

# PIONEER NEWS

Phone 9759 5491

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

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## ANZAC ACTIVITIES 2011

### WREATH LAYING SERVICE

Sunday, 24th April at 3.45pm

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

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 walk to the Cenotaph. Medals are requested to be worn. President Roy Jardine will act as Marshal for the procedure of the service.

### ANZAC DAY MARCH

Monday, 25th April

Forming up for both 2/1st and 2/2nd will be in King Street right opposite the Phillip Street entrance. This will be on the south side footpath outside the old Law Court Building where the two banners will be displayed in the same position as last year. The head of the 6th Division will be in King Street head on to Castlereagh Street. In front of the Pioneers will be the 2/1, 2/2 and 2/3 Machine Gunners and behind the Pioneers will be the 6th Div. A.A.S.C.

### LATE COMERS TRANSPORT

The RSL will have motorised Pedapods at the corner of Elizabeth and Liverpool Streets, corner of Park and College Streets, corner of Macquarie Street and St James Road and in George Street outside Wynyard Station. They are for veterans who are running late and these vehicles will take them to their starting position. The Pedapod is like a motorised rickshaw with a canopy. Also the RSL will have a special place fenced off with seats for veterans and their carers who cannot march. It will be near the George Street boom camera as you turn into George Street. The boom camera will aim at the veterans from time to time.

### MARK NEASBEY - UNIT MARSHAL

Once again we are calling on Mark, son of Bert 2/2, to act as the Unit March Marshal and his duties are: 1. To watch for the movements of troops at the corner of Pitt and King Streets. 2. To then arrange the formation as follows - (a) Band (b) Land Rover (c) Banners/Flags (d) Troops (e) Head count of veterans and descendants to Secretary.

### DON GRANT - LAND ROVER MARSHAL

In 2010 Don, son of Noel 2/1, carried out this task so well he has been asked to do it again this year. His duties are: 1. Contact the driver of the Land Rover which has been ordered by the Association. This will be in Castlereagh Street with 6th Div. HQ. 2. Organise the Land Rover in March position. 3. Arrange veterans into vehicle with aid of two carers. President Roy Jardine, March Leader in front seat. 4. With two carers help veterans out of vehicle at Elizabeth Street.

Veterans to ring Secretary, Max Herron, 9759-5491, to book a seat in Land Rover.

### DESCENDANTS MARCHING

In past years the Association has strictly carried out the ANZAC March protocol as laid

down by the RSL regarding descendants as follows:-

1. Must be over RSL age of 18 years.
2. Must be well dressed.
3. Must wear medals of deceased veteran on right breast.
4. No photographs of a veteran is to be worn or carried by a descendant.

The Chief Marshal of the RSL has stated one descendant to march with one veteran.

### ANZAC DAY REUNION

Monday, 25th April

The Occidental Hotel is once again the venue for the ANZAC reunion which is situated on the corner of York and Erskine Streets, Sydney, opposite Wynyard Park.

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 \$28 collected by Lynn Herron who will supply their name tags.

Members to be seated at 12.15 pm and lunch at 12.45 pm will consist of Roast of Sirloin with vegetables and buttered roll. Cost to men is \$20. Beer prices will be: Middy \$3.20, Schooner \$4.10 and Jug \$14.70.

Ladies will have same menu as above, with dessert, at cost of \$28.

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

### THANKS TO DON CRAWFORD

Many thanks are extended to Don Crawford for attending a meeting with the manager of the Occidental Hotel and supplying all details such as menu and prices.

He also attended the RSL meeting of the ANZAC March Unit Organising Committee and provided all the new details.

## HANDS OF STRENGTH, HANDS OF LOVE

By Ray Law

The cables lay there rusting,  
Where you left them long ago,  
But the story that they're telling  
Is one we all should know.  
For they're made of much barbed wire,  
Of many twisted strands.  
All secured and tied and threaded  
By those patriotic hands.

They're the hands that held a rifle  
When Australia was in need,  
When in its darkest hour  
Performed heroic deeds.  
They're the hands that lifted mates up  
And wouldn't let them fall  
And for themselves took nothing  
But to others gave their all.

They're the hands that rocked the cradle  
Of your daughters and your sons  
When at last the war was over  
And their fighting was all done.  
They're the hands that lifted Grandkids  
For a loving caring kiss,  
They're the hands that gave us everything,  
They're the hands that we still miss.

## TWO QUEENS IN SYDNEY

On 22nd February, 2011, the two Cunard cruise ships Queen Elizabeth 3 and Queen Mary 2 sailed into Sydney Harbour on a world cruise. The Queen Elizabeth berthed at the overseas terminal and the larger Queen Mary at the Garden Island Naval Base.

The January issue of "Reveille" mentioned in an article that the two ships would be arriving in Sydney on 22nd February and that it was intended to hold a Remembrance Service on board Queen Mary 2 to honour those servicemen and women who sailed on Cunard Line's Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth in WWII for overseas service.

As Max had sailed on the original Queen Elizabeth on Good Friday 1941 to join the 2/1 Pioneers in Tobruk and that on board the Queen Mary were the 2/2 Pioneers bound for the Middle East for service in the campaign in Syria, I wrote a note to the RSL in reply, also informing them that the day of the service, 23rd February, was Max's 92nd birthday.

In due course we were invited by the Cunard Line to join them on board for the Remembrance Service. Our daughter, Lynne, was in touch on several occasions with Cunard regarding parking etc, and mentioned in passing that her late mother-in-law also sailed on the Queen Mary to the Middle East as a Captain with the 2/5 A.G.H. and they were very pleased to also send her an invitation.

First on the programme was the Remembrance Service conducted by an Army chaplain, complete with an Army band and Catafalque party. It was a very impressive service and concluded with the laying of wreaths by representatives of the Navy, Army and Air Force.

In conclusion it was suggested that we line the rail of the aft deck to see the departure of the Queen Elizabeth 3 as she sailed past to the Heads on her way to Melbourne and then on to Hong Kong.

While at the rail we were alongside General Peter Cosgrove (Rtd) and in conversation Max reminded him that he was our Guest Speaker at our Pioneer reunion in 1990 at the Gosford RSL. He remembered the occasion well and asked after the late Jack Griffiths and Jack Bertram 2/1sts who both attended the passing out parade of the Tobruk Platoon at Singleton Army Camp while he was the Commanding Officer.

After the sail past of the Queen Elizabeth we were escorted inside the ship to the Britannia Restaurant where we were served a lovely lunch.

At the conclusion of lunch, it was announced that one of the guests, Max Herron, was today celebrating his 92nd birthday and the guests all sang Happy Birthday while Max cut the cake they had provided. He was rather overwhelmed by the occasion and thanked the gathering for their good wishes.

Our thanks to the Cunard Line for a truly wonderful day and thoroughly enjoyed by Max, Lynne and myself. Certainly a day to remember.

- Peg Herron

# MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

• The first issue of the News for 2011 and we wish all our readers lots of good health and happiness in the year ahead. Sadly, during the year we have once again lost so many of our Pioneer friends due to illness and age and they will be remembered with fond memories. Our thanks to all those Pioneers who sent their best wishes to both Max and myself for Christmas and the coming year.

**DORIS AMIES**, Sandgate Qld, widow of Cyril 2/1, with a long letter of her "doings" and a welcome donation to funds. Many thanks. As I am not sure where Sandgate is located in Queensland, we hope you were not in the flood affected areas.

Good to hear that your health has improved since last you wrote and that you can now enjoy doing simple things for yourself. I am sure Wendy and Stu keep a watchful eye on you and able to assist in many ways. Certainly seems as if the move to Queensland has been beneficial to both yourself and the family, with leisure time for craft classes and photography and with your involvement as secretary of your club. After your years of teaching I'm sure you would be the right lady for the job.

We keep reasonably well with the passage of time, both have the usual aches and pains, eyes not as good as they used to be, but still hoping to keep the News afloat for a few more years. Readers are getting less with the passage of time, but family members still like to be kept on the mailing list.

Our very best wishes to you and the family and always good to hear from you.

**ROBYN BELL**, Camberwell Vic, daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1, with Christmas greetings to all and says she is looking forward to joining the Pioneers in Sydney for ANZAC Day. Cannot believe how the year has flown, with a very busy year for her.

Sends her best wishes to Laurie Kelly and hopes he is recovering from the loss of his wife. We have not heard any news of him lately, Robyn, but presume he will be "on deck" for Anzac Day.

Looking forward to seeing you in April – fond wishes from both of us.

**PAT BENTLEY**, Yokine WA, widow of Alf 2/1, with lots of cards from the West with scenes of Perth and her thanks for the News which she is always pleased to receive. Was very interested in the article on the Kokoda Track Walkway and was recently looking at her photos of the opening ceremony at Concord, complete with Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels. The Walkway Committee are continually upgrading the paths, etc. and keep the surrounds in tip-top condition.

Please to hear both Lorna and yourself will be in Sydney for ANZAC Day, arriving on the 23rd April, and look forward to seeing you both again.

Max and I had a big smile over your desire to play "2 up at the Cross" – ~~that~~ I would like to see!

Fond wishes and good to hear from you.

**TOM BLAINEY** 2/1, Noble Park Vic, with Christmas greetings to all and a welcome cheque for the News. Many thanks, Tom, and we hope both Vi and yourself had an enjoyable Christmas with your family.

Also congratulations on your 63rd wedding anniversary on 1st November last and trust the years ahead bring lots of good health and happiness.

Your best wishes are passed on to all Pioneers and their families for the coming year.

**MARY BURNHAM**, Forster, daughter of the

late Colonel Arnold Brown 2/1, with Christmas greetings to all Pioneers and their families and says she feels ashamed that she has not been able to come to Sydney for ANZAC Day for some years. However, she always thinks of the Pioneers as they march past with fond memories – and not only on ANZAC Day.

She enjoys getting the Pioneers News which keeps her in touch with their activities in Sydney, and hopes to be able to join the "boys" one day soon.

All the best, Mary, and keep well.

**ERIC CAUSER** 2/1, Hamilton Vic, with best wishes to all Pioneers and their families for Christmas and the New Year and sorry that he cannot be in Sydney for ANZAC Day. He and Doff are keeping reasonably well and kept busy. Warm wishes to you both – take care.

**LEXIE COATES**, Umina, widow of Jack 2/1, with Christmas greetings to all Pioneers and their families. Sends her thanks for the Pioneer News which she looks forward to seeing in the mail, but says there are not so many names she recognises now with the passing of time.

Lexie had both her knees replaced in September and is doing quite well, but says it is not something she would recommend to everyone. Had no complications and still a little sore. However, says she's kept busy and was very happy with the help from Veteran Affairs.

Take care, Lex, and many thanks for the donation to the News. Very best wishes from Max and myself and hope all the family are well.

**VERA COOK**, Randwick, widow of Clem 2/1, was in touch with greetings for Christmas to all Pioneers and their families and was having a short break away from home over the Christmas period. Vera keeps reasonably well, apart from her arthritis aches and pains, but keeps in touch fairly regularly by phone. Hope you enjoyed your break away, Vera, and all the best from both of us.

**RON COYTE** 2/1, Wentworthville, with Christmas greetings to all Pioneers and their families and a welcome donation to funds, many thanks. Also very grateful to those who keep the Association and Pioneer News afloat – looks forward to keeping in touch.

Do hope the year ahead brings both you and your good wife better health – you certainly need it after your problems last year. Ron had been in hospital a couple of times with a broken arm and torn ligaments after a bad fall and his wife finding it hard since she broke her pelvis bone. At the age we are now you certainly don't need these kind of problems. However, says things are on the improve and are grateful to a couple of wonderful daughters who are very good to them.

All the best, Ron, and our kindest regards to you both. Take care.

