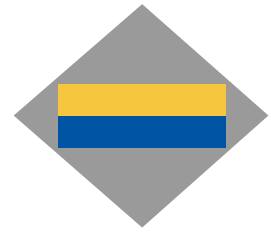


COMRADESHIP

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President's Report



This will be my last President's report as I will be handing over the reins to your Vice President, Craig Iskov, at the September elections. Of course, if a new nomination for President does come in, we will have a vote, somehow I doubt that will happen.

Craig is one of the sons of the Battalion Veteran, Bob Iskov, who sadly passed away only recently. He is well qualified for the position, but he will also need your support as he takes this Association into uncharted territory. I am sure he will bring some fresh thinking to the table to keep this wonderful Association of ours strong and relevant for the future.

I want to thank you all for the involvement over the last few years, and that's what it was all about: involvement; in some cases rolling up the sleeves, and getting things done, as our Veteran Fathers would have done before us. I want to especially acknowledge the following for their support and wise council to me: Ian Hopley from Adelaide, Trevor Pryor from Brisbane, Rob Eden, Jill Bear, Marg Briggs, Craig Iskov and family, Gavon Armstrong, Ross Clover, Darryl Thomson and Jan Erskine from Victoria. Together we opened up the Association to a wider world, with the trips to PNG and Borneo. The laying of Plaques in Queensland, Sydney, Canberra and Fern Tree Gully acknowledged and honoured the Battalion. The closer association with our schools has been a delight; long may this continue.

Finally to our hard working Secretaries: Ross Wilkinson and Chris Ingram, and Treasurer Karen Brkic, a big thanks. Your diligence kept us on an even keel, and new Secretary, John Smith is carrying on this tradition.

Ladies and Gentleman I could not have done it without you, or without my rock, of course, Elaine Ralston.

Best wishes for the future,

Michael Ralston
President.

2014 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS - FINAL REMINDER

(\$25 Single; \$40 Couple; \$50 Family)

These fell due on **30 April 2014** and whilst many have already been received, we wish to remind those who are still outstanding to please send them in. As we cannot include a remittance form with this issue, please contact John Smith directly by phone (03 0782 8132 or 0427 522 999) or email (jlsmith1946@gmail.com). If you wish to pay directly by internet or bank transfer John Smith, will provide banking details.

If you joined the Association between October and December 2013 your membership subscription will not be due until April 2015.

The very latest we can receive the 2014 subscription is the end of October 2014. If your subscription is not received by this date you are in danger of falling off the Membership list, which means you will no longer receive Comradeship. And we know you don't want that Please note:

- *Payment for veteran membership is optional.*
- *Widows of 2/14 veterans are not required to pay the membership fee.*
- *And please keep us updated with changes of address, phone numbers or email addresses.*

MEMORIAL PAVERS



The 2/14 Battalion Association has recently undertaken a paver project at the Kokoda memorial in Cascade Gardens, Broadbeach Queensland. The project offered an opportunity for families or friends to place a paver naming a serviceman for service in Papua New Guinea. It was undertaken in conjunction with the 39th and 2/16th Battalion Associations and complements the beautiful Kokoda and Korean war memorials in the gardens.

The pathway now contains the colours of all three Battalions along with an Honour Roll of pavers for those killed in the PNG conflict, as well as those who have passed away since the war and some veterans who are still living.

There will be another opportunity later this year for interested people to purchase a commemorative paver. Details will be on the website in September and in a later edition of Comradeship.



The 2/14 Battalion section at the New Guinea Campaigns Memorial at Cascade Gardens

LAST SERVICE AT ST GEORGE'S

Due to the sale of the church, the 14th Battalions' memorial service at St George's Uniting Church, Chapel St, East St Kilda, on Sunday, 24th August will be the last one to be held at the church, breaking a tradition that has lasted nearly 100 years.

The service was inaugurated to commemorate the death of Rev Andrew Gillison, Chaplain of the 14th Battalion and minister at St George's, who was killed at Gallipoli while helping a wounded soldier, on 22 August, 1915. Gillison volunteered as a Chaplain, when many of the young men who attended his church, enlisted in the 14th Battalion in late 1914. The love and respect in which he was held by the men is evidenced by the memorial the Battalion erected to him in the church, and the annual service held in his memory which they instigated. The presentation of the Communion chalice Gillison used at Gallipoli, by one of his direct descendents, is one of the rituals incorporated in the event.



