

PIONEER NEWS

Phone: 759-5491

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

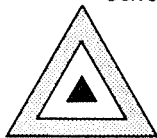
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VIC WHITELEY

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R. LAKE & M. HERRON

President:
J. (Mick) DODSON

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2/2 AUSTRALIAN PIONEER BATTALION (Part 1)

Our successful 1980 Association reunion at Dubbo was based on the roll the 2/1 Pioneers played in that locality forty years previously, both at camp and in town. As remembered, it was the focal point of their march out as a Unit.

This year's 1982 reunion at Wagga places the emphasis on the roll the 2/2 Pioneers played in this locality, both at camp and in town, forty years previously. It was from this centre the reformed 2/2 marched out as a Unit. The following is a brief history of the Unit.

The formation of the original Unit was decided on the 1st May 1940. The 16th May saw the majority of Officers and the first draft of O.R.s arrive at Puckapunyal, Victoria. By the 9th June, 1940 the Battalion was at full strength. Three flags were presented to the Unit, the third — the Australian flag, was presented by the then Lord Mayor of Essendon and later was to fly triumphantly over the ruins of Fort Merdjayoun, Syria.

The 30th March, 1941 saw the beginning of Unit movement to point of embarkation Sydney. This movement was completed by 6th April. The 7th April troops were embarked on the "Queen Mary" and the 9th April she sailed shortly before dawn.

ARRIVED ON FOREIGN SOIL

The Unit arrived Port Tewfik — Port of Suez — on 3rd May, 1941 transhipped onto S.S. "Ethiopia", then up the Suez to El-Kanjara to set foot on foreign soil. They were now at Hill 95 their first camp.

On the 6th June the Battalion was committed to action in the Syrian campaign — five weeks of intensive action — 73 Officers and men killed and 102 wounded.

January 18th, 1942 saw the Battalion at Hill 69. They were fostered in by sister Battalion 2/1 Pioneers; recently out of Tobruk. The 2/1 saw to it that the 2/2 received a hearty meal that evening which was much appreciated.

2/1 and 2/2 TRAIN TOGETHER

The Reo's of both Battalions trained together as one unit in the Middle-East, the officers of both units getting to know each other quite well and the same with the N.C.O's. and O.R's, with long standing friendships being cemented during this period.

On the 30th January 1942 the majority of the Unit entrained for El-Kantara but not before having another excellent meal from the 2/1 Pioneers.

The Unit finally embarked on H.M.T. "Orcades" for an unknown destination — which became Port of Batavia, Java and disembarked 18th February, 1942. Confusing action and movement ensued, until with other troops the Unit capitulated on 9th March, 1942.

Eight hundred and sixty five members were prisoners of war, two hundred and fifty eight were never to return. "We will remember them."

LOSS OF 2/2 PIONEERS

With the fall of Java and the loss of the 2/2 Pioneers, the ship "Niger Stroom", followed two days later by the "Sophocles" and "Shillong" arrived at Freemantle, W.A. in the second week of March 1942, carrying what was left of the 2/2 Pioneer Battalion, their transport — ammunition — and stores.

The troops were mostly Transport Platoon and were transferred to Engineer Units during May. Rumours were rife regarding the reformation of the Battalion, which was transformed into actual fact by June, with the arrival of Lt. Col. Lang at Wagga.

— To be CONTINUED in June issue

WAGGA REUNION

Arrangements for the Country Reunion at Wagga on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, 17th, 18th and 19th September, 1982 are well under way.

The insert in this issue of Pioneer News gives all details and should be read carefully in order to ascertain costs etc.

The accommodation does present a problem at Wagga as the R.S.L. is situated quite a distance from motels and hotels. Before choosing the motels, the Booking Clerk studied the position of each motel in relation to the R.S.L. Club and the railway, but was still unable to select any close.

It is planned to put the train people in a motel or hotel close to the railway station and arrange for the car people to assist by picking them up. If you want a choice of motel/hotel check with the NRMA directory and study their printed map of Wagga.

BOOK ACCOMMODATION EARLY

The suggestion by the Committee is to make up your mind early if you are going and then make your booking with Peg Herron, by sending in the enclosed slip. All motels want bookings confirmed with a deposit in July.

Unfortunately the Mayoral Reception on the Friday afternoon is extended to only twenty members and the Committee do apologise for this, but as it is a condition by the Council we must abide. The Management Committee have decided those included will be the Wagga Committee Assoc. Executive Working Committee, and as many 2/2nds as possible. A list will be published in June issue Pioneer News.