**OLIVE FINLAY**, Mt Pritchard, widow of Gordon 2/1, who was out of action for a month late last year after carpal tunnel operations on both hands has now been having troubles near an eye and is on the waiting list for an operation to have a cancer removed early in May at Westmead Hospital and then a skin graft at St Vincent's Private. However, will be "on deck" for ANZAC Day, along with son Geoff and daughter-in-law Lyn.

Daughter Helen and her husband Keith are off again on a caravan trip around the coast to Adelaide and beyond for five weeks and daughter Jan Reynolds and her husband Allan also off to Melbourne to visit their son Craig. Good to see the younger generation travelling while they are able. Often look back on some of the trips the "Pioneer Family" had years ago as a group – those were the days.

Looking forward to seeing you soon and love from both of us.

**GRACE FOWKES**, Wentworthville, widow of Dick (Snowy) 2/1, with a welcome donation to funds and says how much she appreciates the continued hard work producing the News and trying to keep the "Pioneer Family" in touch. It is only by letters and donations by our readers that we are able to continue Grace, and are always happy to keep in touch with old friends of the war years. Sadly, so few of them left now after the passing of time.

Do hope you are keeping well and Max joins me in wishing you lots of good health and happiness in the year ahead. Many thanks for your donation to the News. Take care.

**MERCIA HEALY**, Bonbeach Vic, widow of Leo 2/1, with greetings for Christmas to all Pioneers and their families.

The past year was not the best for Mercia and family. Her son-in-law, a Vietnam Veteran, passed away in October (a lovely man) and it has been a very sad time for the family. Our sincere sympathy Mercia to you and his family.

Many thanks for your good wishes for the coming year and always pleased to have news from you. Do hope you are keeping well.

**PAM HERRICK**, Sutherland, daughter of late George Bates 2/1, with her usual breezy letter of greetings for Christmas and her "doings" for the year. With family scattered around the country, she and Edward are busy travelling.

They spent two months overseas in the middle of last year visiting the United Kingdom, Scotland, Ireland, over to France, river cruise on the Rhine and Italy. Also planning another trip this year to the UK, Spain and Ireland. Good to see you both doing these trips while you can.

Our fond wishes Pam and all going well may see you ANZAC Day. All the best to Edward – good to see his Seniors group keeping him on the go.

**ALICE KANG**, Concord, Secretary of the Kokoda Track Walkway Committee, with Christmas greetings to Max and her thanks to the members of the Association for their help during the past year.

Many thanks, Alice, and for keeping us informed of the activities at the Track. Always well organised and a credit to you and the committee. Best wishes.

**JOYCE LAW**, Kareela, widow of Max 2/1, with Christmas greetings and her thanks for the work the remaining members of the Committee still do to keep the Association functioning.

She is kept busy with house, garden and driving her sisters to appointments. Son, Craig, is still at home, with Christmas a hectic time for him as he works for Australia Post.

Good to hear from you, Joyce, and hope we may see you at the luncheon on ANZAC Day. Fond love from both of us.

**TIM LLOYD**, Kingsford, son of late Jack 2/1, with a note to say he, together with brother Anthony, were planning to travel to Tobruk for ANZAC Day this year for the 70th Anniversary of the Siege. They were to be accompanied by Bob Cole (son-in-law of late Jack Tooker 2/1) and Terry Morahan (son of late Cyril 2/1). They were to fly to Benghazi and then travel by hire car to Tobruk.

However, Tim has informed us they have postponed the trip due to the fighting in Libya and the dangers involved. However, if conditions improve they may consider making the trip next year.

Tim will keep us informed of events in the future and, in the meantime, will carry the 2/1st banner on ANZAC Day for the 29th year.

Our best wishes, Tim, and see you on ANZAC Day.

**NORMA LUNN**, Dubbo, widow of Ern 2/2, with greetings for Christmas and her best wishes to all Pioneers and their families. She had a nice

call from Keith Prosser 2/2 of Cranbrook in WA, who was an old mate of Ern, and was very pleased to again make contact. Also to inform Max her pension business was still in the "melting pot". Keep on trying Norma, they say "constant dripping wears away a stone".

Fond wishes to you from both of us and all the best for the coming year.

**BERT NEASBEY** 2/2, Davistown, with Christmas greetings from May, Lynda and himself for good health and happiness in the coming year.

He also mentioned that their sons, grandsons and grand-daughters all enjoyed their last ANZAC Day at the Occidental. We hope that they will all be able to join us once again this year. Our very best wishes to all and hope both May, Lynda and yourself are keeping well.

**ALLAN OLSON** 2/2, Netherby SA, with his first note for some time and good to hear that, despite your "ups and downs" healthwise with the chemo treatment, your specialist seems to be more than pleased with your progress. Hope you have made more improvement since you wrote.

Allan keeps in touch with Doug Waters, Bill Thiele and Joe Robertson, although Joe and Doug are not as fit as they would like to be. Doug and Bill are the only two 2/1sts we have left in SA. We do not have Joe Robertson 2/2 on our mailing list, Allan. If he would be interested we would be happy to put him on our roll.

Last ANZAC Day, Allan was determined to participate in the march and the family thought it would be best if he had a wheelchair, so his eldest son said he would push him. They only got about a 100 yards or so when lo and behold the front wheel fell off. Everyone thought he had fallen out. The police came to their rescue and came back with another one which they had borrowed from the Casino. However, all was well and, although he didn't "march", he managed to get to the reunion.

Allan is the President of the Pioneer Battalions Assn. in South Australia, and had a very good roll up to the last reunion, 80 widows, sons and daughters of ex-members – the Pioneer spirit is still alive and well in South Australia.

Our very best wishes to you Allan and hope you will be well enough to make the march and reunion this year.

**BERYL OLIVER**, Earlwood, widow of Ken 2/1, with greetings for Christmas from both son Dean and herself. They are coping well since Ken passed away and even said they made some plum puddings at Christmas and said they felt sure Ken would have given them the "thumbs up". (Ken was a pastry cook with his own business.)

Beryl had her 90th birthday in October and says age is beginning to tell. You are not on your own Beryl, so many of our Pioneer ladies are heading that way – me included. As long as your health is OK, that's the main thing.

Our best wishes to you and Dean and perhaps may see you over the ANZAC Day period. Take care.

**ROBYN PANG-CUM**, Inverell, niece of our late dear friends, nursing sister Vera Hamilton and her sister Marj, with Christmas greetings and her thanks for the Pioneer News which we send her regularly. Also many thanks for the cheque enclosed from Brian and yourself.

Robyn if you are at any time paying a visit to McLean Village in Inverell, we have the widow of one of our late Pioneers, Claude Campbell, in the hostel. She phones me occasionally and I wondered if you ever had occasion to visit the Village whether you may be able to call in and say hello. I'm sure she would be delighted. Her

name is Dorothy Campbell and has a problem with failing eyesight. She says she often gets someone to read the Pioneer News when it arrives, if they can spare the time.

Hope you and Brian are well and have not been affected by floods in your area. Take care and we both send our love.

**ERICA PIELE**, Caringbah, widow of Peter 2/1, with best wishes to all Pioneers for Christmas and lots of good health in the year ahead.

Good to hear the "rowers" were pleased with the article in the News on their races and I keep an eye on any articles in the "Leader" on any rowing news. However, I think the Sutherland Shire gets more of your local news than we do here in St George. Shall have to depend on you to keep us informed.

Best wishes from both of us and always pleased to hear from you.

**FRANCES RHODES**, Page ACT, daughter of the late Jim Rhodes 2/1, with her usual yearly letter for Christmas and her family "doings" for the year.

Their year started on holidays in Jindabyne. Living close by in Canberra it is a favourite spot. Daughter Meg had just finished Year 12 and after several job offers has settled in to vet nursing in a large practice and loving it.

They had a week skiing in August and the snow was fantastic. However at the end of August Meg was doing a jump and landed on her elbow and dislocated it, so that put an end to the season. Meg also spends a lot of time horse riding and was planning on flying to Cairns to have some time with her dad's family on the Atherton Tablelands.

Frances has had a change of jobs in one of the Government departments in Canberra where she works. It's to do with books and is really interesting and she's learning heaps – has just won a promotion which was very pleasing. Makes a big difference if you like the work you are doing.

Always good to hear from you Fran and we both send you our love and best wishes and hope Meg enjoyed her holiday.

**EULALIE SAUER**, Elanora Qld, widow of George 2/1, with Christmas greetings and a long letter of her "doings" for the year and a cheque enclosed for the News. Many thanks.

She went down to South Australia in May with daughter Elizabeth for an Old Scholars' Dinner and then caught up with son Geoffrey and his family, also friends and some of her cousins at McLaren Vale. (Before her move with George to Queensland Eulalie was a South Aussie.)

While she was in Adelaide she went to Centennial Park Cemetery with her son and daughter-in-law and placed a poppy on George's plaque.

She did not see Allan Olson as she ran out of time, only had a week, but phoned him on her return to Queensland. He told her he was in a wheelchair, but was still at home (you may see from my notes that we also had news from him at Christmas with later news).

Eulalie is kept busy when her daughter is away for the Bond University. She has two small dogs which Eulalie keeps an eye on, but it is only about five minutes away from her home.

She likes to read the News when it arrives and sends her very best wishes to both of us and all Pioneers for the coming year. Good to hear from you and hope you were nowhere near the flooded parts of Queensland. I'm never sure where some of these places are – although I saw Bond University on the screen quite a few times. Take care and best wishes.

**NOELA SHEEN**, Pearce ACT, with greetings for Christmas and enclosed a cheque for the Treasurer. Many thanks.

Hope you are still golfing and able to enjoy your garden – from the weather report on our local news Canberra seems to always have rain clouds. So do we here in Sydney, but they never seem to reach Beverly Hills. However, the weeds still grow, and lots of them.

All the best Noela, take care.

**WAL SMITH** 2/1, North Gosford, with a donation to the News enclosed with his Xmas card. Many thanks, Wal, and it has been passed on to our worthy Treasurer. Hope both Yvonne and yourself are keeping well and enjoying your retirement. Very best wishes from Max.

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

**BILL THIELE** 2/1, Port Hughes SA, with a welcome card for Christmas and a donation to the News, written as usual by good wife Betty. When you wrote last, Bill was to have major eye surgery and cataracts removed. We hope everything went well – soon be able to write to us himself. Many thanks for the sub.

Betty mentions he is still enjoying an occasional game of golf, using his four wheel bike during the winter and "night owl" bowls during the warmer weather.

Many farmers in their area are more than happy with great crops on their land this season. Of course, there has been quite a lot of concern about locusts swarming in some areas, and they had a mouse plague during the winter and trouble with rabbits – Betty says life wasn't meant to be easy.

Many thanks for your good wishes to all our readers and hope you both keep well.

**KATH TOOKER**, West Pennant Hills, widow of Jack 2/1, with greetings to Max and myself and all Pioneers for Christmas and hopes the New Year would bring lots of good health to the "Pioneer Family". Hope you are well, Kath, and will get around to phoning you shortly.

**LES TUNKS** 2/1, Mareeba, and his wife Lesley were well when I spoke to them on the phone recently. Lesley's eyes were not the best at the time and they now need lots of care round the house. Send their very best wishes to all and good health in the New Year. Take care and hope there is no storm damage in your area.

**HELEN WALKER**, South Coogee, daughter of late Jack and Mary Lloyd 2/1, with Christmas greetings to all and many thanks for the copies of Pioneer News we post on to her. She read with interest the VP Day anniversary – what an inspirational address by General Gillespie.

Helen mentions that Tim and Anthony were off to Tobruk for ANZAC Day, but with the trouble now in Libya they have had to postpone their plans until a future date. Perhaps the situation may change by next year.

Many thanks for your Christmas wishes and perhaps we may see you at the Wreath Laying on ANZAC Eve. Love and best wishes from both of us.