Rev Andrew Gillison

As numbers from the First World War dwindled, the 14th Battalion Association invited the men of the 2/14th and 14/32nd Battalions to be involved in the service, and a memorial plaque to members who were killed in action was

placed in the church by 2/14 Battalion. Over the years, the service has been further enlarged to commemorate those who fought in later conflicts and has developed a focus on healing. During the service, members of the congregation are invited to light candles in memory of their loved ones who have been affected by war.

Guest speaker on this occasion will be Rev John Bottomley, former minister at St George's and now deputy director of Creative Ministries Network. He will speak on "Transforming Tradition".

As this will be the last memorial service held at St George's, members of the Battalion Association are asked to make every effort to be in attendance.

Lunch, hosted by 2/10 Light Battery, 5/6 The Royal Victoria Regiment and St George's congregation is available for \$10 at the Drill Hall next door to the church, following the service. To assist with catering, please **RSVP** your lunch booking before 15 August by phoning 0423673273 or email champolo@yahoo.com

2/14 Battalion Association Inc Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the 2/14 Battalion Association Incorporated will be held on Sunday 28th September 2014 at 10 am at the Shrine of Remembrance, St Kilda Road, Melbourne.

Business to be conducted:

1. To receive and adopt the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 22nd September 2013.
2. To receive the President's and Secretary's Reports.
3. To receive and adopt the Annual Financial Report.
4. To elect Office Bearers for 2014/2015
5. To consider nominations for Life Membership.

Nominations are called for the following vacancies:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Committee (25 positions)

Nominations are to be received by the Secretary at 38 Lakeside Drive, Sandhurst 3977 no later than Friday 19th September 2014. The Nomination Form is included with this edition of Comradeship. In the event that more nominations are received than there are vacancies, an election will be held.

An ordinary Committee Meeting will immediately follow the Annual General Meeting. Members and visitors are welcome.

This is your chance to become actively involved in the management of one of Australia's largest Associations of World War Two veterans, families and friends. Please get involved.

Committee meetings are scheduled quarterly on the first Sunday of the month.

2014 QUEENSLAND REUNION



The seven veterans from various units who attended the Queensland Reunion

A smaller than usual group of 47 gathered for the 33rd Annual Queensland reunion on a typical winter's day in Brisbane, where the temperature didn't get above 26 degrees all day.

It was wonderful to share the day with 7 veterans (pictured) and the various families and supporters. It was also gratifying to have interstate visitors: Patricia Dillon, Ian Hopley, Craig and Kay Iskov and President Michael.

We remembered some past regulars in Stan Dillon and Norm Stringer (2/14), Bill Bellairs (39th) and Alan Hooper (PIB) while accepting apologies from Gloria Bisset (South Africa) and Peter Dornan (Russia). It was disappointing to receive apologies from Dudley Warhurst (2/14) and George Palmer (39th), who both had late notice medical appointments.

While there was a great deal of renewing old friendships, making new ones and generally networking, the guest speaker, Rupert McCall proved a hit. A man who has read his poetry at the Dawn Service at ANZAC Cove on the 90th anniversary and at Ground Zero on the 10th anniversary of 9/11, said he was honoured to add the 2/14th Queensland reunion to his list of events.

Rupert expressed his pleasure to be in the company of those who had done so much for us all before entralling us with a rendition

of Q150, a poem in which he mentions 150 of Queensland's icons in rapid time. He then raised the odd tear with his poem, The Green and Gold Malaria in which he describes the effect that ANZAC Day has on him – and many others!

After a delightful lunch and Hopper's outline of next year's proposed excursion to Balikpapan, we settled down to sharing the numerous raffle prizes generously donated by those attendees and many who couldn't join us.



Michael Ralston and Matt Power share some time together

Again, the day evoked a wonderful family feeling and the final word from the majority was, "See you next year."

Many thanks to all who attended as you all contributed greatly!

Tevor Pryor

HELP NEEDED

The 2/14 Battalion Association is in need of assistance in two specific areas.

1. For some time the Committee has been investigating having items such as polo shirts, caps, etc printed with the Battalion logo, available for purchase. However, we are in need of someone to handle the sourcing and sale of this merchandise, along with the ties and name badges that we sell currently.

2. The Editor of Comradeship will be overseas from the beginning of April until the end of July, 2015 so an assistant is needed to support the production of the May and August newsletters. Volunteering for this role now will give an opportunity for involvement in the coming December and March newsletters, to see how it's done.

If you can assist with either of these roles, please contact Craig Iskov or Jill Bear. See page 8 for contact details.

