wish you all the best. Not too many make the grade these days.

Bob tells us of his grandson walking the Kokoda Track last year at thirty years of age and very fit. He did his training three months beforehand by climbing Mt Kilimanjaro in Africa, without oxygen.

Your kindest regards passed on to those of the 2/1sts left, Bob, not too many now as age and illness catch up. Take care and all the best.

AVELINE GAMBLE, Chermide Qld, widow of Bill 2/1, with a note in reference to an invitation she had received from the Rocky Creek Memorial Park in North Queensland. Aveline had been away in Darwin and as time was running out for acceptance when she returned she sent the invite on to Max and a copy to Ray Law, whose late father Jim was one of Bill Gamble's platoon. Ray was honoured to accept and his trip is covered by an article he wrote, featured on the front page of the News.

Aveline enjoyed her trip to Darwin, so much to see and do, people very friendly and drivers courteous. Max and I were there many years ago, just after Cyclone Tracey, so did not see the town at its best, but have heard from others now a nice city.

Many thanks, Aveline, and for sending on the article. Ray really enjoyed his hurried trip, as you will see from his notes. Kindest regards from both of us.

JIM GELTCH AM, Moama, son of the late Alf Geltch 2/1, with a letter of thanks to Max for information on his father and back copies of the Pioneer News. Jim says like a lot of baby boomers his interest in Australia's role in two World Wars has been fanned over the last decade and he feels remiss that he did not discuss in more detail the part his father and other relations played in WWII when they were alive.

A friend of Jim's has just returned from walking the Kokoda Track and mentioned a photo of 5 Platoon 2/1 assisting the 14th

Field Regiment haul a 25-pounder to a forward position and is displayed on a memorial at Isurava.

Jim has also taken a particular interest in Australia's role on the Western Front in 1916-18 and has led two groups through northern France and Belgium in recent years. They visited all 5 Australian Divisional Memorials and stopped at Fromelle during the first excavation of the mass graves. He had the honour of reciting the Ode at Menin Gate last March. A truly memorable moment.

Many thanks for your generous donation to the News and copies will be sent when published. We were happy to share a "cuppa" with you on your hurried trip to Sydney in August and Max hopes to be able to send you copies of the 2/1 football team, of which your dad was a member, when available.

Kindest regards from both of us.

RUSS HARRISON 2/2, Stirling SA, per pen of dear wife Rona. It was good to have news from you, as we had heard Russ was not the best. We do not get many letters from South Australia as we have only four or five Pioneers on our mailing list. You are lucky to have Kate handy to keep an eye on you both.

Many thanks Rona for your donation to the News and pleased that it keeps you in touch with "doings" in the East. Max joins me in wishing you both all the best and take care.

ELIZABETH MAHY - BAILEY, Leeton, daughter of the late Phil Mahy 2/1, with a short note with a welcome donation to the News and her kindest regards passed on to all. Trust you are keeping well and still find the News of interest. Many thanks, Elizabeth, and our best wishes.

DELL MULDER, Beaudesert Qld, daughter of our good friend Mavis Blanch (widow of Joe 2/1) with a note to say she is looking after her mother's affairs. Mavis is no longer residing at her home address in Beaudesert but is now in Wongaburra Nursing Home, 210 Brisbane Street, Beaudesert 4285.

Many thanks Dell for your letter and pass on our love and best wishes to your mother. She has been a great supporter of the Association for many years. The News will be sent to your Brisbane Street address.

JULIE MCWILLIAM, Griffith, daughter of the late Steve Clarke 2/1, with a phone call and a note in connection with a newly-opened War Museum in the main street in Griffith. Julie had phoned Max in regard to memorabilia of her fathers and wondering if the Pioneers had a "resting" place for some of her treasures. In passing she mentioned that she had in her possession two or three copies of our Pioneer history. We had a recent enquiry from the son of Alf Geltch looking for a copy, as his dad was one of the platoon that hauled the 25-pounder of the 2/14th Field Regiment up the Kokoda Track and the Bn. football team on the Tablelands.

