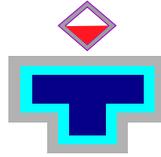


**The Furphy Flyer in Mufti.**



**I HOLD FAST**

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

**Postal address : 10B Somme Parade, Edithvale 3196**

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Melbourne

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**COMING EVENTS FOR 2008**

**Battalion Birthday Lunch, Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July at Pascoe Vale RSL**

*(see inside for further details)*

**Annual General Meeting, August, Pascoe Vale RSL**

**2/24<sup>th</sup>'s Shrine Pilgrimage – Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2.00pm**

**(Assemble 1.30pm)**

*(the August "Furphy" will provide further details)*

**9<sup>th</sup> Division's Shrine Service and Luncheon, Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October**

*(the August "Furphy" will provide further details)*

**Wangaratta Weekend Reunion, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> November**

*(this edition and August "Furphy" will provide further details)*

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**Vale**

L. R. Richardson	VX142896	2008
Thomas A. Karnaz	VX48290	20 Jan 2008
W. E. Vickery	VX71415	12 Feb 2008
W. M. Barwood	VX47204	2 Mar 2008
William (Bill) Mitchell	VX30186	5 Mar 2008
Duncan Anderson MM	VX33857	14 Mar 2008
J. W. Reardon	QX51755	28 Mar 2008
William J. Bell	VX45711	7 April 2008
Les I. Morris	NX179798	12 April 2008
Robin Mitchell	VX67518	3 May 2008
Doris Kaighin		24 April 2008

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

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To all our 2/24<sup>th</sup> veterans, throughout Australia, if you were able to attend an ANZAC Day ceremony, I hope your day was memorable. To those unable to attend, I know your thoughts would have been with the mates who did not return.

### **ANZAC March.**

Melbourne turned on a beautiful autumn day for the 2008 ANZAC Day March. The sun was shining as the marchers assembled in Flinders Street for the march to the Shrine.

The years have definitely thinned our ranks but the enthusiasm, emotion and comradeship of the marchers generated a tremendous atmosphere on this special day.

This year, our President had the honour of leading the 9<sup>th</sup> Division, so was unable to march with his beloved 2/24<sup>th</sup>. He was driven in a jeep, just behind the Rats of Tobruk Pipe and Drums and says he had to stop himself from getting out and marching. He just wasn't used to sitting during the march.

With Alan Nicholson unable to attend, the 2/24<sup>th</sup> was led by Doug Dobson with the assistance of Bob Clark. As usual, we can be proud of the way they marched, and, like all units, they were clapped and cheered along by the many individuals who came to support the marchers and remember the Australians who fought and died for Australia.

Again we were thrilled to have students from Wangaratta High School marching with the 2/24<sup>th</sup>. The students were very welcome and we appreciated the effort they made to be with us.

Thank you to Peter Wright, son of the late Clarrie Wright, of the Morland Bus Company for his continued support to our men over many years.

### **Lunch**

Following the march, members and families returned to the Pascoe Vale RSL to enjoy a lovely meal. Eighty people attended – overwhelming, but what a great day. Considering that many of our regulars were on the sick list or unable to attend, the attendance was outstanding. Again it was a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and meet some new ones. Our President, Alan Macfarlane, was Master of Ceremonies and welcomed us all.

The eight students from Wangaratta High School who marched with our Battalion in the morning also joined us at the lunch.

Thank you to Ted Richards and the great staff of the Pascoe Vale RSL for providing the lunches and many of the door prizes. Also, a big thank you to Janice Young for her contribution to the success of the luncheon. ANZAC Day is a very long day for our veterans but every year, it is a memorable one.

Among those present at the lunch were ....

Janice Young, Alan Smith, Bartlett Family, Robert Spencer, Daryl Shilton, Owen Lewis, Michael Oakley, Alastair Davison, Ray Jinnette, Chris Burchill, Doug Dobson, Keith Clark, Curley Callendar, Rob and June Mitchell, Rod Wilson, Frank Stephens, Helen Simmons, Robyn & Maudie Stevens, Ian Holmes, Brendan Cooke, O'Shea Family, Johnathon Mitchell, Ralph MacCrae, Mark Quinn, Michael Lewis, Bob Clark family, J Mollard, S Mollard, Stephen Greentree, Daniel Lovigs, Heath Keighley, Alan and Faye Macfarlane, Keith Anderson, John McMahan.

### **Wangaratta.**

On Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> April, the Wangaratta High School held its annual ANZAC Day ceremony. Joining them was Darrel Brumby, President of the Wangaratta RSL and Alan Macfarlane, President of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion Association.

The ceremony, organised by the Prefects and Assistant Principal, Mr Ritchie, included the Senior Band playing the National Anthem and students, Jason Harnwell and Emma MacPhee playing Reveille.

Alan presented the school with a replica of the Battalion flag and spoke about the Battalion's strong links with Wangaratta and the now strong links with Wangarata High School.

Acting Principal, Rex Pirie, reiterated these sentiments and stressed that once the remaining few members of the battalion have passed away, it is the responsibility of Wangaratta's youth to uphold their spirit and maintain their memory.

