

PIONEER NEWS

Phone 9759 5491

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

Per Annum: \$5

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Treasurer: DON CRAWFORD

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

Vol. 59 No. 1

APRIL 2013

SAD PASSING OF OUR SECRETARY

Our Association Secretary, Max Herron, passed away in hospital on the 9th March, 2013, aged 94 years. He had been in hospital early in December for an operation and never fully recovered over the following months.

The funeral service was held in the South Chapel of Rookwood Crematorium on Friday, 15th March, 2013 and conducted by Major Bruce Domrow of the Salvation Army.

There was a large gathering of family and friends, members of the 2/1st and 2/2nd

Pioneers and Rats of Tobruk Association, as well as Scouting friends who formed a guard of honour outside the chapel.

The RSL tribute was given by Mrs Vera Ward, Welfare Officer of Penshurst RSL, who then called on Don Crawford, our Association Treasurer, to give the Eulogy on Max's Army career as follows:-

MAX HERRON enlisted in the 2nd AIF on 4th July, 1940, and after training at Greta and Dubbo army camps was posted to the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion.

On 11th April, 1941, after final leave, he sailed on the "Queen Elizabeth" to the Middle East where he spent time training in Palestine before being sent up to join his unit already in Tobruk. He served with the unit until they were relieved from Tobruk on 22nd September, 1941.

The Pioneers remained overseas until 12th March, 1942, returning to Australia on the USS "Westpoint" and disembarked at Adelaide on 20th March.

After further training in Australia, Max sailed in August, 1942 with D Coy. on the "Anshun" to Milne Bay in New Guinea, while the remainder of the Battalion sailed on to Port Moresby. After seven months in Milne Bay, and four attacks of malaria, Max was invalided back to Australia on 4th January, 1943, and sent to 103AGH at Bathurst. After treatment, he was given two weeks leave during which time he married Peg on 3rd March, 1943.

After leave he returned to the unit in Moresby where he was posted to the Signals Platoon. The unit served on the Kokoda Track and in the 9-Mile Quarry until the 19th October when they returned to Australia for extensive jungle training on the Atherton Tableland.

On 21st May, 1945, the Pioneers once again

sailed for their final campaign at Balikpapan in Borneo and Max, now in the Signals Platoon, was attached to B Coy, then D Coy, during the fighting in Balikpapan Bay at Tempadoeng. Although war ended on 15th August, 1945, the unit was not finally disbanded until 18th February, 1946. Max was discharged from the Army on 7th December, 1945.

After the war, Max took an active part in the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Btn. Association, which had been formed in 1948 and held the following positions - 1956 Vice-President; 1957 appointed Secretary; 1958 appointed Editor of Pioneer News; 1975 awarded Life Membership; 1963-1992 organised 20 country reunions by the Association as well as ANZAC DAY marches and reunions. Was ANZAC of the Year in 1997 and awarded an OAM in 2007, together with his wife Peg.

Max was also Chairman of the Editorial Committee that had been formed to complete information for the publication of the 2/1 Pioneer Btn unit history book "The Pioneers", also on the committee formed to plan the placing of a plaque on the plinth at the Imita Ridge station at the newly formed Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway at Concord.

The plaque was unveiled in April 1998. Max had regularly attended the VP Day Service at the Walkway during the ensuing years.

In addition, Max was also a member of the Rats of Tobruk Association and regularly attended their meetings at Five Dock RSL, their Tobruk Sunday services and their Christmas luncheon each year.

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



ANZAC ACTIVITIES 2013

WREATH LAYING SERVICE

Wednesday, 24th April at 3.45pm

All members and their families are invited to the Wreath Laying Service at the Cenotaph on Wednesday, 24th April at 3.45pm. The Association would like to see a good attendance as they consider this event to be an important occasion in the year.

Members and relatives to assemble on the corner of Pitt Street and Martin Place, on the GPO side at about 3.15pm ready to form up at 3.35pm for the short walk to the Cenotaph. Medals are requested to be worn. The Marshal will be John Hayden, son of the late Captain John Hayden 2/1.

ANZAC DAY MARCH

Thursday, 25th April

Forming up for both 2/1st and 2/2nd will be at our starting place in King Street, just near Phillip Street, by 9.45am, where the two banners will be displayed.

Once again we are calling on Mark Neasbey, son of Bert 2/2, to act as Unit Marshal and his duties are to watch for the

movements of troops at the corner of Phillip and King Streets and then arrange the formation as follows:- a) Castle Hill Band; b) Banners and Flags; c) Troops; d) Head count of Veterans and descendants to Peg Herron.

DESCENDANTS MARCHING

In past years the Association has tried to strictly carry out the ANZAC March protocol as laid down by the RSL, regarding descendants marching. The RSL requests that the non-service people who can march with the veterans are the ones who carry the banners and Australian flags, one carer for each veteran. All carers to march behind veterans.

The RSL is providing seating for veterans who cannot march on George Street just north of the ABC cameras. If a veteran requires seating to contact Bob Batty at ANZAC House, by 19th April on 9264 8188, Ext. 707.

LATE COMERS

The RSL will have Pedapods located at corner of Elizabeth and Liverpool Streets, corner of Park and College Streets, corner of

Macquarie and St James Road and George Street outside Wynyard Station to take people to their battalions if they are running late.

ANZAC DAY REUNION

Thursday, 25th April

The Occidental Hotel is once again the venue for the ANZAC reunion, 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 for men of \$25 and issue name tags. The ladies will proceed upstairs and have their lunch fee of \$30 collected by Lynn Herron who will supply their name tags.

Members to be seated at 12.15pm and lunch at 12.45pm will consist of sliced roast sirloin with vegetables and buttered roll. Ladies will have same menu, plus dessert of apple strudel and ice cream.

The reunion Chairman will be Mark Neasbey, son of Bert 2/2.

Enjoy your day and the service organised by the Functions Organiser Delfina Moscoso and her team of helpers.

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

• The first issue of the News for 2013 and we wish our readers lots of good health and happy days in the year ahead. Many old friends passed away during the year and sadly my loved husband of seventy years was among those to make his last journey. May they rest in peace.

To those who sent cards to Max and I for Christmas, many thanks and happy to hear from you.

GWEN BARTON, Gulgong, widow of Albert 2/1, with love and best wishes for Christmas to all 2/1-2/2 Pioneers and families and a safe and healthy New Year. Good to hear from you, Gwen, and hope you are keeping well.

ROBYN BELL, Balwyn, VIC., daughter of late Leo Morris 2/1, with Christmas greetings to all and hopes to be in Sydney for Anzac Day. She was sorry to hear of the passing of Jean Grant so soon after her trip to Sydney and sent her condolences to the family. Trust the baby grandson is well and thriving – he certainly would be spoilt if not living in New York. Looking forward to seeing you soon.

TOM BLAINEY 2/1, Noble Park VIC., with Season's Greetings and the news that they recently celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on the 1st November. Congratulations and every good wish to you both.

Healthwise not the best and I hope by now there has been some improvement. Take care and always happy to have news from you both.

JACK ALLISON 2/2, Eastwood, with warm greetings for Christmas and the news that his family were coming home from Singapore, (after five years) to be with them, also their Wollongong family – says it will need to be a "big" pudding.

Hope you had a wonderful Christmas and hope to see you and Barbara on ANZAC Day. Kindest regards.

AUB BRASIER, Dee Why, our bugler for so many years at our Anzac wreath laying ceremony, lost his wife Nancy in October and the sympathy of the Association was passed onto Aub. She had been in a nursing home for many years.

Our best wishes, Aub, and hope you are keeping well. Take care.

TED CARTER 2/1, Tamworth, with a letter of sympathy to myself and family on the loss of our loved one, and to the Association after Max's many years as secretary and Pioneer News editor.