**DOUG WATERS** 2/1, West Croydon SA, with thanks to wife Maureen for her card and note at Christmas. Doug was not very well. They had received a card from Bill and Betty Thiele and had heard from Allan Olson, who was having his ups and downs. They were pleased to hear from him. The years are catching up with the Pioneers, so many now getting well on in years and health not the best.

Max sends his best wishes to you both and thank you Maureen for keeping in touch. Always pleased to hear from you.

**JOANNA WHITELEY**, Terara, daughter-in-law of late Vic Whiteley 2/1, with greetings from Neil and herself for Christmas. (I presume from your note that Neil is still in Norway.)

Joanna passed on the news that Dylane (Vic's grand-daughter) was expecting their first child in May and said how thrilled Vic and Peg would have been. Sadly both had passed away some years ago.

Many thanks for your note, Joanna, and our best wishes to you both. Hope to see you soon.

**JOYCE WALKER**, Gilead, widow of George 2/1, with a call to say she was keeping reasonably well and with the aid of her "walker" was able to manage around the home. Has a carer in for showering and lots of help from daughter Judith for jobs around the home and for necessary outings.

Good to hear from you, Joyce, and our love and best wishes. Take care.

■ That's all the Mail Bag for this issue and many thanks to all those who sent greetings apart from those in the Mail Bag. All were very much appreciated and God's blessings for the year ahead – Aubrey and Nancy Brasier, Jim and Kay Burton, Don and Val Crawford, Sue and Ross Dawson, Audrey and Jack Hearn, Gloria Hutchinson, Marie Jenson and family, Marj Kerslake and family, Joan Lake and family, Dianne and Rowan Leckie and family (late Bob Ginnane's family), Dawn Levy, Sam and Margaret Lewis, Janet O'Neill and Roma Shearston.

## FLAG RAISING CEREMONY

On Wednesday, 3rd November, a Flag Raising Ceremony was held at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, Killoola Street, Concord.

The Official Welcome was conducted by John Haines AM, Deputy Chairman of the Kokoda Track Walkway. His welcome covered distinguished guests representing the Navy, Army and Air Force, the Police Commissioner, representatives from Veteran Affairs and Canada Bay Council. Following his welcome, he called on Rusty Priest AM, Chairman of the Kokoda Track Walkway, to give a talk on the significance of Kokoda Day.

"Rusty" gave a summary of the bitter fighting on the Track against a superior well-trained Japanese force. He paid a special tribute to the 39th Militia Bn who took the brunt of the battle at Kokoda and Isurava.

In conclusion, he compared Kokoda in the Second World War with the Gallipoli battle and said whereas Gallipoli was fought and lost – Kokoda was fought and won. It was a great day when the Australian and New Guinea flags were raised at Owers Corner to celebrate the victory over the Japanese which prevented the Japanese invasion of mainland Australia.

John Haines thanked Rusty for his address and then called on the Sing Australia Choir to entertain the gathering.

Following this Charlie Lynn MLC, was called upon to give the Kokoda Day Address. He spoke of the hardships endured by the soldiers on the Track and of the wonderful service given by the New Guinea native carriers. It has been written that these native carriers termed the "Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels" carried 700 wounded soldiers on home-made stretchers down the Track back to hospitals and safety.

Charlie declared that no Australian or New Guinea flags would have been raised only for the Navy winning the sea battles of the Coral Sea and Midway, no Australian or New Guinea flags would have been raised only for the Australian Air Force repelling the large formations of Zeros at Milne Bay, Moresby, Buna and Gona. No Aust-NG flags would have been raised only for the bravery on the Track. No Australian or New Guinea flags would have been raised only for the marvellous treatment

of our wounded by the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels.

Charlie spoke from experience because of his 19 years of walking the Track. He had collapsed twice and been carried out by native carriers on a makeshift stretcher of a blanket and two tree saplings. He concluded his address by reading the poem – The "Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels".

The Wreath Laying Ceremony followed, concluding with Last Post, Ode and Reveille and the Australian and Papua New Guinea flags raised on the flagpole. The gathering was then treated to a performance by the PNG Community Group, which was a dance in their native dress.

The service was concluded with the Sing Australia Choir singing the Australian National Anthem followed by the New Guinean Anthem led by the PNG Community Group.

In attendance were Max and Peg Herron representing the Rats of Tobruk Assn and the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Bns Assn.

## EXECUTIVE MEETING 2011

The Executive held their Annual Meeting on Wednesday, 16th February, 2011, at the home of the Secretary at 3 Enoggera Road, Beverly Hills, at 10.30 am. In attendance were Roy Jardine President (Chairman), Treasurer Don Crawford and Secretaries Max and Peg Herron.

The Chairman opened the meeting by calling on the Secretary to report any items of interest from the last meeting. Max said the main item was the letters from members who all said they were pleased that the Executive were looking after the interests of the Association and its members. They were also very pleased to see the Treasurer had kept the finances in such an excellent manner and said it was good to see the Balance Sheet.

Assistant Secretary, Peg Herron, then read the correspondence for the year, as follows:- Outgoing – "Rusty" Priest - Kokoda Track Chairman, Alice Kang - Secretary Kokoda Track, Rocky Creek Secretary - Memorial Park Atherton, Custodian Cenotaph, ABC

Television, Sandra Bowmer (daughter of Don Crawford) for printing the Pioneer Roll, and Mail Room Express for printing of Pioneer envelopes. Incoming – Custodian of Cenotaph, "Rusty" Priest, Alice Kang and numerous letters from Pioneer members.

The Treasurer, Don Crawford, then gave a detailed and comprehensive report on the Statement and Balance Sheet which is printed below for all to digest. The balance once again shows a healthy state and the Treasurer then gave a detailed report on his visit to the Occidental Hotel as reported in the ANZAC activities article on page one.

Don spoke of his intended visit to the RSL ANZAC March Committee meeting on 10th March and he would report his findings to the Secretary.

Secretary Max Herron gave his report on the Wreath Laying Service, ANZAC Day March and reunion, details are on page one.

General Business: 1. Don gave a report on his visit to Mailroom Express when he picked up the three sets of envelopes for the posting of Pioneer News. He was pleased to report that his contact, Kathy Turner, had agreed once again that there would be no charge for this service to our veterans.

2. Assistant Secretary Peg presented her Petty Cash book for the final statement to be checked and for the President and Treasurer to sign. 3. Secretary Max reported he had received a phone call from John Tyler (son-in-law of the late Bill Jollie 2/1) that he would like to log on to the internet all copies of the Pioneer News. To do this he would need to have the sanction of the Executive and the co-operation of the Secretary to supply all the copies of the Pioneer News that has been produced.

John said that this would ensure that the future generation would have access to all copies of the Pioneer News that had been printed.

This was put to the Executive who gave John permission to proceed with his suggestion.

In closing the President thanked the Executive for attending and submitting their reports and closed the meeting at 12.15 pm

## 2/1-2/2 PIONEER BATTALIONS ASSOCIATION GENERAL WELFARE ACCOUNT 80-105-103

Statement of Income and Expenditure for Year Ended 4/2/11

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		<u>INCOME</u>
Pioneer News	– Printing 1,905.00	Donations 3,218.13
	– Postage 465.26	
	2,370.26	
M. Herron – Petty Cash	400.00	
Secretary – Telephone Rental	117.04	
RSL – 2 Wreaths ANZAC Day	55.00	
Castle Hill Youth Band ANZAC Day	200.00	
Aub Brasier – Bugler ANZAC Day	50.00	
Bert Neasbey (2/1 History sold to		
D. Clark \$50 – book + \$10 postage	60.00	
Paid to Occidental Hotel for meals ANZAC Day	58.00	
Donation Rocky Creek Memorial Park	100.00	
Repairs to Secretary's Typewriter	130.00	
Donation Kokoda Track Walkway	100.00	
Donation to Kokoda Track for		
Monument to Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels	200.00	
	<u>\$3,842.98</u>	<u>\$3,218.13</u>

### CASH BOOK BALANCE

Cash at Bank 5-2-10	\$9,350.02
Add Income	3,218.13
	<u>\$12,568.15</u>
Less Expenditure	3,842.98
Cash at Bank 4.2.11	<u>\$8,725.17</u>
Sec. Bal. Petty Cash	59.95
Balance	<u>\$8,785.12</u>
EXCESS EXPENDITURE over Income	\$564.90

D. Crawford  
Hon. Treasurer



# PIONEER NEWS

Phone 9759 5491

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

Per Annum: \$5

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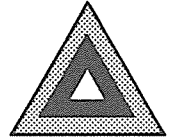
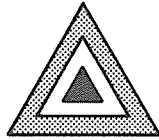
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Treasurer: DON CRAWFORD

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

Vol. 57 No. 2

JULY 2011



## PIONEERS ATTEND ANZAC ACTIVITIES

### WREATH LAYING SERVICE

On Sunday 24th April members and relatives assembled on the corner of Martin Place and Pitt Street on the GPO side for this service which the Executive consider the most important of the Anzac activities, remembering all those Pioneers who paid the supreme sacrifice and those who have passed away since the war.

President Roy Jardine was Marshal and in charge of proceedings and at 3.35pm called upon the Pioneers to form up behind the markers. Behind the Pioneers the relatives were arranged in a column of three. Banner bearers were Sam Lewis 2/1 and Don Crawford 2/2. Wreaths were carried by Bert Neasbey 2/2 for the Association and Mary Burnham, daughter of the late Colonel Arnold Brown 2/1, for the Ladies Auxiliary.

At the Cenotaph the wreaths were laid and Bert recited the Ode to the Fallen which was followed by bugler Aub Brasier playing Last Post and Reveille.

Before dismissal, the President thanked the eight Pioneers and their thirty relatives for attending and the bugler Aub Brasier for his continued valuable support over so many years.

### ANZAC DAY MARCH

Mark Neasbey, son of Bert 2/2, was the March Marshal and at 9.45 arranged for the Castle Hill RSL Youth Band to assemble and form up in front of the Land Rover. He then arranged the two banners and flags into position. Banner bearers were Tim Lloyd 2/1 (which he was proudly carrying for the past 29 years) and Gordon Collins for the 2/2nds. The Australian flags were carried by Ray Law 2/1 and Ryan Crawford 2/2. It was once again quite a treat to receive a tot of rum at the assembly point by Gordon Collins.

Don Grant, son of Noel 2/1, was the Vehicle Marshal and promptly organised a Land Rover to come up from Castlereagh Street into position in King Street. The Land Rover had previously been booked by Don Crawford. Don Grant then organised the five Pioneers into the back of the Land Rover, then helped the Unit Commander Roy Jardine into the front seat of the vehicle.

The Executive would like to thank all those who assisted in the assembly of the March and, in particular, the two marshals Mark and Don, as everything ran very smoothly.

As over the past 18 years the Pioneers were led by the Castle Hill RSL Youth Band and we thank them most sincerely for their continued support.

### ANZAC REUNION DINNER

The venue as in the past thirteen years was the Occidental Hotel in York Street with a new manager since last year, Andrew Henderson, and his staff had arranged all the seating as planned by the secretary.

In the foyer the members were made welcome by the three sons of Pioneers – Geoff Finlay, David Herron and Ray Law, name tags issued, lunch fees paid and names entered on the roll. Members were then directed upstairs

to take their seats ready for lunch.

Keeping to the programme, at 12.15pm the Secretary called upon the gathering to be seated. He then asked Vice-President Jack Allison to open proceedings by saying ANZAC Day is a very special day of Remembrance. We remember the thousands of men and women who gave their lives over several wars so that we may stay a free nation. We especially remember those of both our units who have passed away since last ANZAC Day – 2/1sts: John Hayden, Norm McEvoy, Bryan Smallhorn, Bill Fleming, Bob Baldie, Margaret Rayner, Daphne Kelly and Mavis Blanch. 2/2nds: Frank Ray, Don McClelland, Dick Walker, Bill Cuneen and Tom Brabbin. Jack then recited the Ode to the Fallen.