**VALE**

*I have kindly received notes and copies of eulogies from relatives and friends of 2/24<sup>th</sup> men who have died recently. It is great to hear their life stories and see how their lives have affected so many people. As one eulogy states, 'we are all richer for having known him and now poorer for his passing'.*

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*On Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> May, the funeral service for Robin Mitchell was held at the Uniting Church, Pascoe Vale South. There was a very large crowd, about three hundred people, there to pay their respects to a very special man. Among the attendees were Alan and Faye Macfarlane, Bob and Dot Clark, Keith Clark, Jack Collins and his daughter, Janice Young, Pam and Frank Tyrrell, Neil and Win Holland, Edna Bridgman, Nance Ormsby, Maudie and Robin Stevens, Lyn and Graham Masters, Sherry and Eve Elsdon, John and Gwen Elward, Dave and Wilma Evans. Apologies from Alan Nicholson, Jim Hughes and Doug Dobson.*

*The following is part of the eulogy that was read by Rob's son, Greg.*

Robin Mitchell was born at Stanhope, northern Victoria, in 1922, to Alexander and Emily Mitchell. They had moved there from Apollo Bay two years before, on to a Soldier Settlement block, after Alexander's service in the First World War. Rob had an older sister Val, and then a younger sister Merne. The family later moved to Rushworth, but his first strong memories are from the next phase of his life, growing up in Kyneton from 1928. There he went to state school and high school to year 9, and apparently he was very good at maths. However he left to work in the Post Office, it was the Depression and the family were poor farmers who needed his income.

In 1939 Reverend and Mrs D.C. Gibbs arrived in Kyneton, and on the first Sunday their daughter June met Rob under the apple tree between the Church and the Parsonage. He was 17, she 15. Doug Gibbs didn't think much of Rob at first but later admitted he was a 'goodun'.

Later that year the Post Office transferred him to the Melbourne GPO because of a shortage of men. He stayed with an uncle, and while there, with the help of his cousin, 'borrowed' his uncle's car for a trip to Kyneton – to see a girl, perhaps? No charges were laid. He wrote a 'dear John' letter to June to end their friendship.

He then boarded with the Stancliffes in Coburg, who introduced him to Church and the Methodist Order of Knights or MOK's. This was a boys club based on the Knights of the Round Table and the Christian faith. He made friends for life. He also recommenced his friendship with June.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 1941, at 19 years of age, he signed up and went to war. His great friend Alan Macfarlane will tell you about that aspect of his life later, but it is no surprise that those four years had a profound effect on him for the rest of his life.

On leave in January 1946 he married June at her father's Church in Eaglehawk. He doesn't think he ever did propose to her, she just arranged it. His contribution was the romantic notion of a honeymoon in Mallacoota, but he had no means of getting there and no time, so they had the next best thing – 5 days in Geelong.

They settled in Bendigo, where he finished his army time working for the cartographic department at a big old famous house called Fortuna. It's still there on the hill. Sadly he had to be moved out of cartography after his over-enthusiastic fire-lighting set the chimney on fire and nearly burnt the place down.

He was discharged from the army in June '46 at 23 years of age and worked for the Post Office again. Carolyn was born in 1949 at Kurmala in Bendigo. June's uncle had organised a job for him at Gerrards in North Melbourne so the family moved to Essendon in 1950. I was born in '52. He joined North Essendon Church, and became heavily involved. He was a Sunday school teacher, then Superintendent. Over the next thirty years he also held every lay position in that Church at some stage, including Parish Chairman after Union.

He established the MOKs and made a huge mark on the lives of many boys and young men. He gently showed them his quiet faith in the way he cared for them, but he also excited them with the bush. You can take the boy out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the boy! - hikes and trips and woodchops, as well as swimming and athletics, badminton, countless games of 500 – great memories! His

favourite was to hike into the Lerderderg gorge, via Mount Blackwood, at night, where people were often lost for days, with high stakes on whether you picked the right spur to descend. 15 or more young men and boys in the paddocks with torches trying to catch rabbits with their hands – we never caught one!! Andy, one of the older knights, stunned me one night when he told me my father was a saint! As a know-all teenager I was very aware of my father's perceived faults at that time, whilst being oblivious of his virtues – I was forced to reconsider, and I have never looked at Dad the same since! Does 'borrowing' a car without permission or nearly burning down Fortuna disqualify one from sainthood? What about enjoying a rare episode of illegal fishing? Rather than he a saint, he was more a giant upon whose shoulders we stood.

You will all remember Dad as a tease, and he certainly was. His nieces and nephews, then his grandchildren were a little bothered by that. He famously booby-trapped the front veranda with an empty bread tin and a piece of string, when David was dating Carrolyn. He tickled and joked, and gave cheek. However he had a magical gift of being able to be fun without being a fool – just scratch the surface and you would find his wise council at the ready.

In 1962 Gerrards changed and he became a travelling sales rep for Instant Industries, a small office supply company owned by Darkie Collins. Darkie died in 1969, and Dad moved to Samuel Jones, a packaging firm. These were to be his happiest working years as he travelled all of rural Victoria and the adjacent states supplying Butter factories with packaging. It was the country boys dream, driving all over, his own boss, dealing with country folk. Eventually they were taken over, by a large tobacco company, and Dad retired early at 60 to escape from a desk job in the city.

After retiring, Dad and Mum spent a lot more time at Apollo Bay but it wasn't enough. He joined the Lions Club in Essendon and met a new circle of fine people. He became secretary, and then became more involved in Lionsville Lodge, its accommodation centre. His caring role became focussed there, where he loved to help and be involved and useful. He was a voluntary maintenance man and was greatly valued and loved.

Time took its toll and the last few years have been hard on him, especially with reduced mobility. June has been his strength and between them they have enjoyed the quieter time. In recent months he has had some great times, with family, MOK, and battalion reunions. The ultimate was the arrival of his first great grandchild, Grace who is here today. The circle of life continues.

