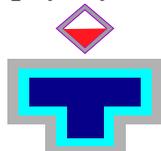


**The Furphy Flyer in Mufti.**



**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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**COMING EVENTS FOR 2009**

**Battalion Birthday Lunch, Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July at Pascoe Vale RSL**

*(see inside for further details)*

**Annual General Meeting, 12 noon, Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August, at Pascoe Vale RSL**

**2/24<sup>th</sup>'s Shrine Pilgrimage – Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2.00pm**

**(Assemble 1.30pm)**

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

**9<sup>th</sup> Division's Shrine Service, Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October**

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

**Wangaratta Weekend Reunion, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> November**

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

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***Vale***

R R Jones	QX47705	
Allan Dick	NX157425	13 December 2008
Russell M Jenkins	VX84531	3 March 2009
Albert Lloyd	VX119630	6 April 2009
Nance Benson		

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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### Wangaratta High School celebrations.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> of March this year, the Wangaratta HS held a weekend of celebrations to mark the centenary of their school. Part of their celebrations included a link with the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion .

Alan Macfarlane and Alan Nicholson were invited to plant a fig tree at the school. The tree will take pride of place in a special centenary garden area, to be developed in the near future. The tree is a cutting from a fig tree at Puckapunyal, which itself was a cutting from the original tree at Tobruk. Our President has nurtured the cutting and was very pleased to be involved with its planting at the school. Principal, Heather Sarau, said. 'It's a wonderful gift which signifies the close bond we have with Wangaratta's Own'.

The centenary garden was designed by student Kodie Deretic and details can be seen on our web page under 'Photo Gallery'



### ANZAC Day.

Another ANZAC day has come and gone and again we remember those loved ones who fought and died for us. I hope the day was all that was expected for those who attended ceremonies around Australia.

In Melbourne, the weather was fine for the march to the Shrine. We had eight Battalion members attending; Alan Macfarlane, Alan Nicholson, Doug Dobson, Bob Clark, Keith Clark, Ray Jinnette, Tom Seymour and another member whose name I unfortunately missed. Apologies were received from Ted Turner of Woy Woy. He sent his best wishes to all.

Our President, Alan Macfarlane, again had the honour of leading the 9<sup>th</sup> Division.

Our Group, led by Vice Presidents, Alan Nicholson and Doug Dobson, looked very professional and respectful. Unfortunately our original numbers are falling, which is to be expected. Preceding the 2/24<sup>th</sup> we again had the tremendous music of the 'Band on the Bus'. The Band, which includes Joe Kenyon and Norm Gray, has a fascinating history and I hope to have an article on them in the next issue of the 'Furphy Flyer'.

Carrying our Banner were students from Wangaratta High School. A big thank you to them and their Principal, Heather Sarau, for assisting with the March.



Principal Heather Sarau and Alan Macfarlane with students –  
Joe Grech, Jeremy Anderson, Anna Lorenz, Adam Brownstein, Chris Cole, Holly Jones, Jordon McInerney



Alan Nicholson



Doug Dobson and Keith Clark



Bob Clark



Ray Jinnette and Alan Macfarlane



Adam Smith and Bob Spencer



Art Callander and Keith Clark



Ray Jinnette, Doug Dobson and Bill Northausen



Vern Collier and Owen Lewis

### ANZAC Day Lunch

Following the march, members and families returned to the Pascoe Vale RSL to enjoy a lovely meal. Approximately eighty five people attended and again it was a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and meet some new ones. The students and Principal from Wangaratta High School, who marched with our Battalion in the morning, also joined us at the lunch. Thank you to the great staff of the Pascoe Vale RSL for providing the lunches free of charge to our veterans, plus providing many of the door prizes. Also, a big thank you to Janice Young for her contribution to the success of the luncheon.

A very emotional moment occurred during the Lunch when it was announced that our President, Alan Macfarlane, will be stepping down as President this year. Alan, who has been involved since 1947 with the running of the Association, felt it was time to give others a chance to step up. I'm sure there will be more of this announcement in the next 'Furphy Flyer'.

Originals at Lunch: Alan Macfarlane, Alan Nicholson, Doug Dobson, Bob Clark, Keith Clark, Ray Jinnette, Art Callander, Hautrie Crick, Owen Lewis, Vern Collier, Bob Spencer, Alan Smith, Curley Northausen.

Apologies: Charlie Scales, Ted Turner, June Mitchell, Nancy Ormsby, Eve Elsdon, Marion Weir, Sandra Sharp.