The President, Roy Jardine, welcomed members and extended a special apology from our Patron John Gilchrist whose health prevented him from attending. A special welcome was extended to Jack Bertram 2/1, who was brought down from Newcastle by his daughter Barbara Douglas and his grandson Greg.

Roy then extended thanks to the working sons – Geoff Finlay, Ray Law, David and Joshua Herron, Tim Lloyd, Mark Neasbey and Don Grant. He also thanked all those who "shouted the bar" – this was very much appreciated, and extended thanks to the Function Manager and her staff for their work on behalf of the members.

### ANZAC REUNION ATTENDANCE

Pioneers in attendance were 2/1sts – Jack Bertram, Noel Grant, Max Herron, Roy Jardine, Laurie Kelly, Sam Lewis. 2/2nds – Jack Allison, Andy Beebar, Don Crawford, Ross Dawson, Bert Neasbey, Gavin Todd. There were 36 relatives and 22 ladies – making a total of 70.

In conclusion Roy thanked his Executive Don Crawford, Max and Peg Herron, for their efforts in organising the ANZAC activities.

Secretary Max Herron then introduced Mary Burnham, daughter of the late Colonel Arnold Brown, D.S.O., M.C., O.B.E. who was the Commanding Officer of the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion. Mary said her father was the youngest Australian Commander in World War I at the age of 21 and the oldest Australian soldier on the Kokoda Track at 50 years of age. An ANZAC, and later one of the Rats of Tobruk who received the O.B.E. for his services, he helped to write Australia's history.

### LUNCH WITH THE LADIES

As usual, the ladies enjoyed their lunch at the Occidental and were joined by several visitors from interstate.

From Victoria came Robyn Bell, Jean Grant, Ann Grant and Margaret Fleming. From Perth Pat Bentley and Loma Servillo, Kay Burton from Springwood, Joanna Whiteley from Terara (near Nowra), Sydneysiders included Marj Kerslake and her daughters Barbara Harrison and Margaret Stolp, Joyce Law and her daughter Karen Thomas, Olive Finlay and daughter-in-law Lyn, Marie Jenson,

Natalie and Catherine Neasbey, Barbara Allison, Janet O'Neill, Leanne Goodwin and daughter Madison, Peg Herron and daughter-in-law Lynn who kindly looked after the collection of the money for the meal. Many thanks, Lynn.

## 70 YEARS OF CARING

On 6th February, 1941, the first patient was admitted to what was then known as the 113 Australian General Hospital and within a few months it had grown to accommodate 2000 Allied service personnel.

The hospital was commissioned in 1939 on land bequeathed to the Crown by Dame Eadith Walker for the development of a public hospital. In 1942, when it was opened, it was the largest hospital in the Southern Hemisphere.

After 70 years Concord retains its links to those early WWII days when it was home to an endless intake of servicemen, either wounded in action or tropical diseases.

Its outstanding history of service to the nation was commemorated on Friday, 8th July, 2011 in a colourful ceremony marking the 70th Anniversary of Concord Hospital and was joined by staff and patients, past and present, to pay tribute to the doctors and nurses who called Concord home.

As Don Crawford, our Association Treasurer, was well known to Alice Kang, Manager of Marketing and Veterans Service at the hospital and, knowing Don was a local from his school days at Concord West Primary and had lived in Concord West all his life, Alice invited Don to take part in the proceedings on the day of the celebration. Only local people, veterans and people who had worked in the hospital during this time were to take part.

Don gave Alice a photo of himself in uniform, stating on the back that he was a World War II Veteran with the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion, 7th Aust. Division, also that his father was a World War I T.P.I. Veteran and that he had passed away in Concord R.G.H. in December 1951. This photo was placed in a capsule along with the personal items from another six people, and the capsule was to be buried and dug up in 50 years.

An official welcome was extended by Mr Tim Sinclair, Acting General Manager of the Hospital and guest speakers from the Defence Force, Health Administration, Dept. Veterans Affairs and the NSW Minister of Health took part in the proceedings.

Following the guest speakers, staff and former patients of the hospital released a cage of white doves, followed by a parade of nurses' uniforms over seven decades, featuring current and former nursing staff accompanied by the Australian Armed Forces Re-enactment Group. This was followed by the cutting of the celebratory cake to finalise proceedings.

Today the Concord Repatriation General Hospital is one of Sydney's major teaching hospitals with outstanding specialist units including a burns treatment centre, cancer and cardiac wards and associated centres.

# MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

• ANZAC DAY has once again been and gone and although the weather was not the best there were still crowds lining the streets of Sydney. Early marchers were lucky to have light showers, but the rain became quite heavy later in the morning. Age and mobility now taking its toll on the marchers and their ranks boosted by sons and daughters who acted as carers.

**CHRIS ARNOLD**, Elanora Heights, daughter of the late Col. Adrian Buckley 2/1, with a very welcome letter and some kind words on the Pioneer News which she was pleased to receive. Was very touched by the poem by Ray Law and was pleased to see Max had a fantastic day on board the "Queen Mary 2" for his birthday and Remembrance Service.

Both Max and I were sorry to hear of your health problems, Chris, and your husband, too, and do hope that the Captains Choice holiday to South America helped to "brush" some of the cobwebs away and you were both able to enjoy the break. Also, that you enjoyed your trip to Perth over the ANZAC Day holiday.

Do hope Barbie is still keeping well – Max and I did enjoy our visit with your mum and dad on the day we spent with them on the farm and both made us welcome.

Many thanks for the donation from your mum to the News and we were both so happy to hear from you again.

Do take care and hope your health problems improve over the coming months. Fond wishes from both of us.

**PHIL BARNETT** 2/2, Alstonville, with a welcome note enclosing cheque for the News and his best wishes to all those who keep the Association functioning. Many thanks, Phil, and hope this finds you and Doreen in good health and well away from the floods experienced up north.

**GWEN BARTON**, Gulgong, widow of Albert 2/1, with a welcome donation to funds and her thanks for the Pioneer News which she looks forward to receiving. Said it was good to read of the events of VP Day and General Gillespie's address.

Gwen is settling down to life on her own since Albie's passing, but says after 72 years of marriage was quite hard to take. She says she gets a lot of pleasure out of the Pioneer News and hearing how other widows cope is very encouraging.

Many thanks for your generous donation to the News, Gwen, and always happy to hear from you. Take care and both send you our love.

**ROBYN BELL**, Camberwell VIC, daughter of late Leo Morris 2/1, with a welcome card from the United States where she and Bruce were visiting New York to see their son and his wife and then on to a 9-day cruise on the Caribbean. From all accounts a wonderful trip and great to see you were able to spend time in Sydney during the ANZAC activities.

Your good wishes passed on to Don Crawford and Val and perhaps may see you in August for VP Day.

Love and best wishes from Max and myself.

**PAT BENTLEY**, Yokine WA, widow of Alf 2/1, with lots of cards from the West and a welcome donation to the News. Was good to see you in Sydney for ANZAC Day, Pat, also Loma. Have been wondering if you did "eventually" get to play 2 up at the Cross – did

not see any mention of your venture in the Sydney papers.

Take care and keep in touch.

**ALBERT BETTENS** 2/2 Lennox Head, pen of good wife Lily, with a welcome donation to the News, many thanks. (The payment you sent Lily was more than enough, it covers Alf for several years).

Good to hear he is still able to cope with his wheelchair and is getting well looked after by his carers and a nurse once a week to keep an eye on him.

Trust by now all the damage to your home caused by the tornado has been completed. The north coast and southern Queensland have been having a lot of problems over the past year what with floods and wild weather.

Our best wishes to you both and hope Alf has a happy birthday in August.

**RUTH BOSANKO**, Greystanes, daughter of the late Jim Field 2/2 with a welcome call just prior to ANZAC Day to wish all Pioneers the very best for their "special" day and a great reunion.

A quick decision on ANZAC morning saw Ruth on the train to take part in the march and was so pleased she had made the decision to do so. Good to have you join the marchers, Ruth, and thank you for your phone call.

**KAY BURTON**, Springwood, daughter of late Bert Rayner 2/1, with some photos taken in Martin Place of ANZAC Day activities, and a couple to be passed on to our bugler Aub Brasier with her thanks. Our thanks, Kay, and these have been mailed to him.

From a report in a local Kyogle newspaper, Kay competed in the recent NSW Masters Swimming Titles at the Homebush Olympic Pool in Sydney and scored three Gold and two Silver medals in her age division. Well done, Kay, and congratulations to you and the other Kyogle swimmer Shirley Claydon (nee Brown) who also won her age division with three Gold and two Silver medals.

Fond wishes from both of us and perhaps may see you for VP Day at the Track.

**TED CARTER** 2/1, Tamworth, with a welcome phone call just as we were going to press, and was sorry to hear of the passing of Roy Jardine. Ted was having eye problems, after losing the sight in one eye and now having injections to the other. Do hope the injections are successful, Ted, and good to hear from you.

Best wishes to both Mary and yourself – take care.

**BOB COLE**, Toronto, son-in-law of late Jack Tooker 2/1, with a welcome letter and donation to the News. Our thanks, Bob, and sorry you were not able to join the boys on ANZAC Day.

Originally, Bob was to join Tim Lloyd, his brother Anthony and Terry Morahan on a trip to Tobruk, but owing to the trouble in Benghazi the trip was cancelled. After Libya, Bob was to meet his wife Ainsley in London. They had booked a cottage up in the Peaks District of Derbyshire for a couple of weeks cycling and walks in the area. Hope everything went well, Bob, and you both enjoyed your holiday.

Bob mentioned in his letter that Kathleen Tooker is now quite frail and had a spell in the San Hospital for stress after a fall. Will see if I can catch her on the phone one day soon.

Best wishes to both Ainslie and yourself and our love to Kath.

**RON CROSS** 2/1, Ballina, with a generous donation to the News and reports that his problem arm is showing signs of improvement. He hopes to get away for a trip shortly and able to write a longer note next time.

Many thanks for the donation to the News,

Ron, and good to hear that your arm is improving. Take care and our best wishes.

**BARBARA DOUGLAS**, Kahibah, daughter of our good friend Jack Bertram 2/1, with a big thank you to Max and others, such as Don Grant, for the efforts they contributed in making 2011 ANZAC Day the wonderful occasion it was. The miserable weather in no way dampened the wonderful camaraderie given and shared by all involved in the march, whether spectator or participant, and with the fellowship of lunch at the Occidental. Her dad shared the thought that "it was the best day he had had in a long, long time" and her son Greg enjoyed the company and experiences of the Diggers and their families so much he has "booked" her dad to include him in next year's reunion.

Barbara believes the sustained effort in publishing Pioneer News is responsible in quite a significant way in bridging the years and keeping the Pioneers such a tight and united group and says – well done.

In regard to our phone call re the John Evans of Cronulla who marched alongside you on ANZAC Day, I am sorry that my efforts to find him came to naught and my letter returned. There were only three J. Evans in Cronulla and none at the address he gave you. However, we tried and we thank you for your trouble. We can only hope he may turn up again next year. (Max tells me he was at the reunion).

Max sends his best wishes and would like to say thanks for your trouble and a big hello to dad.

**WIN DWYER**, Waverley, widow of Mick 2/1, with a welcome donation to the News and apologies for lateness, but has not been enjoying the best of health. Win reports that Beryl Gillian (wife of late Frank 2/1) has recently had a spinal operation and is so far recovering slowly and being looked after by her sister.

Many thanks for your letter, Win, and for the donation to the News. Hope your health will improve with the coming warmer weather. Take care and best wishes.

