

The Furphy Flyer in Mufti.



I HOLD FAST

Official Organ of the 2/24 Australian Infantry Battalion Association Inc.

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COMING EVENTS FOR 2010

Anzac Day March, Sunday, 25th April – Reunion at Pascoe Vale RSL.
(see inside for details)

Battalion Birthday Lunch, Friday 2nd July at Pascoe Vale RSL
(the May “Furphy” will provide further details)

9th Division’s Shrine Service, Friday 22nd October
(the August “Furphy” will provide further details)

2/24th’s Shrine Pilgrimage – Sunday 24th October, 2.00pm
(Assemble 1.30pm)
(the August “Furphy” will provide further details)

Wangaratta Weekend Reunion, 5th, 6th and 7th November
(the May and August “Furphies” will provide further details)

Vale

A. John Gorrie
Robert C Hayes

VX34593
VX52795

15 January 2010
9 February 2010

All members of the 2/24th Battalion Association offer their deepest sympathy and understanding to those bereaved by the passing of members of the association.

Anzac Day 2010

Information for Veterans

The ANZAC Day March Committee know that many Veterans from World War 2 now have great difficulty in completing the 1.8 kilometre Commemoration March.

Accordingly, and following a decision by the ANZAC Day Commemoration Council duly endorsed by the Kindred Organisations & Unit Associations Council, all World War 2 veterans should now be mounted in vehicles for the duration of the March.

The March and Assembly Areas remain unchanged and sufficient vehicles have been sourced to facilitate the carriage of all WW2 Veterans.

The 2/24th Association, along with other Unit Associations, has been asked to supply the number of WW2 veterans who wish to have access to a vehicle rather than walk the 1.8 kilometres.

The ANZAC Day Coordinating Team will have the Unit Association name displayed in the front window of the vehicles and intend to give each WW2 Veteran a window seat in the vehicle provided.

Once mounted in the vehicle Veterans must remain therein until the end of the March. The vehicles will travel behind the banner, followed by any Veterans who decide to march, followed by descendants marching to honour a deceased loved one.

Veterans are therefore asked to let our Secretary know whether they wish to travel in a vehicle. THIS INFORMATION IS REQUIRED BEFORE 10th MARCH. Remember, unless you tell us there will be no seat available. See below for contact details.

The 2/24th's meeting point for this year's Melbourne ANZAC Day March is again in Flinders Street, on the North side, (Saint Paul's Side) between Swanston and Russell Streets. Look for our Banner.

Time of assembly is 9.30 am for an approximate 10.20 am start.

We again welcome those marching to honour the memory of a deceased member of the 2/24th Battalion. Our President has asked that marchers uphold and respect the proud traditions of the 2/24th by following the directions of our leader and dressing appropriately; as smartly turned out as Dad or Grandad always looked.

The Battalion will be led by Association Vice Presidents, Doug Dobson and Alan Nicholson.

Our banner will be carried by students from Wangaratta High School. These students put in a very long day and we are grateful for their commitment and enthusiasm.

Transport will again be provided by Moreland Bus Lines to take veterans and members to Pascoe Vale RSL from the Shrine. This will leave from Birdwood Avenue soon after the March has concluded for the 2/24 Battalion.

The ANZAC Day Commemoration Council has asked us to pass on the following guidelines so that we will not only honour our fallen comrades and forebears, but will also help maintain the ANZAC tradition we are all so proud of :-

- All marchers should conform to forming up and marching 8 abreast.
- Associate members are marching in the place of a deceased veteran, so there is to be only one marcher for each veteran and they should be old enough to march the full distance without assistance.
- No one should join or leave the March during its progress
- Attire should be neat and tidy out of respect for the fallen (torn denim, sporting attire, dirty joggers, etc are not appreciated).
- Carrying pictures of relatives is not supported.
- Next of kin are to wear medals on the right breast (left breast is reserved for the original owners).

Our President, Alan Macfarlane, has again been nominated by the 9th Division Association and the RSL to lead the 9th Division in this years ANZAC Day March. Again a great honour for him and the 2/24th Battalion Association.

Anzac Day Reunion

Pascoe Vale RSL (after the March)

All members of the Association are cordially invited to join in the Reunion Luncheon on Sunday, 25 April. This is held at the Pascoe Vale RSL - 40 Cumberland Road, Pascoe Vale. [Melways Map 17 B10; cnr O'Hea Street]

This is a good opportunity to meet new people in the Association and to enjoy a two course meal for about \$15 and tea/coffee. Drinks are available at bar prices. Please do not send money – pay on Anzac Day at Pascoe Vale RSL.

