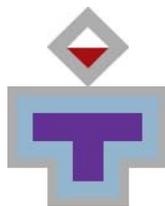


The Furphy Flyer in Mufti.



I HOLD FAST

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

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Melbourne

December 2009



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Your President and Committee wish all our members, their families, our Association friends and well wishers, special greetings for the coming Festive Season. Have a wonderful Christmas and a New Year filled with good health and happiness.

Thank you all for supporting the Association and for the many kind words you have said about the work of the Committee and the Furphy Flyer in Mufti.

Vale

Wally Doyle	VX19456	11 September 2009
Murray Burles	VX34601	5 October 2009
Roy Webb	VX35179	13 October 2009
Michael Oakley		24 August 2009
Mary Ellen Pyke		24 August 2009
Eve Elsdon		11 September 2009
Mrs D Green		September 2009
Olive Beard		17 December 2008
Muriel Duncombe		

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

Wangaratta Weekend Reunion

Friday 06/11/09, Wangaratta RSL

Approximately forty Members and guests met at the Wangaratta RSL for a casual evening meal in preparation for a busy weekend. All tables were occupied and those present included our wonderful local supporters, John Elward, Greg Larkins and Wangaratta High School Principal, Heather Sarau. Our host was Wangaratta RSL President Norm Fearn and we thank him, his members and staff for making us most welcome.

Saturday 07/11/09, Memorial Wall Service at Wangaratta Cemetery, 2.30pm,

On a very warm afternoon approximately 130 people gathered at the Wangaratta cemetery for the Annual Memorial Service. The 2/24th Battalion Memorial area of the cemetery looked immaculate, with all the plaques polished and the roses looking superb. A very big thank you to the cemetery staff, especially Paul Moss-Holland and Peter Szeligiewcz, for the care and attention they give it.

Our President, Alan Macfarlane, welcomed us all and was followed by the Mayor of the Rural City of Wangaratta, Cr Ron Webb. The mayor 'Welcomed' Home the thirteen Battalion members present and wished us all a pleasant and enjoyable weekend in Wangaratta.

Following the singing of the hymn, Abide with Me, Alan Macfarlane, the Mayor, the President of Wangaratta RSL, Noel Fearn and the Principal of Wangaratta High School, Heather Sarau, laid wreaths at the memorial stone. Heather's wreath was made from freshly cut flowers - "*Lest we Forget*".

Norm Gray, son of the late Doug 'Dolly' Gray, played the "Last Post, Lament and Reveille on the Battalions Silver Bugle, thank you Norm.

The Laying of Poppies completed the formal part of the ceremony.

The afternoon was finished off with a great afternoon tea supplied by the ladies of Zonta. Thank you to their President, Nola Hausler and her many enthusiastic helpers.

Cadets from Wangaratta's 33 ACU carried the Battalion's Standard and assisted with the Ceremony. The cadets, as usual, displayed fine professionalism in carrying out their duties. We wish to thank the Officers and Cadets; Liz Rouse, Les Graham, Dylan Kungl, Bas Howard, Jordan Benton, Jordan Fitzpatrick, Jacob Marshall, Josh Marshall and Brent Milzer.

Reception, Wangaratta Memorial Hall, 07/11/09

Association Members, their families and special guests arrived at the Wangaratta Memorial Hall, Performing Arts Centre, for nibbles and drinks, served by volunteer Lions members. The brand new Centre is very impressive and the reception provided an opportunity to catch up with friends and mates.

Dinner.

There were approximately 150 attendees at our Wangaratta Dinner. The hall and the table settings looked great as we walked to our seats. Each table had souvenir menus with a picture of the 2/24th's Battle Honours Plaque at the Wangaratta Cemetery.

Our Master of Ceremonies for the night was Association Vice President, Doug Dobson. Grace was said by June Mitchell, and the Loyal Toast was proposed by Association Vice President, Alan Nicholson.

Our President, Alan Macfarlane, welcomed us all

Ladies and gentlemen, the Mayor of the Rural City of Wangaratta Cr Ron Webb and Mrs Maxine Webb, the CEO of the City, Doug Sharp, Cr Roberto Paino and Mrs Meg Paino, Cr Lauren O'Neill and Mr Paul Scully, Cr Anthony Griffiths and Cr Rozi Parisotto.

It is with much pleasure I welcome you all here this evening for our Annual Reunion celebrating 69 years since the formation of the Battalion. As always it is wonderful to have such a large gathering of Battalion Members, Associates and friends of 'Wangaratta's Own'.

We welcome Mr Paul Mossholland and Marilyn, Peter Szeligiewcz and Toni, the Wright family; Alan, Debbie, John, Elma, Andrew and their able assistant, Chris Hutchieson; all of whom care for our Memorial Wall.