ANNUAL MEETING now at 3 p.m.

not 8 p.m. as in previous years. AT City of Sydney RSL Club, 569 George Street, Sydney NOT at Barrack Street as previously.

1982 ANZAC FUNCTIONS

This year we have a change in location and time for the Annual Meeting, so please make note of the alteration so that we do not fall down in attendance and quorum.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Saturday, 24th April at 3 p.m.

The new meeting place is the Conference Room, City of Sydney R.S.L. Club, 569 George Street, Sydney at 3 p.m., made necessary because the Combined Services Club in Barrack Street is closed on Saturday and Sunday, so the new venue will be used for this year and next year.

The meeting will only take approximately one and a half hours, then a few drinks, a snack if necessary and down to Hunter Street for the Wreath Laying and an early night at home.

WREATH LAYING CEREMONY Saturday, 24th April at 7.00 p.m.

Members of the 2/1 and 2/2 are to be at 19 Hunter Street at 7 p.m. Form up at 7.20 p.m. and move off from the corner of Hunter and Pitt Streets at 7.25 p.m. to arrive at the Cenotaph in Martin Plaza at 7.30 p.m. for the Wreath Laying Ceremony.

Members of our Ladies Auxiliary will join us for the ceremony.

ANZAC DAY MARCH Sunday, 25th April.

Assembly points for both units are the same as last year: 2/1 in Phillip Street near King Street and at the rear of the 6th Division — 2/2 in Phillip Street near Martin Plaza at the rear of the 7th Division.

Both unit banners will be displayed at their respective assembly points.

Please check city newspapers for any last minute changes in assembly points.

ANZAC DAY LUNCH/REUNION REDFERN TOWN HALL Sunday, 25th April.

At the completion of the march in Hyde Park members of both units are to make their way to Museum Station for the train to Redfern for our Annual Anzac Day lunch and Reunion.

Same address as for the past several years: Redfern Town Hall, corner Pitt and Wells Street, Redfern and just five minutes from the station.

If for various reasons you cannot march, still turn up at the Reunion — it is surprising how many old faces you will see. This year you will see Bernard Simmonds 2/1 — all the way from Kent, England.

Doors will be open at 11.15 a.m. and draught beer will be on tap. A new caterer has been engaged for this year's dinner and dinner will be served at 12.30 p.m. and snacks brought in during the afternoon.

— JIM FIELD — Publicity Officer

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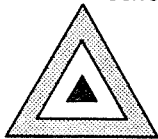
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Vol. 27 No. 3

SEPTEMBER, 1982

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2/2 AUSTRALIAN PIONEER BATTALION (Part 2)

The arrival of Lt. Col Lang at Wagga was closely followed by five Officers and 500 O.R.'s. Billeted at Wagga Showground for two weeks, then out to Kapooka — a brand new training area — where four Officers and 308 O.R.'s., marched in from No 1 Pioneer Training Battalion, Bathurst. Included in Battalion strength were 11 transferred 2/1 Pioneers — four Officers, five Sgts., and two Cpls. In mid July training began in earnest.

The Unit marched out 30th September 1942 en-route for Strawberry, W.A. Camped at Strawberry, then by Christmas 1942 at Camp-Bellevue, Midland Junction out from Perth. Late January 1943 arrived Mangalore, Victoria, then on to Woodford, Queensland for four weeks then on to Ravenshoe — Atherton Tablelands for intensive jungle training.

Embarked for New Guinea on 25th July, 1943 and arrived Port Moresby, 28th July. This made the seventh move by the Battalion since its reform — “We had to be better than Grace Bros!” was the cry. Jungle training was completed at Moresby.

25th August the Unit was flown to Tsili-Tsili, and 1st September 1943 march started to Nadzab, action thru to Lae, entering town on 16th September — the Japanese defeated. From Lae the Unit was flown to Kaiapit in the Ramu Valley where the enemy were in strength in the entire area. Action finalised at Shaggy Ridge Jan. '44.

The Unit had cause for satisfaction. The first Unit committed to action in Nadzab — Lae campaign, it remained in action in the field to the end. It had served under three Infantry Brigades of the Seventh Division in turn earning the confidence of all Senior Commands. The 8th February, saw the Unit on its way home for leave before returning to Queensland, Trinity Beach for amphibious training.

The campaign at Tarakan began early May 1945, and by the end of May the campaign was complete. This action was with the 9th Division.

The middle of June 1945, saw the embarkation of the Unit for what was to be its last action, the assault on Balikpapan in Borneo. By August, action in this area was almost over, and with the atom bomb on Hiroshima it was a certainty. On the 8th October, 1945 the news for which everyone had been waiting was announced — the Battalion was declared redundant, and orders were issued for the disposal of its men, stores, and personal possessions.