Robin Mitchell was a doer, one of those utterly reliable people who will see a job that needs to be done and then gets on and does it without fanfare. Perhaps he learnt during the depression and the war what it means to be dependable, and the consequences of failure. Many of his projects over the years were people whom he cared for, like Darkie Collins widow and his aunt in Apollo Bay, the residents of Lionsville or the Battalion members and their families. He did not do this because he had to, but I believe it was because he cared about them. He never complained about those duties, never got mad, never even raised his voice that I can remember.

A measure of what a doer he is, is that within 24 hours of breathing his last here, he arranged for his miserable football team to reverse their run of horrible form for a miracle win. There remains a little mystery though – he barracks for the demons, not the saints.

*This item from the Warrnambool Legacy newsletter was kindly forwarded by Jack Caple.*

**Cpl William Josiah Bell VX48711**

Joe was born on the February 1921 and enlisted in August 1940; he embarked for the Middle East with the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion in November 1940. He served through the siege of Tobruk.

On his return to Australia he married Elsie Clark while on leave on the 14th June 1944. They had been married 63 years at the time of his death on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2008.

He worked as a linesman with the PMG in Terang and Camperdown until his retirement. He was inducted into the Warrnambool Legacy Club in January 1980. Due to ongoing medical problems, Legatee Joe was not well known outside the Camperdown area; but he served for 28 years and faithfully visited widows until a month before his death.

***Darrel Brumby, President of the Wangaratta RSL, sent in the Order of Service for the funeral of Bill Mitchell, which he and "a number of old diggers" attended. This 'Ode to Digger Bill' was written by Michelle Ferguson.***

This is an Ode to Digger Bill  
A quite gentle man  
A man whom it was a pleasure  
To smile and shake his hand.

A man who loved his family  
And his country too  
A brave hearted man who laid it on the line  
To save Australia for me and you

He's lived through peace and war  
And the passing of his wife  
He's seen his kid's grow up  
Marry and build a life

This is an Ode to a man  
One with few regrets  
This is an Ode to a digger  
Lest we forget. (We will never forget)

***The following is part of the eulogy for Duncan Anderson. His funeral service was held at the Warracknabeal Uniting Church and the attendees included Clem Eastick, Frank Schneider and Jim Lowe.***

Duncan was born in 1919 to Walter and Margaret Anderson, at home, on a farm 14 miles west of Swan Hill. He was number ten in a family of twelve. He attended Pira State School near Swan Hill and completed Grade 8 in 1933. He usually had to milk four cows before school which had to be brought in from a 300 acre paddock. He went to a Presbyterian Church and Sunday School at Bulga, seldom missing a Sunday. To attend he either went by horse and buggy or rode a bike.

In 1937, Duncan came to the Warracknabeal Show and stayed with his cousin Les, who offered him a job for the harvest. The harvest job turned into a permanent job until Duncan enlisted in the army in June 1940, aged twenty.

Duncan met Jean Knox when he was camped at the Wangaratta Showgrounds during his training. They were married in Wangaratta in 1944. They later lived and sharefarmed at Landt's, west of Warracknabeal and in 1948 bought the farm at Brim East.

Farming was Duncan's entire life and despite occasionally bogging the tractor to the axle and knocking mirrors off the ute, he worked the farm with Rodney and later Joel until he and Jean retired to live in Warracknabeal in 2000.

Duncan was a loving and devoted husband of Jean, cherished father of Pam, Rodney and Beth, the proudest grandfather of nine and the adored great grandfather of five. He will be remembered by his friends and family as a caring, dependable, good natured and warm hearted person. Someone we are all richer for having known and now poorer for his passing.

***Our President, Alan Macfarlane, was unable to attend the Service but sent a message to the family plus details of Duncan's war service. I feel it is fitting to print out the citation for his Military Medal.***

"Sgt Anderson served with the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion in the Middle East, New Guinea and Tarakan. He assumed command of his platoon when his platoon commander was wounded in the attack on Airstrip Ridge on the 3/5/1945 and displayed exceptional leadership and gallantry throughout the units operations on Tarakan. Sgt Anderson's ability and skill completely eliminated the enemy on the Elbow and 80 features and did much to ensure the success of the Battalion".

***Jean Anderson sent Alan this thank you note.***

Dear Alan

Thank you for your lovely letter. It was wonderful for us to receive news of Duncan's war years, especially written by you. He was so proud of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> and proud of being a Tobruk Rat. He was very proud to know Alan Macfarlane and spoke highly of you.

I hope your health improves so you can enjoy many years of happiness. Many thanks and kind regards.

## Letters to Secretary

*From Ted Bell of Glynde, SA .....*

Dear Michael, I have not met you but I well recall your father in Tobruk. I congratulate you on the work you are doing for the Battalion.

In the "Furphy Flyer", No. 32, I would point to a minor error, about line 16 on page 7, it was C company of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> that over ran and captured the enemy company No. 621; Everard Baillieu led C company.

He would have spent many days, many hours, in contact with the former enemy establishing the truth as against other claimants, all old history now!

Enclosed is my subscription and donation, regards to all.

*Thanks for your note Ted.*

*From Andrew Finlay of Morven, NSW .....*

Please find enclosed my subscription plus a donation. I feel it is a privilege to belong to the organisation and I wish you all the very best for ANZAC day.

*Our best wishes to you Andrew.*

*From Bruce Gray of Beaumaris .....*

Many thanks for the "Furphy Flyer" which I always look forward to receiving.

*Thanks for you support Bruce.*

*From Mrs Val Wilson of Merlynston, Vic .....*

Dear Michael, I've been talking to Alan and he told me to send you a cheque for \$50 and you would forward to me a copy the History of the 2/24<sup>th</sup>. I want to give the book to my niece as a gift. My husband, Richard, gave her his medals before he passed away. Thanking you for your trouble.

