

2/1-2/2 PIONEER GOSFORD REUNION

Visitors to Gosford for the reunion began arriving on Friday, 25th September, and before long began gathering in the RSL Club for thirst quencher and lots of talk. Frank Caulfield from Benalla turned up about 10 am, maybe the first to arrive.

As Friday progressed and during Saturday, others had arrived and soon there was a buzz of activity and talking. It seemed to those, not the least bit interested in the footie, that the main topics were West Coast Eagles or Geelong, St George or the Broncos.

Some took the opportunity to have a look around the Gosford area and some made purchases for the Sunday barbecue.

As the shadows lengthened on Saturday afternoon, preparations for dressing up for the evening's official activities began and soon it was time to attend the Wreath Laying Ceremony and then the Reunion Dinner.

WREATH LAYING CEREMONY

The wreath laying ceremony proceeded with due solemnity and spirit of remembrance and was conducted under the direction of Ray Harris commencing at 5 pm, at the War Memorial in Gosford Park. The standard bearers were Phil Cramsie 2/1st and Tom Brabin 2/2nd. Proceedings began with the prologue by John Gilchrist. The religious service was carried out by Canon K. J. Heuston, who gave introductory words followed by the singing of the Recessional by the assembled visitors. Canon Heuston delivered the Commemoration Prayer, followed by the Lords Prayer and his address.

Wreaths were laid by Bob Sturgeon and Ralph Mortimer for the Gosford RSL, Vera Hamilton representing nursing sisters and Bill Jollie on behalf of the 2/1 and 2/2 Pioneer Battalions Associations.

The assembly was called to attention and called on Bill Jollie to deliver the Ode to the Fallen. The bugle calls The Last Post, and Reveille were sounded, followed by the singing of Advance Australia Fair.

Canon Heuston pronounced Benediction and for a few moments those present stood in silence, each with his or her own thoughts before moving off to meet again at the Gosford RSL for the Reunion Dinner.

THE REUNION DINNER

Those attending the dinner began arriving at the Auditorium entrance a little before 6 pm. Peg and Vic Whiteley ambushed those who still had to pay and Joyce Walker, Marea McKay, Ruth Rhodes and Mary Lloyd were issuing name tags. Seating arrangements were carried out with a minimum of fuss and all was set for an enjoyable evening. Roy Levy and Reg Ward served the ladies with pre-dinner drinks while the gentlemen obtained their requirements from the bar.

Jack Griffiths was MC for the evening and made his introductory remarks in his usual jocular manner, amid good natured jibes from the visitors. Jack introduced those seated at the King Table, who included Barbara and John Gilchrist, Bill Jollie, Esme Griffiths, Olga and Bob Sturgeon, Zita and Ralph Mortimer. Allan Olson, President of the South Australian Pioneers Association was asked to say Grace. The MC then called on Joe Robertson, also from South Australia, to propose the Loyal Toast. The first course was then served.

The Toast to the guests was proposed by Bill Jollie and Ralph Mortimer, Gosford RSL, gave the response. This was followed by a talk by Charles Richardson whose subject was the 50th Anniversary of the 2/2 Pioneer Battalion being re-formed at Kapooka in July 1942. His talk was well received and those present showed their appreciation by acclamation. The main course followed.

Jack Griffiths then called on John Gilchrist to deliver an address. His theme was the birth of Australia as a nation after the Gallipoli campaign in 1915, its political and economic problems over the years, the participation of Australian Forces in World War II and their fine achievement. John's address was also well received and applauded. Dessert and coffee were then served.

The formal proceedings having been completed, it was time to sit and talk and reminisce over good and bad old days. People began moving from table to table and in no time there was animated conversation around the auditorium.

The MC then asked Bill Jollie to speak in appreciation of those visitors from country areas and interstate. Bill called on the interstate visitors to stand as he called their names. They included:

Victoria — George Murphy (Secretary 2/2 Pioneer Battalion Association in Melbourne), Bob and Joyce Adolphson, Frank Caulfield, George and Nell Kelly (well equipped to tackle the fish along the NSW South Coast on their way home), Joe Kyffin, Tom and Joan Brabin and Frank Cheal (wife Barbara could not attend due to hip surgery).

South Australia — Allan Olson (President Pioneers Association in Adelaide) and Joe Robertson.

ACT — Ray and Merle Burroughs, Gordon and Noela Sheen.

Queensland — Don and Mona Barraclough, Phil Cramsie, Ken Franks, Lloyd Graham, Harry and Dorothy Mowbray, Bob McTaggart, Winston and Letty McKibbin, Charles Richardson (with daughter Jane and son-in-law Adrian Lane-Mullins and their children at the Sunday picnic) and Nev and Betty Woodham.

Thanks for their attendance also to nursing sisters Vera Hamilton, Sue Malcolm and Nessie Spence, also John and Barbara Gilchrist.

The Association awarded Life Membership to Larry Robson (2/1st) for services rendered over a number of years and Jack Bertram undertook to hand the badge and citation to Larry, who was in hospital.

The lucky door prize of a set of lovely bathroom accessories, very kindly made and donated by Glad Allan, widow of Jack Allan 2/1, was won by Shirley Lewis wife of Bill Lewis 2/2.

The evening drew to a close about 11 pm with the visitors looking forward to the Sunday and a pleasant day at the Picnic Grounds at Mt Penang.