A former member of the 2/1st Pioneers, Ted later transferred to the 2/3rd Pioneers and was amongst those chosen by the Australian Government to represent Australia at the 70th Anniversary of the El Alamein commemorations in Egypt.

However, over the years has kept in touch with Max and they have been able to renew wartime friendships through phone calls and functions of the Rats of Tobruk Association.

Many thanks for your letter, Ted, and kindest regards to Mary and yourself.

LEXIE COATES, Umina, widow of Jack 2/1,

with lots of good wishes to all Pioneers and their families for Christmas. Not much to report from her part of the country – Christmas parties all finished and reports that the Brisbane Waters Seniors closed this year and all funds dispersed.

So many not well these days, with advancing years, and no one to take office.

Many thanks for your donation to funds, Lex, and always good to hear from you. Take care and happy to hear news of Doug's leg and hope he is keeping well.

KERRY CHRISTOPHER, Glenfield, daughter of the late Pat Collins 2/2, with a welcome letter to Max with thanks for sending her the News.

Kerry said her father was a proud Pioneer and could not have foreseen the use of technology to make the "Pioneer News" available via the internet. She has asked for her name to be removed from our mailing list and she will be pleased to enjoy the "News" through the internet and enclosed a generous donation to such costs. Many thanks, Kerry, and our best wishes to you.

DON CRAWFORD 2/2, Concord, spent some time during November and December in Concord Hospital with pneumonia. He spent 10 days in intensive care on an aspirator to help him breathe and said "when they took it out he thought they were going to pull his head off."

He has now fully recovered and back doing his wonderful service to the Association, taking over a lot of the tasks usually done by our late secretary. Many thanks, Don.

SUE DAWSON, Bayview, widow of Ross 2/2, with best wishes to Max and I for Christmas and a welcome note enclosing a cheque for the News. Many thanks.

On the 8th December (five months since Ross passed away) they had a "good bye" ceremony at Collaroy Basin where Ross used to go each Sunday after he dropped Sue at Collaroy Baths. Son Greig flew down from Queensland and he and John rowed out the dingy and Sue and Phillip swam behind, said their good byes and John scattered his ashes, as Ross had asked them to do. With about ten of his mates and the family they reminisced with a few drinks and a barbecue.

A lovely farewell, Sue, and thanks for sharing the news with his fellow Pioneers.

ERIC CAUSER 2/1, Hamilton VIC., with best wishes for Christmas to Max and myself and all Pioneers.

His wife Doff says Eric is still busy with his Legacy work and History Centre duties and she is enjoying duets on the piano with her friend Philippa. Not a bad pastime, Doff.

Good to hear from you and hope you are both keeping well. Eric will miss his old mate.

GRACE FOWKES, Wentworthville, widow of Dick ("Snowy") Fowkes 2/1, with Christmas greetings and her thanks for all the hard work and the effort that goes into the News.

She thoroughly enjoys reading it and has done so for many years.

Many thanks, Grace, for your donation to funds and hope this finds you in good health and still able to get out and about. Take care.

RONA HARRISON, Stirling S.A.; widow of Russ 2/2, with Christmas greetings from S.A. and says things were very hectic there when she wrote at Christmas.

Daughter Cate recently had been working in

Canberra and Rona had decided to move over there as soon as she can sell her home in S.A. She will miss her Adelaide home and friends, but will be closer to the rest of her family in Sydney.

Many thanks for your donation to funds, Rona, and look forward to having your new address when you are settled in Canberra. Best wishes to you both.

JACK HEARN 2/2, Howlong N.S.W., with Christmas greetings from he and Audrey to all Pioneers and the very best of health and happiness in 2013. Many thanks, Jack, and take care. Always pleased to have a note from you.

ANN HEALEY, Semaphore S.A., daughter of late Jim Hall 2/1, Kyogle, with a welcome note for Christmas and said it was so good to spend Anzac Day with the Pioneers in Sydney. She had just been to Brisbane and the Gold Coast for a reunion with relatives. Her sister Margaret and husband are back living on the farm and Ann was off up there for New Year.

Good to hear from you Ann, do not get a lot of news from Kyogle any more, except from my daughter-in-law Lynn, and lately from late Leo Ferris' daughter.

Take care and hope to see you again in the not too distant future.

PAM HERRICK, Sutherland, daughter of the late George Bates 2/1, with greetings for Christmas and surprises for 2013. Hope you are well, Pam, and maybe see you for the Anzac activities. Best wishes to Edward.

MARIE JENSON, Doonside, widow of Ted 2/1, with welcome Christmas greetings and hopes to attend Anzac Day and the luncheon at the Occidental. Will be good to see you once again Marie. Best wishes.

JOYCE LAW, Kareela, widow of Max 2/1, with Christmas greetings and has hopes of attending on ANZAC Day. It would be good to catch up again Joyce.

DAWN LEVY, Revesby, widow of Roy 2/2, with a welcome Christmas letter with best wishes for 2013. Hope you are keeping well, Dawn, and still involved with Legacy and War Widows. Time seems to slip by so quickly these days, harder too, when you get older.

My best wishes, Dawn, always good to hear from you.

ELIZABETH MAHY-BAILEY, Leeton, daughter of the late Phil Mahy 2/1, with greetings for Christmas and sends best wishes to all Pioneers and their families for a healthy New Year. Many thanks for your generous donation to the News, Elizabeth, and hope this finds you in the best of health.

JULIE McWILLIAM, Griffith, daughter of the late Steve Clarke 2/1, with her thanks for the extra copies of the News last issue and for making her daughter Karen so welcome when our Pioneers met Karen over at Kokoda Track in November.

Julie and Doug had a lovely email from Jim Geltch in Moama after he read the Pioneer News. Jim was the son of a 2/1 Pioneer, Alf Geltch, who helped haul the 25 pounder of 2/14th Field Regiment up the Kokoda Track.

Julie and Doug will be away on Anzac Day, but send best wishes to all for a great day. My very best wishes to you both.

MARGARET MUNRIGHT, Tea Gardens, daughter of the late Jack Claypole 2/1, with Christmas greetings to all Pioneers from both

Terry and herself.

If space permits I shall publish the article from Rocky Creek that we had to omit in the November issue because of lack of space. My best wishes to you both.

BERT NEASBEY 2/2, Davistown, was 90 on 3rd December and had a great day with family and friends. I had meant to ring him with our best wishes, but with Max not well and in and out of hospital I did not get round to doing so.

Bert had a great day with lots of visitors, lots of phone calls and four cakes.

Thank you, May, for your kind words re the News. Max was very taken with your good wishes and I only hope I, or someone else, can keep up the good work.

My very best wishes to you both and I appreciate your kind words. Take care.

BETTY O'CONNOR, widow of Neville 2/2, with a late letter as we were going to press with some news from her part of the country.

Their group at Ballina area only meets twice a year for lunch and that depends on the health of members. Ossie Carter 2/2 lives in Wollongbar and has been in hospital for a month, but expected home shortly.

Betty keeps in touch with Nancy Robbins, widow of Ray 2/2 of Ballina, who has moved into a self care unit at the RSL Home. Nancy is in good health and still enjoying her bowls.

The group Betty went to Birdsville with last year are planning a trip to Victoria this year, something to look forward to in the future.

Betty was sorry to hear of Max's passing and sent her deepest sympathy to me and my family. Many thanks.

JANET O'NEILL, Clovelly, daughter of late Bill Robertson 2/2, with greetings for Christmas and hoping to see us on Tobruk Sunday.

Janet usually attends Tobruk Sunday at the Memorial at Five Dock each year and we are able to spend a few hours together.

Not many Pioneers are able to attend these days with age and illness catching up.

Good to hear from you, Janet, and will be hoping to see you on Tobruk Sunday along with Marj Kerslake and some of her family.