*It's no trouble Val. Nice to hear Richard's history is being passed on to a younger generation.*

*From Evelyn Rees of Newmarket, QLD .....*

Please use this donation wherever you wish in appreciation of your dedicated support of all the ex servicemen of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

My husband only joined the unit in 1942 but I still enjoy the articles written by those who fought in the Middle East. Great to see the progress of the web site; looking forward to further news.

Once again, thankyou for a great newsletter.

*Thank you for your note and kind donation.*

*From Lois Twigg of Yarraville .....*

Charles and I enjoy reading the "Furphy Flyer" and find lots of news in it. Best wishes to all.

*Thanks for you support Lois.*

*From Jean Gibbs of Echuca .....*

Another year gone and time to pay our subs. I'm so happy to be fit and well and able to enclose my subs and a donation.

I was pleased to get the "Furphy Flyer" yesterday and hear of the members doings. I hope those well enough are able to march in April. I send my sympathy to those who have lost their loved ones.

Thank you for posting the Flyer, I enjoy reading the news.

*Lovely to hear from you again Jean and it's great to know that you are keeping fit and well. Our best wishes go out to you.*

*ps.. Widows are not required to pay annual subscriptions, which I reckon you know already. Your annual donations are very much appreciated.*

*From Bob Hutchieson of Wangaratta .....*

Thanks for the reminder in the "Furphy Flyer" that subs are now due, mind you, I would have remembered about October as I still think it's about July 2007.

However, the main thing is, I still landed our mates of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> on time and safe on the beaches on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 1945.

Cheers to all for 2008.

*Best wishes to you Bob.*

*From Jane Garton of Brunswick West. Mary is the daughter of the late Geoffrey Ludbrook .....* Keep your great newsletter going and in doing so, remind us all of our heritage.

*Thanks Jane.*

*From John Elward of Wangaratta .....*

*"Waste Not – Want Not"*

On a recent visit to the Wangaratta Cemetery I found twelve small ripe figs on the Tobruk, 'Wangarata's Own' Fig tree. With the help of six apples and my wife Gwen's recipe book I was able to make six small jars of apple and fig jam.

I informed our President, Alan, that country kids born in the middle of the Depression in 1935 were brought

up not to waste anything, no matter how small, especially rabbits, fruit and blackberries.

I took a jar to Paul Moss-Holland and Peter at the cemetery who had mistakenly thought the birds had beaten them to the figs. They felt 'Cemetery Fig Jam' had a certain ring about it that would sell well but the tree will need to grow a fair bit before we could expect any returns to help the Association's finances. Regards to all.

*I agree, the name does have a certain ring to it. Well done John.*

*From Nance Ongley of Mortlake, VIC .....*

We all had a great time in Wangaratta last November and are looking forward to the 2008 Weekend. Regards to all members.

*Thanks for the update on Heather Jordan's address. Best wishes to you.*

*From Jack Caple of Warrnambool .....*

I found the last "Furphy Flyer" full of interest thus I would like to add my little involvement re Lt. Jack Shelton.

When we arrived in Palestine, I along with Keith Bailey (both from Warracknabeal) was sent to a three weeks Bren Gun Carrier school. At the passing out, somehow I was the only one that received a Distinguished Pass, with the result that on orders from the CO I was to be promoted to Sergeant. There were a number of Cpl's in the platoon at that time and it so happened that if I accepted the promotion I would have been senior to a close leading Cpl, so, I tried to decline it. But not for long, as our platoon commander being Lt Jack Shelton, quickly showed his authority and ordered me to put up the extra stripe – and get on with it!

We were devastated when Lt Shelton failed to return after being asked to investigate what was going on out in front, prior to Gen Rommel's May attack. He was a good leader and officer and we were saddened the way he was killed.

It was a pleasant surprise to meet his son Bill at the auction of the 'Rats of Tobruk' hall, also his grandson.

I congratulate our President, Alan Macfarlane, on being nominated to lead the 9<sup>th</sup> Division on ANZAC day, he will do it well.

ps.. Good to hear Arthur Fitzpatrick reaching 92, I'm three years behind. He and I did OCTU together in Cairo.

*Thanks for your letter Jack. All the best to you.*

*From Eric Edwards of Carnegie .....*

Frank, I thought this may be of interest to you.

After the majority of the POWs at the camp in Maribor (German "Marburg") were retaken by the Yugo Slavian partisans in August 1944 from the work site — I was not among them because I had been asked to work back at camp that day — I was sent to the farm of Josef Kopper at Grafendorf, near Graz in Austria. There were 10 children on that farm the eldest of whom was a girl of 13 named Cacilia. Later she married, moved to her husband's farm, and had 2 sons and 4 daughters. The eldest son married Anita and they had a daughter named Cornelia. I wrote to them and was invited to visit them, which I did in 1999 and again in 2002 — both farms, the farm I worked on in 1944 and Cilia's. The highlight of the visit was when I was taken to a *Gasthaus* (restaurant) and met all of the 10 "children" plus two more born after I left, plus their husbands or wives, as the case may be, less one chap who had died, and plus Anita who could speak English and who acted as interpreter. One woman came up to me and said "I'm Maria, I was 7 when you were on the farm." They gave me an enjoyable time.

Before I left Anita's farm, she told me that Cornelia, who had been learning English, would have liked to talk to me but she was too frightened in case she made too many mistakes. After arriving home I wrote to her and for her birthday ever since. She will be 23 on 12<sup>th</sup> March. But last year Cornelia wrote to me and told me that she was getting married and, after the wedding, she wrote again telling me about the wedding, which went from 11.30 a.m. until 5.30 in the morning — 18 hours. And she sent a photo of she and her husband. She wrote, "We are so happy that everything was so beautiful."