Zonta President, Nola Hausler and Rod and all their wonderful members; the Lions President, Nigel Thompson, Marlene and members present; the RSL President, Norm Fearn, Carolyn Foote; and the Wangaratta High School Principal, Heather Sarau and Mark.

A warm welcome to all the award winning students, teachers and families of Wangaratta High School, Galen College and Cathedral College.

Greetings to our interstate members; Doug and Eve Gray and Mick Benson and family.

We are honoured to have with us tonight from NSW, Major Mark Scully, Major Steve Cooper and Lt David Webster of the Australian Army Cadet unit. I understand they have read our Battalion history and are so impressed they wish to use our title '24 Battalion' for their unit. No doubt more later.

Mr Mayor and Council, we thank you again for your continued support for 'Wangaratta's Own' and also for your reception here this evening and on behalf of the Association I congratulate you, and the people of Wangaratta, re this new and magnificent building.

The following is a copy of the Mayor's welcome.

Once again it is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the annual reunion of the 2/24th Australian Infantry Battalion; 'Welcome Home'.

As we meet here this evening, 69 years after the Battalion was formed at the Wangaratta Showgrounds and "Wangaratta's Own" marched to the embarkation camp at Bonegilla, it inspires us to ponder anew the complex relationships between history and memories. The history of the young men of the 2/24th, what they embarked on and the challenges they faced. The memory of how we may best remember them today and into the future.

Few A.I.F. battalions had a more severe introduction to battle. Noting from "*2/24th A History of the 2/24th Australian Infantry Battalion*", in your first major action you lost three rifle company commanders with their headquarters personnel and more than six rifle platoons of the twelve in the battalion, a staggering blow to a unit whose members were going through their first introduction to the impact of battle.

But through teamwork, cooperation and of course mateship, the battalion went onto serve with great distinction in all the main conflicts from Tobruk in the Middle East to Tarakan in the Pacific.

As Dr Mark Johnson, History Master at Scotch College, Melbourne and now patron of 9th Division once wrote:

"The 2/24th was one of the best battalions ever to leave Australia. This is indicated by its high tally of decorations but also the fact that it suffered more battle casualties than any other Second AIF battalion: some 335 killed in action or died of wounds. More than 30 others died of illness or accident, and nearly 900 were wounded. The names of its dead will live for evermore. So will the names of the more than 3000 members who survived the war, many of whom have since passed away. In 1940 Churchill predicted that if the people of the Commonwealth stood fast, then for a thousand years people would say 'This was their finest hour': no one can deny that 1940-1945 was the finest hour of the volunteers who joined the 2/24th Battalion."

I am proud to see that the great friendship, between the members of this great Battalion, your families and our Rural City community, shaped by the special and close history which we share, remains as strong as ever.

It is a pleasure to meet up with the members and families of the 2/24th Battalion, to reminisce about our shared history and to remember those we have lost and those less fortunate.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all a great weekend. I hope that you enjoy our wonderful city and look forward to the enduring friendship that exists between the Rural City of Wangaratta and the 2/24th Australian Infantry Battalion continuing into the future.

The Battalion Toast was made by Val Gleeson OAM.

To toast the 2/24th Battalion is indeed a great honour for me. As a 10 year I old stood with most Wangaratta citizens, on September 1940, to wave a fond farewell to these young men who we had come to know and love; many of them did not return, they paid the ultimate sacrifice, fighting for our freedom. On their departing from Wangaratta my father, Tom Nolan, the Mayor at the time, presented the Commander with a pennon from the citizens of Wangaratta and Alan Macfarlane was the young soldier who had the privilege of carrying this flag out of Wangaratta.

Fifty years later, in 1990, Kevin, my husband, was Mayor of the City and as Mayoress and a councilor I had the honour of re-presenting this same pennon to a much older and wiser Alan Macfarlane who you see here tonight.

On this day, the Mayor, the Town Clerk, John Elward, with the other councilors, also bestowed on the 2/24th the Honour of The Freedom of the City, "Wangaratta's Own". The only organization to receive such an honour in the 150 year history of this Council.

With the keys to the City came a citation that still hangs on the wall of the city Council Offices. In fact I saw this a few weeks ago and remarked to John Elward that our three signatures had, like us, faded somewhat.

We have enjoyed a wonderful journey together and have many pleasant and happy memories of our association with the men of the "2/24th Battalion - Wangaratta's Own"

Will you please join with me in a toast to the Battalion.

Student Awards. Each year students from Wangaratta Schools are recognised for their achievements by the 2/24th Battalion Association. The students, chosen by their teachers, were presented with certificates by our President and Zonta President, Nola Hausler.

The students were Melissa Kyne from Wangaratta High School, Adele Marum from Galen College and Nicholas O'Brien of Cathedral College. They addressed the gathering, telling us about their achievements, ambitions and thanking the 2/24th Association for the awards.