We told her of Jim's enquiry and gave her his address. In a later note, Julie had been in touch with him and said he used to live in Griffith and still had a farm at Darlington Point on the Murrumbidgee. In Griffith on business a few days later Jim came out and shared a sandwich and a "cuppa" with Doug and herself. Julie said she was thrilled to give him one of her copies of "The Pioneers" and sent us a photo of them holding their prized possession. She feels sure they will meet up again some time as they have lots of mutual acquaintances.

Julie and Doug are now proud grandparents of one-year-old Saffron Elise McWilliam who is the daughter of son Scott and wife Nora who live in the Hunter Valley. They are looking forward to a visit from the little family in November. Many thanks for the photo – looks like a bundle of mischief.

Julie mentioned that the War Museum is attracting a lot of interest and worth a visit if any Pioneer News readers are passing through the district.

The Association is still functioning and with a bank account, but sadly time has taken its toll of our readers with age catching up. Many thanks for your cheque and our love to you and hope you have a lovely visit with your new grandchild. All the best to Doug.

ROMA SHEARSTON, Stockton, widow of Doug 2/1, with lots of news from her part of the country. Has also been in Sydney for the wedding of her granddaughter Carla, who was married in Berry, and then went on to stay at Katoomba with son Trevor and family. Roma is still happily living in an aged care hostel in Stockton and close to family. Walks every day in the area and has outings in their community bus.

Always good to hear from you, Roma, and to know you are enjoying your new surrounds. Love from both of us – keep well.

OLIVE FINLAY, Mt Pritchard, widow of Gordon 2/1, was in touch and was off to Port Macquarie to spend a couple of weeks with her daughter Jan and son-in-law Allan. They have just returned from some time touring the country. Take care, Olive, and will be in touch with you on your return.

BETTY O'CONNOR, West Ballina, widow of Neville 2/2, with a welcome cheque and her thanks for the News which helps to keep her in touch. Not much news from her part of the country, although members of the battalions still meet for lunch, but struggling with numbers. You will already know that the Northern Rivers Branch has been disbanded, Betty, and the balance of the bank account has been transferred to the Association in Sydney. This was gratefully received and will ensure the Pioneer News will survive for several more years.

Good to see you are still golfing, weather permitting, nice to get out in the fresh air and enjoy the company.

Many thanks for your Christmas wishes to all Pioneers (cannot believe that by the time you receive this it will only be a few weeks away). Take care and Max joins me in wishing you a New Year full of good health and happiness with your family.

JOHN PAUL 2/1, Camira Qld, with a very short note enclosing his subs for the News, many thanks. Says not too much activity in his part of the world, but with some help he is "getting along". Hope you are still able to play bowls occasionally and enjoy the company. Take care John, and our best wishes.

JACK PAINTER 2/1, Narrandera, per pen of his daughter Lyn. Good to hear from you after such a long time and to know you are still battling on. He had a nasty fall in August last year and broke his femur and hip but has made a good recovery, but feeling the cold this winter.

Lyn says he spends his day (with his cat Ruby for company) pottering around the house and garden and would welcome mail from any former mates that have time to write. Not too many left to write anymore, Jack, our ranks are thinning with most 2/1sts now in their late eighties.

Many thanks for your generous donation to the News and to Lyn for writing on your behalf. Take care and best wishes.

LENORE ROBSON, Bolton Point, daughter of Maisie Kempnich of Shoal Bay, widow of Jack 2/1, with a letter on behalf of her mother enclosing a generous donation to the News. Many thanks Lenore and good to hear your mother is still OK healthwise. She has long been a regular correspondent and, as you know, one of our "go anywhere" crowd to country reunions and holidays.