However, we have one small request. As an act of courtesy to Pascoe Vale RSL and to assist with catering please let us know the number that will be attending. So please contact the Secretary or Assistant Secretary with your family name and numbers attending. See below for contact details.

Contact one of the following with details of

- names of Veterans who wish to use a vehicle for the March
- name and numbers attending the Anzac Day Reunion Luncheon.

Honorary Secretary Alastair Davison (03) 9844.3036

Assistant Secretary Janice Young 0414 782 557

If either number goes into an answering machine, please leave all details.

Membership Subscriptions for 2010 – new rules and rates

The Committee has spent some time this year reviewing the rolls and the membership fees. The aim has always been to use the subscription to cover the cost of the 'Furphy Flyer in Mufti'. Due to increasing costs in printing, packaging and postage the Treasurer reports that the annual sub is barely covering the cost of producing the newsletter. A suggestion was put to the Committee that the newsletter be reduced to three copies a year, but this was not adopted based on the need to advertise functions and maintain contact with members.

So, the new membership subscription has been set at \$15 per annum. Members who have already paid their subs for this year do not have to pay the additional amount.

Renewal notices will, from December 2010, be included in the December edition of the 'Furphy Flyer'. Subscriptions will now cover the calendar year from January to December, and should be paid no later than 30 April each year.

Subscriptions in advance. Membership fees paid in advance create a considerable amount of extra work for the committee membership responsible for accounts and rolls. So that accurate records can be maintained the Association is limiting advance payments to two (2) years. Any monies received above this will be treated as a donation.

Subscriptions in arrears. Members who are one year in arrears of their subscription will be notified that their membership may lapse. Membership that is two years in arrears may have the subscription to the 'Furphy Flyer in Mufti' discontinued.

Veterans and Associate Members will receive a letter indicating their standing in regards to their subscriptions in the May edition of the 'Furphy Flyer'. (Widows are not required to pay subscriptions) It is hoped that we have your understanding in these measures set by the Committee. As an incorporated Association we are responsible for maintaining accurate records and accounting for monies paid to us in trust.

Letters

From Lyle Johnson of Aspley QLD to Roland Nicholson, our Treasurer

I just received the Furphy Flyer and enjoyed reading it. The reunion at Wangaratta sounds like it was a wonderful success once again. I wish I could have been there. I am going to see if my daughter will bring me down in 2010. I would love to see my late husband's plaque on the wall. His name was Roland. He was a drummer in the 2/24th Band.

I enclose a cheque for my membership in the Association. If there is any over just use it as a donation. Thanking you kindly.

Our best wishes to you Lyle.

From Charlie Scales of Bon Beach

Dear Alastair, please find enclosed my subs, hope the amount is correct.

I'm going well. David Ross has been 'laid up' with a crook back.

I hope you are well. You must have impressed my wife, Lois, as she sends her love.

Nice to hear from you Charlie.

From Lois Rourke of Tyabb

Dear Alastair,

Please find enclosed a donation to cover the costs of the 'Furphy Flyer' and stamps. I also wondered would these two photos be of any interest, I got them enlarged from the originals.

Arthur Rourke (my husband) was in a Transport Coy. The large group photo includes my husband, I put a dot above his head, plus I recognize a couple of faces, Johnnie Gorrie, Killer McLay. Charlie Scales may recognize a few of them.

The other picture shows Arthur leaning on his elbow against a truck. I wonder if there is a story about the truck?

All the best for 2010.

Thank you Lois. I hope we can get some response



It's obvious that the 'Furphy Flyer' is not the best way of seeing old photos. The printing of our newsletter does not reproduce the pictures to their optimum clarity. The photos, kindly sent in by Lois Rourke will be scanned and placed on our website. Hopefully this will make the faces easier to distinguish and recognize.

With that in mind, our committee members Alastair and Cameron Blackwood, have some great ideas on capturing and recording pictures, memorabilia and stories for our website.

Wanted to copy for our Website: Pictures / maps / paper cuttings / stories

We are looking for material to put on the website, so if anyone can bring anything 2/24th related along to the lunches at Pascoe Vale RSL or the Wangaratta reunion, we will have a computer and scanner to make a copy and note down some information about your bit of history.

Pictures/maps/cuttings: We pop it in a scanner, you tell us a bit about it and then take it away! Easy!