During the evening Alan took a moment to say how much he and the committee were shocked and saddened by the death of our Honourary Secretary, Michael Oakley. Michael had worked tirelessly for the continuing evolution of the Association and it will miss his enthusiasm and commitment.

Alan also thanked our new Honourary Secretary, Alastair Davison. Alastair had taken up the challenge and was doing a great job during this hectic November agenda.

Our President also wanted to recognise the work done by Peter Szeligiewcz. Peter's work at the Wangaratta Cemetery, Memorial Wall, has been exceptional and, for his contribution to the maintenance of our special site, Peter has been made an Honourary Associate member of the 2/24th Battalion Association. Well done Peter.

Stand to The lights were lowered and the 2/24th's Banners were floodlit as our President read out the names of Battalion Members who had died during the last twelve months. Norm Gray then played the "Last Post" and "Reveille" on the Battalions Silver Bugle.

The Len Ormsby (Pansy) Memorial Swindle. A big thank you to the many people who donated prizes for this year's raffle. The prizes were again many and varied.

To assist in drawing the winning tickets Paul Moss-Holland acted as MC, Doug Sharp drew the winning tickets and the student award winners acted as runners with the prizes.

Sale of tickets cleared approx. \$700. What a wonderful contribution from a very generous group of people.

Sunday 09/11/08

Cenotaph Memorial Service

On a beautiful day the Wangaratta Cenotaph looked lovely surrounded by a sea of red roses. About fifty people were in attendance to remember the Australians killed in the service of their country. Those present at the service included the Mayor of the Rural City of Wangaratta, Cr Ron Webb, Cr Roberto Paino, and the President of Wangaratta RSL, Norm Fearn.

The memorial service is a wonderful way to finish the formal activities of the weekend. *'Lest we forget'*

Those attending the Wangaratta Weekend included :-

Nola Adams, Keith Anderson, Shane Anderson, Mick Benson, Steve Benson, Cameron Blackwood, Euan & Dawn Brown, Keith & Lee Buckley, Bob & Dorothy Clark, Graeme & Linda Clark, Adam Clark, Vern Collier, Jack Collins, Major Steve Cooper, Harry Cornehl, Janet Cox, Hautrie Crick, Alastair Davison, Margaret Deering, Kate Dixon, Doug Dobson, Eric Edwards, Russell & Jocelyn Edwards, Sandi Fitzpatrick, Cliff Giersch, Doug & Eve Gray, Norm Gray, Les Hansen, Bob & Marjorie Hutchieson, Betty Kronenberg, Greg & Helen Larkins, Owen & Jessie Lewis, Thomas Lillingstone, Paul & Lindsey Lillingstone, Alan & Faye Macfarlane, Graeme & Lyn Masters, Graeme & Doreen Millane, June Mitchell, Alan Nicholson, Marion Nicholson, Bill Northausen, Nance Ormsby, Karen & John O'Shea, Ashleigh O'Shea, Matthew O'Shea, Sue Parsons, Narelle Price, Dianne Richardson, Ray & Beve Rowley, Margaret Russell, Charlie & Loris Scales, Major Mark Scully, Sandra & Robin Sharpe, G Smith, Maudie & Robyn Stevens, Joyce Svetila, Pam & Frank Tyrrell, Piet & Lynne Van Hooydonk, Piet Van Hooydonk, Karl & Raelene Wala, Lt David Webster, Barry & Dorothy Weeks, Diana & Michael Wymond, David & Janice Young, Frank & Grace Zabilowicz, Cr Ron Webb & Mrs Maxine Webb, Mr Doug Sharp, Cr Roberto Paino & Mrs Meg Paino, Cr Lauren O'Neill & Paul McCully, Cr Anthony Griffiths, John Gerbes, Melissa Kyne, Gena Kyne, Heather Sarau, Mark Sarau, Adele Marum, Kyran & Cathryn Marum, Nicholas O'Brien, Julie Findlay & James Findlay, Fr Michael & Kerry O'Brien, Angela O'Brien, Paul & Marilyn Moss-Holland, Peter & Toni Szeligiewicz, Nigel & Marlene Thompson, Norm Fearn, Carolyn Foote, Alan & Debbie Wright, John & Elma Wright, Andrew Wright, Chris Hutchieson, Rod and Nola Hausler, Joyce Barry, Murray Edgar, Maureen Bedford, Ray & Isabel Dunstan, Gwen & John Elward, Anthony & Bailey Elward, Brian & Dawn Fox, Val Gleeson, Tina Khan.

Apologies were received from Marion Weir and Keith Clark.

Page 6 has a selection of pictures from the Wangaratta weekend.

This next item is from 2/24th Association member Rod Wilson.