***The following is a letter to our Secretary from Kevin Baker of Queensland.***

This is just a little account of our Qld Branch, 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

On Sunday March 8<sup>th</sup> the members of the 2/24 Battalion met as we have done for many years at the Geebung Zillmere RSL for our annual reunion. Our numbers now are very small but the mateship is as strong as ever. There were six service men present .....

Johnny Gorrie, Tom McLucus, Kevin Baker, Mick Benson, Roy Theo Harris and Kevin Dean and eleven friends and relations . Relatives from Melbourne, the Gold Coast, Bundaberg and Bli Bli on the North coast came to make up the very happy group.

It was decided that next year all being well we would have a BBQ at the home of Kevin and Nancy Baker as the meal and service at the RSL unfortunately this year left a lot to be desired.

Jonnie Gorrie was looking very well after a month's holiday in and around Melbourne with his wife Barbara. Thank goodness they were not caught up in the dreadful bush fires. On a sad note Mick Benson had attended the funeral of his wife just two days before the luncheon.

Others who have passed away during the past year were remembered with a minutes silence.

We all wish you and your members the best health possible in the year ahead.

Yours sincerely, Kevin Baker, Sec/ Tres Qld Branch 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

***The following article, written by State President of the RSL, Major General David McLauchan AO (Retd), is from the March edition of the Mufti, the Victorian RSL magazine.***

**2/24 Battalion Reunion "Wangaratta's Own"**

On the League's behalf, I had the pleasure of attending the annual reunion of the 2/24 Battalion Association at Wangaratta on November 8. Nine original members of the battalion were in attendance. The Battalion Association meets every year in Wangaratta in November for three days. The activities commenced with a wreath laying service at the Battalion Memorial within the Wangaratta Cemetery. The memorial wall is very impressive, but is very sobering when you see how many names are included on the nominal roll and the names of those who have since passed on.

That evening I attended a reception hosted by the City of Wangaratta and then a dinner at which I gave a short address. I had the privilege of proposing the Toast to the Battalion. Although I had to leave early on the Sunday morning, the Association held a service at 11am at the Cenotaph and finished the weekend's reunion with a BBQ.

The battalion was initially formed in 1940 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, Finch Haven, Warreo and finally at Tarrakan, where they remained until the end of the war. Their regimental colours register this and are only exceeded by one other battalion who served during the World War II - the 2/25, who have an additional campaign.

The campaigns the 2/24 were involved with will long be remembered in the annals of Australia's military history and I doubt whether we will ever see a generation of Australians quite like this group of men.

It was a wonderful and moving day and I was proud to represent the RSL on this occasion.

Coffee [noun] a person who is coughed upon.

Flabbergasted [adjective.] appalled over how much weight you have gained.

Abdicate [verb.] to give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.

Esplanade [verb] to attempt an explanation while drunk.

Willy-Nilly [adjective] impotent

Negligent [adjective] a condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nightie.

Lymph [verb] to walk with a lisp

Gargoyle [noun] an olive-flavoured mouthwash

Flatulence [noun] the emergency vehicle that picks you up after you are run over by a steamroller.

Balderdash [noun] a rapidly receding hairline.

## Letters to Secretary

*From Fay Hall of Box Hill North .....*

Please find enclosed my subscription and a donation. Could you please pass on my thanks to Alastair Davison who kindly took a photo of my father Tom Mackie's (VX38878) headstone for Alan Macfarlane, who then forwarded it on to me. It was greatly appreciated.  
Kind regards to all.

*I'm sure Alastair and Alan were pleased to assist.*

*From Wilme Evans of Ballarat .....*

Just sending a cheque for David and my subs. We do enjoy getting the Furphy. Thinking of you all.  
*Thanks Wilme, best wishes.*

*From Alan Waterman of Rosebud .....*

Thank you all for your hard work and such interesting articles in our Furphy.  
I was in the 2/24<sup>th</sup> at Tarakan and was wounded whilst serving there.  
Cheers and God bless to all.  
*Nice to hear from you Alan.*

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

All is well down here at Warrnambool. Still able to play competitive golf of a Tuesday, 'Vets Day' (in a cart), also pennant bowls. There are only two 'Pals' left here now; Digger Smith from Haringal who was in the 4<sup>th</sup> AGH Hospital in Tobruk. He visits me every Saturday morning for twenty minutes and still goes dancing, he is only 89!  
It is good to receive the Flyer when it arrives.  
Regards to all.

