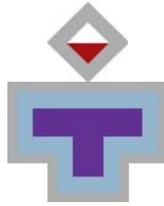


## The Furphy Flyer in Mufti.



### I HOLD FAST

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

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### COMING EVENTS FOR 2010

**Battalion Birthday Lunch, Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> July at Pascoe Vale RSL**

*(Refer to last page for further details)*

**Shrine of Remembrance Exhibition – Western Desert Campaigns**

**Friday, 7 May 2010 until Sunday, 1 August 2010.**

*(Refer to last page for further details)*

**9<sup>th</sup> Division's Shrine Service, Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October**

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

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

**(Assemble 1.30pm)**

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

**Wangaratta Weekend Reunion, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> November**

*(the May and August "Furphies" will provide further details)*

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### **Vale**

W Harris

VX58823

9 February 2009

Bernard J McCarthy

VX145782

28 March 2010

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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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Well, what a great prelude to Anzac Day was the article in the Saturday issue of the Herald Sun, "The Last Rats". Charlie Scales, Jack Caple, Bob Clark and Alan Macfarlane, of the 2/24<sup>th</sup>, looked terrific and the article by Patrick Carlyon recognized the immense effort of the Australians in the battle of Tobruk. Hope all members were able to get a copy.

### **ANZAC Day**

I hope this special day was all that was expected for those who attended ceremonies around Australia. In Melbourne, the weather was fine but cool for the march to the Shrine. We had ten Battalion members attending; Alan Macfarlane, Alan Nicholson, Doug Dobson, Bob Clark, Keith Clark, Ray Jinnette, Tom Seymour, Charlie Scales, Charlie Twigg and another member whose name I unfortunately missed. Apologies were received from Ted Turner of Woy Woy.

The men had the option of marching or transport in some very swish cars. Whatever way they chose, it was great to see the support they received from their mates and the many family members that were there to encourage them. Among the crowd of well wishers were Fay Hall and her grandson. Her father died at Tobruk.

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

Our Group, led by Vice Presidents, Doug Dobson and Alan Nicholson, seemed larger than other years. It was an impressive group of 2/24<sup>th</sup> family members who marched behind the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Banner, proudly carried by the students from Wangaratta High School. A big thank you to them and their Principal, Heather Sarau, for assisting with the March.

Preceding the 2/24<sup>th</sup> we again had the tremendous music of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Memorial Brass Band. See below for an article on the origins of this band.

### **ANZAC Day Lunch**

Following the march, members and families returned to the Pascoe Vale RSL to enjoy a lovely meal. Ninety four people attended and again it was a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and meet some new ones.

The RSL did a great job in accommodating us all, especially with a larger than expected turn up, and provided a terrific lunch. With choices of large helpings of fish, beef or schnitzel plus sweets, we were looked after very well.

I was lucky enough to have a table with Owen Lewis, his wife Jessie and son in law Karl, plus Morrie Parry and his daughter. The friendly conversation and the stories that were told showed these men, plus all the men of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> have stories to tell that are worth recording. I hope families are asking lots of questions of these great men so that family histories can be enriched with the many anecdotes on the brighter side of the horrible things they saw and endured.

The students and Principal from Wangaratta High School, who marched with our Battalion in the morning, also joined us at the lunch. It is a very long day for them and we appreciate their commitment to the 2/24<sup>th</sup>, so much so that they were all made Honorary Junior Associate Members. Thanks also to the Pascoe Vale RSL for providing many of the door prizes.

Veterans unable to attend March but were at the luncheon were Haughty Crick, Owen Lewis, Bob Spencer, Alan Smith, Bill Northausen, Morrie Parry, Curly Callender, Ralph Davies.

Among the other attendees were the Mitchell family, the Twigg family, Cameron Warfe, grandson of Lt Col George Warfe, Wangaratta High School Principal, or Head Mistress Alan calls her, Heather Sarau, and students Ben Palmer, Anna Lorenz, Jeremy Anderson, Sarah, Hawksworth, Broder Kay, Travis Robinson, Maddy O'Keefe, Georgina Hazenwadel, Annie Holmes.

Apologies were received from Ted Turner, Nancy Ormsby, Michael Lewis, Norm Gray.

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*Since 2008, the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion has been preceded in the Melbourne ANZAC day march by the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion Memorial Brass Band. Joe Kenyon, the bands Bandmaster, has kindly sent us the story of its origin. Thank you Joe.*

My Dad Ralph Kenyon VX62663, was a soldier in the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion. Each ANZAC Day after he passed away I marched in the parade to carry his medals. As the years went by we noticed that bands available for ANZAC Day seemed to be disappearing and the old soldiers found it more difficult to march

proudly as they once had. It was so bad that eventually we had to carry a ghetto blaster to help us keep time!

As a musician I thought I should do something about it. In 2007 I contacted a number of musician friends and brass bands (particularly Wes Brown at Stonnington Brass) and found a group, mostly seniors who are unable to march but still love to play so the idea of a truck band was born. The ANZAC Day March authorities were at first a little dubious and it took several months of discussion before the idea was accepted.