DOT PRIEST, Ballina, widow of Peter 2/1, with a long Christmas letter of her "doings" over the year and says she keeps busy having fun, sewing and craft work and doing things on the computer.

With Betty O'Connor they met up with Claire and Terry McGuire 2/1 for a Christmas lunch. The Carters were both on the sick list.

Daughter Pam and her husband Kevin are still tripping around in their caravan, it's a great life and they were at a beautiful dam at the time of writing and catching a lot of fish.

Good to hear from you again, we don't have too many of the Kyogle clan left on our roll any more. Take care and fond wishes.

JACK PAUL 2/1, Camira Qld., with his thanks for the last newsletter – says it is always welcome and keeps him in touch with his old mates of the 2/1sts. Does not see many in the area where he lives, but was very friendly with Les Tunks from Mareeba in North Queensland.

Jack was having a birthday early December (88 years young) and looking forward to a good day at his RSL Club and no sore head after.

Many thanks for the sub to the News, Jack, and keep well.

ERIKA PEILE, Caringbah, widow of Peter

2/1, with a welcome card for Christmas and enclosing a sub for the News. Many thanks. Have not seen any news in the local paper about your rowing family lately, hope they are still well. Best wishes.

FRANCES RHODES, Page A.C.T., daughter of the late Jim Rhodes 2/1, with her usual newsy letter and family doings. She and daughter Meg seem to be always on the go, even though busy working people.

Fran went on a 12-day cruise with her craft friends early in the year and had a wonderful time and would love to go again – work permitting.

This year's ski season was the best ever and she was there most weekends. There are some good ski fields close to Canberra. She was hoping to go to Colorado in February for two weeks, but did not hear if the trip eventuated.

Good to hear Meg loves her new job as nurse to a vet. She works with horses four days a week and goes to competitions riding most weekends.

Always good to hear from you Fran and hope the "job" position has improved. Take care and fond love.

EULALIE SAUER, Elanora Qld., widow of George 2/1, with a welcome letter and cheque enclosed as a donation to the News. Many thanks. Says she looks forward to the News even though she does not know many of the names mentioned.

Always seems to have plenty of family news to impart and we recently had quite a long telephone conversation, which was very interesting.

Her only grand-daughter was admitted to the Supreme Court in Brisbane last April and is practising with a local firm on the Gold Coast. She now joins her mother and eldest brother in the same profession.

You must be very proud of their achievements. Her youngest brother is studying for the Queensland Police Force. He had wanted to join the army, but knee reconstruction ruled that out.

Eulalie flew down to Adelaide last August and it was good to catch up with her son and family. She and George lived in S.A. before their move to Queensland.

Her daughter Elizabeth is kept busy at Bond University and may start her Masters Degree when she returns from Hong Kong early 2013. Eulalie will be caretaker of mail, dogs, etc. until her return. That will keep you on the run!!

Hope you enjoyed your holiday at Royal Pines and always good to hear from you.

BILL THIELE 2/1, Port Hughes S.A., with Christmas greetings to all Pioneers for a Happy Christmas and lots of good health and happiness in the coming year. He also enclosed a donation to funds, many thanks.

Betty did the writing and says Bill is keeping reasonably well at the moment, mainly minor problems with an eye operation in the near future and a skin cancer to be attended to in the coming weeks.

A few months ago he had a couple of falls and complains that he can't run any more. He will be 88 on 26th December and Betty 84, so not really doing too badly.

He complains that he can't do what he used to do, don't we all. However, as long as either

of you can drop us a line now and then to let us know how you are, we will be pleased to hear from you.

It's good to hear you are still keeping in touch with Doug Waters 2/1 and to have news of him. Many thanks and take care.

KATH TOOKER, West Pennant Hills, widow of Jack 2/1, with her love and best wishes for Christmas to all Pioneers and lots of good health in the coming year. Do hope you are keeping reasonably well, Kath, and able to still enjoy an outing now and again.

NOELA SHEEN, Pearce A.C.T., widow of Gordon 2/2, with Christmas greetings to all Pioneers and Max and myself.

This has been a good year for her – health better, able to drive and play golf, sold her town house and will be moving into a new apartment in March. So far have not had your new address, Noela, so hope the News arrives safely.

Good to hear from you – do keep in touch.

JOY TAYLOR, Allawah, daughter of late Jack Harvey 2/1, with a thank you note for making her so welcome at the Anzac functions last year and hopes to be able to attend again this year. Joy enclosed a cheque towards her subs and ongoing costs – many thanks.

Early this year Joy lost her husband Brian, and on behalf of the Association I sent her our deepest sympathy on her loss. In reply, she thanked us for our kind thoughts and hopes to once again be with us for Anzac Day.

Would be happy to have you join us again, Joy, and we send our best wishes.

HELEN WALKER, South Coogee, daughter of the late Jack and Mary Lloyd 2/1, with her thanks for the News and Christmas greetings to the Pioneer Family.

Sister to Tim Lloyd, Helen passed on the news that Tim's younger daughter had a little girl in July – Luella – and doing well. The family will all be together for Christmas.

Her parents, Mary and Jack, were very special friends to Max and I over many, many years and always good to hear news of them. Many thanks, Helen, and hope you may be able to attend one of the Anzac functions. Thank you for your phone call after Max's funeral – would be happy to see you if ever out my way.

JOANNA WHITELEY, Terara, daughter-in-law of the late Vic. Whiteley 2/1, with a welcome note for Christmas and news of Neil's doings during the year. Although Neil has had stints in Norway, Malaysia and Singapore as part of his job for the Brazil office of his firm he has also had more time in Sydney.

This gave them more time to do a trip to Central Australia mid year passing over Lake Eyre in flood, visiting Uluru and The Olgas, Kings Canyon and Alice Springs before a few days in Darwin.

Joanna baby sits the late Vic and Peg's grand-daughter Temperance one or two days a week, so is kept on her toes.

Both send their best wishes for 2013 to all Pioneers and their families and hope to catch up again one of these days.

• That's all the Mail Bag for this issue and our thanks to all those who sent messages apart from letters. All were appreciated and God's blessing for the coming year.

LAST POST

ALBERT BETTENS 2/1, Lennox Head, passed away on 28th November, 2012, aged 95 years. Since his wife Lilly passed away in August last year he has slowly declined in health and with Parkinsons Disease and eventually a stroke, he finally got his wish to be at peace with his dear wife Lilly.

His daughter Wendy Lincoln of Lennox Head passed on the sad news and said she had been their carer for many years since her father had a stroke five years ago and had a very close and loving relationship with her parents over the years. She likes to think they are now dancing together, with her dad taking some time out for fishing and a game of cricket.

Many thanks for passing on the sad news Wendy, and I am sure he will be sadly missed. He is survived by four daughters, 13 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

Dot Priest wrote that she went to the service for your father which was held in the Church of England Hall at Lennox Head and there were a lot of people there to afternoon tea and to pay their respects.

Our sincere sympathy is passed on to your families in their sad loss.

PIONEER WEBSITE NEWS

From the Website Secretary

Our website is celebrating its first birthday and though we haven't had a lot of enquiries, those we received were very interesting.

In November we received a request from Leonie Kidman, regarding her late uncle Ron Kruger 2/1, who fought at Balikpapan. Leonie would like to know if there are any members who knew him, as she would appreciate any memories they have of him.

TOM OSBORN, son of the late Col. Gordon Osborn 2/1, wrote for information on the making of the "Rats of Tobruk" medals by "Lofty" Barlow.

He is compiling a history of the medal, which was made from captured tank parts, shell cases and a Stuka bomber shot down over Tobruk. According to Geoff Graham, nephew of the late Major Geoff Graham 2/1, there were only 20 made. Tom would like to contact anyone who has one or knows where one is displayed.