**ANNE DYNON**, Berry, daughter of the late Capt. Frank Dynon 2/1, with a cheque to Pioneer News – many thanks.

Anne also enclosed a photo of a memorial stand in her church in Kangaroo Valley for Mass on ANZAC Day. The photo album her father brought back from the Middle East was on display containing many photos of the 2/1sts time in the area. We are still holding the battalion photos and albums, Anne, so will file these latest additions away until it is decided what we may do with them in the future.

Trust you and Tony are keeping well – I spoke to him several times when your mother Billie was alive. Best wishes from Max and myself.

**OLIVE FINLAY**, Mt Pritchard, widow of Gordon 2/1, had a successful operation in Westmead Hospital in May to have a cancer removed near the eye and then on to St Vincent's Private for a skin graft. The doctors are happy with the results and Olive is due for a check up later in the year. Her family keep a close eye on her and she sees them regularly.

Daughter Helen and her husband Keith are off shortly on a 40-day overseas trip to England and the Continent – do hope they have better weather than we are experiencing in Australia at the moment.

Take care Olive and our love and best wishes.

**AVELINE GAMBLE**, Chermside Qld, widow of Bill 2/1, with her congratulations to Max on his 92nd birthday and the memorable day he

had on the Queen Mary 2. The Cunard Line recently sent him a DVD of the events of the day – a wonderful memento of the occasion.

We were both very interested in your memoirs of our wartime harbour and the coming and going of the ships. Brought back a lot of memories for me too, as I worked down near the Quay and spent a lot of time "ship watching". I was on a Manly Ferry the morning Max sailed on the Queen Elizabeth and she was moored near the Zoo ferry terminal. I can still see the soldiers on every spare spot on the ship. By the time the ferry returned from Manly the ship was just about to clear the Heads.

In regard to your enquiry re the 2/5th A.G.H., they were in Greece just outside Athens at Ekali. I think the medical staff and nurses were evacuated to Crete, but the male orderlies and some staff went into prisoner of war camps with the men in Germany.

Many thanks for your donation to the News and best wishes from both of us.

**JOHN GILCHRIST** 2/1, Narrabeen, and Patron of the Association, with a very kind letter of thanks to Max and myself for the work we have done to keep the traditions and friendship of the Pioneers in their very healthy state.

Our very sincere thanks, John, and sorry you were not able to join us for ANZAC Day. President Roy Jardine made your apologies for your non-attendance at the reunion and told the gathering that you would be with them in spirit, and would think with pride of the achievements which the battalion achieved.

Your very generous donation to funds is gratefully acknowledged and we wish you the best of health in the coming year.

**BERYL GILLIAN**, Maroubra, widow of Frank 2/1, with a welcome donation to the News and some kind words of praise for those who keep the News afloat. She looks forward to seeing it in the mail.

Do hope you are now up and about after your spinal operation, Beryl, and feeling better despite the cold weather.

Our best wishes to you and many thanks for your donation to the News.

**ANN HEALEY**, Semaphore, SA, daughter of the late Jim Hall 2/1, with best wishes for Easter and lots of love. Ann was a Vietnam nursing sister and was off to Canberra for ANZAC Day for a reunion with her unit. Do hope you had a great "catch up", Ann, as I guess you don't meet very often.

Ann was going to her home town of Kyogle for the Queen's Birthday holiday in June with her sister Margaret, who with her husband John, teach in China. They recently became grandparents – daughter Angela giving birth to a lovely big boy in December. Do hope your visit was a great reunion for you both and able to meet up with some old friends.

Many thanks, Ann, for the donation to the News and always happy to hear from you. Love and best wishes from us both.

**MOLLIE JEAN HUNT**, New Farm Qld, with her best wishes for Anzac Day and the Wreath Laying at the Cenotaph. The weather wasn't very kind to the marchers on ANZAC Day, but they made up for it at the reunion. All had a great catch-up with old mates.

Good to hear you are well Mollie and busy – but says "single blessedness" is for the birds!!

We both send you our very best and many thanks for your donation to the News. Trust Wendy and Stu are keeping well, and you are all well away from the bad weather you have been having in Queensland.

**DAWN LEVY**, Revesby, widow of Roy 2/2, with a welcome letter and a donation to the

News. Many thanks, Dawn, and good to hear from you again.

Dawn is keeping well and at time of writing had just returned from a six-day holiday to Eden with her Legacy group. Said they had a lovely time, although not as many ladies going these days. Like so many groups the members are slowly dwindling – age and illness fast catching up with their members.

Dawn is still very involved with Legacy and War Widows, really enjoys it and has made some lovely friends. Says she's not home much, but doing what she can for as long as she's able.

She sends her best wishes to all and her thanks for the News. Hope to catch up one of these days, Dawn, and both send our love.

**NANCY LINTON**, Tuncurry, widow of Don 2/2, with a welcome letter and a donation to the News. Many thanks.

She and her family, Don's sons, Ian and Warwick, watched for the 2/2 Pioneer banner and sadly recalled the faces of those who have passed on. Like all units their numbers are sadly being depleted with the passing years.

In Tuncurry, the war widows are well looked after and glad of the companionship the War Widows Guild and Laurel Club offer in the way of monthly meetings, day coach tours and organised holidays. The Legatees also continue to support, and much appreciated.

In closing, Nancy was very interested in the article on Max and my outing on the "Queen Mary 2" – certainly a day to remember, Nancy, and the DVD the Cunard Line sent to Max recently a wonderful memento of the occasion.

Keep well, Nancy, and both send our best wishes.

**VINCE LONGMORE** 2/2, Eagle Vale, with a welcome note to say hello and to say it's been some time since he last wrote. Never mind, Vince, good to hear from you and still able to put pen to paper even though the aches and pains are still with you.

He turned 90 in March and his wife, Carol, unknown to him, rang many of his friends and arranged a party at one of the local Greek restaurants, about 40 attended, and they had a great time, with plenty of fine food and drinks.

Healthwise he is reasonably well, but has a balance problem and plenty of aches and pains when walking which he loved to do first thing in the morning, whether cold or hot. Says his memory is not always the best, where did he leave his walking stick and so on, but still able to enjoy life. (Join the clan).

Vince says he has not attended ANZAC Day in town for some years, but goes to the local Dawn Service when he can. Says it is wonderful to see the young people carrying on with the traditions and keeping the ANZAC Spirit alive, especially Gallipoli, Kokoda and all those areas around the world where the Aussies have fought.

The younger generation are hoping to be able to carry on the News when Max and I are unable to do so and John Tyler, Bill Jollie's son-in-law, is in the process of putting all the past issues online. A big job and will take some time.

Vince sends his best wishes to all, especially any of 2/2 D Coy. boys or Sigs. of H.Q. Coy. who may still be around. Not too many, I would presume, Vince, as time marches on.

Keep well and always good to have a note from you for old time's sake. Many thanks also for the donation to the News.

**BERT NEASBEY** 2/2, Davistown, per pen of good wife May, with greetings for Easter and ANZAC Day. They enjoyed reading of our visit to the "Queen Mary 2" and said it was a

great gesture on the part of the Cunard Line. As mentioned in a previous par in the Mail Bag, May, they sent Max a DVD of the day – a lovely surprise.

Bert and his sons, Mark and Greg, and Mark's two daughters were looking forward to ANZAC Day and the reunion lunch.

**BETTY O'CONNOR**, West Ballina, widow of Neville 2/2, with news from her part of the country, which had arrived too late for the issue.

She mentioned that she see Ron Cross 2/1 occasionally and he still lives at the Ex-Services Home in Ballina and he seemed well. A few of their old Pioneer group still meet for lunch twice a year and Betty wishes all Pioneers the best of health for 2011.

She had been on a group trip to Inverell to an "Opra in the Paddock", but rain started to fall as the show began and was still falling three hours later when it finished. Was a great night despite the rain, lots of laughs peering from under umbrellas and hooded ponchos. Says they couldn't even get away from the rain by going inland.

Over Easter she was flying to Tullibigeal, via Sydney, and Griffith to a Borapine School reunion and looking forward to catching up with people she hadn't seen in years. (Must see if I can find those places on my NRMA maps).

Good to hear from you again, Betty, and hope you enjoyed your visit to your old school. Best wishes from both of us.

**JANET O'NEILL**, Clovelly, daughter of the late Bill Robertson 2/2, with several photos for Max taken on Tobruk Sunday at Five Dock and at the Wreath Laying and before the March on ANZAC Day. Many thanks, Janet, and they have gone into the Pioneer albums of the Battalions. Good to see you on ANZAC Day and at the luncheon at the Occidental.

**JACK PAUL** 2/1, Camira Qld, with a short note enclosing his subs for the News and hoping we were both well. No news from his part of Queensland, just taking each day as it comes. However, sends his best wishes to all Pioneers and their families and lots of good health in the coming months.

Many thanks for your donation to the News, Jack, hope you are well way from all the bad weather the Queenslanders have been getting this year. Max sends his regards.

**JOHN PITMAN** 2/1, Moree, with his best wishes to Max for ANZAC Day and a cheque for worthy Treasurer. Many thanks.

John was a Sig. in the 2/1sts with Max and says there are not too many names in the News that he knows. That's not surprising, John, as to Max's knowledge there are only four Sigs that he knows of still alive. We had a call this week from Eric Causer whom you would know and he keeps in touch quite a few times a year. He did not make it to Sydney for ANZAC Day this year as he has done for several years.

Pleased to hear you were having a great season at Moree this year with plenty of good green feed. Just a change from so many parts of the state with storm and flood problems.

Good to hear from you and both send our best wishes.

**MARGARET TELFORD**, Wodonga, Vic, with a change of address for her father Albert Dean 2/1, formerly Shepparton, Vic. Margaret has had her dad transferred to a nursing home in Wodonga and would like the News sent to her address.

Many thanks, Margaret, we have amended our roll and hope this News finds your dad enjoying his new surroundings and in reasonably good health. Best wishes.

**RON WEBSTER** 2/1, Bass Hill, with his thanks for the last issue of the News which he had received a few days before he wrote. A visit to the bowel cancer specialist recently showed good results and he has no further visits for six months.

However, Ron says his hearing is not good and despite visits to both State and Federal Hearing Centres not much can be done. Hope you had more luck with the latest specialist or failing that a Cochlear transplant. So many of our generation have ear problems, Max and I included. Good to hear Veterans Affairs are looking after you regarding hire cars to and from appointments – they save a lot of problems on public transport.

All the best, Ron, and your good wishes passed on to all 2/1 Pioneers.

**ROBERT STUBBS**, Dongara, WA, nephew of Noel Schomberg 2/1, with a welcome donation to the News and said he was sorry he would not be in NSW this year for the ANZAC Day march and reunion.

Many thanks, Robert, and in passing Max and I saw Noel last week (mid July) at a Rats of Tobruk luncheon at Five Dock. He was down from Newcastle with Vi Flynn for the lunch and another Rat from Newcastle.

**JOANNA WHITELEY**, Terara, daughter-in-law late Vic Whiteley 2/1, with a welcome note and some photos of the arrival of Vic and Peg's first grand-daughter, Temperance Jade Bell, to his grand-daughter Dylane on 24th May. Joanna said Vic and Peg would have been delighted with their first grandchild.

Many thanks, Joanna, and it was good to see Neil and yourself at the reunion once again. Always pleased to hear news of you both. Love and best wishes.

**JOYCE WALKER**, Gilead, widow of George 2/1 with a call to say she was keeping reasonably well, with lots of home care, and still able to get about with her trusty "walker". Was expecting another great grandchild early in the New Year to her grand-daughter Alana and her husband – hope all goes well Joyce.