'Shrine' Tobruk Display.

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

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

The Shrine has asked me to assist in the setting up of an exhibition that they are organising featuring the 'Siege of Tobruk'. This exhibition is planned to open in mid May 2010 and run through till early August.

As well as uniforms, equipment and other memorabilia related to the 'Siege' the Shrine will be exhibiting paintings by artist Peter Wegner who has been working on his series of paintings featuring Tobruk veterans.

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

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

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

Or email rwilson@genesis.net.au



Alan Macfarlane & Mayor Cr Ron Webb



Hautrie Crick



RSL President Norm Fearn & Darrell Brumby



Doug Dobson and Bill Northusen



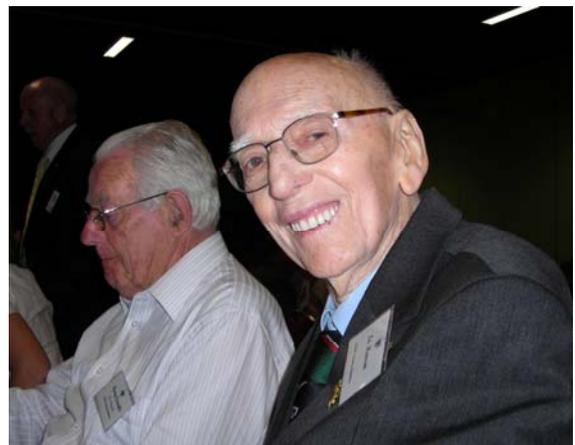
Charlie Scales and Alan Nicholson



Bob Hutchieson and wife Marjorie



Jack Collins



Harry Cornells & Les Hansen

Shrine Service Sunday 18th October 2009

Approximately twenty Association members attended this years Shrine Pilgrimage to remember and honour the fallen of the 2/24th Australian Infantry Battalion. With the service held in the Shrine Sanctuary we were welcomed by our President Alan Macfarlane.

Dr Mark Johnson, History Master at Scotch College and 2/24th Association member, spoke of the significance of October 1942 and why we were gathered here today. His address is printed below.

The service included the singing of the hymn, Abide with Me, the laying of the wreath and the observance of One Minute's Silence.

After the ceremony we all got to have a chat and a cuppa in an ante room of the Shrine. A big thank you to the Shrine staff who were, as usual, very helpful.

We hope you can join us next year. Attendees included : Alan and Faye Macfarlane, Doug Dobson, Mark Johnson, Bob and Dot Clark, Alastair Davison, Pam and Frank Tyrrell, June Mitchell, Keith Anderson, Margaret Russell, Keith Clark, Janice Young, Cameron Blackwood and Narelle Price, Shirley Drayton, Bruce Williams.

Dr Mark Johnson's address.

Sixty-seven years ago today the 2/24th Battalion was in Egypt, near the railway town of El Alamein. It was an exciting time for the men of the battalion, for just the day before the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Weir, had informed his company commanders that a major attack was pending. There had been a duststorm two days earlier, and rain on 17 October, but the main news on 18 October was that there was to be a big training exercise for the whole of the 26th Brigade, of which the 2/24th was part. It began at 8.30 that night. The unit war diary says 'Preparations for exercise, though hurried, had been made in great detail. An actual section of the German front was reproduced on the ground complete in every detail with wire, mines and booby traps. This embodied all known details of the section to be later attacked.'



Alan Macfarlane
Johnson

Doug Dobson

Dr Mark
Johnson

These reproductions, based on patrols and aerial and ground observation later proved to be very accurate.

This was all of course preliminary to the great battle of El Alamein. It was a battle that was a turning point in the war – remember Churchill said that before Alamein we never had a victory, and after Alamein we never had a defeat. That battle was also to see the 2/24th's greatest loss of blood – more men were killed in its 9 days in action at Alamein in October than in the whole of its 6 months in Tobruk the year before. Tobruk had been rough too. The unit had lost more than 80 killed in action or died of other causes there. Moreover it lost 262 men captured there. The May show, that terrible battle where Rommel came within a hair's breadth of achieving a decisive breakthrough, had been an awful time for the battalion. 32 men were killed on 1 May 1941. Many more were wounded, and during the siege some were brought to a regimental aid post beneath a fig tree related to the one we all know in the grounds of the Shrine.