Sorry to hear your dad's brother Pat had passed away at the Ex-Servicemen's Home at Ballina. He and his wife Fay attended most of our country reunions with Maisie and Jack. Pat had been a POW in Changi Prison for five years and was 94 years old when he died. Fay died in Kyogle Nursing Home last year.

Lenore says the North Coast area will be a lot poorer for their passing, as they have both been involved in all manner of organisations. She is sure Uncle Pat has met up with his brothers and friends "upstairs" and thinks there would have been plenty of rum and beer flowing, probably taught St Peter a few things about catching fish too.

Our fond love to Maisie from her friends in Sydney – we shared some good times together over the years – and many thanks for keeping in touch.

BRYAN SMALLHORN 2/1, formerly of Armidale is now living with his son at Denistone. Bryan had been at Armidale for 60 years and raised a family of five, but after 10 years on his own felt it was time he made a move. Says the years are catching up and has to admit he feels it at times.

Many thanks for the donation to the News and it will be posted to your new address. Sends his best wishes to all and sad to see the numbers depleted as time marches on. Kind regards and take care.

HARRY WEST OAM, 2/2, Lane Cove, with a welcome donation to the News. Harry, enjoys the News, although he left the 2/2 Pioneers to go to ANGAS in 1944, then spent 30 years in New Guinea on discharge. He has always been involved with their reunions since he has been in Sydney.

He was 87 in July and is doing well in a self-care retirement village in Lane Cove. He has maintained his interest in PNG and in the Queen's Birthday Honours List of 8th June was awarded an O.A.M. for "Service to the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia", an organisation with more than 1000 members, scattered throughout Australia and beyond. A significant object of the Association is to strengthen the civil relationship between the peoples of Australia and PNG. Harry was secretary for 10 years and President for 16. This and their community projects have kept him busy in retirement.

Our sincerest congratulations to you, Harry, on your OAM – very well deserved. Max and I know full well the pride we felt in our awards in 2007 and the pleasure of the presentation at Government House.

■ That's all the Mail Bag for this issue and on behalf of President Roy, Treasurer Don, Max and myself we wish all Pioneers and their loved ones good health and happiness in the coming years. 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 Christmas and may the New Year bring Peace and Goodwill.

LAST POST

CHARLES RICHARDSON 2/1 and 2/2, Pinjarra Hills, Qld., passed away in Greenslopes Private Hospital on 11th June ages 92 years. Charles had been a resident of the RSL Veteran Homes at Pinjarra Hills for some months before having a fall and admitted to hospital where he passed away.

Charles was originally a Lieutenant in the 2/1st Pioneers and served with them in the Middle East, including the siege of Tobruk. On return to Australia he was later transferred to the re-formed 2/2 Pioneers after the original unit was taken prisoners by the Japanese, and served in Papua New Guinea and Borneo.

After the war he resumed his employment as a radiographer at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney and then worked in private practice in Lismore for ten years before taking up the position of Radiographer-in-Chief at the Mater Hospital in South Brisbane.

We thank his daughter Jane Lane-Mullins for passing on the sad news of her father's death and our sincere sympathy has been passed on to his large and extended family in their sad loss.

TRIP TO THE ALICE

Pat Bentley of Yokine, W.A., widow of Alf 2/1, in a recent letter mentioned a trip she planned to do from Perth to Alice Springs by the "Gunbarrel Highway". The areas of Western Australia in the north are so vast that many of our readers would not have had the opportunity to travel the area other than in four wheel drives or a heavy vehicle. We asked Pat for some details of her trip and the following is taken from her notes and itinerary.

Leaving Perth on Monday 10th August with Silvers Travel it was going to be a long day by coach as they headed towards the edge of the desert for their first night, passing through the Goldfields Pipeline, with lunch at Southern Cross, on to Kalgoorlie and then to their overnight stay in Leonora, a very busy town for miners in the area, and 830 ks. from Perth.