Stories: Sit down in front of the camera, tell us your yarn! Also easy!

We would also like any background history about any items you have, so we will have a video camera where you can leave a quick note of what you know about the item. Who is in the picture? What was happening? Where was it taken? Anything like that. We will then trim it down and put it on the website:

<http://2-24.battalion.org.au/>

Who said English is an easy language?

- 1) The bandage was wound around the wound.
 - 2) The farm was used to produce produce.
 - 3) The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
 - 4) We must polish the Polish furniture.
 - 5) He could lead if he would get the lead out.
 - 6) The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
 - 7) Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present
 - 8) A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
 - 9) When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
 - 10) I did not object to the object.
 - 11) The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
 - 12) There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row .
 - 13) They were too close to the door to close it.
 - 14) The buck does funny things when the does are present.
 - 15) A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line.
 - 16) To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.
 - 17) The wind was too strong to wind the sail.
 - 18) Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear.
 - 19) I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
 - 20) How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?
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Three elderly ladies were discussing the trials of getting older. One said, "Sometimes I catch myself with a jar of mayonnaise in my hand in front of the refrigerator and can't remember whether I need to put it away, or start making a sandwich." The second lady chimed in, "Yes, sometimes I find myself on the landing of the stairs and can't remember whether I was on my way up or on my way down." The third one responded, "Well, I'm glad I don't have that problem; knock on wood," she raps her knuckles on the table, then says, "That must be the door, I'll get it."

The following article is taken from the November 2009 edition of the Wangaratta newspaper, The Chronicle. It was written by local identity Bill O'Calaghan.

Wangaratta's Own.

In a line in the "Pirates of Penzance" a character is described as "the very model of a model major general". That line occurred to me when I first met Major (ret) Alan Macfarlane, OAM, EM.

Introduced to him by Greg Larkins at the high school reunion in March, who, with John and Gwen Elward looked after him when he visited Wangaratta for the reunion, which, as President of the 2/24th Australian Infantry Battalion Association, he was attending in an official capacity, I was most impressed, and decided that this stay and the story of "Wangaratta's Own" should be written, preferably to coincide with the battalion's visit to Wangaratta today.

I had intended seeing him at his home in Vermont, but when I learned that he and the Secretary, Alastair Davison, would be here in August I saved myself a trip and the interview was conducted at the Wangaratta -Cemetery. More about the cemetery later.

Tall, slim, upright, moustachioed, with an enviable head of silver hair, a palmolive complexion, with fair hearing and keen eyes, the 91 year old could pass for a healthy man in his mid-60s. So fit is he that he annually marches in the Melbourne Anzac Day procession; not only marches, but leads the famous 9th Division.

But his health has not always been so good. When he was repatriated a short time before VJ Day, after having served his country for five years, he was mentally in a bad way.

Let's start at the beginning. Born in England, he, his widowed mother and two siblings migrated to Australia in the 1920s. Soon after their arrival his mother remarried and his childhood was spent on a fruit orchard in Coomealla. He travelled on horseback to school, first at Merbein and then at Wentworth, a distance of 14 miles. After saving enough money by working at a bakery after school, he bought a bike.

In 1937 (he was spot-on with dates) his step-father sold the property and the family moved to Murrumbena and Alan was employed as a cadet trainee at a Richmond textile factory.

While in Coomealla he had joined the militia and after Australia declared war on Germany in 1939, and he learned that the 2/24th Battalion was to be formed in Wangaratta under Colonel Spowers, he transferred to the AIF.

In July 1940 he, by now a lance corporal, and 300 other recruits were transferred to the Wangaratta showgrounds which was to be the Battalion's base for several months.

The accommodation was not five star. As Colonel Spowers, DSO, MC recalled in the 1946 Pioneers' Memorial Oration: "Men were housed in sheep pens, horse stalls and grandstands; tents were pitched in unoccupied areas and officers lived in the Women's Industries Pavilion".

For six days a week there was serious training, but Alan recalled that it was necessary and at least Sunday was a day of rest. "We soon became accustomed to camp routine: reveille, out into the freezing cold of the Wangaratta frosts, PT, breakfast, inspection, weapon training, company training and routine marches. The first route march was 18 miles and there were no hot showers at the end".

In the history of the 2/24th Battalion Major R. P. Seale wrote: "The people of Wangaratta adopted the 2/24th and we were given the honorary title of "Wangaratta's Own". The originals will always remember the unstinted hospitality meted out to us by all the people of Wangaratta. We were particularly grateful for the opportunity to visit private homes, for we were still in the transitional stage of conversion from civilians to soldiers.