Between the siege of Tobruk and the great battle of El Alamein, the 2/24th Battalion played a great part in another campaign, the July fighting known to many as the Tel el Eisa battles. Now the 2/24th had a special connection to Tel el Eisa, which was a position just 24 metres above sea level but still high enough that from it observers could see everything for kilometres around. On the night of 10 July 1942 the 2/24th was at the forefront of an Australian attack from the so-called Alamein Box. It captured an even bigger hill than Tel el Eisa, called Trig 33. On the way there they came across a group of tents and vehicles. The occupants, Germans, fought back pretty hard, but the 2/24th overcame them. Rommel was very upset when he heard this news, for those Germans were his most valuable intelligence unit, and now he'd lost them. He also lost Trig 33. The next day the 2/24th took the eastern part of Tel el Eisa ridge. They and other Australians had to endure fierce enemy tank attacks over succeeding days. By the end

of the July fighting, the Australians had suffered more than 2200 casualties, nearly 300 of them to the 2/24th. However, that high ground remained in the Australians' hands.

Back then to October 1942. The 2/24th was among the first units to advance, and there's a wonderful painting of them following up the famous 880 gun barrage on 23 October. Over succeeding nights the unit was reduced from more than 600 men to just 54 standing by the end of 31 October. No fewer than 44 died on that day, with more than 110 wounded. The climax to their action involved advancing down the coast road towards defences that included dreaded 88 guns. Sergeant Len Dingwall led his platoon in capturing three machine gun posts, and was then prominent in leading the remnants of three platoons through point blank fire to capture a position based on one of these 88s. That gun is now on display at Puckapunyal. So on Saturday 31 October spare a thought for those 44 men. Their contribution to the preservation of our lifestyle was profound.

Of course the sacrifice didn't end in October 1942. There were still two terribly hard campaigns to fight, against the Japanese. In New Guinea the battalion endured what the unit historian called 'a deadly, soul-destroying campaign', while the one on Tarakan in 1945 was even bloodier. In fact the 2/24th lost more men in the Borneo campaigns than any other Australian battalion – 72 killed. Thus on 1 May, exactly 4 years after the May show in Tobruk, the battalion landed on Tarakan and proceeded to lose men for months thereafter. The first was 26-year-old Corporal Merv Minchin, a Western Australian farm labourer, who died of wounds on the day of the landing. Unknown to Merv, his brother Alec had died on a POW ship the previous September. Merv demonstrates the point that by this time 'Wangaratta's Own' battalion was by no means only a Victorian unit. Just over half the unit's casualties on Tarakan were from other states. During the campaign VE Day came on 7 May, what would have been Merv Minchin's 27th birthday. VE Day was barely noticed in the unit at the time, but the battalion had done a lot to make it happen. And although Tarakan was not a decisive battle like Tobruk or Alamein, the men of the unit were at least as well trained and effective in that campaign as in the earlier ones. The volunteers who comprised the 2/24th Battalion risked everything for their country, for their unit and especially for each other. Their self-sacrifice could never be bettered and should never be forgotten.

Michael Oakley 1943 – 2009

Approximately 400 people attended the very moving celebration of Michael's life at the Frankston Civic Centre. The eulogy was given by Tony Oakley, Michael's brother, with the reading by his niece Susannah. The celebration included special music, stories and memories, giving us a glimpse of the many facets of his life. Michael's Double Bass was centre stage.

Our President, Alan Macfarlane paid a tribute to Michael's work for the Battalion Association by placing a poppy on the coffin. Musical colleagues provided some great musical tributes following the ceremony.

Attendees included ... Alan Nicholson, Doug Dobson, Keith Clark, Jack Collins and Betty, Lynne & Piet Van Hooydonk, Bob & Dot Clark, Lyn Masters, Janice Young, Keith Anderson, Alastair Davison, Neil & Win Holland, Janet Macfarlane, Charlie Scales, Faye & Alan Macfarlane.

The Association will remember Michael as a man who cared for the men of the 2/24th and the many widows of the men of the 2/24th. He was an excellent administrator who had a vision for where the Association was heading. A friendly man who will be missed, not only by his family, but also by all those who came in contact with him.

The following is a poem to Michael written by his friend Charlie Scales.

A hand upon the tiller
Of a small boat out to sea
Guided by a gentle man
Who knew its mystery.

A hand which gathered up the seaweed
To mulch his vegie patch
Or guide some errant student
Find the note to match.

A hand which helped so many
A bulwark come what may
The music man of Edithvale
Whose soul is sailing on the bay.

Most of us live simple lives
Supporters of the band
But blessed is he the gifted one
Who lends a guiding hand.

Letters

From Joan Shaw of Sebastopol VIC. Joan is the widow of Stan Shaw, VX5213 On a recent trip to stay with my oldest Grandson and family in Wodonga, Ashley suggested he take me down to Wangaratta to see the Memorial Wall and Gates.

Well, to say we were thrilled and impressed is an understatement. You have certainly put a lot of hard work and planning to present such a beautiful memorial for our soldiers of the 2/24th. The camera worked overtime on all the aspects of the Memorial and I look forward to sharing them with the wider family.