In the meantime I made contact with other members of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> and discovered some fascinating background history. In 1941 the 2/24<sup>th</sup> band had won the 9<sup>th</sup> division band contest playing their favorite marching tunes and had been given a leave pass to visit Tel Aviv as a reward. Whilst in a restaurant having some appropriate refreshment it was suggested that the band should be recorded for posterity. The recordings were duly made on a few very fragile wax disks and were carried around in a soldier's bag for the rest of the war and amazingly survived. In recent years the wax disks have reappeared, the music was transcribed onto cassette tapes and then the disks disappeared again! After a lot of detective work and phone calls I zeroed in on Norm Gray who supposedly had a copy of the tape. Yes he did have the tape and was only too happy to send me a copy on CD and a photo of the band. By an incredible coincidence it turned out that Norm's Dad (Doug 'Dolly' Gray) had played in the original 2/24<sup>th</sup> band and had been best mates playing in post war dance bands with one of our senior players Geoff King from Stonnington Brass! I also found out their favourite old regimental marches. Finding the written music took almost a year but by the time of our first rehearsal we had the music and the recording ready. I must confess that I had a large lump in my throat as we read our parts and listened to the scratchy ghostly music 'Our Boys' had recorded in the Middle East so long ago.

Our first truck in 2008 was loaned and driven by a member of the Military Vehicle Club. In 2009 I contacted the Linfox office and Mick Best and due to his organisation skills Mr Lindsay Fox generously provided a suitable vehicle. Also in 2009 Norm Gray joined us to play the Solo Eb Horn part in of honour of *his* Dad who had played the same instrument and part in 1941. This year, 2010 we traveled in luxury in Mr Lindsay Fox's pride and joy the International R190 from 1967.

For our first effort on 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2008 the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Memorial Brass Band led the Battalion on to St Kilda Rd. We kicked off with the 2/24<sup>th</sup>'s favorite marching song that they had not heard for 50 years. They hadn't known it was coming and the result was amazing. The tired old eyes snapped wide in surprise and the tired old backs snapped up straight.

As they stepped out smartly it was possible to glimpse the stubborn spirit that had helped them to stop Rommell and the Afrika Corps at the siege of Tobruch and again at Hill 33 and yet again at El Alamein before coming home to fight the Japanese in the defence of Australia. These men are all my heroes. This year was even bigger and better and I am grateful to Mr Lindsay Fox for his generosity in allowing us to use his magnificent International R190 to enable us to do this small service for the men of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion.





**Keith Anderson, Charlie Scales and granddaughter Ebony-Lee**



**Tom Seymour and grandson David Hollingsworth**



**Leading the 9<sup>th</sup> Division, Alan Macfarlane**



**Charlie Twigg and wife Lois**



**Alan Nicholson, Keith Clark and Ray Jinnette**



**Ralph Davies**



**Morris Parry**



**Doug Dobson**



**Jessie Lewis, Own Lewis and son in law, Karl Walls**



**Wangaratta High School students with their Principal, Heather Sarau**

## Letters to our Secretary.

*As you read these letters it becomes obvious that many of our members are very generous in their support for the 2/24<sup>th</sup>. On behalf of the committee I thank you very much for your kind donations.*

*From Fred Seymour of Blackburn .....*

Please find enclosed my subs and a donation. All well here at present. Had a skin cancer removed from right hand. The skin specialist done a good job. Regards to all.

*Best wishes to you Fred. Good to hear all is well.*

*From Ian Goldsmith of 'Dingley' .....*

My late father, Ray (Goldie) Goldsmith, who passed away in 1999, was a member of the Association and I now write on behalf of my mother Gwen Goldsmith and enclose a donation in appreciation of the years of wonderful reading we have had in the form of the 'Furphy Flyer'. Mum is no longer able to read the Flyer due to failing eyesight but I enjoy the wonderful stories of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> that dad always boasted about with such great pride.

I hope you keep up the great work and I look forward to many more years of reading the exploits of the 2/24<sup>th</sup>. Best wishes to all.

*Thank you for your support Ian. A big cheerio to your mum Gwen.*

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

Please find annual membership for myself and my sister, Judy Fogarty.

Unfortunately due to family and other commitments we have been unable to attend any functions over the last two years. I enjoy reading the newsletter.

A few years ago my cousin found in my aunt's house a collection of letters which were written by my father, Sid Perris, whilst he was first at Wangaratta in 1940 and then in Tobruk. The letters are very interesting and I plan to type the letters as some of the writing is beginning to fade. Dad was willing to talk about his time in the war but his letters give us a picture of the life he lead during that time.

Well done for the work that you do for the Association.

*Your Dad's letters are part of your family's history and as such, precious. All the best with your endeavours and thank you for your letter.*

*From Alma Levens of Berwick .....*

Enclosed is a donation from myself and daughters Judith and Kathryn. Please use in whatever way you need.

Always look forward to the 'Furphy Flyer', thank you. Unfortunately, not to many names I'm familiar with these days.

Best wishes to all.

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

*From Mick Benson of Asmore QLD .....*

Please find enclosed some cash for my subs and any left over, put it were it will do the most good.