**ERIKA PEILE**, Caringbah, widow of Peter 2/1, with a very short note enclosing her donation to the News, many thanks.

Has no news, but will keep us posted on the "doings" of the grandchildren and their rowing activities. I keep my eye on the sporting section in the "Leader" for any news. Best wishes, Erika, and keep well despite the weather.

• That's all the Mail Bag for this issue and our thanks to all those members who keep in touch and to those who send donations to the News – very much appreciated.

## LAST POST

**RUSSELL HARRISON** 2/2, Stirling, SA, passed away on Friday, 6th May, 2011. Russ had not been in the best of health for some time, but wife Rona said he passed away peacefully with his family by his bedside. A private family service was held later in the week.

Prior to moving from Epping to South Australia to be closer to his daughter, Kate, Russ served on the Pioneer Committee for many years as Publicity Officer. He was also Secretary of the South Australian Branch.

The sympathy of the Association was passed on to Rona, Michael and Kate on their sad loss.

**CECIL BLANCH** 2/1, Kyogle, passed away in Kyogle Hospital on 12th May, 2011, aged 98 years, and a Thanksgiving Service was held at the Lismore Memorial Gardens Crematorium Chapel on 18th May.

Cecil was one of the four Kyogle brothers who enlisted in the 2/1 Pioneer Battalion. Our sympathy is passed on to his family.

**JACK STEWART** 2/1, Woodlands, W.A., passed away on Saturday, 23rd July, 2011. We had recently heard from his wife Yvonne to say he had been in ill health for some years, but the news was unexpected.

Jack had been unable to attend the ANZAC activities in Sydney for several years, but over the past few years he attended the ANZAC Day functions in the retirement village where he and Yvonne resided – but to him it was never the same.

Our very sincere sympathy has been extended to Yvonne and family in their sad loss.

## SICK PARADE

**LAURIE KELLY** 2/1 of Oxford Falls, was in hospital late July after a fall at home and broke his femur. He was taken to Mosman Private Hospital where he was operated on and had a rod inserted in the bone, before being transferred to rehabilitation.

He was visited in hospital by Marj Kerslake and her daughter Margaret Stolp, who said he was in good spirits.

**BEV WALKER**, wife of Ern Walker 2/1 of Penrose, was operated on in Bowral Private Hospital in late July and, at time of going to press, was making good recovery and hoping to be able to return home shortly.

Our best wishes, Bev, and will keep in touch.

## VALE – ROY JARDINE

**ROY JARDINE** 2/1, our Association President, passed away on the 22nd July, 2011, at the age of 90 years.

Roy had been admitted to Concord Repatriation Hospital in early July with double pneumonia and was later transferred to Ashburn Aged Care Hospital at Gladesville, where he passed away. While there he was visited by Marj Kerslake and her daughter Margaret Stolp and Peg Herron was in touch by phone with Roy only a few days before he passed away.

The funeral on 27th July was held at the Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Gladesville with a large congregation of family and friends. The service was conducted by Father Paul Pearce and the Prayers of the Faithful by his grandchildren and family members.

The Eulogy below was read by Don Crawford, Treasurer of the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Battalion Association.

### EULOGY

Roy enlisted in the 2nd AIF in June, 1940 and was posted to the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion. After training at Greta and Dubbo camps sailed with the unit on the Dutch ship Johande-Witt on the 30th September 1940 for the Middle East.

After further training in Palestine, the unit moved to Egypt and the Western Desert in Libya and fought in the campaigns up to Benghazi. It was at this stage that the German Field Marshal Rommel with his Africa Corps and Panzer Division forced the Australians back to the fortress of Tobruk and the Siege of Tobruk which lasted seven months.

After being relieved in late September 1941 from the garrison, the unit moved to Palestine where training was resumed until the Battalion was finally returned to Australia in March 1942 by the U.S.S. Westpoint.

After leave, the Pioneers moved to Queensland for some months and then sailed for New Guinea for service on the Kokoda Track, including the battle of Imita Ridge.

In September 1943 the unit returned to Australia and went into camp on the Atherton Tablelands in Queensland before embarking once again for their final campaign in Borneo.

On return from New Guinea, Roy transferred to another Unit until his discharge in 1945.

After the war when the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Battalion Association was formed in 1948, Roy became a member of our Committee and has attended all their meetings since that date.

In 1980 he was elected Vice-President, a position he held until 2009 when he became President. Roy was also Chairman of our ANZAC Day Reunion lunch and Marshal of our Wreath Laying Service each year. He attended our many country reunions and never missed our ANZAC Day functions. He also carried out the duties of Returning Officer for our annual election of officers. Since being President he has also presided over the Executive Annual Meeting held each year.

Roy was also a very keen supporter of the Rats of Tobruk Association and attended all their meetings as Vice-President, as well as their functions.

We thank God for the life of our departed friend and we extend our sincere sympathy to his wife Phyllis and her family – he will be sadly missed by his fellow Pioneers and members of the Rats of Tobruk Association.

The Poppy Service was conducted by Ken Johnston on behalf of Gladesville RSL.

### ATTENDANCE

Pioneers in attendance were Don and Val Crawford, Max and Peg Herron and son David, Ern Walker and daughter Joy Jorgensen, Marj Kerslake and daughters Margaret Stolp and Rhonda Foulds.

The Rats of Tobruk were represented by President Joe Maddeley and several members of the Rats of Tobruk.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

9 Ferrier Place  
Kambah ACT 2902

Dear Max,

You will not know me, but quite a few years ago you were in contact with my uncle, John McLean of Avalon Beach. Your correspondence was in relation to my father, Thomas Philip Mahy (Phil) NX125893 who served in Balikpapan, Borneo with the 2/1 Pioneers.

You mentioned that Dad was in the "B" Company patrols and was a friend of Max Law who kept a diary which is now in the War Memorial.

I live in Canberra, so will research these diaries and the patrols undertaken by "B" Company. However, I was wondering if you know of anything of a personal nature that would have related to Dad while he was in the army. In retrospect, I think Dad made overtures to me about this period in his life, but I was too young and did not want to know of unpleasant and possibly disturbing incidences he may have gone through. I now wish I had taken the opportunity to listen to him.

I am interested in anything and everything he may have experienced before, during and after the war. The only thing I remember him talking about was that there used to be "film" nights where the Yanks got to sit in the good seats facing the sheet/screen, and the Aussie soldiers sat behind the screen and saw everything projected in reverse. He thought it was a great joke.

I hope that you do not mind me asking you this favour.

Yours sincerely,  
Christine May (nee Mahy)

EDITOR'S NOTE:- We would appreciate if one of the three B Coy 2/1 members on our roll would write to Christine if they are able to help in regard to her father's Army service.



# PIONEER NEWS

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NOVEMBER 2011

## VP DAY – KOKODA TRACK WALKWAY

The 66th Anniversary of VP Day at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway at Concord was held on 15th August and more than 2,000 people gathered to pay their respects to all those servicemen and women who served their country in the armed forces for so many years and those who gave their lives for their country. The service was conducted by Father Graeme Malone SSS, Honorary Chaplain of K.T.M.W. and Reverend Paul Weaver, Anglican Chaplain of Concord Hospital. Mr John Gatfield was Master of Ceremonies.

After the arrival of the Official Party and the mounting of the Catafalque Party, the Prologue was given by Angelo Tsirekas, Mayor of Canada Bay.

Due to the illness of the Chairman of the Kokoda Track Walkway "Rusty" Priest, a Director of the Walkway welcomed the assembled guests and the guest speaker, Major General Jeff Sengleman DSC, AM, CSC, Commander Forces Command and other honoured guests and said it was important on this 66th Anniversary to remember our servicemen and women and the price that was paid for freedom. He then called on Major General Sengleman to address the gathering.

### ADDRESS BY GENERAL SENGLEMAN

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: It is a great privilege to speak here today on behalf of all the men and women of the Australian Defence Force, to commemorate the 66th Anniversary of Victory in the Pacific, and to pay tribute to the extraordinary contribution made by Australian servicemen and women during the Second World War.

The Second World War remains a defining moment in the history of our nation. Six years of tragedy, struggle and immense sacrifice in widely differing theatres of war, from the skies over Europe, through the deserts of North Africa, to the islands of the Pacific, right to when Australia was vulnerable to Japanese invasion; when freedom as we know it was very seriously threatened.

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

Over one million Australian men and women served during this time, and tragically, over 39,000 of our fellow Australians paid the ultimate price in defeating fascism and preserving democracy. The strong and spirited character of our nation rests firmly on the inheritance of this sacrifice. It also rests on those who were fortunate enough to come home. They were the driving force that shaped our great Australian nation in the second half of the 20th century.

Of course, we are all gathered here today not only to commemorate this sacrifice and give thanks to the extraordinary veterans here with us, but to also celebrate the fact that 66 years ago, on 15 August 1945, this dreadful war finally came to an end.

With the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, the Emperor saw

the futility of continuing the war and was persuaded to surrender unconditionally.

When Prime Minister Chifley famously decreed, "Fellow citizens, the war is over", and signalled that all Australians could look forward to a life unthreatened by war: Some celebrated with triumph and renewed hope; Some spent the day in quiet reflection. Ultimately, though, everyone knew that the war was over and that nothing would be quite the same again – too many people had lost too much.

In Australia, VP Day ended six years of hardship, sacrifice and anguish, and signalled the start of a new era of peace. However, the war took an enormous toll on the physical and emotional health of our veterans, and many never fully recovered.

Sixty years is a long time. A sad consequence of the passage of time is that every year the numbers of surviving WWII veterans diminish. It is our privilege and our duty to ensure that their great service continues to be remembered and honoured. This is a lasting debt we owe to all those that have served our fine nation.

So what should we remember on Victory in the Pacific Day 2011?

In many crucial battles and forbidding places, the war in the Pacific tested the character and commitment of the Australian people. Whether they served in the jungles of New Guinea, in the air, on the high seas, or in the factories and farms of the home front. We remember today a generation of magnificent Australians who fought to protect our way of life; our democracy, our culture, our land.

We remember almost one million Australian men and women, including many indigenous Australians, who served and the almost 40,000 who died fighting, 17,000 of these in the Pacific campaigns, to protect the freedom we enjoy today.

We remember and cherish their spirit of service before self; their sense of humour and fair play; of individual and group responsibility; and their firm belief that true democratic freedom must be nurtured and protected; and when threatened, is worth fighting and if necessary, dying for.

We appreciate that through their valour, our country emerged from the Second World War with a new sense of economic, political and social independence.

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

## PIONEER NEWS TURNS 60

To mark the 60th Anniversary of the publishing of the Pioneer News in 2012, we are hoping to launch a website with every issue of the newsletter, from March 1952 to 2012, available for viewing.

This monumental task has been undertaken by John Tyler, son-in-law of Bill Jollie, who was our Association President from July 1988 to April 1996.

John suggested we create a website that contains all the back issues so that future generations will have access to them, both as a social history and a searchable record of all the men of the 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneers whose names and stories are mentioned. John's task has been to scan over 800 pages of original copy by hand – a time-consuming and delicate job. He has also researched appropriate software for digitising the images, and consulted specialists, including the Australian War Memorial, on the best way to go about the task. This was made easier thanks to the diligence of our current editor Max Herron, who had the foresight to retain a copy of every issue ever published when he replaced Max Law in 1958 on his transfer to Adelaide.

The Executive would like to extend their sincere gratitude to John, both for his wonderful suggestion and the endeavour he has put into the project so far. We hope that he succeeds in his desire to launch the website by the April 2012 issue.

We will post an update with details of the progress, and if all goes well, how to access the site. Finally, we look forward to the day our newsletter becomes accessible worldwide.

The Association Executive

when Allied submarines torpedoed the unmarked ships carrying prisoners around Japan's wartime empire.

We remember our many friends and allies who stood alongside us, shared many burdens and remained steadfast in the face of sustained and extreme adversity.