After breakfast next morning with some of the miners, they headed north-east to Laverton, first stop off the bitumen and on to the Great Western Highway heading for Warburton. It was here at Warburton that their route actually joined on to the original "Gunbarrel Highway" that Len Beadell had laid out. A stop was made at Giles Weather Station for a tour around the area and photos taken of a relic of the Blue Streak Rocket found only a couple of years ago.

The Giles Weather Station was established in 1956 by the Weapons Research Establishment, a Division of the Department of Defence. The station was named in honour of Ernest Giles who explored the area in the 1870's. Its location near the core of the sub-tropical jetstream makes the station vital for forecasting over most of eastern and south-eastern Australia, particularly for rain, and severe storms in Summer.

A most interesting day and they leave the "Gunbarrel Highway" and cross into the Northern Territory on the Lasseter Highway.

Some of their over-night stays were in transportables and no problems with the coach apart from a very flat tyre one day. Pat felt sorry for the driver and his helpers as it was a "stinking" hot day. The price of a can of beer varied with how the bar person was feeling.

Their overnight stop was Yulara and it was good to be back on the bitumen again.

A late start was made next morning before they head over to the Rock. When they arrived there, Pat thought she might try her luck on the climb, but the guide pointed out that she was a bit ancient for the hike – for someone who swims and cycles and fit – what a joke!! Most travellers now opt for the posted base walk around the bottom, before heading over to the Sunset Viewing Area to catch the changing colour of the Rock.

The next day was spent touring the area, crossing Angus Park Station and arriving at Kings Canyon for lunch before a walk down the Gorge before returning to the highway and heading to Erolunda for their overnight stop.

The following morning saw them on the road to Alice Springs along the Stuart Highway, stopping at the Henbury Meteorite Craters site, Stuarts Well and past the top secret base at Pine Gap. They took a tour of the town before checking into their hotel.

Sunday was spent touring the area, such as the Desert Park, on a world class level for wildlife, and then in the afternoon a drive out to Simpsons Gap and Stanley Chasm. The centre of town had many attractions, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and School of the Air.

The last day in The Alice was a visit to the Transport hall of Fame with its many displays and the rest of the afternoon free for shopping or resting.

All good things must come to an end and on Tuesday 18th August Pat was aboard her Qantas flight back to Perth to her own cooking and the joy of making her own bed again.

Thanks for your notes on your trip Pat – made very interesting reading.

VALE – KEN OLIVER

KEN OLIVER 2/1 of Earlwood passed away on 29th August 2009 at the age of 87 years. He had been in Prince Alfred Hospital for several weeks but was transferred to Canterbury Hospital where he passed away.

The funeral service was conducted at Earlwood Anglican Church on 4th September by Rev. Marshall Ballantine-Jones to a packed congregation. Bardwell Park RSL conducted the Poppy Service and the Eulogy on Ken's army service was delivered by Don Crawford, 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Battalion Association, as follows:—

KEN OLIVER enlisted in the 2nd A.I.F. on 10th March, 1941, and was posted to the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion. After training at Dubbo Camp he sailed on the "Queen Elizabeth" to the Middle East in June, 1941, where he served with the unit until they returned to Australia in March, 1942.

After training in Australia for several months, Ken went to New Guinea with the Pioneers, the Unit to Imita Ridge on the Kokoda Track and Don Company, of which Ken was a member, to Milne Bay. Their ship M.V. "Anshun" berthed at the Gilli Gilli wharf area and before the ship could be unloaded was shelled by the Japanese Navy a couple of times, rolled over and sank. They lost all their equipment, but suffered no casualties.

The Pioneers served in New Guinea until October 1943 before returning to Australia where they were sent to the Atherton Tablelands in North Queensland for extensive jungle training. This training included Beach Landings at Trinity Beach before the Unit sailed on 21st May, 1945 for their final campaign in Borneo.