I was thinking about our trip to Canberra. Remember the group photo that was taken outside the War Museum, would it be possible to purchase one as a keepsake as I would like one if at all possible. Let's know and I will send the necessary down to you. In the meantime keep the flag flying. Cheers for now.

*Good to hear from you Mick. Alastair will be in contact with you.*

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

Please find enclosed subs and a donation.

I hope this may be of interest for the next newsletter.

I left the Battalion at the closing of the New Guinea campaign after serving there and in the Middle East. I then joined the newly formed "Z" Special Unit.

Several months ago, here in Rosebud, I met for the first time a 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion chap, Alan Waterman. Alan joined the Battalion when I left and then went on to Tarakan, and then was badly shot in the leg. When we were discussing the Battalion Company in which he served, he actually took my place in the Battalion. D Company, 18 Platoon and 9 Section, he then informed me Joe Pope was his Sgt.

Joe was my Cpl when I left so I thanked Alan (jokingly) for taking the bullet I may have copped had I stayed in the Battalion.

Alan cannot travel a long distance now and prevents him going to our reunions. He sends his regards to you and members of the Battalion.

*Thanks for your letter Jack. Your experience proves that the world really is a small place and that the choices we make in life can have many consequences.*

*From Jacques Joubert of Blackburn .....*

Dear Alan,

Thank you so much for the loan of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> A History of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion,

a very special record of a very special regiment and time.

This puts so much into perspective. You are the last of a long line of remarkable men.

Many thanks.

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

Dear Alistair and members,

In the last printing of the Furphy Flyer an article contributed by Jim Lowe contained the name of Captain Geoff Travis. As the Company runner I knew the man pretty well. Not much glory in being a Company runner, and very much being scared stiff. Having run a few messages for Geoff, he reckoned I needed a spell, and decided to go himself. He asked for my "Housewife", you know that small package that if you got into trouble would temporarily meet your immediate needs. Off he went and sad to say never to return. No thanks to a Jap sniper who ended his life. What a tragedy. He volunteered to go in my place. Maybe it's inbuilt, but whenever a volunteer is needed I have no hesitation in raising my hand up. Such is the impression that Geoff's action left on me. He was a good bloke and worthy of the 3 pips he wore.

Another man to greatly impress was Sgt. Major (Nude Head or Egg shell Blonde) Bill Smith. This little bloke of small stature made his presence felt on the parade ground, but when the "Blue" was on he was there for his men.

I salute both men. Kinds regards,

*Thank you so much for your letter Frank. Best wishes to you.*

*From Joy Pigdon of Portarlington .....*

I have enclosed a cheque for my subscription and a donation. My brother died of wounds at Tobruk, 2 May 1941. When they had the white wooden crosses at the Shrine of Remembrance a few years ago, Victor, my husband, and I went up and put Lester's name 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion B Coy and his number 25603.

I was interested to find out about the service there in October. We came up and I bought with me a photo of Lester and two of his mates. On enquiring with the men at the Shrine gathering I was very fortunate that Alan Macfarlane was present. As soon as I showed him the photo he immediately recognised Lester (my brother). It was wonderful to meet him, we have kept in touch ever since.

I always enjoy reading the Furphy Flyer in Mufti. I enjoyed the story in the last issue regarding Alan Macfarlane. Please pass on my regards to Alan, and Faye. I always look forward to seeing him in the ANZAC parade to the Shrine. Bye for now, best wishes.

*Thanks for your support Joy*

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

Please pass on my congratulations to all involved in producing the Furphy Flyer, it seems to improve with age, well done and thank you to those who send in items of interest.

I received notice last week of a Pioneer Battalion closing up due to lack of active membership, hopefully the 2/24<sup>th</sup> will live on with support from family members of a younger generation. Thank you for the privilege.

*Thank you for those kind words Richard, best wishes to you.*

*From Jean Riordan of Echuca .....*

Dear Editor and Secretary,

Thank you for a very interesting Furphy as always. We hope Lyle gets feedback on her photos. What a wonderful write up on our Alan Macfarlane. Congratulations Alan on being so fit after all you have been through.

Please find enclosed my subscription for the year and a donation to help the 2/24<sup>th</sup> on the way. I always look forward to the Furphy coming and read it from front to back. Thanks again.

*Good to hear from you again Jean. Hope you are keeping well.*

*From Jack Hunter of Bald Hills QLD. Jack is the Hon. Sec/Treas of ROTA QLD .....*

Dear Alastair

Please find enclosed requested form filled with details plus a donation to the 2/24 Association so as to continue receiving the Furphy Flyer in Mufti.

I am also pleased to hear you received our recent Tobruk Truth journal. I have been passing on your magazine to a few of the R.A.B. after I have read it.

Mrs. Lyle Johnson is one of our lady members and I was a good friend of her late husband Ron (Sticks) Johnson. I am not a "RAT" as only born 31<sup>st</sup>. March 1941 a significant date before the siege. However I served in Tobruk for 2 years 1962/64 R.A.F.

Best wishes and kindest regards

*Thanks Jock.*

*From E Frankel of Pascoe Vale Sth .....*

Enclosed please find money order for payment of Subs and purchase 3 lapel badges.