AINSLEY COLE (nee Tooker) wrote that she had visited the Australian Army Infantry Museum at Singleton and was surprised there was nothing on display of the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion.

She suggested we provide the museum with a history of the unit.

DEL HIRD, daughter of the late Leo Ferris 2/1, wrote that while searching Google, she was excited to be directed to our website.

"Having grown up with the Pioneer News being a regular newsletter" in her household, she didn't understand or appreciate the significance of the everlasting bond between the Pioneers and how the newsletter kept them together through their lives.

Thanks you Del for your words of appreciation and sorry to hear of the loss of your mother, in 2011.

DENNIS CLARK wrote asking if anyone knew who was writing a book on the 1st Pioneers AIF (1914-1918) and could they write in with their contact details.

Again, our website address is www.pioneerbattalion.com.au and we are happy to try to answer any queries you may have.

AWARD TO ALICE KANG

The Returned and Services League of Australia has awarded its highest honour to Alice Kang, Concord hospital's Marketing Manager and Co-ordinator of Veterans' Services.

At the RSL's NSW State Congress, Alice was presented with the League's Certificate of Merit and Gold Badge, recognising her outstanding work over a long period in supporting veterans' needs at Concord Hospital. Alice received the award from RSL National President, Rear Admiral Ken Doolan, and State President, Mr Don Rowe.

The Certificate of Merit is the most prestigious award the RSL can bestow on someone who is not a member of the League, and the announcement was met with a standing ovation from the 250 delegates attending the Congress at Rooty Hill RSL Club.

Alice is the Secretary of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway at Concord and our heartiest congratulations are extended to her on behalf of the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Battalions Association.

THANKS TO DON CRAWFORD

Thanks to our Treasurer for some of the extra tasks he has undertaken on behalf of the Association over the past year. Visiting Mailroom Express to place the order for the printing and addressing of the envelopes for posting the Pioneers News, picking them up when printed and then delivering them to Beverly Hills.

Also his visits to the Occidental Hotel to obtain details for the ANZAC Day reunion and attending the RSL ANZAC March Committee meetings to receive rules for ANZAC Day March.

Your efforts were much appreciated Don, especially over the last few months while Max spent so much time in hospital.

67th ANNIVERSARY VP DAY

By Margaret Munright at Rocky Creek

We, Terry and I, have experienced something very special.

We know it's special when we meet Ray, son of the late 2/1 Pioneer Jim Law,

When we laid our wreath at the 2/1-2/2 Pioneers' obelisk, how proud we felt,

The fly past of three WWII planes, the sound of the air raid siren,

The dedication of my father's plaque in recognition of his war service

The poppy I leave with him.

The speeches, the unveiling and dedications,

The marching of proud Military and

Ex-Servicemen,

The wonderful display of precise marching by Cadets,

The Catafalque party taking up their positions in readiness for the wreath laying

Ray, solemn and dignified, he gently lays his wreath beneath our flag in memory of his father and all the Pioneers.

The feeling you get when Piper Lawie played The Lament.

The reading of The Ode, They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old . . .

The Last Post,

Rouse,

Advance Australia Fair sung with gusto.

I do know we three were very lucky to have been there that day. To acknowledge the bravery of our fathers and the men of the 2/1-2/2 Pioneers - "First In Last Out".

As Terry and I drove along the main road through Greta on our way home, I let sand from Trinity Beach just gently fall from my hand as a little reminder of the great sacrifice men from Greta Army camp made for us. We will never forget. Thank you.

SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE APRIL

With subscriptions send news of family and happenings.

All correspondence to Hon. Secretary; 3 Enoggera Rd, Beverly Hills NSW 2209.

22.2.13

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

Statement of Donations and Expenditure
for the Year Ended 22/2/13

EXPENDITURE

Pioneer News	– Printing	1,905.00
	– Postage	521.05
		<u>\$2,426.05</u>
M. Herron – Petty Cash		300.00
Dick Smith Flyer Inks		87.54
John Tyler Website Rental		166.95
Red Fragrance Wreath Anzac Day		75.00
Aub Brazier Bugler Anzac Eve		50.00
Darcy Henderson 2nd Anzac Eve		50.00
Jaff Electronics Typewriter Repairs		145.00
Aub Brazier Gift Retired Bugler 50 Years		100.00
Kokoda Track Walkway Donation		100.00
		<u>\$3,500.54</u>

DONATIONS

Donations	2,815.00
Bank Interest	37.91

\$2,852.91

CASH BANK BALANCE

Cash at Bank 20-2-12	\$8,596.06
Add Donations	<u>2,852.91</u>
	\$11,448.97
Less Expenditure	<u>3,500.54</u>
Cash at Bank 20-2-13	<u>\$7,948.43</u>
EXCESS EXPENDITURE over Income	<u>\$647.63</u>
	D. Crawford
	Hon. Treasurer

PIONEER NEWS



Phone 9759 5491

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

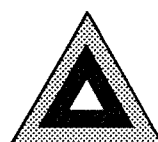
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SEPTEMBER 2013

PIONEERS ATTEND ANZAC ACTIVITIES

WREATH LAYING SERVICE

On Wednesday, 24th April, members and relatives assembled in Martin Place for our service to honour our Pioneers who gave their lives during the war and those who passed away in later years. Sadly, this included Max Herron who was Secretary of the Association since 1957 and Editor of the Pioneer News for 55 years. He will be sadly missed.

As mentioned previously, it was decided last year that we call on the younger generation to assist in the ANZAC activities – John Hayden, son of the late Capt. John Hayden 2/1, to be the Marshal for the Wreath Laying Ceremony, Mark Neasbey, son of Bert Neasbey 2/2 to be Chairman of the ANZAC Reunion and Darcy Henderson, great-grandson of the late Bert Rayner 2/1 of Kyogle to assist our retiring bugler Aub Brasier at the Wreath Laying Ceremony, as this was to be Aub's last duty to the Pioneers after 52 years.

John Hayden, Marshal, called on the assembled gathering to fall in and commence proceedings. Banner bearers were Don Crawford for the 2/2nds (sadly, the only veteran in attendance) and John Collins carried the banner for the 2/1sts. His father, Pat Collins, was originally a 2/1st Pioneer before transferring to the 2/2nds. The wreath layer was Dean Oliver, son of the late Ken Oliver 2/1st.

After the wreath laying, Jim Geltch, from Moama, son of the late Alf Geltch 2/1, recited the Ode To The Fallen and this was followed by Last Post and Reveille by Darcy Henderson and Aub Brasier.

John Hayden then called on the assembled gathering of Pioneers and friends to lay their wreaths and thanked the two buglers for their attendance. Also thanks to Lynne Berry (Herron) for supervising and arranging purchase of the Association wreath.

Amongst the relatives attending the Wreath Laying were family members of both 2/1 and 2/2 including Val Crawford, Janet O'Neill, Kay Burton, Mark Neasbey, Robyn Bell, David Herron, Lynne Berry, Peg Herron, Helen Walker, Jim and Matt Geltch, Joan Lake, Marj Kerslake and grand-daughter Ellie Stolp, Dean Oliver, John and Gordon Collins, Darcy Henderson and Aub Brasier.

ANZAC DAY MARCH

MARK NEASBEY, son of Bert 2/2, was the March Marshal and, as for the last 20 years, the Castle Hill Youth Band, resplendent in the blue and white uniforms, formed up to lead the Pioneers. Once again, we were most appreciative of their attendance and thank them for their support.

Our Treasurer, Don Crawford 2/2 was the march leader and, sadly, only two Pioneers in the march, Noel Schomberg 2/1 and Bert Neasbey 2/2 – Laurie Kelly 2/1 was in one of the Land Rovers earlier in the march.