"Sundays were days of comparative rest - inspection and church parades, afternoon free, and to improve the drill; and to interest the local community there was ceremonial changing of the guard".

Alan has wonderful memories of Wangaratta in 1940; one in particular is of a Sunday afternoon ride in a horse-drawn jinker.

On September 27 the battalion left for Bonegilla, farewelled in the streets and at the Ovens bridge by almost the entire population of 4000. "There was many a friendly wave of the hand, handkerchiefs and miniature flags to give the boys a parting greeting. The great majority of the soldiers have established firm friendships during their stay in Wangaratta, friendships that will remain during the years of war (how prophetic!) and for many years thereafter". (Wangaratta Chronicle 28/9/1940)

Before leaving the showgrounds the battalion was presented with a 14 foot pennant emblazoned with the words "Wangaratta's Own" by Cr Tom Nolan, Mayor of Wangaratta.

Alan, by now a sergeant, had the honour of carrying the banner to Tarrawingee. This was not a long haul for a fit young man and Alan could not understand why he felt so tired when the Battalion had its first rest at Tarrawingee. He soon discovered why: two wet bricks had been placed in his kit bag.

The march to Bonegilla took three and half days but to their dismay the weary soldiers found that conditions at Bonegilla were even more primitive than they were at the showgrounds. The sleeping quarters were unoccupiable so the men were given six days' leave in Melbourne.

On their return, training was intensified and in November the battalion embarked on the Strathmore.

Disembarking at Kantara the battalion entrained to their camp at Dimra near Gaza in Palestine. While in Dimra the battalion was transferred from the Seventh to the Ninth Division. After months of training the unit went into action near Benghazi and later in Tobruk which it held for eight months. This is not a war story. Alan did not want to go into great detail about the various encounters but a brief summary is desirable.

"The battalion was initially formed in 1939 as part of the 7th Australian Division. The battalion left Australia for Palestine and saw service in North Africa with the defence of Tobruk, the salient at Tel el Eisa, El Alamein, and from 1943 in the areas of Nadzab, Finschhafen, Warre and finally at Tarrakan, where they remained until the end of the war". (Mufti, the Victorian RSL magazine).

Alan played down his own achievements but the fact that he rose from lance corporal to captain indicates he must have been a courageous soldier and a natural leader. He is mentioned on several occasions in Major Searle's history.

By May 1945 the end of the war in the Pacific was in sight but for Captain Macfarlane his war was over. His normally strong voice quavered as he spoke of his mental state which he described as "horrific". Invalided back to Australia, he spent several months in the Heidelberg Repratriation Hospital. Fortunately, he made a complete recovery and looked forward to farming on a soldier settlement block at Coomealla. However, the bureaucrat who interviewed him so infuriated Alan with his inane questions that he stormed out of the room.

Coomealla's loss was the future Battalion Association's gain. His post war position was as a salesman for an import company and he combined that with a part-time business administration course at the Melbourne University. There followed stints in the textile industry and with British Petroleum. Then he found a position more to his liking: to re-form the Citizens' Militia Force. As well, he was promoted to major and assisted in the development of Legacy, and was one of the founders in 1948 of the 2/24th Battalion Association, which soon had a membership of between three and four thousand.

Since its inception Alan has been one of the stalwarts of the Association. President for 19 years, he has been the chief organiser of the Wangaratta reunion on which event the narrative now focuses.

The reunion had its genesis in a letter in the Wangaratta Chronicle (15/12/1989) from Bill Kemp who had been one of the original members of the 2/24th, and who suggested a reunion in Wangaratta in 1990 to mark the 50th anniversary of the battalion's formation.

The suggestion was taken up by the council, in particular by the mayor Kevin Gleeson, and the town clerk, John Elward. It was resolved that the association members be invited to Wangaratta to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the battalion's formation and of its time in Wangaratta.

During the weekend celebrations the association was given the Freedom of the City. Cr Val Gleeson, the mayoress, presented Major Alan Macfarlane with a flag identical to the one her father (Cr Tom Nolan) had presented to Sergeant Alan Macfarlane 50 years earlier.

So successful was the weekend that it was decided to make it an annual event and John Elward wrote to a number of residents inviting their assistance for future reunions. Among them were Kevin (dec) and Val Gleeson, Len and Jean Greenwood (both dec), Ray and Isabel Dunstan, Noel and Glenda Wise. All survivors are still helping as are Greg and Helen Larkins and Paul Moss-Holland.