*Must be something in the water down there. Great to hear that you are both well.*

*From Mrs Lyle Johnson of Apsley QLD .....*

Please find enclosed a donation in memory of my late husband, Ronald Johnson.  
Also, please give my regards to President Alan Macfarlane and his good wife Faye.  
Looking forward to the next Furphy.  
*Thank you Lyle, your support is greatly appreciated.*

*From Vern Collier of Oakleigh East .....*

The Furphy has arrived and I am pleased to see that the two Alans are going to lead the 9<sup>th</sup> Division and our Battalion at the ANZAC Day March.

Please find enclosed a cheque for subs and a donation.

I hope you are fit and well – your expertise is needed for many years to come.

Regards to all.

*Thanks for your note Vern. Our best wishes to you.*

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

Dear Michael, I have no idea whether I'm financial or not, so please find enclosed a cheque to be used for whatever.

I always look forward to the quarterly Furphy Flyer in Mufti.

*Thanks for your support Frank.*

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

Dear Michael, please find enclosed my 2009 subs; no apology as it's par for the course for me now as I can't even get out of bed on time.

In the last Furphy Flyer in Mufti, Shirley Drayton of Ocean Grove, the daughter of G A Stewart, requested a photo of her father's plaque on the Memorial Wall at Wangaratta. I have enclosed a couple of photos for her; I haven't a computer so hopefully you can forward them onto her.

Just tell her the Navy, as usual, helps out.

Best wishes to Alan and cheers to Bob Clark, hope he is feeling fine soon.

*Great to hear from you again Bob. Thanks for helping Shirley with her quest.*

*From Bill Horrigan of Beaumaris .....*

Please find enclosed my subs for 2009 and apply any balance as a donation.

I still enjoy all Mufti stories although my late relative, Bert Londrigan, only came to the Battalion later for service at Tarakan.

Regards to all.

*Best wishes to you Bill*

*From Jack Collins of Rosebud .....*

Dear Michael, my son, Stephen, was one of the unfortunate residents that got caught up in the fires at Marysville and lost his house and car but fortunately he was able to escape in the van with other staff members from Kooringa Resort.

Stephen did hear that Cliff Hoskin, an ex 2/24<sup>th</sup> member, escaped OK with his wife, but apparently

the trauma was too much for his wife and she died in hospital.

All the very best to you and your family.

*Thanks for your note Jack. Your news about Stephen and Cliff is very sad. Our best wishes go out to all of you.*

*From **Marion Weir** of Mt Eliza .....*

I enclose a cheque to cover my and family subscriptions plus a donation.

We all enjoy reading the Furphy Flyer and I was so pleased to see my husbands name mentioned in the Toast made by Major General McLachlan AO, at last years Wangaratta dinner.

Looking forward to a couple of events during the year, 'if I can', and certainly the Wangaratta weekend.

*We look forward to seeing you Marion. Best wishes to you.*

*From **Joy Pigdon** of Portarlinton .....*

I wish everyone all the best for this year 2009. Victor and I always enjoy eading all the news, etc.. Give our regards to Alan and Faye Macfarlane. Trust all is well.

*Thanks for your note Joy.*

*From **Sherry Radman** of Maribyrnong .....*

Dear Furphy Readers, I am keen to obtain if possible a copy an old publication of a book on Jungle Warfare that we had in our home when we were growing up. My father was in the book but sadly Dad has gone and the book disappeared long ago. It was in a type of thick magazine form approximately 12 inches or 30 centimetres high from memory, and was made in a greenish gray camouflage coloured print.

I have seen one in a display cabinet at the Melbourne Repatriation Outpatients Clinic, I have tried Canberra Archives many years ago but to no avail. Dad was **Eric Elsdon** mostly known as **Happy** of the 2/24th. I would greatly appreciate any help or information on this childhood memory and keepsake of my father. Many thanks and here's hoping.

*Thanks Sherry, I hope we can help.*

*From **Kev Baker** of Brisbane .....*

Just a quick note to let you know that our Qld Branch have had their Annual 2/24<sup>th</sup> lunch. (*See letter on Page 5*). My time has been taken up with the schools and helping the widows with a few jobs. Our ANZAC Day will be busy as we still march,

possibly for the last time. I have a school before ANZAC Day and two after plus some talks to the kids.

Anyway I hope to hear from you Mexicans soon as we, the Banana Benders, are kept pretty busy.

Regards to all.

*Best wishes to you Kev.*

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

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

I guess it's that time of the year when we reflect on those who have served but particularly those who paid the supreme sacrifice.

My thoughts are about my late father, William (Bob) McGrath, ex 2/24<sup>th</sup>, and Walter (Wally) McGrath – KIA, Tel El Eisa, ex 2/24<sup>th</sup>. And their legacy.

All the best, many regards to all.

