

were quite happy to go with them and the students were pleased to hear two different stories.

Their ANZAC Day at Redlands was a bit damp, they had a heavy shower just before the parade moved off, but all went well in the end. He doesn't march any more as his legs no longer keep pace, but, he takes advantage of a seat in a jeep if one is available.

Harry sends his thanks for the News as it's always good to hear what is happening down south. Says it's a long time since those days in the desert of North Africa and he still likes to wear his Association badge when he gets the chance.

Good to hear from you, Harry, and we send our best wishes to both Jean and yourself for continued good health.

DANNY SPROUSTER 2/1. Dundas, with his apologies for non-attendance on ANZAC Day due to ill-health, but enclosed a donation to the News with his brief note. Hope things have improved for you now, Danny, and thanks for the sub.

JOHN TREVETHICK 2/1. Lane Cove, with a cheque for dues and an article for Max on the Association banners of both 2/1 and 2/2. (This has been dealt with by Max in a separate article). Many thanks for your donation and for the kind words on our efforts on behalf of the Association. They were very much appreciated.

LES TUNKS 2/1. Mareeba, with a couple of letters since last issue and newspaper cuttings from their local newspapers in reference to Rocky Creek Memorial Park and the refurbishment of the memorial markers on the Tablelands. Over the years some of the markers have deteriorated and a grant was obtained from Veteran Affairs to refurbish the signs as a community project. Quite a lot of work has been done on the Rocky Creek site and Les says it has become quite a show place.

Many thanks for the cuttings, Les, the donation to funds and the stamps, and I hope both Lesley and yourself are keeping as well as can be expected. It's always good to hear from you. Trust you enjoyed your local ANZAC Day, even if you weren't up to the march.

DICK WAKELY 2/2. Waratah, with a very short note enclosing his sub and the news that he was recuperating from a bout of pneumonia – and doesn't recommend it. Trust you have fully recovered, Dick, and your best wishes passed on to all Pioneers. Many thanks for the donation to funds.

DOUG WATERS 2/1. West Croydon, S.A., per pen of wife Maureen, enclosing sub, for which many thanks. Glad you are both well and that Doug still enjoys reading the News and sends his best wishes to all. He keeps busy in his garage making toys – always good to have a hobby. Trust you enjoyed your ANZAC Day in Adelaide. Doug, with the combined Pioneer Association. Our kindest regards to you both.

RON WEBSTER 2/1. Bass Hill, with a very welcome Easter card to both Max and I and we thank you Ron for your kind thought. Trust you and family are well and send you all our best wishes.

JOYCE WESTWOOD, Bradbury, widow of Jack 2/2, with a sub to the News which she enjoys reading. Many thanks. Joyce has now joined War Widows and Legacy and finds them both very enjoyable and has made a number of new friends with similar interests. Good to hear, Joyce, and hope you will continue to keep in touch. All the best.

NEIL WHITELEY, Terara, son of the late Vic Whiteley 2/1, with a generous donation to funds and apologies for having missed the last two ANZAC Days because of work commitments, but hoped to be on deck this year. However, prior to ANZAC Day rang to say he was unable to make it. (Neil is an engineer on a ship and can be at sea when these special days are on the calendar). Sorry you couldn't make it, Neil, perhaps better luck next year. Many thanks for the sub and our best wishes.

KEITH PROSSER 2/1. Cranbrook, W.A., with his sub enclosed and a card to be re-addressed to Ernie Lunn 2/2 in Dubbo. This was duly sent on, Keith, and latest reports from Ernie shows he is much improved. (See letter this Mail Bag). Thanks for your donation and kindest regards.

• That's the end of the Mail Bag for this issue and I thank all those who made time and effort to keep us up to date on your doings over the last months. Several ladies of the Association

enjoyed a lovely luncheon at the Grace Hotel after the march on ANZAC Day and it was good to see so many of them able to come along and enjoy the day. We were joined by ladies from Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth. Hopefully we may make it again next year. My love and best wishes to all.

THE PIONEER BANNERS

BY JOHN TREVETHICK, Secretary 1946

In the early post-war years, the units did not have banners, as on ANZAC Day they carried a cardboard sign on a pole with the units' title supplied by the RSL.

In the late 1940's, however, approval was granted for banners to be designed and paid for by the individual units.

At the Committee meeting held on 26th January, 1950, presided over by ex C.O. Geoff Graham the following motion was approved:

"Arrangements be made for the manufacture of two banners for the use of 2/1st and 2/2nd Pioneers. Each unit to have campaign honours as applicable to the unit, attached to the banner.

Each banner at a cost of approximately £14. Moved by D. Walker and seconded by E. Face, that this matter be left in the hands of John Trevethick."

After several trips to the Public Library in Macquarie Street, it was decided the shape of the banners to be the Heraldic Shield type, most favoured by British units, both for its historical significance and it could be carried by one person.

The banners to be purple, the official army colour for engineers, to signify that element in our dual role as Infantry and Engineers. An enlargement of the unit badge plus unit number and title, with campaign honours were superimposed in white on the shield. In the early years they were termed campaign honours, as the term "Battle Honours" was not formulated until about 1960.