Ashley and I were really moved and I felt very privileged to be there with Ashley who remarked he was very moved to share this moment with me. He and Stan were very close and it was quite emotional for us.

I have followed the progress in the Flyer and while grateful for the photo copies, nothing prepared me for such a splendid effort.

So many of the names were familiar to me as I had heard Stan speak of them often. Also it was sad to see the names of two men who had made the effort to come to Ballarat for Stan's funeral.

Thank you to Alan Macfarlane and all members of the Wall Committee for all the thought and planning that went into the Memorial Wall.

Thank you for your letter Joan. The many people who brought the Wall to fruition and the many people who keep the Wall and its surrounds so special would be pleased to read about your feelings and thoughts on visiting the cemetery. Our best wishes to you and your family.

From John Archibald of Balnarring VIC.

Hope this finds you well, please find enclosed my subs. I have had some health problems this past two years but I am OK now. My wife Nola and I have sold our home in Balnarring and we are moving to a retirement village in Hastings.

My late Uncle, Cpl. George Mackenzie, was taken prisoner at Tobruk. My family came to Australia in 1950, my uncle and Aunt Peg sponsored us to come to Australia from Scotland.

I enjoy reading the Furphy Flyer in Mufti.

We both wish all the 2/24th members all the best wishes.

Lovely to hear from you John. I hope both you and Nola are in good health and looking forward to a wonderful new year.

From Arthur Fitzpatrick of Heyfield

Please find a cheque for my subs. My kindest regards to Alan and Co. I am keeping well as I slowly approach 94 years.

I would like to add an incident that happened in Tobruk.

It was decided that corporals would send a report on ammunition that had been expended to the Sergeant of the platoon. I received a report from Corporal Michael, nickname Sailor, because of his style of marching.

The report was written on a piece of 'Iti' paper, listing all ammo used, not that we had much, and I don't know if the red box grenades were included.

Sailor signed off by saying, 'I see the moon is full tonight, hoping you are the same, Sailor.'

Thanks Arthur, always nice to receive a note from you and good to hear you are keeping well. Kind regards to you.

From Kathy Hilgert of Mt Macedon

My name is Kathy Hilgert, my father Harry Beard, VX41763, served in the 2/24th and passed away some years ago. I am writing to let you know that his wife (my mother), Olive Beard, passed away in December 2008. Mum kept in touch with a number of people from the 2/24th especially Dobbie Dobson (I am afraid I don't know his first name, he was known to us as Dobbie) and Alan Macfarlane.

I do not have contact information for them or others and noticed that in the Furphy Flyer there is a Vale section. Mum was an avid reader of the Flyer and I would like to let people know of her passing.

Thank you for advising us of the passing of your Mother Kathy. Our best wishes to you.

From Helene Riedl Hon.Secretary/Treasurer/Editor - The Tannoy On behalf of the President & Members of the 2/8th Australian Field Regiment Association -

We salute the valiant 2nd 24th Australian Infantry Battalion -- AIF 1940 - 1946 -- upon the Dedication of the Commemorative Plaque at AWM, Canberra on 26.11.2009

Losses were so many - Never to be forgotten by brothers in arms. You Held Fast.

Subscriptions and Donations

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

Subscriptions :

Russell Edwards, Geoff Edwards, Thomas Lillingston, Kathy Hilgert, Judy Pain, Maurie Parry, Arthur Fitzpatrick; Janet Macfarlane.

Donations :

Doug Dobson, Bob Egglestone, Thomas Lillingston, Bob Hutchieson, Maryanne Crossthwaite, Alan Macfarlane, Jean Shaw, Nancy Ongley

Sick Parade

Les Hansen, Keith Clark, plus I know there are a lot of 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%.

This item appeared in the Sun newspaper on the 7th September.

Rats make their first pilgrimage.

The 30 members of the Melbourne based Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipe and Drum have made their first visit to the Tobruk battlefields, in Lybia, where they played at a commemoration service at the war cemetery. Tripoli Consul-General, Tom Yeats, and special representative of the Australian Government, Tim Fisher, accompanied the band on its one day visit to Tobruk on Saturday.

“Members of the Band, aged from 15 to over 60, played with precision in the extremely hot conditions,” he said.

Hayden Middleton, 15, from Craigieburn, told the gathering he had “come to honour his grandfather and all the veterans”.

Hayden is the grandson of Nancy Ormsby. Nancy has lots of information about the trip and it is hoped that a DVD will be made of the Tobruk tour.

Quilt

At the Shrine Memorial Service, Shirley Drayton of Ocean Grove attended and brought along the Memory Quilt she has been making. The quilt, in memory of her dad, George ‘Sport’ Stewart, is being made with 2/24th ties and bits of personal memorabilia. When finished it will be a great family heirloom. I hope we can get a photo for the “Furphy” or the website when it is completed.