*Thank you Bob.*

*From **Cameron Blackwood** and **James 'Scotty' Blackwood** (C coy, 13<sup>th</sup> platoon, Tarakan) .....*

Please find enclosed our subs and a donation to the Association.

After my introductory letter in the August 2008 'Furphy Flyer' I was amazed when Bob 'Snowy' Dickson was kind enough to call and then post some of his personal photos to me to show my father. I was floored by that wonderful gesture. I carefully posted them back to him and sent a follow up letter but I haven't heard back, so I hope that they arrived back in one piece (and that he is OK).

I've attended a few of the Battalion lunches and the Shrine visit last year and I just wanted to say what a friendly and welcoming bunch you all are. I'm looking forward to attending more of the association's gatherings.

My father and I enjoy reading the 'Furphy Flyer' and catching up on all the unit news. Cheers.

*Nice to hear you had a response to your August request. I was unable to call Snowy as I could not access his phone number. I hope he reads this and confirms he has received the photos back and is OK. All the best to you and your Dad.*

*From **Kerry Wright** of Toongabbie .....*

I would like to advise that my father, **Alan Dick**, passed away on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2008 at the age of 85. Dad always enjoyed reading the 'Furphy Flyer', thank you for sending it, but it's now time to

take him off the mailing list. I enclose a cheque for \$200 for any outstanding dues and a donation to the Battalion in Dad's memory. Thankyou.

*Kerry, I apologise for not acknowledging the death of your father in the February edition of the 'Furphy'. Thank you for your note and your family's generosity.*

*From **Jean Hiscutt** of Howth, Penguin TAS ....*

Please find enclosed a donation for the association. We are enjoying some nice weather here in Tasmania.

In September this year my son and his wife are going to Tarakan for a holiday. Tarakan is where his late father, Robert (Bob) N Clarke , was, when the war ended.

I enjoy reading the Furphy Flyer in Mufti.

*Nice to hear from you Jean. My wife's relations were some of the original settlers in Penguin so I know that it's a lovely part of Tassie. Our best wishes to you and your family.*

*From **Richard Cains** of Old Beach East, TAS .....*

Please find enclosed subs and a donation.

Your members are very thin on the ground here in Tassie. However, any required assistance I can give is only a phone call away. Thanks, all the best to all at the 2/24<sup>th</sup>.

*Thank you Richard.*

*From **Daren Robins** of the Sunshine Coast QLD ....*

Dear Mr Oakley, I am an amateur military researcher and have come across your contact details via the Shrine of Remembrance. I am presently researching a man named Lt. Col. George Radford Warfe who I believe served as C.O. of your battalion, including in the Tarakan Campaign in 1945. My own late grandfather served under Major (as he was then) Warfe in the 2/3rd Independent (Commando) Company during their Wau-Salamaua Campaign in New Guinea in 1943, and I am keen to discover more about this legendary character from those who served with him in other units.

I am particularly interested in contacting those from your battalion who may have anecdotes, photographs or other information about Lt. Col. Warfe himself (both during and after the war), or of their experiences in the unit while under his command. Anything at all, even the slightest recollection, would be appreciated.

Ideally I would like to compile a book about Mr. Warfe and his life, however this will depend on the information and resources I can access.

I can be contacted at PO Box 4635, Sunshine Coast Mail Centre QLD, 4560; phone (07) 5445 9721 (Sunday evenings are best) or, email : darrenrobins@yahoo.com.au

Thanking you in advance and trusting that life is treating you and yours well.

*Michael has emailed Darren about our book on the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion History, plus our web page. Please contact Darren if you have any info about Lt. Col. George Radford Warfe you feel would be of interest to him.*

*From **Shirley Drayton** of Ocean Grove .....*

Thank you to everyone who responded to my request for a photo of my dad's plaque on the Wangaratta Memorial Wall; George (Sport) Stewart.

Also thank you for the 2/24<sup>th</sup> ties and ladies scarf. I could still use more 2/24<sup>th</sup> ties, either the original or the later one if anyone would like to donate them to the memorial quilt I am making.

Now that everyone knows about it I need to get on and complete it.

Regards to all.

*From **Ken Wright** of Montmorency .....*

Hi Mike, I'm interested in any information about Private James Campbell Mc Cracken. If anyone from the Association can assist could they please contact me at 1 Helwig Avenue, Montmorency, 3094, or [wright9w@optusnet.com.au](mailto:wright9w@optusnet.com.au) or, call me on 03 9439 1294.

*We have also received notes and phone calls from **Beve Rowley, Margaret Joyce, Bob Robinson and Eric Edwards.** Thank you for your support and kind words.*

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### **Sick Parade**

Marion Weir broke her hip and was in Frankston Hospital. She sent her best wishes to all those marching.