Early this year I received another letter telling me that she was pregnant and expecting a baby in April so, last week, while I was in the city, I went to a souvenir shop and bought a toy koala, nearly 6" high and made in Australia. It has a small cardboard boomerang in its paws and a silken scarf with 4 Australian flag motifs around its

neck. The new baby, of course, won't be interested in it for several months, but it is typically Australian. They are fine people.

*Best wishes to you Eric.*

*From Clem Eastick of Nhill .....*

I am a bit shaky for this writing business. Please find enclosed my subs and a donation. I attended Duncan Anderson's funeral at Warracknabeal. It was good to catch up with Jim Lowe and Frank Schneider. I am still living rough out in the bush. I have been getting a supply of wood in for the winter. I can still get my boots on in the morning. I don't think I will ever wear them out. Getting to lazy. Regards to all at reunion.

*Your handwriting is perfect, Clem. Lovely to hear from you.*

*From Bill Shelton of Kooyong .....*

...The family was particularly pleased to read the story of my father, Lt. Jack Shelton, in the last "Furphy Flyer". Notwithstanding we know the story it was great that you printed it for the members. Regards to all.

*Best wishes to you Bill.*

*From Shirley Wild of Teesdale VIC .....*

Please find enclosed a cheque for subs and a donation. ....Thoroughly enjoyed last year in Wangaratta, hope to be there again in '08.

*Thanks for your support Shirley.*

*From Stan Gleeson of Neerim South .....*

Please find enclosed a cheque for subs and a donation. In memory of .....

Bryan Gleeson VX34495 2/24th

Bob Hodges VX34539 2/24th

Bill Gleeson VX34502 2/24<sup>th</sup>

Iris Gleeson VF39763 AWAS

I have had the honour and pleasure of meeting many ex 2/24<sup>th</sup> members over the years. Bryan was my uncle with whom I boarded in Melbourne in the early 1950s.

I used to enjoy a beer or two with my uncle Bryan and Ossie Warden at Staggs' Hotel in Maribynong in those days.

*Nice to hear from you Stan.*

*From Bill Northausen of Braybrook .....*

Sorry for missing ANZAC Day due to ill health. Please find enclosed a cheque for subs and a donation to the Memorial Wall.

*Hope your feeling better Bill, all the best.*

*From Faye Chandler of Leongatha .....*

I am writing on behalf of my father **Morrie Parry** who is 86 years young. As dad's eyesight isn't very good I read the "Furphy Flyers" to him. He enjoys reminiscing over all the stories, but doesn't say much. I enjoy reading all the stories too. Dad was in the 2/24<sup>th</sup>, Dom Company, as a stretcher bearer in the Middle East and New Guinea.

Dad went to Darwin in September and was happy to see the War Memorial. Keep up the good work in the "Furphy Flyer", also enclosed is a donation.

Regards to all.

*Lovely to hear from you Faye. Our best wishes to you and Morrie.*

*From Bob McGrath of Vermont South .....*

I hope this correspondence finds all at the Association fit and well. Please find enclosed a cheque for subs and a donation towards the upkeep of the Memorial Wall.

I am very pleased to receive the *Furphy Flyer in Mufti* and consume every page on receipt. Often names appear that my father talked to, in conversation years ago, which brings back many memories. All the best to everyone.

*Thanks Bob.*

*From Larry Forrest of Sunnycliffs, VIC .....*

My name is Larry Forrest, the youngest son of Ernest William John Forrest, VX45474.

I know that the ranks of the Rats/Diggers of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> are thinning but I was wondering if there is somebody within the Association that knew my father and could possibly pass on some information or stories to me. I can be contacted at PO Box 62, Sunnycliffs 3496 or (03) 50242975 or email, [lforest@bigpond.net.au](mailto:lforest@bigpond.net.au)

Hoping to hear from you soon.

*Hope we can help Larry.*

*From Rayda Noble of Bon Beach .....*

Just to let you know that the grandson of Nance and Len Ormsby, Haydon Middleton, aged 14, is now a member of the Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums. Nance is a very proud grandmother and Len, who passed away in 1999 would have been just as

proud. Look out for Haydon at the ANZAC Day march. Regards to all.

*You sound just as proud Rayda. Thanks for the note.*

*From Michael, Danny and Helen Simmons of Seaford .....*

Enclosed is a donation from Dawn Simmons to the 2/24<sup>th</sup>. We are very grateful to Alan Macfarlane for conducting the funeral of our dad Michael (Mick) Simmons in 2004 and for all those members of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> who attended his funeral. Special thanks to Alan Nicholson who cared for Dad in the prison camp when he had hepatitis and for his visit to our home before dad's funeral. Dad, along with Tom Anderson, loved ANZAC day and the other reunions during the year.

Dawn died suddenly in November 2007. She expressed her desire to give a donation last year when Dawn and Helen attended the Wangaratta weekend Reunion. Thanks to Maudie and Robyn Stevens for their friendship that weekend.

The DVA and visits from Legacy supported Mum well in her final years.

A big thank you to all the committee for all their hard work.

*The Association, and Alan in particular, thank you very much for your kind words and your mother's very generous donation. This sort of support is very much appreciated.*

*From Jan and Brian Hoare of Launceston. Jan is the daughter of the late Max Frost .....*

Dear Alan and members of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion Association. Thankyou so much for your words of sympathy on the occasion of Dad's death. Dad thought very highly of all of you and enjoyed your fellowship on the occasions he was able to make the reunions. He had hoped to attend last year with me as his companion/carer. But he was physically unable to make that much of an effort and, I must confess, I was relieved when his plans didn't come to fruition. Thankyou for inserting the funeral notice in the Melbourne paper, I received a copy via Neil Whybrow.