Over the years the original banners became worn and damaged which necessitated removing all the lettering, renewing the purple cloth and then sewing back the white lettering. This was carried out in 1962 by Laura Westwood, wife of Joe who was the then Social Secretary, and Peg Herron, wife of Secretary.

The original banners were made by the late Connie Lester of Double Bay, at no charge. She was a friend of John and Cyril Morahan who were both on the Committee of the Association.

The 2/2 Pioneers in Victoria, in early years, had formed their own 2/2 Pioneer Bn Assoc. under Clayton Davis and had their own separate banner, whereas in NSW the two units came together to form the 2/1-2/2 Pioneer Bn Assoc. in 1946, which made for easier administration and lower costs. Both branches, over the years have had their own newsletters, but have kept in touch with one another through the two Secretaries.

Because of high numbers, in NSW the two units had separate venues for the Anzac Day Reunions until 1976 when they came together and held a combined Reunion at the Redfern Town Hall of 170 members.

Then in 1994 they moved to the Occidental Hotel in York Street, with an attendance of 104 but now down to fifty two members combined plus twenty two relations. At these combined Reunions both banners have been proudly and prominently displayed alongside one another.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Many thanks for your most interesting article John - we feel sure it will bring back memories to our members who, like me, would not know the work and research that went into producing the two famous banners.

SICK PARADE

GEORGE WALKER 2/1 was in Liverpool Hospital on 26th April with a heart problem. He went home for a while but was back in hospital for a pacemaker implant in May at Liverpool Hospital where he was visited by Peg & Max Herron.

WALLY COE 2/2 of Summer Hill was in Wyoming Nursing Home at Summer Hill, recuperating after having a leg amputated when in Concord Hospital. He had been visited by Don Crawford and Bill Tasker.

VALE BILL ROBERTSON OAM

On 8th May, Bill Robertson OAM, 2/2 of Randwick passed away in St Vincents Hospital at the age of 97 years. He had been in hospital for three weeks and most of the time he was not conscious.

The funeral on 13th May at the Eastern Suburbs Crematorium was packed with people from all walks of life who had been associated with Bill over many years.

Pioneers in attendance at the funeral were Allan Olson and Russ and Rona Harrison who had flown over from Adelaide for the day, Snowy Dodd with daughter from Forster, Don/Val Crawford, Gavin Todd, Roy Jardine, Jack/Barbara Allison, Allan McInnes, Bob/Neil Ginnane and son and Max/Peg Herron.

The minister called upon Bill's granddaughter to speak on Bill's family life and then called on President Allan McInnes to deliver the Eulogy on Bill's military service which he carried out as follows:

"Bill enlisted in May, 1940 and was posted to the 2/1 Pioneer Battalion and after training at Greta and Dubbo camps sailed with the unit to the Middle East and served in the seven month Siege of Tobruk.

On return to Australia in 1942 he was seconded to the newly formed 2/2 Pioneer Battalion, whose original members had been captured in the fall of Java. During the 1943 New Guinea campaign as a Captain he was O.C. of "D" Coy and took part in the Lae campaign including Nadzab, Tsili Tsili and Shaggy Ridge.

In 1945 he was appointed Major-Beach Commander for the 2/2 Pioneer Battalion when they landed at Tarakan and in the final campaign at Balikpapan, Borneo.

Since the war, Bill has been a staunch Committee member since 1948 and served in an Executive position as Vice-President for many years and in recent times as Co-Patron. In 1943 Bill was made a Life Member for his outstanding service to the Association. He has not missed an Anzac Day March and Reunion Dinner and has attended many Country Reunions conducted by the Association.

In April, 1998, Bill was awarded the Order of Australia Medal after being nominated by the Clovelly RSL Sub-Branch (which he joined in 1951) because of his dedication to the Branch where he served in numerous roles as President, Pensions and Welfare Officer and delegate to the NSW State Congress.

Bill was a keen member of the Rats of Tobruk Association and each year attended the Tobruk Sunday Service at the Five Dock Bowling Club.

President Allan concluded the Eulogy by saying we thank God for the life of our friend and our sincere sympathy is extended to his wife Toss and her family. He will be sadly missed by all.

PIONEER NEWS POSTING

Members will have noticed that the Pioneer News April issue was contained in an envelope for the first time ever, as previously it had been in a wrapper.

This came about because the Secretary reported the addressograph stencils used to produce the addresses on to wrappers had worn out after 50 years of use and the system needed updating. At the November meeting Don Crawford proposed that quotes be obtained for the printing of the Associations' details on to envelopes and for the addressing of 500 envelopes. After numerous quotes he chose one from Mailroom Express of Regents Park.

The envelopes were printed, addressed, post coded and bar coded and cost wise the new system came out in front, but the big factor was the time saved – old system took thirty hours to prepare and five hours to wrap – new system one hour to prepare and one hour to insert the news into the envelopes. Also posting time faster than ever.

At the March meeting the Secretary thanked Don Crawford for his effort and also thanked Peg Herron for the typing of roll from the card system and extended thanks to Don's daughter, Sandra Bowmer for her typing of the roll on to the computer for dispatch by the internet to Mailroom Express.