Since 1990 the ageing members of the battalion have returned annually to Wangaratta on the weekend nearest the Remembrance Day. For men in their early 90's it is a most enjoyable, but taxing, weekend. Tonight there is a 'get together' dinner at the Wangaratta RSL. Tomorrow afternoon there is the annual memorial service, followed by afternoon tea provided by the Zonta Club ladies. In the evening there is a mayoral reception at the Performing Arts Centre with assistance from the Lions Club. Formalities conclude on Sunday morning with a laying of a wreath at the cenotaph in the Memorial Gardens, followed by morning tea at the RSL.

The visit to the cemetery, about which I hope to write a story next year, if I am not by then a permanent resident there, is both nostalgic and moving.

As he does with the rest of the cemetery, the sexton, Paul Moss-Holland, keeps the association's section in immaculate condition. Its features include an avenue of 24 gum trees, large rocks with plaques denoting the battalion's history and the various campaigns in which it was engaged, massive blue stone entrance gates, a fig tree grown from a cutting from Tobruk, a rose garden and a memorial wall bearing the names of the battalion members who were killed in the war and those who have since died.

Both the council and the association have financed these additions and Paul also stressed that the contributions of Lou Adamo and John (Sauce) Nolan should be recognised.

As well, the association has planted a tree in Batchelor's Green and provided a seat in the central business district. It grants an annual award in the form of a certificate to year 11 students who have shown involvement, contribution, consideration and an awareness of the needs of others for the betterment of school and community life. The student's name is engraved on an honour board which the association has presented to Wangaratta High School, Galen College and Cathedral College.

Last year only nine members of the original group came to Wangaratta; this year there will probably be fewer. If you should see them around the city during the weekend, greet them and perhaps stop for a chat and tell them how Wangaratta has changed in the last 69 years.

As I noted in our last 'Furphy Flyer', Bill O'Callahan, has written a book titled, *The Wangaratta Story*. The book is a comprehensive look at Wangaratta's social history, spanning pre-settlement to the present day. Bill spent 15 months researching and writing the book and finished in time for the city's Golden Jubilee celebrations. Copies are available at newsagencies in Wangaratta and Yarrunga for \$30.00.

In the last issue of the "Furphy Flyer" I included an item from 2/24th Association member Rod Wilson. I have included it again because of its significance and because the Shrine has asked him to widen the topic of the display to include the Western Desert Campaign.

'Shrine' Display.

Many of you may remember the '60th Anniversary of the Siege of Tobruk' display that I organised in the Melbourne Town Hall in 2001 and the El Alamein display in 2002.

Since then I have continued to exhibit many aspects of Australia's military history ranging from the Boer War through WW's 1 & 2 and Vietnam. These have been in various locations around the state including the Melbourne Town Hall and the Shrine of Remembrance.

The Western Desert Campaign 1940-1942 will be the theme of the exhibition at the Shrine of Remembrance from Friday, 7 May 2010 until Thursday, 1 August 2010. The exhibition will be in the Eastern Gallery and display memorabilia, documents and letters, photos, paintings and outfits and brief descriptions of the three major campaigns – Bardia, Tobruk and El Alamein. The exhibition will incorporate contemporary portraits of veterans by artist Peter Wegner; and several of our veterans have already had sittings for their portraits.

Also, on Wednesday 9 June Bob Hare, the son of Captain Ivan Hare MC who was killed in action at El Alamein, will share extracts from his father's diaries. This talk will commence at 11.00am.

In 2001 several kind people associated with 2/24th assisted by loaning items of interest for the display. I would again greatly appreciate any help in this regard.

Items of interest include AIF and Commonwealth uniform items such as tunics, hats, shirts, shorts, tin hats, personal items etc. Of special interest would be unit colour patches both the original diamond and the later 'T' style patches. German and Italian items of uniform, insignia and equipment are also sought. I am especially interested in a German helmet or cap.

For further details or if you feel you may be able to assist please contact Rod Wilson on 59622782.

Or email rwilson@genesis.net.au

Rod advised that Jack Capel answered the call and sent down a couple of items on loan for the exhibition and that Colonel Weir's wife and daughters also made a few things available. Rod appreciates the support he is receiving from 2/24th Members and hopes they will visit the exhibition.

I apologise for the delay in reporting the Annual General Meeting held on the 19th September 2009. Listed below are the office bearers elected at that meeting and the Presidents report of events between October 2008 and September 2009.