Max was such a vital member of our family circle and his death has left a void that nobody else can fill. However, we have a lifetime of wonderful memories and stories to share amongst us, and we are grateful that we had him for so long. He was a very loved and loving father, father-in-law, grandfather and great

grandfather, who served his country and community all his life. Larger than life, he had an enormous influence on all of us and our lives have been richer for his presence.

Your support and expressions of sympathy have all helped to ease our sadness and we thank you sincerely.

*Thank you for your letter Jan. Our best wishes to you and your family..*

*From Frank Schneider of Horsham .....*

Please find enclosed a cheque covering membership and a donation. I read with much interest the contents of the "Furphy Flyer". I'm happy to include order of service and selected material from eulogies given at Duncan Anderson's funeral. Present at the funeral of their mate and friend were Clem Eastick and Jim Lowe, proudly wearing the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion tie. Both were wounded in action and even in old age they are still going strong. I did visit Duncan in Horsham Hospital earlier this year not knowing then that his life was drawing to a close.

Spoke to Ron Werner (Qld) recently. He's having health problems and is in a retirement village. Mobility is limited but still sees the funny side of life. With admiration I read of the St Kilda footballer, Harry Comte. I was fortunate to play a game of football; played it on the Tablelands and Harry was Captain, of course. In the opposition were the Cordner brothers, one of them winning the Brownlow in 1946. Needless to say we lost. I last saw Harry in a makeshift hospital in Tarakan, he was far from well. I remember Harry with kind affection.

Sorry to have rambled on, kind regards to all.

*You haven't rambled at all Frank, it's nice to hear from you. All the best to you, and Ron in sunny Queensland.*

*We have also received calls, notes and cards from Graeme Caple; Jack Collins; Rob Mc Donald; Andrew Finlay; Pam Evans; Beverley and Joseph Weir; Snowy Rodwell; Bob Robinson; Margaret Deering and Fred White.*

*Thank you all for your support and kind words.*

***This item was taken from the newsletter of the 2/12<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment Assoc, 'Take Post'. It contains extracts from the speech by his Excellency Major General Michael Jeffery AC CVO MC, at the dedication of the El Alamein Memorial in April 2006.***

Of course, in scale and ultimate importance that first battle of El Alamein was dwarfed by the second, which itself was preceded by the successful Battle of Alman Halfa in which the newly arrived Commander of the 8<sup>th</sup> Army, General Montgomery, stamped his authority on his men by ensuring his troops did not withdraw. They were to win or die where they stood. Alamein was a complex, hard fought and lengthy battle in which General Montgomery aimed to finally break and destroy Rommel's army. As he awaited the great opening artillery barrage from over 800 guns on the night of 23 October 1942, 9<sup>th</sup> Division Commander General Morshead wrote :

*A hard fight is expected, and it will no doubt last a long time ... The men are full of determination and confidence ... these grand fellows have never failed to respond fully.*

And a long hard fight it was, lasting twelve days and involving an elaborate deception plan as to the timing and location of the main assault which took Rommel completely by surprise. When it was over, the division had suffered 2,694 casualties of whom 620 were killed in action or died of wounds. The 9<sup>th</sup> Division's vital role in this great victory cannot be told in a few words but we must try.

After the relative stalemate of the initial attacks, the Australians were handed the unenviable task of advancing to the north towards the coast. They were to draw down upon themselves the brunt of German counter-attacks so allowing the allied tanks to break out through heavy minefields to the south. In this so-called 'crumbling' battle every unit of the division, but especially the infantry and pioneers, were involved to the full, every one of them suffering heavy losses. The 2/13<sup>th</sup> Battalion, for example, took 286 casualties and the 2/32<sup>nd</sup>, 201. Here again, our veterans with us this morning will recall hard and terrible struggles at such places as the 'Saucer', Barrel hill and Trig 29.

By 5 November 1942, the Allied divisions had achieved a break out through the minefields and the Africa Korps were in retreat – the battle was over, Egypt and the Suez saved. In Britain, Churchill ordered the church bells to be rung throughout the land for the first time since the outbreak of war. Similarly, the bells rang out in Australia when the news reached home. Churchill famously summed up the battle on 10 November 1942 with the words: *Now this is not the end, it is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.*

It was however the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division's war in North Africa. In early 1943 the division returned to Australia but fought on with honour and success in New Guinea and Borneo. At the division's farewell parade in the desert it was addressed by the British Commander in Chief in the Middle East, General Sir Harold Alexander, and I know that at least one of our veterans here today heard these words which no one in the 9<sup>th</sup> Division would ever forget:

*The Battle of Alamein has made history and you are in the proud position of having taken a major part in that great victory ... I do not believe you have ever fought with greater bravery or distinction than ... when you broke the German and Italian armies in the Western Desert.*

So I say to the veterans of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division here today – Australia is very proud of what you did here at El Alamein. This rededicated, beautiful memorial and this cemetery, where so many of your mates lie buried, will remain part of the Australian military ethos forever. As a nation we thank you for those years of blood and sacrifice when with your RAAF and RAN comrades in arms, you did so much to bring about the defeat of a tough, well trained and determined enemy.

Lest we forget.