Banner bearers were Tim Lloyd 2/1 (his 31st year) and John Collins for the 2/2nds. The Australian flags were carried by Ray Law 2/1 and the 2/2 by Gordon Collins.

It was good to see so many of the family members of veterans who had passed away over the years taking part in the march.

ANZAC DAY REUNION DINNER

As in past years, the venue for the reunion dinner was the Occidental Hotel in York Street, opposite Wynyard Park, where members were greeted by the Functions Organiser Delfina Moscoso and her friendly staff.

In the foyer were Pioneer sons Geoff Finlay, Ray Law and David Herron, name tags were issued and lunch fees collected before members were directed upstairs to their seats and the luncheon. Treasurer Don Crawford was seated at the top of the stairs to collect donations towards the Pioneers News and the successful running of the Association, his efforts very much appreciated by members. Josh Herron was busy putting out cards and various duties around the tables, sadly with no Max to give him instructions. Many thanks Josh.

Our 2/2 Vice-President Jack Allison had apologised for his non-attendance on ANZAC Day, so Mark Neasbey assumed the duties of Chairman of the reunion. There were only four veterans present on the day – Laurie Kelly and Noel Schomberg 2/1 and Don Crawford and Bert Neasbey 2/1.

Keeping with the programme, Mark recited the Ode To The Fallen with mention of the names of all Pioneers who had passed away since last ANZAC Day. He then made special mention of the passing, in early March, of our long-time Secretary and Editor of Pioneer News, Max Herron, who had held both positions since 1957.

Mark also extended thanks to the working sons for a job well done – Geoff Finlay, Ray Law, David and Josh Herron, Tim Lloyd and those who "shouted the bar" – much appreciated – and to the Function Manager Delfina and her staff for making the reunion a success.

ANZAC REUNION ATTENDANCE

There were only four Pioneer members in attendance as mentioned in Mark's welcome, but 40 relatives of members and 22 ladies.

It was pleasing to see so many sons of both 2/1 and 2/2 members who had passed away over the years in attendance, both at the march and reunion, and hope that, in future years, you will be able to keep the Association alive in honour of your fathers and grandfathers.

LUNCH WITH THE LADIES

The ladies also enjoyed their lunch at the Occidental and, as usual, were joined by family members. Robyn Bell was the only visitor from Victoria – the Grant family sadly missed after attending for so many years.

Sydneysiders included Marj Kerslake and daughters Barbara Harrison and Margaret Stolp, Janet O'Neill, Natalie and Catherine Neasbey, Marie Jensen, Pam Herrick, Julie Jardine, Helen Walker, Ruth Bosanko, Prue Armstrong, Karen Withey, Maureen Jarvis, Jenny Stubbs, Leanne Goodwin with Hayden and Madison, Peg Herron and daughter-in-law

Lynn who, as always, looked after the collection of the ladies lunch money. Many thanks Lynn. We hope to see you all again next year.

FOND MEMORIES OF MAX

The following letter was received in March from Jack Allison, Vice-President of the Association, a few months after the passing of the Secretary of the Association, Max Herron. For personal reasons Peg did not take it along on ANZAC Day but phoned Jack and told him she would insert it in the next issue of Pioneer News.

"Dear Peg,

After a long association, I feel I couldn't let this time go by without scribing a note mentioning what Max's friendship has meant to me.

Army friendships can refer to more than slogging along in the Army unit and fronting up to what is expected of you. Memories of the fellas you know so well at close range come up easily. But I value greatly the memories I have of those whose years were not merely on patrol or when the clock just didn't exist.

Max stands out strongly among such memories of value. Times of friendship were intermittent, spasmodic or in committee – festive occasions, ex-army gatherings. Max's constancy, reliability, enduring effort always meant things would turn out right, his good humour always prevailing. Peg was always a wonderful support.

I carry these fond memories of Max."

Jack Allison

Many thanks Jack for your kind tribute, from my family and myself.

"RATS OF TOBRUK" MEDALS

TOM OSBORN, son of the late Col. Gordon Osborn 2/1, had been in touch with Max about Tom's research of the Pioneers "Tobruk Rats" Medals. He was interested in getting in touch with any of the family members who may have one in their possession.

On a trip to Sydney in June, Tom phoned me to see if he could pay a visit to photograph the one Max had been given by Brigadier John Gilchrist and I was delighted to meet him again after so many years since his father's funeral in 1987. Gordon and his wife, Belle, were well known to me from the old days of the 2/1-2/2 Comforts Fund, of which I was a member.

I was sorry that Max could not have been here to meet him, but Tom was able to take his photos and tell me a lot about his research.

During his visit to Sydney he paid a wonderful visit to Laurie Kelly 2/1 at his Oxford Falls home and able to chat to Laurie about his time in the Pioneers and in later years. In conversation it turns out Laurie's daughter is a good friend of Tom's sister – small world.

Would be pleased to have any further details from your research, Tom, and to publish any results in the "Pioneer News" if you need help at any time.

With best wishes, Peg Herron

MAIL BAG

By PEG HERRON

• Another ANZAC Day has passed and much better weather than last year for the marchers and the spectators. Despite age catching up with the veterans, the ranks were boosted by many sons and daughters who acted as carers. Sadly, our Pioneers were few in number, only four veterans able to take place in the march.

However, quite a lot of letters for my Mail Bag and my best wishes to all those who can still manage to pen a few lines.

JACK ALLISON 2/2, Eastwood, with his apologies for his non-attendance at the ANZAC Day reunion and hoped it would be a wonderful occasion. He sent a generous donation to funds and best wishes from both he and Barbara for the luncheon. Many thanks, Jack, and I have printed your tribute to Max elsewhere in the News.

GWEN BARTON, Gulgong, widow of Albert 2/1, with a cheque for the News and her deepest sympathy on the passing of Max. Many thanks Gwen, and for your loving thoughts for me and my family at this sad time.

Alby's friendship with Max goes back a long way and he valued it greatly.

Hope this finds you well and happy in the Lodge. Take care.

ROBYN BELL, Balwyn Vic, daughter of late Leo Morris 2/1, with her kind message of sympathy on Max's passing and her thanks for all the years he has devoted to the Pioneer News and the Association. Many thanks Robyn.

Pleased to see you were able to once again make the trip to Sydney for ANZAC Day and the Wreath Laying. Sadly, our members are getting fewer each year and we are hoping that the younger generation will be able to carry on.

Robyn passed on congratulations to Mark Neasbey on his role as MC and the enthusiasm shown by the younger members in their support to the Committee was very pleasing.

She was delighted also to see Gary Lewis (son of late Sam Lewis 2/1) just before the march began, given the lifetime of friendship between Sam and her father. Robyn was also pleased to link up with the Collins brothers, John and Gordon, Geoff Finlay and Geoff Stone. Her best wishes are passed on to the "Pioneer Family" and she hoped to be in Sydney for VP Day at Concord.

SANDRA BOWMER, Miranda, daughter of our Treasurer Don Crawford, with a kind message of sympathy to my family and myself on Max's passing. It was very much appreciated, Sandra, many thanks. Sandra kindly keeps our mailing list up-to-date.

KAY BURTON, Springwood, daughter of late Bert Rayner 2/1, with expressions of sympathy on the passing of Max – one of the last Pioneers – and God's blessings. Good to see you on ANZAC Eve, Kay, and your help with Darcy.

EVELYN BOOTH, Wagga Wagga, partner of the late Jack Morgan 2/2, with a welcome donation to funds and her sympathy to the Herron family for their loss. Many thanks, Ev.

Evelyn continues to enjoy good health and considers herself lucky. Says her grandson marched very proudly on ANZAC Day for his grandfather and Ev had one granddaughter in the Army and one in the RAAF who served in Afghanistan. Her husband also served and they live in Canberra.