Although then, Australia was still very much a part of the British Commonwealth, one of the greatest legacies of the war was the close relationship forged between Australia and the United States throughout the Pacific Campaign. It is a relationship which endures to this day and has grown in strength and meaning.

We should also take this opportunity to pay tribute to the people of New Guinea, some who have been immortalised as the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels. Their sacrifice and support will never be forgotten.

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

So today, we commemorate, we remember, we honour and we give thanks to an entire generation of Aussies who – when it

(Continued on page 2, foot of column 1)

# MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

• The last Mail Bag for the year and not so many letters from our readers – the cold weather during the winter months seems to slow down our readers. However, our thanks to all who put pen to paper and sent along donations to the News.

**ROBYN BELL**, Camberwell Vic, daughter of the late Leo Morris 2/1, with a welcome letter following ANZAC Day and how pleased she was once again to be in Sydney for the ANZAC activities. Despite the inclement weather, was so pleased to see the big crowd at the wreath laying service and some able to still march on ANZAC Day. Those unable to march were provided with an army jeep and were very appreciative of the service.

Robyn was able to make the trip to Sydney for VP Day at the Kokoda Track Walkway, Concord, and was able to join with the Pioneer Family for the service and refreshments.

In closing, Robyn sent her very best wishes to all Pioneers, their sons and daughters and says how pleased they can all come together

## VP DAY – Continued from page 1

mattered most – served, sacrificed and demonstrated those finest Aussie qualities of courage, compassion and endurance.

Today, we should also not forget the men and women of the ADF who are currently serving with great distinction on operations overseas. You can be very proud, just as I am, of the contribution they are making and the way in which they are conducting themselves. They are serving in the fine tradition established at ANZAC Cove and reaffirmed sixty-six years ago by the remarkable World War II generation. Indeed, they are inspired by the incredible achievements of those great World War II Australians who fought so bravely to secure our future.

To all World War II Veterans and their families here today, a very sincere thank you for your service and sacrifice. To the many thousands who made the supreme sacrifice fighting in the Pacific during WWII, the nation extends its deepest and most sincere gratitude. Through their sacrifice they proved yet again that real nobility and grandeur belongs not to nations, but to the people on whom they, in the last resort, always depend.

Thank you.

Lest we forget.

## WREATH LAYING CEREMONY

The official Wreath Laying Ceremony then followed at the Centrepiece of the Memorial Walkway. Many wreaths were laid by dignitaries and those in attendance. This ceremony ensured that their memories would continue as part of our history. The playing of Last Post followed with Don Rowe, NSW State President of the RSL reciting the Ode, and Reveille.

At the conclusion of the programme, thanks were given to all those who contributed to the success of the programme, this was then followed by the National Anthem.

Our thanks to Alice Kang, Honorary Secretary and the Walkway Committee in their organisation of service and to Alice for replying to our request for General Sengleman's address.

## PIONEERS IN ATTENDANCE

Pioneers who attended were Don and Val Crawford, Jack and Barbara Allison, Robyn Bell, Marj Kerslake and daughter Margaret Stolph and Max and Peg Herron.

on ANZAC Day for the ANZAC activities and the luncheon at the Occidental Hotel. Would like to mention the Grant family from Victoria and how lovely it was to see them once again accompanying Noel.

Our fond wishes Robyn and all the best for the coming festive season.

**PAT BENTLEY**, Yokine WA, widow of Alf 2/1, had just finished reading the July issue of the News when she wrote and said it was freezing cold (not her words) when she wrote. From Sydney weather reports on the TV at night you seem to be having lots of bad weather – always rain clouds over Perth and surrounding areas.

Good to hear from you, Pat, and both send our best wishes. A big hello to Loma when you are talking to her.

**TED CARTER** 2/1, Tamworth, with a very generous donation enclosed with his letter – many thanks – and a receipt has already been sent. Ted was originally an officer in the 2/1st and after Tobruk transferred to the 2/3rd Pioneers for service with that unit. However, keeps up his ties with his old unit and the Rats of Tobruk Association.

Do hope the treatment on your eye is showing improvement, Ted, and a bonus that you do not have to come to Sydney for treatment. We have both been for our check-ups this week, mine fairly stable but have to keep an eye on Max's and if any sign of change will probably use laser.

Thanks for your kind words on the News and this can only be achieved if our readers put pen to paper and keep in touch. Time marches on and the age of our readers makes writing difficult for some.

Our best wishes to Mary and yourself – always good to have a note from you and hope your eye continues to improve.

**OLIVE FINLAY**, Mt Pritchard, widow of Gordon 2/1, was off on a holiday to Port Macquarie in November for a couple of weeks when I spoke to her recently. Her daughter Helen and husband Keith were back from their overseas trip to England and the Continent and Olive was planning to spend some time with them.

Hope the weather will be kind to you, Olive, and you enjoy the break. Our love and take care.

**JIM GELTCH**, Moama, son of late Alf 2/1, with a welcome note enclosing a donation to the News, many thanks. Also thanks for your kind words on our efforts in maintaining the Association – keeping the flame alive.

On the farm they have had a mixed year agriculturally. They lost their tomato crop in the Victorian floods in January, but thankfully that was all. The family are all well and the history of the 2/1sts is doing the rounds of all his siblings. It is reconnecting them to his dad's contribution.

Jim mentioned that he will be in France and Belgium again next year and will take in the Last Post at Menin Gate as usual. He has yet to see the new memorial at Fromelle, although he happened to be there during the excavation – a truly moving experience.

Good to hear from you Jim and will look forward to seeing you the next time you are in Sydney. Kindest regards from Max and myself.

**JOHN HAYDEN**, Bangor, son of late John 2/1, formerly of Orange, with a newsy letter and said it was great to receive the latest issue of the News and apologises for not thanking the Association for allowing him to take part in the ANZAC Day march.

Many thanks, John, for the news from Queensland on Nev and Betty Woodham. For as long as I can remember they have always kept in touch since they moved from Sydney –

always at Christmas – and it was good to have a posting address for the News.

John said Nev led the ANZAC march at Redlands this year in a sports car and says they have relocated to an aged care facility at Labrador. I have noted their new address on our roll and hope the News arrives safely in due course. Would be pleased to have news of them from time to time.

Many thanks, John, and would be pleased to see you any time you are passing.

**ELAINE HENDERSON**, Narellan, niece of late Ron Clark 2/1, with a change of address from Epping and a welcome donation to the News.

Good to see you have made a move to be closer to family, Elaine, and a lot less work to do as you get older. It's a nice area around Camden, quite a lot of our Pioneer widows have made the move out in that area.

Thank you for your donation and will amend your address on our roll. Take care and enjoy your new surrounds.

**MOLLIE-JEAN HUNT**, New Farm Qld, widow of John 2/1, with thanks for the last News, sadly with not too many 2/1sts to remember these times.

She had just returned from a coach trip to Cairns and said she spent a nostalgic day up on the Tableland. As they drove along she realised that they must be in the area of the hospital the Pioneers helped to build, and then passed a shop in Tolga selling peanuts. She remembers John's tale of the Chinaman selling peanuts by the tinfal – and on special occasions offering a Chinese whiskey with strange-looking herbs in it. They drove past the new memorial site of the hospital and our driver told of its history. Wasn't it there several were showering when the first transport of nurses came by?

Perhaps there may be some 2/1sts still living who may remember those long ago days.

Good to hear from you Mollie, and glad you were able to make the trip. We both send you our best wishes – take care.

**NORMA LUNN**, Dubbo, widow of Ern 2/2, with a welcome note and her thanks for the News which she is always happy to find in her mail box.

She is keeping well and able to go on lots of outings, plus a trip to Wagga for a wedding, another one coming up in November, plus a trip to Quirindi. She and a friend share the driving.

Will pass on your best wishes to Marj Kerslake when next speaking to her. She keeps reasonably well and is well cared for by her daughters who live close by.

Max joins me in sending you best wishes, Norma, and good to hear from you.

**JULIE MCWILLIAM**, Griffith, daughter of late Steve Clark 2/1, with a welcome donation to the News enclosed with her letter and her thanks for those who keep up the Pioneer News and the Association. Says it's always good to read of the ANZAC activities and was sad to read of passing of Roy Jardine in July.

Julie says not too much to report from her part of the country. Their family are all enjoying good health – for which she and Doug are thankful. They have appreciated a wetter than usual year in Griffith, whilst being spared the terrible disasters which occurred elsewhere in Australia.

Many thanks for your donation, Julie, and love and best wishes to you both.

**OLIVE RICHARDS**, Scarborough Qld, widow of Jack 2/1, with a welcome letter enclosing her donation to the News, many thanks. Olive's yearly letter is always written around her birthday – this time 92 – and she thinks she has had enough. Her writing is still good, so I think you are good for a few more years Olive.

She is keeping very well and able to look after her personal needs and able to do a few chores in the dining room of the hostel where she lives.

Son Chris and his wife Annette are both well and very busy, still living on Bribie Island. They have just returned from a trip to Canberra where they had gone to spend a few days with their son before he flew out to Afghanistan. He is due home in December. Annette flies down to Canberra a few times a year to see her grandchildren.

Good to hear from you Olive, always pass on the news to Marj Kerslake when speaking to her, and to Vi Flynn if we happen to meet.

Take care and love and best wishes from both of us.

**JOY TAYLOR**, Allawah, daughter of Jack Harvey 2/1, with a welcome cheque for the News and to help with costs for the Association. Many thanks, Joy.

In her letter, Joy said it was such an honour to be able to join with the Pioneers and their families at the wreath laying on ANZAC Eve and to be able to march on ANZAC Day. Such a shame the weather was so unkind.

In regard to the ANZAC luncheon, I have written you, Joy, with details and would be only too happy for you to join the ladies at the Occidental.

Best wishes from both of us and look forward to catching up next year.

**NOELA SHEEN**, Pearce ACT, widow of Gordon 2/2, with a welcome donation to the News, many thanks.

Noela had a hip replacement in July and has been out of action for some time. Do hope your trip to the surgeon after you wrote (no date on your letter) was good news and you are now well and able to drive the car – perhaps hopefully to get back to golf.

You were lucky to have grand-daughters so close to help out with shopping, etc. and I can see their help was very much appreciated.

Take care Noela and trust you are now well on the way to the best of health.

- Apart from the Mail Bag, we have had phone calls from the following who have passed on messages with news of their doings.

**KAY TASKER**, Georges Hall, daughter of late Bill Tasker 2/1, with her best wishes passed on to all Pioneers and families. Kay had a stroke at the beginning of the year and was out of action for some time and unable to drive the car and attend to her business. However, was now back at work and feeling a lot better. Good to have a chat to you, Kay, and would like to see you if passing this way. Take care.

**ROMA SHEARSTON**, Stockton, widow of Doug 2/1, with several calls over the past weeks. Roma had a fall in the hallway of the Hostel where she lives in Stockton and broke her shoulder. She has only just recovered and able to take care of herself once again. Roma previously lived near me in Beverly Hills, spent years on school committees together and played golf, so very old friends. Good to hear from you, Roma, and please do not send any subs for Pioneer News. Fond love.

**JOYCE WALKER**, Gilead, widow of George 2/1, with greetings, and the news that she was keeping well and able to get about with her trusty "walker". Will miss her daughter Judith, who is her main carer, when she goes to England shortly for her daughter's 30th Birthday. Always good to hear from you, Joyce, take care.

**LESLEY TUNKS**, Mareeba, wife of Les Tunks 2/1, with news from the Tablelands. Neither of them keep the best of health, but with help around the house, "wheelies" and cabs for appointments are able to manage. Writing is a problem with bad eyesight, so good to hear

news of them by phone. Ray Law was sorry, due to a rushed trip, he was unable to see you both for VP Day. Take care, will keep in touch.