RMB

With the changes to Australia Post’s deliveries, could Members who have an RMB mailing address please write and advise us your new mailing address. Thank you.

An elderly gentleman had an appointment to see the urologist who shared offices with other doctors. He approached the desk and gave the large, angry-looking female receptionist his name. In a very loud voice, she said,

"YES, I HAVE YOUR NAME HERE-, YOU WANT TO SEE THE DOCTOR ABOUT IMPOTENCE, RIGHT?"

All the patients in the waiting room snapped their heads around to look at the very embarrassed man. He recovered quickly, and in an equally loud voice replied,

"NO, I'VE COME TO ENQUIRE ABOUT A SEX CHANGE OPERATION, BUT I DON'T WANT THE SAME DOCTOR THAT DID YOURS".

24th Cadet Unit

At the Wangaratta Reunion we welcomed three officers of the 24 Battalion AAC (Australian Army Cadets) from New South Wales. Fascinated by the history of the 2/24th AIF Battalion they have adopted the colour patch of the 1st AIF 24th Battalion (with a superimposed 24) and are keen to be associated with our Association – and this has been granted by the Committee. Major Mark Scully (Staff Officer), Major Steve Cooper (Army Reserve) and Lieutenant David Webster (Training Officer) made the trip down to the Reunion and joined us at the Saturday Memorial Service, The Reunion Dinner and the Sunday Service at the Cenotaph. Majors Scully and Cooper also came to the Commemorative Service at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, bringing four cadet officers who assisted with the Battalion banner.

The 24 Battalion AAC has over 400 cadets with units in Canberra, Cootamundra, Goulburn, Leeton, Moss Vale, Norfolk Island, Ulladulla and Wagga Wagga. Major Scully is the Battalion Commander and Major Cooper is the senior cadet officer. Lieutenant Webster is a training officer.

Cadet Units are now regionally based (rather than being in schools) and attendees at Wangaratta Memorial Services will be familiar with the Honour Guard provided by the 33 Cadet Unit based at 'Beersheba Barracks', Wangaratta. We hope to maintain a fruitful relationship with both of these Army Cadet units.



A sign of the times.

The 9th Division Association has advised that the lunch, following their Annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine, will no longer take place. Their President, Alan Macfarlane, said that dwindling numbers had made the luncheon untenable. He also advised that the 9th Division Shrine Service will still go on, with the help of the Shrine staff and the cadets from Scotch College.

The Wangaratta Story

At our Annual Reunion Dinner, the Mayor of the Rural City of Wangaratta made a special presentation to our President. A book titled, The Wangaratta Story, written by local identity, Bill O'Callahan, was presented to the Association.

The book was a labour of love for Wangaratta's social history resulting in a comprehensive book spanning pre-settlement to the present day. Bill spent 15 months researching and writing the book in a mammoth effort to finish in time for the city's Golden Jubilee celebrations.

Copies are available newsagencies in Wangaratta and Yarrunga for \$30.00.

Reminder

Just a reminder that next year is the 70th Anniversary of the formation of the 2/24th Battalion. We are hoping to mark the year with special emphasis on our Annual events. More information in next years 'Furphy Flyer'.

Dedication of Commemorative Plaque, Canberra. 26 November 2009

'Very special', 'Wonderful', 'Very moving', 'I wouldn't have missed this for quids'; these were some of the reactions from the veterans and families who attended the Dedication Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial.

In the Western Courtyard of the AWM, a Plaque Dedication Ceremony was held to recognize the sacrifice and service of the members of the 2/24th Australian Infantry Battalion.

It was a warm day but all who made the trip to Canberra were made to feel important and honoured guests at this exceptional War Memorial.

At the Service we were welcomed by Ms Nola Anderson, Assistant Director Australian War Memorial. Our President, Alan Macfarlane, gave the Commemorative address (printed below), followed by the unveiling of the Plaque by Alan and our Vice President, Alan Nicholson. A prayer of dedication was read by Chaplain Darren Jaensch with the Ode, read by our Vice President, Doug Dobson.

Norm Gray, son of the late Doug Gray, played the Last Post and Rouse on the Battalion's silver bugle. How lucky we are to have such a talented musician who puts his heart and soul into the music, leaving the audience moved by the beauty of his playing. Thank you Norm.

Councillor Ron Webb, Mayor of Rural City of Wangaratta, concluded the service with a Thanks and Farewell.

I have included some photos of the Ceremony in the "Flyer" but for more information and pictures I recommend you visit our website.

The following is the Commemorative address by our President, Major Alan Macfarlane OAM EM (Ret'd).

Ms Nola Anderson, Assistant Director Australian War Memorial, Chaplain Darren Jaensch, Councillor Ron

Webb, Mayor of Rural City of Wangaratta, all members of the Association, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The 2/24th Battalion was one of the nine infantry battalions of Australia's most famous division of the Second World War, the 9th Division. It was involved in all the division's campaigns, from 1941 to 1945.