She sends a big hello to Betty O'Connor

and Kath Tooker, whom we hear of from time to time. Kath doesn't keep the best of health, but Betty still plays golf and able to travel. Her best wishes are passed on to all Pioneers.

Always happy to have news of you, Ev, and hope you continue to keep well.

AUB BRASIER, Dee Why, with his best wishes to the Association and was honoured to be at the Wreath Laying Ceremony on ANZAC Eve. Also passed on to the Herron family his sympathy on the loss of Max. Many thanks, Aub. Your association with the Pioneers goes back a long way.

ERIC CAUSER 2/1, Hamilton Vic, was not able to be in Sydney for ANZAC Day, but spoke to me on the phone and sent his regards to all. He had just had some "nasties" removed that day from his face. Hope all is well with both Doff and yourself, Eric, and Robyn Bell was going to contact you shortly. My fond wishes to you both – take care.

LEXIE COATES, Umina, widow of Jack 2/1, sent her condolences to the Association on the loss of their long-term Secretary and to Peg and her family. In earlier years, her husband Jack was a great and long-time member of the Association. Many thanks Lex and hope this finds you well – always happy to hear from you. Take care and love.

WYNN DWYER, Bronte, widow of Mick 2/1, with a welcome note and a cheque for the News – many thanks. I passed the cheque on to our Treasurer Wynn for the full amount and put some of it towards the wreath for the Wreath Laying Ceremony on ANZAC Eve. Trust that was OK with you.

Hope you are well and looking forward to some nice warm weather and good health. Take care and fond wishes.

GRACE FOWKES, Wentworthville, widow of Dick ("Snowy") Fowkes 2/1, with my thanks for your welcome letter written on ANZAC Day, realising just how I would be missing Max and sending me such a lovely message.

Grace watched the march on TV and was lucky enough to see her granddaughter driving a Land Rover transporting some older veterans (Dick would have been so proud of her). She is in Army Reserves and her husband now in Afghanistan serving his 3rd term. (Please God, it will soon be over and he will be home safely.)

Many thanks, Grace, for your lovely letter and so happy to hear news of friends from the past – almost like family. My love to you and hope you are keeping well.

JIM GILCHRIST, Deacon ACT, son of our late Patron (Brigadier John Gilchrist, ED) with a card for ANZAC Day and thanks on behalf of he and wife Kay to all Pioneers. Your dad was sadly missed at the reunion, but all had happy memories of past years. My kind wishes to you both – and your flowers are happily blooming in my sunroom.

MAUREEN FLEMING, Mittagong, widow of Bill 2/1, with a welcome donation to the News, many thanks. Also news of her latest trip overseas.

Late last year she went travelling again with her friend Pat to America. They had a wonderful time visiting friends in Portland on the West Coast and then on to Vancouver, across to New York and into Canada. A friend then drove them to Vermont to see the lovely autumn colours, and had a couple of days in Hawaii before flying home.

A visit to her son in Queensland was next trip on the list, to whom she passes on her Pioneer News. (Send me his address, Maureen, and I'll put his name on the mailing list.)

Always happy to hear from you with your news – guess you are already planning what you can do next. My love and best wishes for lots of good health – happy travelling. Take care.

JENNY DAVIDSON, Hon. Secretary of the 2/2 Pioneer Btn Assn in Victoria, with a tribute to the passing of Max. Says Max's contribution to the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Btns Association has been so highly regarded by so many and will be for a long time.

Many thanks, Jenny, for your kind remarks and my best wishes passed on to Col. Hamley and your members.

OLIVE FINLAY, Mt Pritchard, widow of Gordon 2/1, was still suffering a lot of aches and pains when I spoke to her recently, but hoping the warm weather would be a big help.

Her daughter Jan Reynolds from Port Macquarie had been down recently and was going on a cruise of the Pacific Islands with some friends. Hope you had a great holiday, Jan, and refreshed after the sad passing of your husband Allan some months ago.

Take care, Olive, and love and best wishes.

ANN HEALEY, Semaphore SA, daughter of late Jim Hall 2/1 of Kyogle, with a loving card and prayers on the passing of Max, especially when she watched the film on Tobruk and tried to understand what those brave men went through. Says how proud she felt having known those men with whom her father served.

ANZAC Day in Semaphore was huge – the Dawn Service enormous and her thoughts were with her time in Sydney last year with the Pioneers and their families.

Fond love Ann and hope we may see you again one day soon.

JACK HEARN 2/2, Howlong, per pen of wife Audrey, with sincere sympathy on Max's passing and how she and Jack were privileged to meet him at Rocky Creek at the Association Wreath Laying in 2001, while in Queensland on holidays.

How time flies when you get older – just seems like yesterday. My best wishes to you both and trust your health has improved Jack. Take care.

DARCY HENDERSON, Springwood, great-grandson of late Bert Rayner 2/1 of Kyogle, with a thank you card for the privilege of playing the bugle at Max's funeral and at the Wreath Laying on ANZAC Eve. Many thanks, Darcy, both on my family's behalf and the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Bns Assocn.

MOLLIE-JEAN HUNT, New Farm Qld, widow of John 2/1, with a welcome donation to the News and her sadness at the passing of Max. Sends her deepest sympathy and hopes the Association can continue to function with assistance from the younger members.

She enjoys the News to keep her in touch and appreciates so many helping when so many are too distant to do so.

Her best wishes are passed on to all those who are "keeping the Association paper afloat".

Thank you for your donation to funds, Mollie, and always pleased to have a note from you. Take care, and my best wishes.

GLORIA HUTCHINSON, Caringbah, widow of Bill 2/1, with her love and sorrow at the news of Max's passing – Bill and Max were in the Sig Platoon together in Borneo and kept in touch over many years until Bill passed away.

Fond wishes, Gloria, always good to hear from you and take care.

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

Don used to enjoy keeping up with news of Pioneers through the Pioneer News and looked forward to receiving it in the mail, and Nancy offers her sincere thanks for the dedication of those who are still "keeping on, keeping on".

Do hope you are keeping well, Nancy, and always happy to have a few lines from you – time is marching on and our mailing list sadly getting fewer each issue.

Take care and my very best wishes.

MARGARET MUNRIGHT, Tea Gardens, daughter of the late Jack Claypole 2/1, with a phone call recently re some photographs of her fathers and her attempts, if possible, to find someone who could identify the Pioneers in the snapshots.

They were taken at Greta in the early days and at various stages during the war and, as so much time has elapsed, it is proving rather difficult to find anyone who could identify them.

I have spoken to Margaret and was only able to personally recognise one of them taken in Sydney on ANZAC Day in 1966, but shall endeavour to show them to Ern Walker 2/1 whom I see at most Rats of Tobruk meetings. He may be able to recognise some of them.

Will keep in touch, Margaret, but sadly so few 2/1sts now still with us. Laurie Kelly, Noel Schomberg and Ern Walker I see from time-to-time, and maybe they may be able to recognise some of the soldiers – here's hoping.

My best wishes to you and Terry and I will ring you if I have any luck.

KELLIE JONES, Kingston ACT, grand-daughter of NX79750 T. Jones with a welcome donation to funds and her thanks for receiving the News in the mail for some years. Is now happy to receive her copy "online" and sends her best wishes and thanks to all. Thanks Kellie and I have removed your name from our mailing list – all the best.

SUE KENNY, Lambton, daughter of Jack Bertram 2/1, with heartfelt sympathy on the passing of Max and says Jack was devastated at the News – they have been friends for such a long time and very close when they lived here in Sydney. Also with brother Jim who lived locally.

Jack has been living with Sue and her family for the past nine years and up until two years ago was relatively independent. He is very frail now and confused. Was a wonderful Vice-President and committee man and we enjoyed both Jean and his company at so many Pioneer functions.