Eve Elsdon, also a broken hip and was in John Fawcner Hospital.

Our best wishes to all those not feeling well at the moment.

---

*5 out of 4 Australians have trouble with fractions.*

*Some people grow up and spread cheer; others just grow up and spread.  
I received copies of this article from two Association members, Alan Nicholson, our Vice President and N. H. 'Moggie' Mogridge.*

*Moggie writes that the article on Arthur Fitzpatrick appeared in the Gippsland Weekly in April. He says Arthur was the Lieutenant of 13 Platoon, 'C' Company of which he was a member.*

### **A Tale from a Tobruk Rat**

Arthur Fitzpatrick lives in Heyfield. Now at 93 years old, his house is tidy, and his demeanour is bright. Life seems relatively simple.

He owns a small wooden box, filled with photos and postcards – most of them yellowing with age. Seated in front of the box, Arthur sorts through a few photos before pulling out a photo of a man in his prime, wearing an Army uniform, slouch hat to one side, standing at ease. On the back in delicate copperplate handwriting is 'L Cpl A Fitzpatrick, 1940' and in darker, newer ink beneath, 'Sergeant A Fitzpatrick'.

For it was in 1940 that Arthur, at the age of 24 and a lust for adventure, joined the Australian Army.

"Everybody was joining the Army", he recalls. "All my mates were joining, and it was like an adventure. At least it was for me".

Arthur was a member of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion. Raised in Wangaratta in 1940, the 2/24<sup>th</sup> was part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division, which, in the November of 1940, was shipped to the Middle East. The 7<sup>th</sup> Division was initially stationed in Dirma, in Palestine, before being sent to relieve the 6<sup>th</sup> Division at Tobruk in Lybia on April 10, 1941.

By then, elements of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division had been consolidated with the 9<sup>th</sup> and was settling in for the long haul. Arthur, along with the rest of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division remained there for the next six months fighting off the German Afrika Korps.

Although outnumbered and outgunned, Tobruk became the first battle in which the seemingly all-powerful German forces were repelled. The situation in Tobruk was unforgiving to the troops, who were ordered to hold off the German advance from the already battered waterfront fortress.

"There was this large circle of pits. All the Rats in Tobruk were prepared to hold it," Arthur said of the grit of the Allied forces in Tobruk. And it was within those pits that the famous name was born, the Rats of Tobruk. The advantage lay with the Allies, as Tobruk was surrounded by an almost completely flat plateau, with no cover for attacking forces.. The harbour served as the heart of the fortress, with the defences crossing the desert in a rough semi-circle to the western harbour, nine miles away. Strong points were littered across the desert, protected by barb wire, anti-tank ditches and land mines.

It was on this setting that the Afrika Korps launched an attack on April 13, 1941, known as the Easter Battle. Expecting to take Tobruk with ease, the Germans ended up being completely routed by the Allies.

"We managed to withstand the attacks, until we withdrew in November, 1941," Arthur said of the attacks from the Germans. "We didn't have much in the way of arms. Of course, you couldn't lift your head up over the pits during the day or you'd lose it"

After months of holding off the Germans, the 9<sup>th</sup> Division was withdrawn out of Tobruk. Arthur was shipped out on September 17, 1941, aboard the HMAS Nizam. However the voyage was marred by tragedy and was the last journey for some of Arthur's comrades. The Nizam, while maneuvering to avoid torpedoes, barely avoided a bomb and her oil pumps were damaged.

"Thirteen blokes were lost over the side, and only eight survived, having been in Tobruk for all that time."

Looking back over the effort in Tobruk, Arthur believes the effort the Australian troops put in was instrumental in routing the Germans.

"It was a pretty good effort as far as Australia was concerned, to have held the place and the garrison from the Germans from April until November."

Now, although nearly seventy years have passed since Tobruk, Arthur still remembers the events like yesterday.

"I often think about various blokes and incidents at night, wishing I had done this better, or thinking that I did that all right. A lot of them (his comrades) are not with us anymore. At 93, I'm one of the lucky ones".

*The following, kindly forwarded by Jim Lowe of Natimuk, VIC, is a Newspaper article from the Argus, dated May 8<sup>th</sup> 1945.*

### **Australians capture Tarakan Airstrip – Victorian Battalion in thick of fight.**

**From Noel Adams, War correspondent of the Argus, with the Australians in Borneo.**

Two main goals of the Australian invasion of Tarakan have been reached after five days of heavy and incessant fighting. The town and the airstrip are entirely in our hands.