EVENT CALENDAR

2014

Bruce Kingsbury Memorial Service

Friday, 22nd August 2014
at 9.30 am
Reservoir High School
855 Plenty Rd, Reservoir

Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital (Austin Health)

Friday 22nd August 2014
at 11 am. Enter via Gate 9
300 Waterdale Road,
Heidelberg West

Healing The Wounds of War

Sunday, 24th August 2014
at 10.30 am
St George's Uniting Church,
4 Chapel Street, East St Kilda

Kokoda Campaign Memorial Service

Sunday, 31st August 2014
at 11 am
Osborne House.
North Geelong

AGM and Committee Meeting

Sunday, 28th September 2014
at **10 am**
The Shrine of Remembrance,
Melbourne

Annual Pilgrimage

Sunday, 28th September 2014
at **12 noon**
The Sanctuary,
The Shrine of Remembrance,
Melbourne

NOTE: Change of time

2/16th Battalion Reunion Lunch

Sunday 5th October 2014
at 11.30 am
Old Hepburn Springs Hotel,
Hepburn – Newstead Road,
Hepburn Springs
RSVP Trevor Ingram 0419 333 347
Email: tingram@globalskm.com

Committee Meeting

Sunday, 1st December 2014
at 11.30 am
East Malvern RSL

OBITUARIES

VX15239 Lieutenant Robert Francis ISKOV



Bob Iskov at the 2011 ANZAC Day March

Army records in Canberra indicate that Bob was born in Kelly country, Glenrowan, on 1st May 1920 and was living and working there as a farm labourer at the outbreak of war. Like many of his comrades-to-be, he had initially enlisted for part-time military service in the 59th Militia Battalion that drew on the population north of Melbourne and was known as the Hume Regiment.

At the outbreak of War the Militia could not serve outside Australia and so, again like many Militia members, Bob transferred to the AIF on 13 May 1940 at Seymour. Posted to the Recruit Receiving Depot at Caulfield Racecourse, Bob took his Oath of Enlistment there on 16 May 1940. He was posted to the 2/14 Infantry Battalion and marched in to the Battalion on 20 May 1940 at Puckapunyal Army Camp where he was allocated to its Mortar Platoon.

The Platoon was armed with 3 Inch (76mm) mortars and provided a form of mobile close artillery support for an infantry battalion. After 5 months training at Puckapunyal it sailed from Sydney for the Middle East in October of 1940. After landing in Palestine, the Battalion first saw active service in the defensive positions at Mersa Matruh in North Africa.

With the Battalion's move to Syria to take part in the Campaign against the French Foreign Legion who were part of the Vichy French Forces supporting the German Army, the Mortar Platoon provided active and accurate fire support in every battle there. It was during this campaign that Bob was first hospitalised with malaria, a problem that was to beset him numerous times in his subsequent service in the Army. While still overseas in Syria, Bob's leadership abilities were recognised with his promotion to Corporal on 1 January 1942.

By this stage Japan had entered the war and Australia was under threat from the rapidly advancing Japanese Army. John Curtin, Australia's Prime Minister, pushed for the return of the 7th Division from the Middle East to meet this threat. After a short rest and rebuilding in Australia the Battalion sailed for Port Moresby as the Japanese Army had already landed on the north coast of the main island of New Guinea with its objective being Port Moresby.

However, the jungle terrain of the Kokoda Track limited the use of the Battalion's heavy equipment and the Bren Carriers, Mortars and Machine Gun Platoons were all detached to form part of the 7th Division Carrier Group. The carriers were armed with a mortar and a machine gun and formed a mobile fighting force around Port Moresby up to the foothills of the Owen Stanley Mountains at the start of the Kokoda Track.

The mobility of the Japanese enabled them to carry mortars and light mountain artillery over the Track to give them greater firepower. With the withdrawal of the

Australians after the battle at Isurava, In early September 1942 it was decided to send a small mortar detachment from the Carrier Group, including Corporal Iskov, to collect mortars and ammunition flown in to the advanced supply point at Myola and set up a defensive fire base near Efogi.

As the Japanese pressed on the Australian positions at Brigade Hill, the mortars finally commenced firing. Unfortunately, due to the close canopy overhead from the surrounding trees, one of the mortar bombs hit a tree overhead when fired and prematurely detonated. The resulting shrapnel caused casualties amongst the mortar men and then the Japanese mountain guns commenced firing on the fire base.