After fighting at the landing and beach-head, B and D Companies moved to the beach area of Tempadeong which was occupied by the Japanese. After the capitulation on 15th August, the Japanese surrendered their swords and disclosed the disposition of their forces. The surrender ceremony in the Pioneers company lines was certainly a momentous occasion for the Battalion.

Ken was discharged from the A.I.F. on 8th February, 1946. He joined the Committee of the Association after he retired and assisted our Welfare Officer in visiting sick members in hospital and attending funerals. He was a regular attender of our ANZAC DAY march and reunion each year.

In June 2005 Ken was nominated by the Association Committee to take part in a mission to Borneo to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the landings. Ken was honoured to be selected to represent the 2/1st Pioneers on the mission, the only army veteran from N.S.W. He was also able to pay his respects to his brother, Bob, who was listed as Missing in Action while serving with the 2/9th Btn. in Malaya in January 1942.

In conclusion thank God for the life of our departed friend and we extend our sincere sympathy to his wife, Beryl and son, Dean on their loss. He will be sadly missed by his fellow Pioneers.

Following the Pioneer tribute, Dean Oliver delivered a very fine Eulogy on his father's life, as a good father and friend.

A private cremation service for close friends and family of Ken followed later in the day at Rookwood Gardens Crematorium.

Ken had been a regular attendee at Association committee meetings and was always keen to take part in discussions on the programme. He was thrilled when the Association nominated him to represent them on the Government sponsored pilgrimage to Borneo in 2005 and at the next meeting gave a wonderful resume, illustrated with photos, of his trip. Then in November of that year, together with son Dean, he visited New Guinea calling in at Moresby up to the gateway of the Kokoda Track and down to Milne Bay.

Pioneers in attendance at the funeral were Don Crawford, Max and Peg Herron and son David.

PIONEER NEWS – 57 YEARS OLD

The Pioneer News has just concluded its 57th year of publication and still going strong, thanks to the support of its many contributors through donations as well as letters for the Mail Bag. Without this support the paper would cease to exist.

At a committee meeting of the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Btns Association in 1948 it was proposed that every effort be made to write the history of the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion and, if at all possible, to endeavour to publish a newsletter. However, it was not until 1952 that the Committee of the day felt sure they could turn out something regular and worthwhile that could maintain contact with those members of both units whom they already knew and try to re-establish relations with those members of both units whom they had not seen for years since the war finished.

The Committee comprised Hec. Page, Frank Cheal and Bill Robertson 2/2, and Max Law, Rod Pegg and Harry "Monty" Montague 2/1. Subsequently, Max Law, as secretary, wrote to the various newspaper groups around Australia and in almost every case the Association's plea for members was published in city and country newspapers alike, resulting in quite a list of members being enrolled.

The first issue appeared in December, 1952, edited by Max Law 2/1 and Frank Cheal 2/2. It was a small typewritten sheet of eight pages containing a President's message (at that time Hec. Page 2/2) and a message from our Patron, that great lady Mrs. Lilla O'Malley Wood, with very encouraging words for the new venture. Mrs O'Malley Wood had been instrumental in forming the 2/1st Pioneer Btn. Comfort Fund in 1940 and later included members of 2/2nd Pioneer Btn when that unit was reformed in 1942.

The subscription at the time was 2/6d, but donations of larger amounts were gratefully received. The postage was 3d each, so there was not a lot left over to publish the paper. Max and Frank attempted to get enough news to continue printing the news each quarter, enlisting the help of a young typist at the bank where Frank worked to type the contents onto a stencil to be roneod. This was done free of charge. After a few issues two good friends of Max who were printers set up and printed the News free of cost. This arrangement carried on for some time and gradually the Pioneer News began to take on a more professional look.

By the end of 1953, however, the news had grown from its small beginnings as a typewritten roneod sheet to a small printed edition and able to be registered at the GPO as a periodical. The Mail Bag in those days was printed as "In Passing" and as time went by and more members were contacted, the number grew.