Enemy positions adjacent to the airfield have been eliminated, and repair of the runway is in progress. Surprisingly the Japanese, who had clung fiercely to their strong defences on Ripon Ridge, overlooking the airstrip, withdrew on Friday night, and on Saturday afternoon the ridge was occupied by our troops without opposition.

A Victorian battalion which bore the brunt of the fighting for the strip hoisted the Australian flag and its own battalion flag on the strip shortly after 6pm.

While Ripon Ridge was being occupied cavalry commandos and pioneers completed the clearance of Tarakan, blowing in the few remaining tunnels from which the Japanese attempted to defend the town and its surrounding oilfield.

With the capture of the town and the airstrip the main phase of the battle for the island has ended. The Japanese forces that still remain are no longer in a position to deny us the use of the island.

The tenacity with which the Japanese defended the airstrip from their deep tunnels and pillboxes on Ripon Ridge made it appear that they were determined to hold the ridge to the last man. But when two Australian patrols moved across the airstrip on Saturday afternoon from either end and climbed the ridge they found it deserted. Another patrol then pushed along the road from the airstrip in the direction of the island's other oilfield, which lies roughly in the centre of Tarakan, and did not encounter any opposition until it reached a height known as Gaps, more than half a mile to the north.

That night the troops who had won the air strip enjoyed their first night's unbroken rest since they landed on the island at dawn on Tuesday. They forgot their weariness, their sweat-sodden clothes, and unshaven faces, in the cheer they gave as they watched the Australian flag and their own battalion emblem being hoisted over the strip. While Ripon Ridge was being occupied engineers of the Army and RAAF began clearing the airstrip of the mines with which had been sown by the Japanese. They began their dangerous work even before they knew that the ridge was cleared. Before nightfall they had unearthed a number of powerful mines, including not only converted depth charges, which the Japanese have left everywhere, but Dutch naval mines filled with 500lb of high explosive.

In the town area the men of a South Australian battalion moved through the eastern outskirts, which they had occupied on Friday and after clearing several Japanese positions from a commanding ridge cut the road running from the town to a small beach on the east coast of the island. It was while this operation was in progress that commandos who captured Tarakan Hill on Friday cleared the hill, with the aid of pioneers, of the last enemy nests. Together these two actions put the town completely in our possession.

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 own 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 Pte Ron Tully, of Geelong, was patrolling in thick scrub when a few yards away he saw a helmeted figure with his back turned 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 a 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.

#### **GENERAL BLAMEY'S CONGRATULATIONS**

The officer commanding the Australian troops on Tarakan has 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." The message expresses appreciation of the efforts of all the forces engaged in the

operation.

It was announced from General Blarney's headquarters that the Tarakan invasion operations were carried out under the general direction of Major-General G. F. Wooten, commanding 9<sup>th</sup> Australian Division, in co-operation with Admiral Royal, US Navy, and Air Vice-Marshal Bostock, RAAF.

The force which made the assault landing was under the command of Brigadier D A Whitehead.

\*\*\*\*\*

***Jim Lowe writes***

Here is my involvement regarding this story – to lead my section to capture the ridge overlooking the air field and the twin barreled anti-aircraft gun.

Captain Traves had taken out pill boxes with accurate fire. At day break Lt. Harry Freame and I had surveyed the gun position and this helped when my section was ordered to take the position – no casualties. Ron Tully's story is very accurate. Ron was in my section.

**Australian War Memorial – Hall of Fame  
“Saluting Their Services”**

The *Saluting Their Services* program is an Australian Government initiative that aims to honour the sacrifice and service of Australia's servicemen and women in wars, conflicts and peace operations, and to promote appreciation and understanding of the role that those who served have played in shaping the nation. The program is designed to preserve our heritage from wars and conflicts and to involve people throughout the nation in a wide range of activities and projects.

The 2/24 Australian Infantry Battalion Association has been granted approval and a Government Grant to install a plaque at the Australian War Memorial Hall of Fame dedicated to the 2/24 Australian Infantry Battalion. The Bronze Plaque is currently being cast and will be installed in late 2009.

A *Dedication Service* to remember and honour the service and sacrifice of the Unit will be held at the Memorial in Canberra to install the Plaque.

**2/24 Battalion Members, family and friends will be invited to attend.**

We will advise all members as soon as a date is confirmed.

**Rocky Creek War Memorial Park**

Whilst on the subject of War Memorials, Alan Macfarlane noticed a referral, in the NSW RATs News, to the 9<sup>th</sup> Division plaques at the Rocky Creek War Memorial Park, Tolga, Queensland. They mentioned how wonderful they are but there was no mention of ours. Alan mentioned that he has been quizzed as to why we haven't got our own unit plaque there.