Cut off by the advance, it was decided to destroy the mortars and withdraw to the jungle, however, not before the observation officer had the satisfaction of seeing a mortar bomb land on the head of a Japanese officer in Efogi village. Carrying their own wounded and cut off from the Australian positions, the party took fourteen days to work their way around the Japanese and regain the Australian lines.

Severely depleted by battle casualties and illness, the Battalion was withdrawn to recoup and be reinforced. For his leadership and actions under fire, on 30 September Bob was promoted to Sergeant after the group's return to the Australian lines.

With the Japanese at the end of their tether and many reinforcements arriving from Australia, the Battalion was withdrawn to rest and rebuild. However, this was not for long and with the Battalion at only half strength including a group of Company strength detached to an independent infantry force, the Mortar Platoon was detached from the Carrier Group and rejoined the Battalion when it was ordered to participate in the attack on Gona on the North Coast.

Whilst occasionally operating in its primary role, for the most part, all men in the Battalion acted in infantry roles. Bob's actions at Gona were particularly noticeable on fighting patrols along the coast. On one occasion it was found that Bob had killed 3 senior Japanese officers including a lieutenant-Colonel and a Major, with several short bursts from his Tommy Gun involving a total of seven bullets. Important maps and other intelligence was recovered from the bodies.

On one occasion Bob was required to mount a reconnaissance patrol to scout Japanese positions and one of the mortar platoon members volunteered to accompany the patrol. Bob politely refused his request but when pushed to say why, Bob replied, "It's because you talk too much!" (Those who knew Bob will appreciate the irony.)

After the Battalion's return to Australia and before it re-embarked for the Markham Ramu Campaign, Bob was selected to attend the Officer's Training School and marched out of the 2/14th on 30 April 1943. On his promotion to Lieutenant on 5 September, he marched out to the Reinforcement Depot, as, by that time, it was policy that Officers promoted from the ranks not return to their original unit. In technical terms, Bob was actually discharged from the Army as an ordinary soldier and commissioned back into the Army on the same day as an officer.

He was then posted to the Jungle Training Centre at Canungra in Queensland where he remained as a training officer until 4 May 1944 when he marched in to the 2/23 Battalion in 26 Brigade 9th Division. The battalion was based in Cairns along with other units of the 7th and 9th Divisions undergoing training in Sea-borne landings preparatory to participation in General MacArthur's invasion of the Philippines. At the last minute this participation was cancelled to make that invasion a purely American affair.

Australia's General Blamey then planned for these troops to engage in a series of invasions and actions on Japanese held islands in New Guinea and the Netherlands East Indies (now Indonesia) with a view that Australia remain a relevant partner at the forthcoming Peace Table. Australia's part in this Campaign has often been referred to as "The Unnecessary War" and there was anger in Australia that this caused unnecessary loss of life.

The 2/23 Battalion sailed for Morotai in the Netherlands East Indies and then on to take part in the invasion of the important oil-producing Tarakan Island on 1 May 1945, with Lieutenant Bob Iskov as a Platoon Commander. The island was heavily fortified and defended with mines and booby-traps. There was no escape from the island for the Japanese so they fought to the last man. There were more Australian lives lost on Tarakan alone than for the 6th Division's entire losses during the North African Campaign against the Italians and Germans.

After Peace was declared, Bob remained on Tarakan with the 2/23 Battalion on Peace-keeping operations until returning to Morotai 25 October 1945 and eventual return to Australia on 7 November 1945. He was finally discharged from his obligation to the Army on 5 December 1945 and placed on the Reserve of Officers and returned to Glenrowan. Like many of his fellow soldiers, Bob was afflicted by the curse of the tropics, malaria, and spent much time in field and base hospitals including the weeks prior to his discharge from the Army in 1945.

He was an active member of the 2/14 Battalion Association where he served on the committee for many years. He would always travel to Melbourne for committee meetings and the Annual Reunion and ANZAC March. He provided much information for publication in the Battalion Histories and his last involvement was when three generations of the Iskov family attended a meeting in Melbourne to plan the concert about the 2/14 Battalion on the Kokoda Track performed with the Hawthorn City Band in July 2013.

The 2/14 Battalion Association Inc recognised the contribution of Robert Francis Iskov in War and his post-War contribution to the welfare of his fellow veteran comrades and their families and the preservation of the Battalion history with its ultimate award, Life Membership.

A brave soldier and a great man.

A large contingent of 2/14 kinfolk travelled to Wangaratta to say a final farewell to Bob in June.