***Our President notes that between the 9 July 1942 and the 16 November 1942, Tel El Eisar and El Alamein, the Battalion incurred 628 casualties. A small percentage were wounded twice, some wounded and taken P.O.W, and some wounded and later K.I.A.***

*This item "A Letter to Mum" was published in a previous "Furphy Flyer". The poem was written by an unknown soldier in Tobruk shortly before he died of wounds. It was sent to the Castlemaine Mail newspaper in 1942 by Cpl 'Mick' Paull's parents. Mick was killed in action later the same year.*

When you're sucking at your pencil and you don't know what to say,  
 When you wish the bally Censor hadn't seen the light of day.  
 There's always one small item left, that's considered safe to tell,  
 And it doesn't take much writing,  
*Dear Mum, I'm safe and well!*

The tucker may be onkus, the water may be crook.  
 We've hardly seen a drop of beer, since Wavell took Tobruk.  
 We've been before the C.O. for being AWL,  
 But, take your pen and write it down,  
*Dear Mum, I'm safe and well!*

We've marched on rocks and gibbers, and swallowed lots of sand,  
 Till we wonder why the bally place was called the Promised Land.  
 The nights are cold as charity, the days are hot as hell,  
 But we write the same old message out,  
*Dear Mum, I'm safe and well!*

We've heard the cry of jackals and the braying of the donk'.  
 We've bargained with the Arabs for their eggs and fruit and plonk.  
 We've lived with sheep and camels and their everlasting smell,  
 But still we write the same old words,  
*Dear Mum, I'm safe and well!*

We've heard the Jerry bombers come screaming overhead,  
 And it isn't very pleasing to be dodging lumps of lead.  
 When you're sitting in the trenches midst a hail of shot and shell,  
 You still find time to send a line,  
*Dear Mum, I'm safe and well!*

There's a grey-haired lady waiting beside the old bush track,  
 Expecting a call from the mail-boy with news of her soldier boy Jack,  
 And a smile lights up her care-worn face with a beauty no words can tell,  
 As she relays these words to her family,  
*Dear Mum, I'm safe and well!*

### **Memorial Wall.**

The 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion Memorial Wall is the main feature at the entrance to the Wangaratta Cemetery – a fitting tribute to the Battalion members. The latest plaques have included the following names....

**R C Sheridan   A E Grigg   F Marshall   W J Pickering**

Applications for a Plaque for a deceased Battalion Member should be made to the Association enclosing a Cheque/Money Order for \$88 (inc GST) made payable to "E J Wright & Sons" – the memorial masons who manage the wall. Send your request to, The Secretary, 2/24 Aust Infantry Batt. Assoc Inc, PO Box 2003, Edithvale VIC 3196.

Details required for the Plaque are :- Surname, Initials, Service Number, Honours and Date of Death.

*Kevin Baker from Queensland kindly sent down a letter regarding the Queensland Reunion that was held on the 9<sup>th</sup> March this year. Thankyou Kevin.*

On Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup> March, thirty three people attended a luncheon for the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion members at the Geebung Zillmere R.S.L. Club. The number was made up of nine veterans and the rest were family and friends. The family of Jack Gorrie came from Melbourne for the occasion. Tom McLucas and wife, Estelle, came from Bundaberg and Barry and Pam Evans came from Bli Bli; the rest of us were locals.

A short meeting was held before the lunch and it was decided to try and meet again in March 2009 (God willing).

We had a visitor from Veteran Affairs who brought some interesting material for us. Also, Grant McCorrie from Veteran Affairs called in for a short time to wish us all well.

Our Lord Mayor and his wife were invited but could not make it what with our State elections the following week. They sent their apologies and best wishes.

A very happy and friendly day was enjoyed by everyone.

On a personal note, we are hoping to get a house sitter so we can attend the Wangaratta Reunion later this year. We send our best wishes to all members.

ps... Sadly, since the Reunion, one of our members, Johnny Reardon, who was present at the Reunion, passed away.

Over the last few months we have received Annual Subscriptions and Donations from the following members. Thank you for your support and your kind donations.

Please note that receipts will not be sent unless a reply paid envelope is enclosed with your subscription. All subscriptions and donations will be acknowledged in the Furphy Flyer in Mufti.

**Subscriptions :**

Larry Forrest, Beve Rowley, Anne Hill, Bob McGrath, Fred White, Pam Evans, Joy Pigdon, Ed Rodwell, John McLeod, Alec MacNeill, Bob Robinson, Matthew Tranter, Janice Khan, Roland Nicholson, Graeme Caple, Mary Ludbrook, Gwen McCunnie, Helen Robertson, Jack Caple, Evelyn Rees, Peter Spence, Charlie Scales, Bob Hutchieson, Marg Deering, Jean Gibbs, Charles Twigg, Valerie Wilson, Frank Cullen, Daniel Legg, Len McKenna, Tom Ross, Roy Theo Harris, Tom McLucas, Jack Collins, Bruce Gray, P Kelly, Joy Pitts, Muriel Dunscombe, Elizabeth Ryan, Andrew Finlay, Ted Bell, Ross Abberfield, Shirley Wild, Judy Fogarty, Frank Schneider, Brendan Cooke, Mark Quinn, Michael Lewis, J Mollard, S Mollard, Stephen Greentree, Heath Keighley, Keith Anderson, Patrick O'Rafferty, Charlie O'Rafferty, Robert Spencer, Alastair Davison, Ray Jinnette, Chris Burchill, Doug Dobson, Keith Clark, Curley Callendar, Rob Mitchell, Rod Wilson, Ian Holmes, Clem Eastick, Roger Canty, Morrie Parry, Bill Northausen, Jeanette O'Brien, Stan Gleeson, Beverly & Joseph Weir.