The answer is the 2/24<sup>th</sup>, plus the 2/23<sup>rd</sup> and the 2/48<sup>th</sup> agreed, many years ago, to have a Brigade plaque with each unit on the plaque. This has been done and the plaque, fitted to a large rock, looks great.

**Thank You**

The family of the late Eric “Happy” Elsdon has made a generous donation to the Association. The committee is very grateful and thanks them for their support. Happy is sadly missed.

Patrick O'Rafferty, a young brother of the two O'Rafferty brothers, originals of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion (deceased), joined the R.A.A.F. and has now written a small book of his experiences. Should anyone be interested please contact Pat direct with their support.

Pat's address is 60 Helene Street, Bulleen Vic, 3105.

*These next items were received form Alastair*

*Davison*

### **Siege of Tobruk Memorabilia for Shrine of Remembrance Exhibition in 2010**

During 2010, as a lead-up to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011, the Shrine of Remembrance will be mounting an exhibition to remember the Siege of Tobruk.

I would be interested to hear from anyone with memorabilia (such as photos, records, letters, items, etc) that illustrate or detail experiences/events of April to October, 1941.

**At this stage we are just collecting information on what is available.** If you, or members of your family, have items that illustrate aspects of the siege (and you are willing to lend them to the Shrine for the duration of the exhibition in 2010), please give me a description and some details. Please include your contact details (including telephone) so that the exhibition staff at the Shrine can make any final arrangements.

Many thanks

Alastair Davison

Telephone: 03 9844.3036

Email: [ajdavison@netspace.net.au](mailto:ajdavison@netspace.net.au) or Postal address: 103 Pound Road, Warrandyte 3113

### **Battlefields and Historic Sites 2009**

from Alastair Davison

Last year I went on the tour to Libya, Egypt, Syria and Jordan, visiting the CWG Cemeteries and ancient historic sites. This year the same company, Mission Travel is doing a tour that follows the only two ANZAC contingents – those in Greece/Crete (April 1941) and the Gallipoli campaign (April 1915). The tour is for 23 days from 23 September 2009 and details of the tour can be found at [www.missiontravelgroup.com.au/pilgrimages/battlefields.html](http://www.missiontravelgroup.com.au/pilgrimages/battlefields.html) or ring 03 9889 0777 or 1300 554 654.

Email: [info@pilgrimage.com.au](mailto:info@pilgrimage.com.au)

They are also conducting a tour to the Western Front in July 2010 that will coincide with the opening of the new cemetery at Fromelles. Details at : [www.missiontravelgroup.com.au/pilgrimages/fromelles.html](http://www.missiontravelgroup.com.au/pilgrimages/fromelles.html)

We have received a copy of a book titled *Letters from a Soldier 1940 – 1942*. The book contains correspondence from Pte Allan B Cameron, VX43493 (1904-1985) to his family while he was serving in the AIF in the Middle East and North Africa. It was collated by his brother, the late Oliver Cameron in 1975. Pte Cameron was an original 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion member in the Signals platoon.

The self-published book is a tribute to the memory of the Allan Cameron and provides a valuable insight into the thoughts and experiences of a 'Desert Rat'.

Copies are available from Ron Cameron, PO Box 721, Richmond Vic, 3121. The cost is \$25.00 which includes postage.

Dan was a single bloke living at home with his father and working in the family business. When he found out he was going to inherit a fortune when his sickly father died, he decided he needed a wife with which to share his fortune.

One evening at an investment meeting he spotted the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. Her natural beauty took his breath away.

"I may look like just an ordinary man," he said to her, "but in just a few years, my father will die, and I'll inherit twenty million dollars."

Impressed, the woman obtained his business card and three days later, she became his stepmother.

Women are so much better at estate planning than men.

## OUR WEB PAGE

I highly recommend that members visit our web page. Alastair Davison has been working on the page and it is almost ready to go "live". You can currently access the page at <http://adavison.customer.netspace.net.au> and I hope you will see the many possibilities this site can open up.

Also, whilst there, families can see what information is required for a Wall plaque at Wangaratta cemetery.