I apologise for late payment but I am 90 years of age and have been extremely ill with constant hospital admissions with advanced cardiac failure which is not expected to improve. Thanking you sincerely.

*The way I see it, anyone over the age of 80 is entitled to be a little late with their subs. I'm sorry to hear you not well at the moment but I know all our members wish you the very best..*

*From Andrew Findlay of Morven NSW .....*

Please find enclosed cheque for my subs and donation to the Association.

I do hope that ANZAC day is another great success for all those chaps that are able to march or to attend the ceremony. Kind regards.

*Thanks Andrew. It's great to see the many ANZAC Day ceremonies around Australia getting such large attendances, especially with the younger generations.*

*From Wilma & David Evans of Ballarat .....*

Please find enclosed Subs for this coming year. We would like to congratulate everyone who was involved in organizing the Canberra commemorative service. It was wonderful to be there and also meet up with some of the men. Thank you for the invitation to be there. Best wishes.

*I agree. It was a special day for the men and families of the 2/24<sup>th</sup>.*

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

Dear Alastair, I enclose my cheque for the annual subs, the balance towards the expenses involved in running this fine Association. Hope you are keeping well.

*Thanks Vern, good to hear from you. Hope you are keeping well.*

*From Bob Piconi of Strathfield NSW .....*

Dear Alastair, Please find enclosed a cheque to cover my subscriptions. If the amount is more than I owe please accept the difference as a donation. Kindest regards.

*Thanks for your support Bob.*

*From D & M Maher Of Albury .....*

Please find enclosed cheque being subs. for Danny and Mary Maher. We both enjoy the Furphy, keep up the good work.

*Best wishes to you both.*

*From Zoe Mair of Dungog NSW .....*

Dear Alan,

Once again I have received the Furphy Flyer in Mufti, which I very much appreciate and enjoy. You do a wonderful job. I wish I was closer so I could catch up with you all.

*Thank you very much Zoe. Your support is very much appreciated.*

*From Harold Shilton of Melton South .....*

Please accept this donation from my mother, Hazel, to be used in any way you feel appropriate.

*Again, the support and generosity of our members is wonderful. Thank you Harold and please pass on our best wishes to your mum.*

*From Margaret Deering of King Valley VIC .....*

Please say "Hi" to Janice. It was great to see her recently.

*'Hi Janice!'*

*From Doug Dobson .....*

Thought I would let you know that Arthur Fitzpatrick turned 94 on the 18<sup>th</sup> March and the family had a dinner for him at the Cowes RSL. There were about 60 people there, mostly family plus myself and Beverley and Peter Emmett. It was a very nice evening and everybody seemed to enjoy themselves. Arthur was in good spirits and enjoyed the event.

*Happy birthday Arthur and thanks for the note Doug.*

*From Lyle Johnson of Aspley QLD .....*

Thank you once again for the 'Furphy Flyer' as always very interesting to read. Just one little thing, you put my husbands name in the last Flyer as Roland and his name was Ronald. You must have been thinking of the Treasurer at the time, anyway I forgive you.

*Thanks Lyle, at my age the message from my eyes to my brain seems to be getting fuzzier. It must be a man thing, like our selective hearing.*

*From Brigadier O H (Zac) Isaksson MC of Greenwich NSW .....* Dear Alan,

Thank you for the Christmas Furphy Flyer and again I apologise for not making it to Wangaratta. The more I think about Tobruk the more I am struck by the magnitude of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> achievement in the Salient Battle. There seems no doubt that had the Battalion not held on, Tobruk would have been lost.

At a recent lecture I gave I said that in my view the defence of the Ras el Medauer Sector was one of the most significant unit achievements of the Second World War as the strategic implications of the loss of Tobruk would have been incalculable on top of the disasters of Greece and Crete. To me it is remarkable that post war historians have not understood it. I hope the Battalion appreciates its great victory.

So there is the view of one who has read a great deal of military history. The main trouble is that most commentators, rightly, praise the 9<sup>th</sup> for its offensive successes only.

Best wishes to you and Faye.

*And best wishes to you also Zac.*

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

I hope this correspondence finds you and all at the Association fit and well. Enclosed is a cheque for my Association membership fee and a donation towards the upkeep of the Wangaratta Memorial Wall.

*Thank you for your generous support Bob.*

*From Nance Ongley of Mortlake .....*

You have put me in a 'tisy' – I always pay my subs when sending back my details for the Wangaratta dinner etc, and include my daughter, Heather Jordan's costs etc with it. Now I am not sure if we are in arrears or ahead. Enclosed is a donation to the Association.

*Sorry Nance. It definitely wasn't our intention to worry or confuse our membership, especially members like yourself who make generous donations each year. Our best wishes to you.*

*From Beve Rowley of Traralgon .....*

Please find enclosed a cheque for my subs and a donation from myself and my Mum, Margaret Joyce. Thank you very much for sending the badges.