**Donations :**

Beve Rowley, Margaret Joyce, Alec MacNeill, Graeme Caple, Mary Ludbrook, Helen Robertson, Jack Caple, Evelyn Rees, Marg Deering, Jean Gibbs, Charles Twigg, Frank Cullen, Daniel Legg, Bruce Gray, Joy Pitts, Andrew Finlay, Shirley Wild, Frank Schneider, Brendan Cooke, J Mollard, Robert Spencer, Alastair Davison, Ray Jinnette, Clem Eastick, Roger Canty, Dawn Simmons, Stan Gleeson, Beverley & Joseph Weir.

**Memorial Wall Donation :**

Bob McGrath, Bill Northausen, Jack Collins.

**Thank You**

Helen Robertson, widow of the late Guy Robertson, has made a magnificent donation to the Association. Helen enjoys the "Furphy Flyer" and is pleased to see the Association run so well. She sends her best wishes to everyone and invites you to drop in for a cup of tea if you are up Coleraine way.

Helen, on behalf of the Association, thank you very much. Our best wishes to you.

### Sick Parade

To all our members who not well, and to the families of those members, remember that our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Keith Anderson, Jimmy Hogg, Wally Doyle, Vern Collier,  
Les Hansen, Charlie Scales, Alan Nicholson & Ted Turner

A very special cheerio to **Eric Elsdon**, our best wishes go out to you 'Happy'.

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### Welcome to New Members

It's with much pleasure that we welcome new Associate Members.

**Jeanette O'Brien.**

**Matthew Tranter**, grandson of the late Rob Mitchell.

**Pam Evans**, daughter in law of the late Ray Ferrier.

**Jill Hunter**, daughter of J W Reardon.

**Sherron Mitchell**, daughter in law of the late Bill Mitchell.

**Larry Forrest**, son of Ernest Forrest.

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### Magazines have been received from the following units and read with pleasure.

- The Tannoy      2/8 Aust Field Reg Ass.
  - Mud and Blood    2/23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Assoc.
  - 9<sup>th</sup> Aust Division Sappers Assoc
  - Action Front      2/2 Field Regiment Ass.
  - Rats of Tobruk Assoc.
  - Tobruk House News
  - HMAS Westralia Association
  - Dial Sight      2/7 Aust Field Reg.
  - Sinals 9<sup>th</sup> Aust Division Assoc.
  - Take Post      2/12 Aust Field Reg.
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### Website update

The Battalion website is still in its development stage, but if interested you can view its progress on the following URL: <http://adavison.customer.netspace.net.au>

When the website is getting closer to full development it will be placed on a server with its own domain name (such as <http://2-24aifbattalion.org.au>) . If you have suggestions for a more easily recognisable URL then please pass it on to us.

### We need photos, 2-24 snippets, memories

The aim is to make the website an historical repository of all things connected to the story of the 2/24 Battalion. We would appreciate the loan/use of any memorabilia, photos, stories, brochures or any other items of interest that could be included in appropriate sections of the website.

The website that you can see on the web is only the starting point. Many more sections will be added as time and materials permit.

### Suggestions

Also, we would like feedback on the website. Please e-mail suggestions for additional links, content as well as any perceived errors or omissions.

We hope that you may be able to contribute some gems. Any photos, memorabilia or original material will be scanned and treated with great care, and returned – unless you decide to donate it to the 2/24.

Many thanks, Alastair Davison ( [web2-24@netspace.net.au](mailto:web2-24@netspace.net.au) )

Postal address for materials: 103 Pound Road, Warrandyte 3113

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*I'm sorry there were no jokes in this issue, I ran out of space. I'll make up for it in the August edition*

**THE BATTALION BIRTHDAY LUNCH --- FRIDAY 4<sup>th</sup> JULY 2008**  
**12 FOR 12.30 AT PASCOE VALE R.S.L**

Coming up in July we have the Annual Birthday Lunch. The cost is approximately \$15.00 for a two course meal with tea and coffee provided. (Please pay on the day)

If it is your intention to attend could you please phone one of the following Members and advise the number that will be attending the lunch :-

<b>Michael Oakley</b>	<b>9772 3302</b>
<b>Janice Young</b>	<b>0414 782 557</b>
<b>Alan Macfarlane</b>	<b>9884 9378</b>

If you are unlucky enough to get a recorded message, just leave your name and the number attending. Thank you.

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Also coming up is our **Wangaratta Weekend on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> of November.**

The events at Wangaratta - the Memorial Wall Service at the Cemetery; the Reception and Dinner; the Service at the Cenotaph; and the BBQ lunch - all make for a memorable and enjoyable weekend, a weekend that is an important part of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion Association.

To enable the Committee to plan for this Weekend could you please advise us of your intention to come and the possible number of guests who will accompany you.

This request is only to gauge possible numbers. A form giving more details about the weekend and asking for more information will be sent out in the next "Furphy Flyer".

**Please phone one of the following Members advising us of the number that you think will be attending :-**

<b>Michael Oakley</b>	<b>9772 3302</b>
<b>Janice Young</b>	<b>0414 782 557</b>
<b>Alan Macfarlane</b>	<b>9884 9378</b>

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Important

As with last year we are asking you to book your own accommodation for our Wangaratta Reunion. The following is a list of toll free / phone numbers for you to ring.

<b>Park View Motor Inn.....</b>	<b>1800 032 475</b>
<b>Warby Lodge.....</b>	<b>1800 806 720</b>
<b>Wangaratta Motor Inn.....</b>	<b>03 5721 5488</b>
<b>Heritage Motor Inn.....</b>	<b>1800 066 679</b>
<b>Ryley Motor Inn.....</b>	<b>03 5721 6388</b>

Please indicate that you are part of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Reunion and please specify room number or upstairs or downstairs room requirements. The staff are waiting for your call and I know they will assist you. Thank you.