### Subscriptions.

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

#### Subscriptions :

Frank Tyrrell, Pam Tyrrell, G M & S Quinn, Anne Hill, Joy Pitts, Elizabeth Ryan, Fay Hall, Len McKenna, R P Weir, C M Weir, D J G Weir, Bill Horrigan, , Jack Caple, Vern Collier, Bruce Gray, Alan Waterman, John McLeod, Frank Schneider, David Evans, Olaf Isaksson, Michelle Alabaster, Joy Pigdon, Victor Pigdon, Tom McLucas, Les Hansen, Harry Cornehl, , Maureen Bedford, Peter Spence, Frank Cullen, Roland Nicholson, Charlie O'Rafferty, Pat O'Rafferty, Owen Lewis, Alan Nicholson, Ray Jinnette, Chris Burchill, Harry Crick, Alan Smith, Karen O'Shea, Bev Emmett, Curly Callendar, Alistair Davison, David Davison, Claire Davison, Fleur Alexander, Bob Egglestone, Michael Lewis, Bob Clark, Robyn Koiker, Peter Koiker, Robert Clark Jnr, Keith Clark, Graeme Clark, Adam Clark, Richard Cains, Beve Rowley, Robert Robinson, Bob McGrath, M Mogridge, Ted Bell, James Blackwood, Cameron Blackwood, Jack Collins.

#### Donations :

G M & S Quinn, Arthur Loram, Muriel Duncombe, Nette Draffen, Lorna Hill, Fay Hall, Len McKenna, Marion Weir, Bill Horrigan, Vern Collier, Maudie Stevens, Frank Schneider, Bob Hutchieson, Mrs R W Evans, Olaf Isaksson, Lyle Johnson, Les Hansen, Harry Cornehl, Maureen Bedford, Dawn Catherall, Patricia McRedmond, Frank Cullen, Bill Nathausen, Mark Quinn, Keith Clark, Ray Jinnette, Kerry Wright, Jean Hiscott, Beve Rowley, Bob McGrath, Ted Bell, James Blackwood, Cameron Blackwood, Jack Collins.

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

- |                     |                                 |                                 |                                    |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Tobruk House News | Rats of Tobruk                  | • The Tannoy                    | 2/8 <sup>th</sup> Aust. Field Reg. |
| • Dial Sight        | 2/7 Aust Field Reg.             | • Signals                       | 9 <sup>th</sup> Aust. Div Assoc.   |
| • Mud and Blood     | 2/23 <sup>rd</sup> Batt. Assoc. | • Mufti                         | Victorian RSL                      |
| • Take Post         | 2/12 Aust Field Reg             | • H M A S Westralia Association |                                    |

### Welcome to New Members

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

**Bob Egglestone**, son of L W Egglestone, VX75964.

**Adam Clark**, grandson of Keith Clark.

**John and Ruby Clark**, son and daughter in law of Bob Clark.

**Dianne and Peter Richardson**, daughter and son in law of Bob Clark.

**Joyce and Peter Svehla**, daughter and son in law of Bob Clark.

A petrol station in country Queensland was trying to increase its sales so the owner put up a sign saying, **Free Sex with Fill-up.**

Soon a local pulled in, filled his tank and then asked for free sex. The owner told him to pick a number from 1 to 10. If he guessed correctly he would get his sex free.

The bloke guessed 8 but the owner said, "You were close, the number was 7. Sorry, no sex this time."

A week later, the same bloke came along with his mate, Bluey, pulled in for a fill-up and again asked for his free sex. The owner gave him the same story and asked him to guess the correct number. The bloke guessed 2 this time and again the owner said, "Sorry, it was 4. You were close once more but no free sex this time."

As they were driving away the bloke said to Bluey, "I think that game is rigged and he doesn't really give away free sex."

Bluey replied, "No, No! It aint Bill. It aint rigged, My Missus won twice last week."

**THE BATTALION BIRTHDAY LUNCH --- FRIDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> JULY 2009**  
**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 :-

**Michael Oakley: 9772 3302 - Janice Young: 0414 782 557 - Alan Macfarlane 9884 9378**

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

Also coming up is our **Wangaratta Weekend on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> of November.**

The events at Wangaratta 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 August "Furphy Flyer".

Please phone one of the following Members advising us of the number that you think will be attending :  
**Michael Oakley 9772 3302, Janice Young 0414 782 557, Alan Macfarlane 9884 9378**

**Important**

As with other years 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.

**Wangaratta Reunion 2009 - Program**

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> Nov** Registration and "**Get Together**" Dinner - Wangaratta RSL from 6pm

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> Nov**

2.30pm Assemble at Cemetery for our **Annual Memorial Service** and **Schools Awards Presentation Ceremony.**

Afternoon tea courtesy Zonta ladies.

6.30pm **Reception** at Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre sponsored by the Mayor and Councillors of the Rural City of Wangaratta and the Lions Club

7.00pm **Reunion Dinner** – Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre.

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> Nov**

11.00pm Assemble at the City Cenotaph for the Battalion Service followed by Morning Tea at the Wangaratta RSL.