*Nice to hear from you Beve.*

*From Bernadette Scully of Moonee Ponds .....*

Dear Alastair, please find enclosed subs. As I said during our phone conversation there is no need to send Mum, Fran Scully, a Furphy Flyer as she is legally blind and I read her mine. Many thanks for the work that you are doing.

*Our best wishes to you Bernadette. Please pass on a big cheerio to your Mum, Fran.*

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

Dear Alatair, I am not sure of my subscription position. I am honoured to belong to the Association so do treat the balance as a donation. All the best.

*Good to hear from you again Bill. I agree with you, it is an honour to be associated with the men of the 2/24<sup>th</sup>.*

*From Mary Jane Joscelyne, daughter of A P Gebhardt, from East Melbourne .....*

Dear Alastair, please find enclosed subs and a donation. My son and I really enjoy the Furphy Flyer, in fact I think it's a little gem, and I do share the stories with visitors who ask do I have another for them to read yet! My compliments to all.

*Thanks for your note and donation Mary. Your kind words are appreciated.*

*From Philip Burns .....*

Dear Alan, Thank you for the opportunity to read and learn about the wonderful 2/24<sup>th</sup> role and deeds in WW2. The detail of the events, particularly the battles, was revealed more 'visually' to me than any other books I have read on War Battles. Obviously this is so because it was written by so many direct participants.

It is easy to understand how the men formed the many strong relationships, given they emanated from support for each other in such circumstances. I can really appreciate how you look forward to reunions with your digger mates.

Thank you again for your kindness in trusting me with your copy of the 2/24<sup>th</sup>.

*From Charlie Scales of Bon Beach .....*

I have corresponded recently with my old C Coy mate, Jack Webb and was pleased to hear from him and to know that he and his wife, Ellen, are well although a bit creaky around the joints.

I am taking a huge liberty by posting you this letter which contains news of Arthur Fitzpartick who, it seems, is not too well. It would be only temporary as what I know of Fitzzy, he is a pretty tough old bloke.

When I knew Jack Webb in my army days, I never knew him as a poet or an author but you can never underestimate a bushman. This poem of Jacks is inspirational.

'Fumina'.

Come up to Fumina where the grass is always green,  
Where a meal without a rabbit is seldom seen,  
You may snare a wallaby and eat him in a stew,  
The Scotchmen love their haggis,  
The Chinese love their rice,  
But for those who love their rabbit,  
Fumina is Paradise.

ps... Fumina is near Warragul, in the hills.

Looking forward to saying hello on ANZAC day.  
*Lovely to hear from you again Charlie. Best wishes to you, 'Fitzzy' and Jack.*

*From Bev Emmett daughter of "Snowy" Yarwood VX68679, KIA, Wareo, 1943 .....*

Last November my husband and I went on a tour of Egypt & Jordan and our itinerary included El Alamein War Museum and Cemetery. There, we were hoping to find Dougy Dobson's uncle's grave. He was KIA whilst serving with the RAF (seconded from the RAAF), a daunting task considering the thousands of young men buried there. We borrowed our tour guide's Aussie flag, placed it in the ground next to the grave, recited the Oath and sang Advance Australia Fair. Very emotional.

While looking for Dougy's uncle we came across the grave of a member of the 2/24th. Cpl. T.N. MacFarlane, VX2910I and have enclosed a photo. If any 2/24th Battn. Assoc. member would like this photo or copies of it, I would be pleased to send it to them.

*Our best wishes to you Bev.*

*Roma Taylor, daughter of Frederick Titchy Lye VX35084, tells this fascinating encounter...*

We have been living in Churchill (Vic) for ten years, and due to a stroke I need a fair bit of help. Ten years ago I had a lady called Carol Henshaw come and take my car away to clean it and then bring it back.

Approximately four weeks ago when she returned the car Carol asked me where I got the CD that was playing in the car. The tune was called Two Rats in Tobruk from Slim Dusty's album, On the Track. Carol seemed very interested and when I asked her why she told me that her father was in the Ninth Division.

When I asked 'What battalion?', she said that she did not know, so she went home quickly and got out a file that her daughter Christine has had put

together. Lo and behold – Carol's father was in the 2/24th! Carol's father was Aubrey Nielsen VX29046.

Since then we have been constantly in touch with one another, looking at photos, stories and jokes. It was Carol who gave me a copy of the story about the Australian Flag. It is amazing how many people have memorabilia in their homes.

ps... Have just found another six people from Boolara who are interested in joining the Association.

*Great work, Roma – keep up the good work.*

*We have received an email from Dave Evans of Ballarat advising that he has documents belonging to Eugene Geraghty, VX33414, a 2/24<sup>th</sup> member who was captured at Tobruk in 1941. Dave wishes to contact Eugene's family to arrange for the return of these documents.*

*Please contact our Secretary if you can help.*

*We have also had notes from Joan Monds and Mary Collyer who send their best wishes to all officials and members.*

*It would also be remiss of me not to thank Win and Neil Holland for their very generous donation to the Association. Thank you.*

A bear walks into a bar in Billings, Montana and sits down. He bangs on the bar with his paw and demands a beer.

The bartender approaches and says, 'We don't serve beer to bears in bars in Billings'.