“In the mountains of Syria, in the jungles of New Guinea, amid the palms of Java, and on the low hills of Borneo, as well as many countries of South East Asia, the names of the fallen, adorned with the name of their Battalion which they served so well, shall be forever remembered.”

“Lest we forget”.

WAGGA REUNION

An advertisement appears on page four of this issue, outlining all details of the Country Reunion at Wagga on the 17th, 18th, 19th September, 1982.

It is requested that all members attending cut out the Programme and bring it to the Reunion with them so that they are up to date with all the proceedings.

In particular we seek the co-operation of all members with cars to seek out and look after those members coming by train. All accommodation is too far from the R.S.L. for walking so they will require a lift on all the activities.

Applications closed on the 30th July with an attendance of two hundred and forty-five members.

YELLOW EXPRESS LOSS

Another Pioneer to join the ranks of the retired is ROY “SNOWY” JARDINE. All his working life was with Yellow Express and Roy lost buckets of sweat during those halcyon days of wool delivery to the Sydney Wool Stores from the Darling Harbour rail-head.

During his Army days Roy was in No. 6 Platoon Transport, 2/1 as a Driver. It was not commonly known, but Roy was an accomplished (?) poet. An example of Roy's efforts is as follows:-

“To the roar of the racing motors,
To the smell of the burning oil,
Through heat and dust — day and night,
The Transport drivers Toil.”

All the best to Roy and regards to Phyllis and family.

NEWS ITEM — HARRY MONTAGUE

FRED CALLAWAY, A Coy 2/1 was visited while doing my rounds recently at Concord Hospital. He was receiving medical treatment for a thigh injury received in action during the Island campaign, which has restricted much of his movement but he is still as cheerful as ever.

Fred will be remembered as a tireless worker for the Association and was Secretary before Max and then became President.

Fred sends his regards to all his friends and sincerely thanked me for the visit.

BRISBANE REUNION

SATURDAY 30th OCTOBER, 1982
at 4 p.m. at the residence of

JOHN and MOLLIE HUNT
4/25 Mountford Rd., New Farm, Qld. 4005
Telephone 358 4349

Acceptance by 16th October, but not
absolutely necessary.

— MOLLIE and JOHN HUNT.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT — by JACK (Mick) DODSON

When we hold our Annual Meeting, we know the next day is one of the most important days in Australian history — Anzac Day.

On 25th April, 1915 (Sixty-seven years ago) gallant soldiers and sailors from Australia and New Zealand stormed ashore on the beach at Gallipoli — a beach now known as Anzac Cove. Thousands lost their lives before reaching the beach.

In December 1915 when the Peninsular was evacuated, the casualties were the highest for any one action during World War I. They gave their lives so that we could be here today to pay homage to the fallen. It was not all in vain, for from that action Australia became a nation in the eyes of the world.

This we remember when we march past the Cenotaph — hats off and eyes right.

We are all aging, which is shown by the record number of our members (Seventy-one) who have passed on, in the past twelve months — forty-four 2/1st and twenty-seven 2/2nds — Lest we Forget.

It is almost forty-five years since the 2/1st sailed for the Middle East and forty-one years for the 2/2nd. We may not have known each other in those days, but since the war the friendship has strengthened so that today we are one big Association.

I now come to the hardest part of my report — how can one find the right words to express thanks to the Executive and Committee for their outstanding efforts.

Led by Max Herron and assisted by Peg and the Ladies Auxiliary, the organisers of the successful Port Macquarie Reunion have already laid the foundations for another successful reunion at Wagga in September.

When you think of the various Reunions over the years and the Wagga reunion coming up, please give thought to the thanks that must go to these great band of workers.

Treasurer (money bags) Vic Whiteley, concerned with rising costs, is always on the ball where our finances are concerned and assuring that our various accounts are kept in a strong position.

Editors of the Pioneer News, Max Herron and Bob Lake keep the life line of the Association going. Members from all states of Australia are enlightened on the latest news of members.

Of course, no matter how good the Editors are, we must have the reporters and also the members who send in letters. Keep up the good work fellows.

Then again, members would not receive their Pioneer News if it was not for the wrapping committee, who meet at Max and Peg Herron's home, four times each year and prepare and wrap the thousand copies.

Many, many thanks to Max and Peg for making their home available and also for providing the supper.

Welfare Officers Harry Montague and Jack Collins who have to be dedicated to welfare work to be able to fit in visiting sick members and assisting with pension enquiries. — many thanks.