The 2/24th was formed in July 1940, one of the most perilous times in the history of Western Civilization. Hitler had just conquered France and so Britain was in great danger of invasion. The men who joined the 2/24th at that time were conscious of that danger.

The unit was formed at Wangaratta, in Victoria, and ever since has been known as 'Wangaratta's Own'. After training in Australia and Palestine, the unit went into action at Tobruk, in Libya, in April 1941. The 2/24th bore the brunt of Rommel's most determined attempt to capture that fortress, in the so-called 'May Show'. Nearly half of the unit became casualties in that fight, but they helped to ensure that the enemy did not make a decisive breakthrough. The battalion continued to man the defences, including the dreaded Salient, until relieved in October 1941.

After recovering and garrisoning Syria, the battalion accompanied the rest of the division back to the Western Desert in July 1942. It played a key part in the fighting of that month, capturing Rommel's best intelligence unit, as well as vital ground on Trig 33 and Tel el Eisa. It also held off numerous German attempts to recapture that ground.

In the great British 8th Army offensive at El Alamein in October-November 1942, the 2/24th again took a leading role with Right of the Line. It fought at places which entered Australian military folklore, including the Fig Garden, the Blockhouse, Thompson's Post and Ring Contour 25, or Baillieu's Bluff as it was known. The 31st of October was the bloodiest day in the battalion's history, with 44 killed and more than 100 wounded. The unit set off that day very under strength, with barely 200 men, but finished the day with just 54 still standing.

Having contributed to the tide-turning victory at Alamein, the 2/24th returned with the 9th Division to Australia early in 1943. In September it was thrown in against the Japanese at Lae, New Guinea, in the

biggest amphibious landing since Gallipoli. The unit historian called what followed 'a deadly, soul-destroying campaign', where the terrain and tropical disease were nearly as troublesome as the Japanese. Still the unit contributed to the conquest of the strategically vital Huon Peninsula.

After another year of waiting and training in Queensland, the unit entered its final campaign in May 1945, four years to the day after its first great battle in Tobruk. The new campaign, on the island of Tarakan, was a hard-fought one in which the Australians soundly defeated the well-entrenched defenders. Nevertheless, there was a price to pay - the battalion had more than 60 deaths, which was more than any other 9th Division unit in 1945. Indeed the 2/24th had paid an extraordinary price for its big part in the Allied victory. With more than 360 dead, 330 of them in action, it suffered more deaths in action than any other Australian battalion in World War II.

It was also one of the most decorated battalions, with 12 Military Crosses, 10 DCMs and 24 Military Medals. More than 3400 men passed through the battalion and they maintained a vibrant and mutually helpful association after the war. Although the unit began in Victoria, it contained men from all states. For example just over half of the 71 men of the battalion killed in 1945 were non-Victorians.

Much of the credit for the postwar strength of the unit association rests with the editors of the unit's newsletter, Furphy Flyer, the first issue of which came out in Tobruk. Its original editor, Joe Moloney, was killed at Alamein. Imagine how happy he would have been to see this gathering, the strength of which shows that memories of the 2/24th Battalion will never die.

So, here at our nation's capital in this magnificent memorial we acknowledge, with this plaque, the contribution and the sacrifice of the men of the 2/24th. We will remember them. I hold fast!

Attendees included

Michelle Alabaster, Keith and Maggie Anderson, Kevin Baker, Tom Lillingstone, Wayne, Graeme & Daryl Beaglehole, Maureen Benson, Mick Benson, Anne Bonner, Roger & Kerry Canty, Jack Caple, Dawn Catherall, Bob Clark, John Clark & family, Keith Clark, Dawn Cleary, Joan Dare, Bob Fenwick, Alastair Davison, Doug Dobson, Bob & Pam Egglestone, Mrs Lil Elliott, Wilma & Dave Evans, Andrew & Libby Finlay, Norm Gray, the Gray and Brown families, Neil + Win Holland, Stephany Kennedy, Rob & Peter Koiker, Faye & Alan Macfarlane, Tom McLucas & family, Linda McRedmond, Lyn Masters, June Mitchell, Alan & Marion Nicholson, Roland & Sue Nicholson, Margaret Pickering, John Downey, Joy Pitts, Edward Pyke, Bernie Creenaune, Pat Rankin, Allan Rooke, Rick & Kerrie Gardiner, Tom Ross, Liz and Andy Ryan, Fred & Ramona Seymour, Maudie Stevens, Lyn Van Hooydonk, Leo Walton, Lyndsay Warden, Janice Young, Robyn Upton, Major Mark Scully, Major Steve Cooper.