President: Alan Macfarlane.
Vice Presidents: Doug Dobson and Alan Nicholson
Treasurer: Roland Nicholson
Secretary: Alastair Davison
Assistant Secretary
and Public Officer: Janice Young
Committee: Keith Anderson, Cameron Blackwood, Bob Clark, Keith Clark, Ian Holmes, Greg Larkins, Faye Macfarlane, Mark Quinn, Sandra Sharp.

PRESIDENTS REPORT 2009

My greetings to all members as I offer my report regarding our Associations' activities during the past twelve months.

The Shrine Service 19.10.2008

Again the attendance was very good, with the assistance of Shrine staff and our members' provisions; we enjoyed afternoon tea and a "chit-chat".

Wangaratta Reunion 7/8/9.11.2008

As always a very special and successful gathering, even though our numbers were down, the spirit and atmosphere remained. We were delighted and privileged to have the state president, Victorian R.S.L. Major General David Mc Lachlan AO (RETD) as our guest and speaker.

Anzac Day March and Reunion 25.4.2009

Weather wise- great, atmosphere – great! We were honoured to have Wangaratta High School Principal, Mrs Heather Sarou and seven senior students carrying our Battalion Banner then joining us for our annual reunion lunch. Again some regulars were missing but we were pleased to welcome new folk to fill some of the gaps. A special thank you to the Wright Family – Moreland Bus Lines for their continued support.

Birthday Lunch 3.7.2009

A happy gathering and excellent meal was the vote by those able to attend. I suggest to the committee that the luncheon be held after the A.G.M. next year.

Wangaratta High School Centenary Celebrations 7/8.3.2009

Alan Nicholson and I were honoured to be invited to attend this historic and important occasion. As a celebratory gesture, we presented a small fig tree, grown from a cutting of a genuine Tobruk Fig Tree growing at the Tobruk Barracks, Puckapunyal. The tree will have a special place when the school refurbishments, designed by a student, are completed.

My sincere thanks to all our great supporters in Wangaratta and especially our Secretary, Michael Oakley, Treasurer, Ronald Nicholson, Janice Young, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer, Frank Tyrrell for his excellent production of the Furphy Flyer and to my wife Faye.

I would like to add, on this occasion, my thanks to all and particularly Alan Nicholson and Doug Dobson for their support and patience.

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- **The most enjoyable way to follow a vegetable diet is to let the cow eat it, and then eat the cow.**
 - **Worrying works! 90% of things I worry about never happen.**

Last years August edition of the 'Furphy Flyer' included an item sent in by Jim Lowe of Natimuk, VIC. The article, by war correspondent Noel Adams, covered the capture of the town and airstrip at Tarakan. I received further input to that article when reading the newsletter of the 2/7 Australian Field Regiment, 'Dial Sight'.

I have reprised part of the original item and included the additional information.

There have been many tense and dramatic encounters during the fighting on Tarakan. On most of the ridges, so thick is the undergrowth, that our men and enemy patrols have sometimes come face to face before either was aware of the other's presence. During the attack on the airstrip Private Tully of Geelong, was patrolling in thick scrub when a few yards away he saw a helmeted figure with his back towards him. Thinking it was an American looking for excitement, Tully called out. "Good-day, Yank". The man turned swiftly, and Tully saw that he was Japanese with a grenade in each hand. Tully recovered in an instant from his surprise and shot the Japanese before he could even raise his hand.

Jim Lowe of the 2/24th battalion writes, "Here is my involvement regarding this story - to lead my section to capture the ridge overlooking the airfield and the twin barrelled anti-aircraft gun. Captain Travers had taken out pill-boxes with accurate fire. At daybreak Lt. Harry Freame and I had surveyed the gun position and this helped when my section was ordered to take the position - no casualties".

(Dial Sight addition from editor, J A Quillam)

Ron Tully's story is very accurate, he was in my section. Lt. Freame survived the intensive first week of the fighting, even clearing out a tunnel bunker single-handed, with a flamethrower. Several days later he was a patient with a minor complaint in the temporary hospital near the Ac Troop gun position. One night a Japanese soldier infiltrated the area, put poison into the drinking water and killed Lt. Freame. A young RAAF friend of mine was a patient in the hospital at the time and told me about this. He suffered minor poisoning.