Thank you for your donation to funds Sue, and for your letter, so few Pioneers left up your way that we have had no news of him for some time. Both he and Jean lovingly remembered. My loving wishes to your families.

HARRY LAMERTON, Douglas Park, son of the late Jack Lamerton, D Coy 2/1, with a phone call recently on my efforts to find the whereabouts of his mother, Marie. She is in Blue Hills Retirement Village at Prestons and I was happy to have news of her after several phone calls as to her whereabouts. Has just recently celebrated her 87th birthday.

Bernard Lamerton attended the Pioneer reunion on ANZAC Day, but Harry had grandchildren marching locally and attended their special day.

My best wishes to you Harry and thank you for your message – shall ring mum when I get the News to the printer.

DAWN LEVY, Revesby, widow of Roy 2/2, with a welcome cheque for the News, many thanks, and your kind message of sympathy on the loss of my beloved Max.

Have had a few health problems, Dawn, stitches on leg and face, but they are healing and I'm trying to catch up with the News. Often think of you and guess you are keeping busy with family and grandchildren. How time marches on so quickly. Take care and love.

TERRY McQUIRE 2/1, Lismore, with a kind message of sympathy from he and Clair on the sad occasion of the passing of Max. My thanks to you both for your kind wishes to myself and family. Hope you are both keeping well and still able to catch up occasionally for a luncheon with the local Pioneers. Take care.

JULIE McWILLIAM, Griffith, daughter of the late Steve Clark 2/1, with deepest

sympathy to me and my family on the sad loss of our beloved Max. Julie said he was a fine man and his loss will continue to be felt by all who had the honour of knowing him.

The family had just returned from a holiday in Samoa. Whilst there, daughter Karen and Nick announced their engagement and the family were thrilled. Our heartfelt congratulations to them and so pleased Max and I were able to meet them over at the Kokoda Track last year.

They all spent ANZAC Day in Samoa, the Memorial Clock tower in Apia adorned with the Australian and New Zealand flags and lovely wreaths.

My fond wishes to both Doug and yourself and many thanks for your kind words on the work I continue to do for our Pioneer family, very much appreciated.

BERT NEASBEY, 2/2, Davistown, with cards from May, Lynda and Bert himself over many weeks since Max passed away with good wishes and lots of encouraging words to thank both Max and myself for so many years of service to the Association. It is pleasing to hear that the time spent on Pioneer News and mail has been appreciated and I hope to be able to carry on with the job entrusted to me. Many thanks to you for your kind words.

Over the weeks, Bert and May have celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary on 6th May, congratulations to you both, had the arrival of a new great-grandchild on 12th June (Oliver Marcus) and a trip to hospital for May with a heart attack for 10 days. It has been a hard road back, but with lots of help from daughter Lynda, May is recovering slowly.

Thank you for your caring and do hope that the coming weeks will be a return to good health, May, and thank you so much for your weekly cards with good wishes.

BETTY O'CONNOR, West Ballina, widow of Neville 2/2, with a card of sympathy on Max's passing and hopes that time will heal the big hole left in the Association by his loss, many thanks, Betty, and hope you are keeping well and still enjoying your golf.

JANET O'NEILL, Clovelly, daughter of late Bill Robertson 2/2, with her love on hearing of Max's passing and happy that she was able to join with the ladies on ANZAC Day after the march. Many thanks, Janet, and hopefully will meet up again at one of the Rats of Tobruk luncheons later in the year.

PETA PARRAVICINI, Menora WA, daughter of late Warwick Sands 2/1, with a message of sympathy on the sad passing of Max. Her father served with the 2/1 in Borneo and she had been in touch with Max late last year when Warwick passed away.

Thank you Peta and I shall continue sending the News with our best wishes.

JOY PREEDY, Shenton Park WA, widow of Len 2/2, with her deepest sympathy on the loss of Max and said Len had thought very highly of Max when they had been in touch in the years gone by.

Len passed away in 1999 and was very involved in Pioneer activities in Western Australia. Joy remains on our mailing list and I was happy to hear from her after such a long time.

Hope you enjoy good health, Joy, and many thanks for your card. Take care.

DOT PRIEST, Ballina, widow of Peter 2/1, with fond love to myself and family on the sad passing of Max, also from daughter Pam and husband Kevin. Hope this finds all well Dot – not too many of our Pioneer family left now on the North Coast.

Many thanks for your words of comfort, Dot, and take care.

FRANCES RHODES, Page ACT, daughter of the late Jim Rhodes 2/1, with her deepest

sympathy on viewing the Pioneer website and learning of Max's passing. What a loss to the Association and another brave and great Pioneer at rest. Sadly, not too many left Fran, age catching up.

Will be in touch with you later and hope you and Meg are both well. Fond love to both.

LOMA SERVILLO, Willagee WA, our visitor from Western Australia each ANZAC Day with Pat Bentley, wrote a welcome note as to Pat's progress in the Aged Care Home where she resides with alzheimer's and Parkinsons disease.

We miss you both on ANZAC Day and often wonder how she is. Thanks for your letter, Loma, and the story of your long friendship with Pat's family.

I would appreciate if you would let me know from time-to-time of her well being.

Fond wishes, Loma, and my thanks for your kind words of sympathy on the passing of my loved Max. It was rather a sad time over the ANZAC activities.

JOY TAYLOR, Allawah, daughter of the late Jack Harvey 2/1, with a note apologising for missing ANZAC Day events this year, but was having a medical problem and unable to attend.

Joy's daughters had booked her a trip to New Zealand for two weeks in early May, so she put off the surgery till the end of May. All went well, with no further problems.

Thank you for your kind offer of help with the Pioneer News, Joy, and as mentioned to you on the phone I shall ring you when the next issue is printed if I need help. My daughter usually helps, but she lives in Murwillumbah and has to fly down when I need her.

RITA TREFONI, Pendle Hill, widow of Noel 2/1, with a welcome donation to the News and her sincere sympathy on the passing of Max. Noel and Rita were regular attendees of our functions in the early days of the Association. Sadly, so many old friends now no longer with us as time marches on. My fond wishes, Rita, take care.

LES TUNKS 2/1 Mareeba Qld, and wife Lesley were pleased to hear from me when I phoned them for VP Day at Rocky Creek. Neither were able to attend the service due to walking problems and Lesley's eyes not the best. They have lots of home help and care in getting to appointments when needed.

Ray Law's trip was rushed and he apologised for not having time to pay them a visit.

Was nice to speak with you, Lesley, and shall keep in touch. Take care.

ERIKA PEILE, Caringbah, widow of Peter 2/1, with a short note enclosing her sub to the News and promise of a chat when time permits. Thanks, Erika, and hope your health has improved since your last note. Best wishes.

HELEN WALKER, South Coogee, daughter of the late Jack and Mary Lloyd 2/1, with a letter of deepest sympathy on the passing of Max. Her parents were very close friends of both Max and myself over many years and were sadly missed. Many thanks, Helen, and always happy to have news of the family.

MANDY WHITMORE, Dalkeith WA, daughter of the late Bernie Reiners 2/1, of Corryong Vic, with the family's deepest sympathy on the passing of Max. They had recently only read of his death when they found a "Pioneer News" while on a visit to their mum.

They had fond memories of lots of happy times on holidays over the years, as Bern and Max were close friends while both were in the Sig Platoon of the 2/1sts. Good to have news of mum, Mandy, and I send my love and best wishes to all. It was a lovely surprise to hear from you.

NEIL WHITELEY, Jerara, son of the late Vic Whiteley 2/1, long-time Treasurer of the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Btn, with his sympathy passed on to myself and the Association on the loss of Max.

Neil was in Korea on work duties when he heard the news. He and wife Joanna have attended the reunion on ANZAC Day when Neil's work duties allow.