As it was now possible to contact members by virtue of the News, the Association was able to hold quite a lot of functions resulting in not only the men getting together for the ANZAC Day march and reunions but families able to join in outings and meet one another.

These were in the form of Christmas parties for the children (money for gifts often being raised by Mrs O'Malley Wood and the ladies from the Comforts Fund), picnics, car trials, dances, etc. These were all very well patronised and would have not been possible only by publicity in the News.

By 1958 our mailing list had grown to nearly 900 members of both units and printed for the grand sum of £13-8s (\$27.60). Before the addressograph machine was purchased in 1959, the wrappers for the paper were typed each issue by Peg Herron as at that stage Max was a co-editor with Max Law. When Max Law was transferred to Adelaide by his firm in 1959 Max Herron was appointed as editor, with Vic Whiteley as co-editor and responsible for the Mail Bag.

However, in 1963 Bob Lake was appointed as co-editor when Vic Whiteley resigned and

was very ably assisted by daughter Gail who typed the Mail Bag for Bob from 1963-1966. When Gail married, his other daughter Eileen "fell" for the job and carried on until she retired from her position at the ABC. Bob held the position as co-editor until his untimely death in September 1996.

During the seventies Max and Bob were assisted from time to time with articles by John Harnetty, ex C Coy., - 2/1, who was an interpreter in the 2/1 during the war years, and later became a journalist on one of the city newspapers. The articles were full of humour and a great source of amusement to all who had the good fortune to read them.

Over the years the paper has gone from strength to strength and from that small beginning we have the News as it is today.

The Association, over the years, has been greatly indebted to all those who have given of their time in the wrapping of the News. With so many of the earlier helpers no longer with us, it is hard (with failing memories) to record all those who have been a tower of strength in this task but we are reasonably sure that the following is a fairly accurate list. Prior to 1957 the paper was wrapped at the home of Fred Callaway and included Bert Holmes, Tom Crossman, Alf Carter and Max Herron. After that date and up to the present time, Max has been responsible for making sure the paper is printed and then wrapped for posting at his home in Beverly Hills.

Since 1957 the following members and their wives have given sterling service and are to be commended for their efforts: Max and Peg Herron, Bob Burnside, Don Lawson, Gavin Todd, "Sailor" Witham, Bob and Joyce McGregor, Jack and Laura Westwood, Harry Mostyn, Wal and Lal Page, Gordon and Olive Finlay, Jack Dodson, Alf Carter, Bob and Jean Dixon, Jim and Kathleen Field, Reg Armstrong, Jack Henderson, Doug and Roma Shearston, George and Joyce Walker, Nev. Woodham (on the occasion his taxi was in the Beverly Hills area), Ruth Rhodes, Marj and Jack Kerslake and Don and Val Crawford.

With age catching up and so many of the above who have passed on, or moved away from Sydney, the sole wrapping committee now consists of Max and Peg Herron, with help from Don and Val Crawford and Marj Kerslake when necessary.

In 2002 the Secretary found it necessary to change the system of posting out Pioneer News because the old system depended on addresses being printed on the wrapper produced from individual stencils and these were no longer available.

When the secretary informed Treasurer Don Crawford of this, Don said he would shop around for a new process and eventually came up with the mail order firm of Mailroom Express who would print our details on the envelope and print the addresses at the same time. This new system was adopted and now the News (already folded by courtesy of the Printer) can be inserted in envelopes by two people in a couple of hours. Each year Don's daughter Sandra Bowmer makes any changes to the roll and emails them through to Mailroom Express, for which we are very grateful.

On reading back over the earlier News it is sad to read of so many old friends who have passed on, including Max Law (one of the original editors) and then in 1996 our long-time Mail Bag editor Bob Lake. They are gone but will never be forgotten.

Keep your letters coming and, hopefully, we may continue for many more years.

SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE APRIL

Send with news of your family and happenings to Max Herron, 3 Enoggera Road, Beverly Hills, NSW 2209.