The bear, becoming angry, demands again that he be served a beer. The bartender tells him again, more forcefully, 'We don't serve beer to belligerent bears in bars in Billings'.

The bear, very angry now, says, 'If you don't serve me a beer, I'm going to eat that lady sitting at the end of the bar'.

The bartender says, 'Sorry, we don't serve beer to belligerent, bully bears in bars in Billings'.

The bear goes to the end of the bar, and, as promised, eats the woman. He comes back to his seat and again demands a beer.

The bartender states, 'Sorry, we don't serve beer to belligerent, bully bears in bars in Billings who are on drugs'.

The bear says, 'I'm NOT on drugs'.

The bartender says, 'You are now. That was a barbitchyouate'.

### **Tough enough to bend bullets**

*Shirley Drayton sent in this next article that appeared in the Geelong Advertiser on the 26<sup>th</sup> April 2005. This is a very sympathetic interview with her father, George Stewart, by reporter Danny Lannen.*

George Stewart rested his cane against the hall pew and flexed his 86-year-old leg. It didn't move as far as it used to, but the long-time Inverleigh farmer wasn't expecting too much.

He wore two bullets in the limb six or so decades ago when he was fighting for Australia's ideals. A German shot him at Tobruk, a Japanese foe got him in New Guinea. He recalls it now with a shrug and a wry smile lights his face. It is a smile which knows much but says little.

'I got one bullet below the knee and one above it,' Mr Stewart said. 'I've still got the Japanese one at home, it hit the bone, that's what stopped it.' The bullet is bent as testimony to his mettle.

Mr Stewart was a proud elder at Anzac Day formalities at Inverleigh yesterday. He couldn't march but he stood to attention for the laying of wreaths at the town cenotaph and set his mind to the memory of the mates he left behind on distant, hostile shores.

That's what Anzac Day was about for him.

George Stewart grew up a doughty Mallee boy before he signed up and headed for the Middle East with the Second 24<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

'They sailed us over on the Queen Mary, she was stripped down,' he recalled. 'They fed us frozen eggs and frozen kidneys ... you could smell 'em before you could see 'em!'

He fought in some 'terrible places' – desert in the Middle East and jungle in New Guinea – and witnessed his share of war. He took up a soldier settlers' block at Inverleigh after his discharge and with wife of 61 years Irene nurtured a family of four.

Macular degeneration has gradually taxed his sight during the past few years but failed to dim his smile during the Anzac Day gathering as he recalled with verve the brightest anecdotes from a cursed war and reserved his inner thoughts in reverence for the mates who paid a fatal price.

*Reproduced with permission from the Geelong Advertiser.*

### **Some Websites to visit**

1. Bob Clark alerted us to the following website. Many of you would have seen the Herald Sun on 24 April with the four page spread about the Rats. The photographer, Ellen Smith, took the photos of the Rats, and the Herald Sun has placed a multimedia presentation based on the photos and interviews on the Web at [http://www.heraldsunonline.com.au/soundslides/dhs/news/rats\\_of\\_tobruk/index.html](http://www.heraldsunonline.com.au/soundslides/dhs/news/rats_of_tobruk/index.html)  
The presentation features sound clips, photos of the veterans during the war as well as the colour images of the Rats taken for the newspaper.
2. As many of you will be aware Shirley Drayton has been working on a Memory Quilt of her dad. She has finished it finally and it can be viewed on the Web at <http://geelongcreativefibreats.wordpress.com/>. There are three photos on the website showing the quilt including some close-ups. If you pass your mouse over each photo you will see a larger image. Shirley will be sending us a photo for the next Furphy Flyer for those without access to the Internet.
3. Dennis Photography  
There are Anzac Day photos of the 2/24 on this photographer's site. Type 'dennisphotography' into Google. At the bottom of the photos click on the link 'View your pictures', then on the next screen click on 'Special events'. Select Anzac Day 2010. Next screen requires the password 'austalia10' With the Window under showing 'All photos' there are several options:
  - \* Select 'March taken from the left side - page 51;
  - \* Select 'March taken from the right side - page 55
  - \* Select 'Roving photographer at Shrine Part 2' - page 4 for more of Wangaratta HS.
  - \* Again on the lower window select 'Roving photographer before entering the Shrine' Page 47. Click on the thumbnails to see an enlarged view - BUT the enlarged view is watermarked. In the enlarged view you can move back and forth through the set of photos.

The real problem with this commercial photo shoot is that the cheapest prints are \$15 each!