PICNIC AT MT PENANG

Sunday dawned with prospect of a fine day which fortunately continued and gave good conditions for the picnic at Mt Penang Centre at Kari-ong a few kilometres south of Gosford.

The advance party was on the job early and a little after 10 am when the Gosford visitors began arriving the barbecue cooker was being prepared, traffic direction was in place and refreshment facilities just about ready for business.

Soon tables were being set up around the picnic area and groups were forming, all ready for a pleasant day in the outdoors. While many favoured the barbecue, others produced their packs of sandwiches and at some tables there appeared chicken and cold meats and salads. Cakes and other goodies were produced and it was obvious there were a lot of healthy appetites to be satisfied.

Signs of an end to the day's activities became evident around 2.30 pm. The area was cleaned up and movement back to the various motels in preparation for the farewell dinner began. Also there was something called the Rugby League Grand Final being shown on TV which seemed to be enticing many to make an early departure.

The facilities at Mt Penang are ideal and the day was enjoyed by all.

FAREWELL DINNER

Visitors began arriving at the auditorium for the farewell dinner from 6 pm, pre-dinner drinks being available from the bar.

George Walker was OC Mess Parade and about 7 pm he began calling the visitors to the serving area, table by table.

The farewell evening being informal, speech making was kept to a minimum. Bill Jollie spoke and affirmed the success of the weekend. George Murphy, Secretary of the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion Association in Melbourne was called upon to speak in appreciation of the weekend's activities. He said he was pleased to have been able to attend and praised the various helpers who made the weekend so successful. George conveyed the best wishes of 2/2 Pioneers in Victoria. He was accompanied to the dinner by his sister Gwynne Sweet and her husband Kevin.

George, on behalf of those present, conveyed thanks to Ray Harris for organising the wreath laying ceremony together with Roy Levy and for their good deeds at the picnic. He mentioned Vic Whiteley, assisted by his wife Peg, as collector of fees; George Walker as OC Mess Parade and Transport Officer;

Russ Harrison for directing traffic and as reporter for *Pioneer News*; Reg Ward (a scout friend of Max Herron) who performed numerous duties; David Herron (son of Peg and Max) who organised the setting up and printing of the Reunion programme; Peg and Max Herron for all those matters they handle so efficiently and have done over many years and Bill Jollie for the manner in which he carried out the duties of chairman for the weekend. Special thanks also to Jack Griffiths for his duties as MC at the reunion dinner.

The visitors sat around in groups and eventually it was time to depart. There was general agreement that a great weekend had been enjoyed by all.

Reported by **RUSS HARRISON**

BALIKPAPAN SURRENDER

The 2/1st Pioneer Bn encounter with the Japanese force at Tempadeong on 2nd September, 1945, prior to the official surrender of the Japanese was not recorded in the War Diary.

On page 172 of the 2/1st history book, "The Pioneers" appears an article taken from "Table Tops", the army newspaper, and even this is not correct as it states Lieut Ray Smith, on his way up Balikpapan Bay had with him two privates, whereas it should have read a corporal and a private. The full encounter is now told by Bill Hodges:

"On the morning of 2nd September 1945 an American launch arrived at Tempadeong beach with two American Servicemen on board who sought permission to head up the Bay to take photographs. Lieut Ray Smith passed on the request to Colonel Buckley who readily agreed providing an escort of an NCO and a bren gunner were included.

"Lieut Ray Smith, Corporal Ray Horne and Bill Hodges, with a bren gun, made up the party and proceeded up the Bay and encountered many barriers, consisting of sunken barges and large trees tied together with wire, blocking the river except for a channel, 20 feet wide, mainly along the right hand bank.

"After the final barrier was negotiated we rounded a bend and saw a cleared spit of land with a long barrelled gun with a 2" bore, aimed in the air. There was a hut in the background and several Japanese soldiers standing around in the area.

"Lieut Smith remarked, 'I hope these Japs know the war is over'. We agreed, as there was no chance of us turning back. As we neared the shore a plank was pushed out from the bank for us to disembark.

"On coming ashore we noticed the gun had been dismantled and all rifles piled in front of the hut and as there did not appear to be any other weapons around or with the Japs, we breathed a sigh of relief.

"A Japanese then said, in broken English, 'Wait, wait he come', and pointed up the track leading into the bush. Fifteen minutes later a Japanese came down the track, and we noticed he was not in military uniform but wearing a brown cotton jacket and a black fez type cap and carried a walking cane. He appeared to be a person of authority as the Japs sprang to attention as he passed and one Jap said he was the Admiral.

"A table and chairs were produced and the Admiral and Lieut Smith sat down and arrangements were made for formal talks to be carried out the next day. The Jap interpreter who spoke to us said, 'Me been in Australia, me cook two years in Melbourne,' but beyond that he said nothing.

"The Jap soldiers kept some distance from Ray Horne and myself, while we retained our guns and would not let us get behind them, and they also stood across the track so we could not see beyond the clearing.

"We spent an hour there before embarking for Tempadeong and reporting back to Colonel Buckley with the news we had encountered the Japs and made arrangements for their surrender."

Following the encounter, on 10th September a Japanese delegation of senior officers, led by Rear Admiral Nomiya, came down by barge from Semoi and Sepakoe to Battalion Headquarters at Tempadeong for a conference with Brigadier F. G. Wood, Commander of 25th Brigade and Colonel Buckley. The Japanese surrendered their swords and disclosed the disposition of their forces, through the aid of maps and other records.

— Reported by **BILL HODGES**