Brother Chris, Lithgow, also sent his sympathy – proud to know Max through 1st Beverly Hills Scouts and the Pioneer Bn Association.

Thank you both and good to have news of the family.

BELINDA WILLMORE, Bellevue Hill, widow of Ian 2/2, with her condolences to myself and family on the passing of Max and to the Association on the loss of a wonderful Secretary for over fifty years. Says it has been marvellous getting the Pioneer News so regularly over so many years, giving the Pioneers and their families so much pleasure and making it possible for everyone to keep up with the news of both Pioneer units.

Thank you so much for your letter, Belinda, and I will try and keep up with the good work and hopefully the "younger generation" will be able to carry on with the Pioneer News started by their fathers so long ago.

My very best wishes to you and for your kind thoughts.

PETER and VIRGINIA SMITH, Camden, our "Pioneer News" typesetters over many years, with their deepest sympathy on the loss of Max and offers of help to me in my new position as Editor. Your kind words on Max were very much appreciated and I shall be grateful to you both for help in my new jobs Secretary and Editor.

• That's all the Mail Bag for this issue and my thanks for all the messages and cards on Max's passing. All were very much appreciated and God's blessings for your caring.

PIONEER WEBSITE NEWS

From WEBSITE SECRETARY
www.pioneerbattalion.com.au

TOM OSBORN wrote to thank us for the information we gave regarding the "Rats of Tobruk" medal which he is researching. He is collating information of who now own the medals and how they acquired them.

STEVEN CHARKER, grandson of Colin Charker 2/1, wrote asking if anyone has information about his grandfather and his service in the army.

LORRAINE EATHER wrote to thank "the men of the 2/1st" who were friends of her father "Bluey" Eather. She comments that he never discussed the war, but told her of the men and many "funny events". His grandson, Nicky, has just left the army after two stints in both Timor and Afghanistan. She also said he is redheaded like "Bluey" and has his sense of humour.

MAURICE ELLIOTT sent in a photo of Matthew Elliott 2/2 attending Anzac Day in Wollongong in his son's jeep. It was driven by his grandson with his great-grandson sitting in the back seat wearing his medals. Four generations of the Elliott family "on parade". Wonderful effort.

MAUREEN UPSTON wrote asking about the service record of Leslie Alfred White 2/2. Anyone knowing him please let us know.

ROB GRAHAM complimented us on our website via email, and included photos of a "Rats of Tobruk" medal owned by her great-uncle Lt.-Col. George Graham. Rob's father had stored it in an old cigarette tin in a drawer for many years.

GEOFF FOX wrote informing us he is designing a memorial in Moratai where his father served.

JOHN TYLER, son-in-law of late Bill Jollie 2/1, wrote to say he has renewed our Domain name for another two years. Many thanks John, and our best wishes.

We are happy to try and answer any queries you may have.

VP DAY 2013 - ROCKY CREEK

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

Once again a year has slipped away and VP Day was approaching fast. I was no better organised than usual despite my intentions to make sure that arrangements were made well in advance for a change. A last minute scramble ensued trying to organise flights, accommodation and car hire but managed to get there more by good luck than anything else I think.

After leaving home at 3.30 am for the early flight to Cairns I arrived at 9.30 am to a typically beautiful sunny day that Nth Queenslanders call winter! I had taken my jacket off in the plane and didn't look like needing it again until I left the plane back in Sydney on the return flight on Monday.

After picking up the rental car and checking all was well at the motel, I headed for Rocky Creek and the "meet and greet". As this was my fifth trip and the locals being as friendly and hospitable as they are it was more than enjoyable to renew acquaintances which have, by now, become firm friendships. To spend some time catching up with the latest developments in the Memorial Park, visit the Plinth for the 2/1-2/2 Pioneers and the Tobruk Fig Tree were all highlights, but it was sighting the plaque dedicated to Dad on the Wall of Remembrance which brought a lump to my throat. I had been planning to arrange this since my first visit to Rocky Creek but for some reason had always hesitated when deciding to do it. I think it was experiencing the dedication of Jack Claypole's plaque last year with his daughter Margaret and her husband Terry that finally convinced me to go ahead with Dad's and I am very grateful to them for sharing that experience with me. A small service was held later in the afternoon where the next of kin of each veteran whose plaque was to be dedicated was presented with a Rocky Creek Memorial Park Badge. I will give this to Mum along with the photos of the Memorial Wall. I haven't told her that I had organised this so it should come as a surprise to her. I was then privileged to be asked to say a few words about Dad's service and any recollections of his time in the Tablelands that he had passed on to me. I spoke of his fondness of the people who had tried to make his stay there enjoyable and gave such a welcome despite the War. I also mentioned the suspension bridge the 2/1sts had built during their stay there and how blessed I was to have been shown the remains of it by one of the locals on a previous trip. I took a moment to place a poppy on the plaques of Jack Claypole and Bill Gamble and pay my respects and it was then time to head back to Cairns for a welcome night's sleep before the more formal service scheduled for the coming day.

Sunday, dawned clear, bright and warm (I'm beginning to think that's all they have) and after breakfast and collecting the wreath which had been delivered to Reception, I set out on the drive back to Rocky Creek. Over the morning, the crowd steadily grew and I think it became the biggest attendance I have experienced there. It seems that Australians are increasingly more determined to give due recognition and thanks for what we have and the price that was paid for it.

As usual, the service began at 1.00 sharp with the mournful sound of an air raid siren which preceded a spectacular low level fly over by two WWII fighters based at the nearby Mareeba aerodrome. It certainly sets the scene! Immediately following the fly past the families of the fourteen veterans whose plaques were to be dedicated assembled at the Memorial Wall. One-by-one the names were read out, each one accompanied by the tolling of a single ring of a bell made from a WWII artillery shell. The family then were given a poppy each to place on their loved one's plaque. It was undoubtedly one of the most poignant moments of my life to go forward and place a poppy for Dad and I don't mind admitting to finding it all very emotional.

The service then proceeded with the usual format of a marching in of a parade of ex-servicemen with a guard of honour mounted by the local Cadet unit. The guest speaker this year was a theist who serves as an RAAF reservist who has seen tours of duty in East Timor, the Solomons and Afghanistan. After addressing the significance of the Tablelands during the War and the contribution made by servicemen who were stationed there to our national security during those desperate times, he moved to the significance of the anti-malarial research conducted there whilst the Hospital was in operation. He went on to reveal the incredible statistics that whilst there were a staggering 6,154 battle casualties during the New Guinea Campaign there were an almost unbelievable 215,000 cases of malaria. The Rocky Creek Hospital was vital in not only treating the worst of these but in also finding a preventative, where Quinine was proving unsuccessful Atribin had brought amazing results. In fact, from a ratio of 740 per 1,000 personnel showing signs of Malaria in troops stationed in the tropics the incidence had dropped dramatically to 26 per 1,000 within 12 months of the routine introduction of Atribin! He was quick to point out that this breakthrough which was adopted by both American and British Forces was a product of research which had its roots at Rocky Creek.

At the conclusion of the address it was time for the wreath laying and again it was both a proud but humble moment for me to be called forward to lay a wreath on behalf of the Association but a privilege which I greatly appreciate and extend my thanks for.

The service concluded in time-honoured tradition with the sounding of the Last Post, the Lament and Reveille. After the singing of the National Anthem the formalities drew to a close and it was time for farewells and plans for next year. The hospitality that both Dad and Max Herron had talked so fondly of is still alive and well, as I received several invitations from local families to stay with them whenever I visited. They are the warmest and friendliest people you could find anywhere.

As usual, I spent a few moments of quiet reflection at the Plinth dedicated to the 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneers and found again that unique sense of closeness to Dad that I don't get anywhere else, as I could hear in the rustling of the gum leaves, the laughter of so many of Australia's finest sons of so long ago. It was now time to go.