## News from the Committee

The Committee met on Saturday 8 May – it didn't clash with any important AFL games so there was a good attendance! Below are some of the topics discussed or items raised:

1. We have had to increase the price of badges to \$10 so that we cover costs. The company producing the badges had increased the price.
2. The 9<sup>th</sup> Division luncheon to follow the Service at the Shrine will be held at Scotch College.
3. During the past month there have been several enquiries to the Secretary as a result of people reading our website – including one from the UK.
4. The number of paid-up members has been continuing, which bodes well for the viability of the Association. However, subs are a long way short of the full membership roll.
5. The Committee, on behalf of the Association, is investigating a plaque at the Australian War Memorial to commemorate the 24<sup>th</sup> Battalion in World War I.
6. Prefects from Wangaratta High School, and their Principal Mrs Heather Sarau, marched with the Battalion and were our guests at the Anzac Day luncheon. The Association is thrilled at the involvement of the school and hopes that the link will continue for many years to come. The President, Alan Macfarlane, was pleased with the appearance of the marchers. In recognition of their role and commitment, the Association is honouring the students with a certificate nominating them as Honorary Junior Associate Members. This suggestion was applauded by those present at the Anzac Day Lunch and endorsed by the Committee.
7. Much of the time at the meeting deliberated on the format of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion at Wangaratta this year – Friday 5 November to Sunday 7 November. It is going to be a great celebration; being 70 years since the Battalion was formed, marched out of Wangaratta and sailed to the Middle East. Put the dates in your diary now and plan to be there – it is going to be a very special celebration. More news in the next Furphy.
8. Although it was mooted that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and the Birthday Luncheon be held at the same date and function, it was acknowledged by the Committee that 2 July was too early to prepare reports for the AGM. So the Birthday Luncheon will proceed as planned on 2 July and the AGM will be held with the August Committee Meeting. Note that all Members and Associate Members are welcome to attend the AGM.
9. It was suggested at the Anzac Day Luncheon that we commemorate the Marching Out of Wangaratta with a re-enactment in Wangaratta. This was discussed by the Committee but concern was raised that the event was too close to the Annual Reunion and would split attendance between the two events. The Wangaratta Reunion in November will be the only commemorative event.

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In a follow up to the 'Furphy Flyer' article on our President, Alan Macfarlane, I thought I would list some of the 'extra curriculum' activities that he was involved in recently.

2 Feb	9 <sup>th</sup> Division Meeting
8 Feb	Kindred Organisations Meeting, Anzac House
18 Feb	9 <sup>th</sup> Division Meeting
26 Feb	Rats of Tobruk Association meeting
23 Mar	RSL Anzac Day Committee
26 Mar	Rats of Tobruk Association meeting
11 Apr	ROTA dinner at Puckapunyal
12 Apr	Kindred Organisations Meeting, Anzac House
15 Apr	RSL Anzac Day Committee
18 Apr	RSL Church Service
23 Apr	Wangaratta High School Anzac Service
25 Apr	Lead 9 <sup>th</sup> Division in Anzac Day march
4 May	9 <sup>th</sup> Division Meeting
8 May	2/24 <sup>th</sup> Association Committee Meeting

17 May Address at the opening of Western Desert Exhibition at the Shrine

It's obvious that Alan is dedicated to the interests and welfare of his fellow veterans, the widows of veterans and the proud traditions of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion. I'm 30 years younger and I wish I had half his energy and enthusiasm.

The picture on the next page shows Alan and the President of RSL Victoria at Government House.

Alan and the President of RSL Victoria, Major General David Mclachlan AO (retd) at the Government House reception to welcome his Royal Highness, Prince William.




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

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

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

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

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

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

Cameron scanned the following two pictures at the RSL ANZAC day lunch. It is our intention to have these pictures loaded onto our website to enable a clearer image for you to view.



Roma Taylor had this photo and would like to know if anyone recognises the soldier



An unidentified member brought in this picture which is apparently of Capt Lindsey Canty in a prewar militia somewhere in Victoria. It is believed that some of these people may have been involved in the initial make up of the 2/24th. Does anyone else know who is in this photo or have any more information about it?

## The Origins of the Last Post

Recently there has been an e-mail doing the rounds with a story that claims to tell the origin of the *Last Post*. Since the e-mail originated in America and contains the story of the origin of *Taps* it is most definitely not the story about the *Last Post*.

In the British army *Retreat* was the older custom dating back to the 16th Century that consisted of prolonged drum beats at sunset to warn the night guard to mount and also to give notice that the gates of the town walls were about to close. This custom was also part of the end of day battle procedure when volleys were fired and a hymn played in honour of those who had fallen during the day. At this time of evening the colour would be trooped. Today, this latter activity is replaced by the lowering of the National Flag.

A soldier's day was originally marked by a series of bugle calls; starting with *reveille* in the morning and finishing with the *Last Post*. The *Last Post* came out of the tradition of the British army while stationed in the Netherlands in the late 1600s. It was part of a routine, called tattoo, that commenced with a bugle call (the First Post) that indicated that the orderly sergeant and a drummer (with a bugle) had started their rounds. They marched from post to post accompanied drum-beat, and at each sentry point a bugle call was sounded. Upon reaching the final post the drummer would sound the *Last Post*. This was to indicate that the day was ended and that all soldiers should be in their billets – and not in the pub. It was also a signal for the night sentries to be on duty and alert at their posts. It was the last warning to any soldiers who were still at large that it was time to retire for the evening. The word tattoo comes from the Dutch phrase *Taptoe* (pronounced tap-too) which is an abbreviation of *Doe den tap toe* – a call that was used in the taverns to say 'Turn off the taps' – of the beer barrels.