The officer commanding the Australian Troops on Tarakan received the following message of congratulation from General Blarney, C-in C AMF; "Warm congratulations on successful operation which leads AIF again from Australian territory to foreign territory held by the common enemy.

I well remember that occasion as the Ac Troop Observation Post Officer, Dick Faulkner, was up with the leading 2/24th infantry lads - and so were his signallers. I was the Sgt of the Sigs and we had to provide line communication from the guns, and repair the lines when the fleeing Japs managed to cut them. On one such occasion signaller, 'Ace' Williams, was wounded, when finding and repairing a damaged wire. It was hard work for us as we had to carry heavy reels, run out the cables and push them off the track, sometimes putting them above head height in the foliage. In addition, of course, we had to provide our own 'scouts' and carry the personal gear of the chaps running the lines. At night we stayed with the infantry. I would ask their Sergeant where he would like our group and he was quite happy to have us spread among his lads.

Strange as it may seem, in January, after the war, I called to see my girlfriend at her home and was met at the front gate by her father. He introduced me to a visitor from Victoria, who was related to his wife. They were cousins. I looked at him and he looked at me, both of us in disbelief. He was the sergeant of the 2/24th. and his surname was Nettleton.

Unfortunately in 2009 there is only one of 'my' Sigs left to read of the 'doings' of those days and he is my very good mate, Michael Rabbitt, who at the time of preparing this copy, is in hospital with hernia problems. Probably from the strain of carrying heavy reels of cable, but the barmaids at the Millicent hotel say it could have been caused carrying the crates of beer home.

Tour to Tobruk 2011 (from Alastair Davison)

Since I went to Libya and visited Tobruk and El Alamein in 2008, several of our members have commented that they would like to visit these sites. The tour company with whom I went is planning a trip to Libya, Egypt and Greece in 2011. It is being planned to commemorate Anzac Day at the cemetery in Tobruk. Pre-release details of this tour can be found obtained at <http://www.missiontravel.com.au/ww2-libya-egypt-greece-and-crete-with-garrie-hutchinson-april-2011> (or Google Mission Travel and look under Pilgrimage Tours/2011.) Telephone contact is 1300 554 654 or you can email info@missiontravel.com.au.

Commemorative Service at the War Memorial Canberra, 26 November 2009

Some recollections

June Mitchell was most impressed with the dedication ceremony, and found it a very moving and emotional event. She commented that Alan Macfarlane's speech was a great précis of the battalion's war activity, and that the Mayor of Wangaratta's speech of thanks was lucid, remarking on the great honour that the Rural City of Wangaratta community has in its enduring association with the members of the 2/24th.

June also commented on the sincerity of the prayers by the Chaplain, which added to the occasion and she was sure that Rob would have been very proud had he been able to attend. June concluded by saying she was so glad to have been present at the commemorative service.

Bobby Fenwick felt that it was heart-warming to see the strong bond which continues amongst the members of the 2/24th Battalion – many of whom had traveled long distances to be with their mates at the Canberra service. These were men who had given up the carefree days of their youth to face the brutality of war; memories of which could only be shared with their mates as they worked to create balanced lives in peacetime. Of course, she added, many did not have that opportunity; having given up their lives. Bobby expressed her thanks to the Battalion for giving the widows the opportunity to join with the men on what was a memorable and moving occasion.

Keith Clark's mate, Ted Pike from Tassie, was given a surprise by his four sons. Ted thought he was going on a trip to Melbourne but ended up at the ceremony in Canberra. His boys knew he had read about the upcoming ceremony in the 'Furphy Flyer' and, as a surprise, organized the trip and accompanied him to Canberra. By all accounts they all had a great time with their Dad and his mates from the 2/24th.

Read the speeches by the President, Alan Macfarlane, and the Mayor, Cr Ron Webb, on the website at <http://2-24.battalion.org.au>. Click on photo of the Australian War Memorial on the front page. If you do not have access to a computer and would like a copy of the speeches, please contact the Secretary and they will be posted to you.

Subscriptions & Donations

Please note that receipts will not be sent unless a reply paid envelope is enclosed with your payment. All subs and donations will be acknowledged in the Furphy Flyer in Mufti. Thank you for your support.

Subscriptions

M W Twentyman, V Williams, Nola Adams, Lois Rourke, Charlie Scales.

Donations

May Cleghorn, A J Davison, M W Twentyman, J & M Drage, V Williams, Nola Adams, Lyle Johnson, Lois Rourke, Charlie Scales.