**LAURIE KELLY**, 2/1, Oxford Falls, is now home from Mosman Hospital after several weeks with a broken femur and is picked up twice a week and taken to Lady Davidson for rehabilitation treatment.

He is on a walker, but is cheery and happy and hasn't lost his good sense of humour.

Trust you are soon back to the best of health, Laurie, and many thanks to Marj Kerslake for keeping us informed of your progress.

**NEVILLE WOODHAM** 2/1, Labrador Qld, with a welcome phone call from wife Betty just as we were going to press with her new address and best wishes from both of them for the coming year. Lovely to hear from you both, do keep in touch.

- That's all the Mail Bag for this issue and on behalf of Treasurer Don Crawford, Max and myself we wish all Pioneers and their loved ones good health and happiness in the coming year. To those who have lost loved ones we send special thoughts. Have a Happy Christmas and may the New Year bring Peace and Goodwill.

## KOKODA DAY 2011

On Thursday, 3rd November, 2011, a Flag Raising Ceremony was held at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, Concord, despite the torrential rain which continued during the ceremony.

To commence proceedings Benjamin Ijumi, a Papua-New Guinea native, sounded a cone shell before the Official Welcome given by John Haines AM, Deputy Chairman of the Kokoda Track Walkway. His welcome covered Distinguished Guests, representatives of the Navy, Army and Air Force, Veterans Affairs, Canada Bay and Ryde Councils.

Following his welcome he called on Brig Phil McNamara (Rtd), a Director of the Track, to give an address on the significance of Kokoda Day. He spoke of the bitter fighting against a superior well-trained Japanese force and paid special tribute to the 39th Militia Battalion who were heavily involved in the battle at Kokoda and Isurava.

This was followed by a Cultural Performance by the natives of PNG which was very much appreciated by those in attendance, despite the

dreadful weather conditions.

The Kokoda Day address was given by the General Manager of Concord Hospital. He spoke of the hardships and conditions endured by the troops fighting on the Track and the wonderful service the New Guinea native carriers, termed the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels, who carried the wounded, on home-made stretchers, down the Track to safety and treatment.

Following the raising of the Australian and PNG flags, the wreath laying ceremony took place after which Don Rowe, President of the NSW State Branch of the RSL, recited the Ode, followed by the singing of the Australian and New Guinea National Anthems.

Guests then proceeded to the Education Centre for the unveiling of the Fuzzy Wuzzy Sculpture with the Mayor of Canada Bay, Cnr Angela Tsirekas reciting the poem Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels.

The ceremony concluded with the unveiling of the sculpture and a cultural performance by the PNG Group in their native dress.

In attendance on behalf of the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Bn Association were our Treasurer, Don Crawford and his wife Val.

## TOBRUK FIG TREE

It has been considered necessary to explain to readers that the Fig Tree was a prominent feature on the Tobruk landscape. It was the only tree in the desert and was situated near the Derna Road and the front line fortifications of concrete underground bunkers constructed by the Italians before the war.

The Fig Tree played two important rolls during the siege – firstly it housed a battalion Regimental Aid Post in a cave alongside the tree, where a doctor and orderlies attended the wounded before despatching them to the 2/4th Aust General Hospital in the Tobruk township.

Secondly the German artillery gunners used the Fig Tree as a focal point in determining the distance and elevation to fire on the Australian fortified bunkers. It is for this reason it was never fired upon by the German artillery nor bombed by the German Air Force.

In 2004 Joe Maddeley, President of the Rats of Tobruk Association, visited Tobruk and said the Fig Tree is still there and growing and the Libyan Government has erected a fence around it for protection.



Fig Tree and Battalion RAP Tobruk – Aust War Memorial

## VALE – DR STAN GOULSTON

Dr Stan Goulston, AO, MCMD, 2/1st Pioneer Battalion of Chatswood, passed away on 20th August, 2011, and his funeral was held at the Jewish Section of the Northern Suburbs Cemetery at the age of 96 years.

At the outbreak of war in 1939, he enlisted in the AIF and was posted to the 2/1st Pioneer Bn as Regimental Medical Officer and went to the Middle East with the 6th Division.

After serving in Palestine and Egypt his Battalion was sent to Libya where it endured the eight-month siege of Tobruk in 1941. A third of all Australians killed in the Middle East Campaign lost their lives during the siege. Stan wrote "The enemies were Germans, flies, fleas, heat and dust storms". Nevertheless it was in Tobruk that the Australian 6th Division inflicted their first defeat on the Germans during the war. Stan's first medical article, published in the Medical Journal of Australia in 1942, described his Regimental Aid Post as a cave under a very old fig tree near an ancient Jewish cemetery on the perimeter of Tobruk.

Twice mentioned in dispatches, Stan was awarded the Military Cross. The citation read "... he set a splendid example of devotion to duty and courage under fire, setting an inspiring example to every member of the Battalion." But Stan was more proud of his award of one of the three famous "Tobruk Rat" medals, made from scraps of metal from German planes and artillery by men from his Battalion. After broadcasts by the renegade English "Lord Haw Haw", who described the troops as "... the rats of Tobruk – Germany's self-supporting prisoners of war", the Australians converted this snide remark into one of pride, calling themselves the Rats of Tobruk.

Stan returned to Australia in 1942, serving for 14 months in Darwin before being posted to London as Senior Medical Officer in the Australian Army staff from 1944 to 1946, when he was discharged with the rank of Lieut-Colonel.

Later he was appointed Honorary Physician at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and commenced consultant practice as a general physician and gastroenterologist. Stan joined an outstanding group of clinicians, largely ex-servicemen, who established the status of the hospital as a leading educational institution. He worked at RPAH for 33 years, leaving in 1980, but continued in clinical practice until he was 79. With Sir William Morrow he set up the first specialist Gastroenterology Unit in Australia. Despite having a busy clinical practice Stan was a gifted teacher and inspired countless medical students and young doctors. He also published 34 research papers, many of them seminal. Over the years he cared for thousands of patients, always with devotion and compassion and was beloved by nurses and hospital staff. He was a doctor's doctor.

Stan's kind and gentle nature, his devotion to his wide family, his commitment to medicine, his love of teaching, his caring and compassion for patients – all these attributes have left a profound impression on so many. Above all, his integrity and incredibly strong sense of what was right and wrong shone through.

Stan is survived by four daughters, Diana, Wendy, Sue and Sadhana, ten grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. Although separated by distance, all remain fiercely close and care deeply for one another.

Stan leaves behind, with them and all who knew him, an extraordinarily rich legacy.

## VP DAY 2011 – ROCKY CREEK

By Ray Law, son of the late Jim Law 2/1

The speed with which the year had flown was amazing and VP Day very nearly caught me unaware. The arrival of grandson number two in May and the general distraction of the joy of being grandparents had all but preoccupied us for the entire twelve months. With number three due in January one can only wonder how fast the next year will disappear.

However, I eventually arrived in Cairns in the afternoon of Saturday, August 13, the day before the Rocky Creek VP Day service which is always held on the Sunday closest to the 15th, the actual day of the Japanese surrender. After collecting my hire car at the airport it was time to check in at my motel and ensure that the wreath I had ordered through the local florist had arrived. With all in order it was time for dinner and an early night.

Sunday dawned fine, sunny and far from the frosty morning I had left in our Southern Highlands home the day before. With breakfast out of the way, I headed off on the pleasant one-hour drive to Mareeba and then Rocky Creek. Arriving at the park two hours before the service began ensured that I had plenty of time to visit the Memorial Wall and quietly reflect on so many who had paid such a high price for the freedom we all enjoy and treasure. I paused for a while at the name of Bill Gamble, so familiar to most of you and placed a poppy in remembrance and thanksgiving. I would dearly have loved to have met him as he had been Dad's Platoon Commander in Borneo and we had corresponded and spoken on the phone several times after I had sent him a photo of him and Dad which had turned up one ANZAC Day (I think courtesy of Bill Wright). He had in turn sent me a number of his war mementos and I treasure them to this day. Sadly he passed away before he was able to come to Sydney for a reunion as he had planned and I have regretted it ever since.

The time for the service to begin was now near and as an air raid siren began it's mournful sound a pair of WWII fighter planes from the nearby Mareeba airfield swooped in for a low level fly past. It was a dramatic commencement to the formalities. Tablelands Regional Council Mayor Tom Gilmore opened the service and welcomed everyone. He made the simple statement that "We gather here today not just because we can, but also because we must, for we can never afford to forget". Words well chosen and movingly delivered.

The guest speaker for this year was Commander Wendy Anne Bullen CSM, ADC, RAN, Commanding Officer – HMAS CAIRNS. After a brief history of the significance of the Atherton Tablelands in WWII she commented that "This service signifies not only the end of that terrible conflict but also the end of the threat to our lifestyle. The Pacific War brought war to our doorstep for the first time. In WWI and the first part of WWII the threat of invasion had seemed very remote but that had all changed with the bombing of Darwin. In all," she commented "from Broome to Townsville there had been nearly 130 air raids which dramatically emphasised the threat to Australia". She went on to acknowledge how that threat had been nullified only by the outstanding heroism and fighting abilities of you who answered your countries call to arms in such a magnificent fashion. Her comments were both sincere and well received. It was now time for the unveiling and dedication of Unit Plaques. This year saw one for the RAN, one for the 2/4th Independent Company and one for the 2/31st Battalion. The latter being

most poignant as it was unveiled by its last two known remaining members. An occurrence that was a privilege to witness but very moving.

It was again a moment of both humility and pride to be called upon to lay the wreath on behalf of the 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneers and as always I am deeply indebted to you all for the opportunity to do so. It is not something that I take for granted. The final comments for the day were made by the Master of Ceremonies, Council Employee Mr John Hardy who drew our attention to the "Tobruk Fig Tree" in the Memorial Garden. I had not known that this existed so after the conclusion of the service I sought him out for some clarification. He informed me that about ten years ago a cutting of a fig tree from Tobruk had been imported through quarantine and planted at Rocky Creek as a tribute to all who fought there. It is clearly not at home in these foreign conditions and has not thrived at all. However, as I looked closely at it I noticed that it was beginning to bud with new season's shoots, clearly stating that it was still very much alive, had not succumbed to this unfamiliar environment and would continue to battle on against all odds. I could think of no better tribute to your own struggles in similarly hostile conditions all those years ago when you found yourselves in its home against such huge odds. In its favour it is being gently nurtured and no one is trying to kill it! In a moment of brevity I became painfully aware that its permanent dwelling place there so far away from its home bears a silent tribute to so many young Australians who have never returned to theirs. With the day now drawing to a close it was a time of quiet and private reflection at your association memorial plaque among the gum trees. As I have experienced before there was a feeling of closeness that I have not felt anywhere else as I sensed the presence of my dad and all his Pioneer brothers. I found it difficult to leave but it was time to go.

Until next year.

## THE TOBRUK FIG TREE

There stands a single fig tree  
In a land far from its own  
And there among the gum trees  
Seems somehow quite alone.  
It isn't really thriving  
But it gamely struggles on  
Despite these strange conditions  
And its hope is far from gone.

This tree was here transplanted  
At this place called Rocky Creek  
And in the breeze's whisper  
I am sure I hear it speak.  
It invites a close inspection  
If you care to take a look  
You'll find it's something special  
For this tree comes from Tobruk.

It tells to those who'll listen  
Of a conflict long ago  
Of stoic men from foreign shores  
Who faced determined foe.  
Of men who 'though outnumbered  
With great bravery undertook  
A task which seemed impossible  
The defending of Tobruk.

This tree now lives among us  
From its home so far away  
It brings to us a message  
And I'm sure I hear it say,  
"I simply stand in tribute.  
When upon me you now look  
Remember all your sleeping sons  
In my home there in Tobruk."