However the Dutch *Taptoe* bugle call, *Taptoesignaa*, which is now used for remembrance events, is not the same tune as the *Last Post*. And, neither *Last Post* nor *Taptoesignaal* is to be confused with the US call of [Taps](#). Although they all serve a similar function they have different tunes and origins. The US expression of Taps (from drum taps) is also derived from tattoo and was used in their military even before the Civil War. But the bugle call of *Taps* has its origin during the American Civil War.

During the days of the British Empire the use of the *Last Post* became part of the routine of all the armies in the dominions, and as well as indicating the end of a soldier's day it is also used in funeral and commemorative services as a farewell and to show that a soldier's duty has been done.

### Words

The Australian Army website has words that go with the tune of the Last Post:

Come home! Come home! The last post is sounding for you to hear.

All good soldiers know very well there is nothing to fear  
while they do what is right, and forget all the worries  
they have met in their duties through the year.

A soldier cannot always be great, but he can be a  
gentleman and he can be a right good pal  
to his comrades in his squad.

So all you soldiers listen to this –

Deal fair by all and you'll never be amiss.

Be Brave! Be Just! Be Honest and True Men!

[Source: <http://www.defence.gov.au/army/history/LastPost.htm> ]

Alastair has written a piece on the origin of Taps, which I will include in the August 'Furphy Flyer'.

- 
- *A video recorder may insult your intelligence, but nothing rubs it in like a computer.*
  - *Old fishermen never die; they just smell that way.*
  - *I'm young at heart... slightly older in other places.*
  - *Some people just don't know how to drive. I call these people "Everybody but me".*
  - *A male gynaecologist is like an auto mechanic who never owned a car.*
  - *I've got furniture disease... my chest has fallen into my drawers.*
  - *Funny, I don't remember being absent minded.*
  - *Be nice to your children. They'll choose your nursing home.*

- *Anything preying on my mind would starve to death.*

### **Sick Parade**

A big cheerio to **Les Hansen** and **Nancy Ormsby** plus any other members out there with niggling aches and pains, and other conditions much worse. Please remember that we are thinking of you and our best wishes go out to everyone who is not feeling 100%.

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### **News Letters**

Tobruk House News	Vic Branch of the ROTA
ROTA	NSW Branch of the ROTA
53 <sup>rd</sup> Aust Composite Anti-Aircraft Reg Assoc.	
Mud and Blood	2/23 Battalion Association
Dial Sight	2/7 Aust Field Reg Social & Welfare Club
Take Post	2/12 Aust Field Reg Assoc

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## **Shrine of Remembrance Exhibition – Western Desert Campaigns**

The Western Desert Campaign 1940-1942 is the theme of an exhibition at the Shrine of Remembrance which will be on display from **Friday, 7 May 2010 until Sunday, 1 August 2010**. The exhibition is in the Eastern Gallery and displays memorabilia, documents and letters, photos (some from the Imperial War Museum, London and some from the 2/24th's Freddy Priest), paintings, maps and outfits (from Rod Wilson). There are also brief descriptions of the three major campaigns – Bardia, Tobruk and El Alamein. The exhibition incorporates contemporary portraits of veterans by artist Peter Wegner; and several of our 2/24 veterans sat for these portraits - including Alan Macfarlane, Bob Clark and Jack Caple. The Shrine is open from 10.00am until 5.00 pm every day during this display. It was opened on Monday 17 May by Dr Mark Johnson, patron of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division, and a speech about the campaigns was delivered our President. Associated with this exhibition, on Wednesday 9 June, is a talk by Bob Hare, the son of Captain Ivan Hare MC who was killed in action at El Alamein. He will share extracts from his father's diaries. This talk will commence at 11.00 am. Ring the Shrine on 96548415 to book a place.

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### **Coming Events**

Please note that if it is your intention to attend an upcoming event it is important for us to know, in advance, the approximate numbers that will be coming. As a matter of courtesy we ask you to phone one of our committee members so that we can plan seating and catering arrangements.

An example of not being advised in advance was this year's ANZAC lunch at the Pascoe Vale RSL. We had approximately 60 responses for attendance, we advised the RSL to expect 70 to 75, and 94 people turned up.

It was a great day and it was lovely to see everyone there but it was a bit unfair to the RSL who had to hastily arrange extra seats and meals.

#### **The Battalion Birthday Lunch – Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2010**

**12 for 12.30 at the Pascoe Vale RSL**

Coming up in July we have the Annual Birthday Lunch. The cost is approximately \$20.00 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 :-

**Alastair Davison 9844 3036 - Janice Young: 0414 782 557**

**or e-mail: [event@2-24.battalion.org.au](mailto:event@2-24.battalion.org.au)**

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

#### **Wangaratta Weekend Reunion, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.**

This year marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the forming of the 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalion. To celebrate this milestone, the Reunion in Wangaratta will a very special event, with more activities on Saturday and Sunday.

To enable the Committee to plan for this Weekend, and to notify Wangaratta City of our requirements, 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** – it is not a booking. 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

**Alastair Davison 9844 3036 - Janice Young: 0414 782 557**

**or e-mail: [event@2-24.battalion.org.au](mailto:event@2-24.battalion.org.au)**

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

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