We have received Newsletters from the following Associations,

- Dial Sight 2/7 Australian field regiment
- HMAS Westralia Association
- 9th Aust Division Sappers Association
- Tobruk Truth ROTA Queensland Branch
- Mud and Blood 2/23rd Battalion Association

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- *The main trouble with mental notes is the ink fades so fast.*
 - *An apology is a good way to have the last word.*

The redhead took her finger, pushed on her left shoulder and screamed. Then she pushed on her elbow and screamed even more. She pushed her knee and screamed; likewise her ankle. everywhere she touched made her scream. The doctor said, "You're not really a redhead are you?" "Well, no," she said, "I'm actually a blonde."
"I thought so," the doctor said, "your finger is broken."

Eternal Truths

- Once over the hill, you pick up speed.
 - It's hard to be fit as a fiddle when you are shaped like a cello.
 - Everyone has a photographic memory. Some just don't have film!
 - If the shoe fits, buy it in every colour.
 - If you look like your passport picture, you probably need the trip.
 - Bills travel through the mail at twice the speed of cheques.
 - Some days are a total waste of make-up.
 - A balanced diet is a chocolate in each hand.
 - Middle age is when broadness of the mind and narrowness of the waist change places.
 - Junk is something you've kept for years and throw away three weeks before you need it.
-

An elderly man lay dying in his bed. In death's agony, he suddenly smelled the aroma of his favourite chocolate chip muffins wafting up the stairs.

He gathered his remaining strength, and lifted himself from the bed.

Leaning against the wall, he slowly made his way out of the bedroom, and with even greater effort forced himself down the stairs, gripping the railing with both hands, he crawled downstairs.

With laboured breath, he leaned against the door-frame, gazing into the kitchen. Were it not for death's agony, he would have thought himself already in heaven: there, spread out upon waxed paper on the kitchen table were literally hundreds of his favourite chocolate chip muffins.

Was it heaven? Or was it one final act of heroic love from his devoted wife, seeing to it that he left this world a happy man?

Mustering one great final effort, he threw himself toward the table, landing on his knees in a rumpled posture. His parched lips parted: the wondrous taste of the muffin was already in his mouth, seemingly bringing him back to life.

The aged and withered hand trembled on its way to a muffin at the edge of the table, when it was suddenly smacked with a spatula by his wife.

"Bugger off" she said, "they're for the funeral."

I walked into Bunning's hardware at lunchtime, wandered down the timber aisle and some old fart, dressed in a red shirt with a green apron on asked me if I wanted decking. Fortunately, I got in the first half dozen punches and sorted the bastard out.

Those less suspecting might not be so lucky. Spread this warning on to all your friends.

A wise mute once said:



The 2/24 Australian Infantry Battalion Association (Inc) Annual Subscription 2010

Please return this sheet even if you have paid your subs

Due to rising costs of printing and postage we are reluctantly increasing the Annual Membership to \$15. The last date for renewal of membership will be 30 April, 2010; but in future the subscription year will be January to December. Subscriptions not paid by 30 April will be treated as being in arrears.

IMPORTANT: *Please note that all Veterans and Associate Members who have renewed their subscriptions already DO NOT have to pay any additional fee for this year.*

Also, please remember that widows are not required to pay annual subscriptions.

We have had a number 'Furphy Flyers in Mufti' returned due to an incorrect address in our files. So that we can update our records we ask all members and organisations to complete the following details so that our records are current.

Title [please circle] Mr Mrs Miss Ms Dr Other

Name: (or position in organisation)

Kindred Organisation (if appropriate)

Status of your membership [Please circle correct status]

Member –veteran // Widow of veteran // Associate Member // Kindred

For Associate Members please indicate your relationship to the Association:

Friend of Association // Relative or descendant of

Postal address

..... State.....Postcode

Residential address (leave blank if same as above)

.....

..... State.....Postcode

Telephone number ()

E-mail address (if applicable)

Do you wish to have the 'Furphy Flyer in Mufti' e-mailed as a PDF file instead of it being posted?

If you agree please circle: YES

Please return this form to:

**Honorary Secretary
2/24 Battalion Association
P.O. Box 337
Warrandyte Vic 3113**

The data collected by 'The 2/24th Australian Infantry Battalion Association Inc' is for the exclusive and sole use of the Association and the membership list will never be supplied to any other organization. Individual details will only be supplied with the written consent of the member concerned.

View the Privacy Policy at <http://2-24.battalion.org.au/privacy>

Please return, with subscription (if applicable) no later than 30 April, 2010