VX15509 Private Ernest John 'Jack' GRAVES

Army records in Canberra show that Jack Graves was born in Kyabram on 10 April 1919 and was living in Merbein when he enlisted in the Army on 17 May 1940 and showed his occupation as Motor Driver. His enlistment form also indicates that he had 12 month's prior service in the Militia with 7th Battalion also known as the Northwest Murray Borderers. Based in Mildura, the battalion had companies at several centres including Merbein. The 7th Battalion was in camp at Mt Martha when Jack decided to enlist in the AIF as Militia units could not serve outside Australia.

He moved to the General Details Depot at Caulfield Racecourse from where he was posted to 2/14 Australian Infantry Battalion on 20 May 1940. It was not long after the Battalion moved to Puckapunyal that Jack was struck down with Mumps, not a very nice thing for an adult male! However, he was soon back on duty and being a driver, was posted to the Transport Platoon. And, of course, with that dry humour that Australians are noted for, he was quickly nicknamed "Digger", not because of his military occupation but as a parody of his surname.

The Platoon members were made to realise early on that they were soldiers first and then drivers or mechanics

by having to undertake the same drill and long marches that the rest of the battalion members enjoyed. When transferring to Sydney for overseas embarkation, beer smuggled on to the train by members of the Platoon was quickly confiscated and destroyed.

It was on the Aquitania on route to the Middle East that Jack fell foul of military discipline and failed to obey a general order. He was fined 2/6 (25 cents), not much these days but back then it represented half a day's pay.

The Platoon members were not the smartest of soldiers and lacked discipline but had a reputation of getting the job done! They often tested the patience of the Platoon Commander with their antics such as using the vehicle mirrors and hand throttles to enable them to drive and steer the trucks while lying down, thus giving the appearance that nobody was driving the vehicles.

Whilst at Mersah Matruh in the Western Desert, members of the Platoon located some beer on railway wagons destined for British troops. Needless to say they quickly found a way to transfer this to their own trucks. On another occasion, they set the steering and hand throttles of two trucks to move around in a circle, one following the other, without anyone on board, much to the annoyance of the Transport Officer.

However, in Syria, in was back to business and the Transport Platoon was busy ferrying troops and supplies to the front line, often on the steep and winding mountain roads. On many occasions they came under heavy and accurate artillery fire or strafing by enemy aircraft.

The Battalion finally returned to Australia under the rumoured threat of enemy ships and submarines in the Indian Ocean. After a short rest the Battalion moved to Queensland and preparation for a move to New Guinea and action against the Japanese. Jungle warfare limited the use of Transport some other services at Battalion level and so, on arrival in Port Moresby, These platoons were transferred to direct 7th Division Command servicing all troops around Port Moresby up to the foothills of the Owen Stanley Mountains. It was during this period that his proficiency was reviewed and he was upgraded to Driver Mechanic Grade III.

After the Kokoda Campaign concluded a reorganisation of battalions took place and Transport Platoons were reduced in size. On its return to Australia Jack marched out of 2/14 Battalion on 30 March 1943 and marched in to 131 General Transport Company. Over the period to the end of the war Jack also served with 66 Transport Platoon and 7 Field Company Royal Australian Engineers and saw service at Lae, Emirau Island and Torikina on Bougainville. He returned to Australia on 9 September 1945 and was discharged from the Army on 28 September 1945 with his discharge papers indicating that he would return to O'Bryan Street Merbein to live.

Gavon Armstrong delivered the eulogy on behalf of the Battalion at Jack's funeral in Kyabram in June.

QX28887 Private Kenneth Roy MCINNES

Army records show that Ken McInnes was born in Brisbane on 19 December 1921 and was living there when he enlisted in the Army at the City Recruiting Centre on 6 January 1942.

He was initially posted to 11 Training Battalion then 29 Training Battalion and finally 8 Pioneer Company where he was promoted to Lance Corporal. After reverting to the rank of Private, Ken marched in to 18 Australian Infantry Training Battalion from where he was posted to the Jungle Training Centre at Canungra in January 1943 and again promoted to Lance Corporal.

Eventually on 11 June 1943, Ken marched in to the 2/14

Battalion where he was posted to 18 Platoon in D Company and appointed a Section Commander. He saw service with the Battalion in the Markham-Ramu Campaign where D Company was the lead unit for the Battalion's move into the Atzera Mountains to cut off the Japanese retreat to the North Coast.

The Company next saw action at Wampun as it advanced from Kaiapit into the Ramu Valley and then Kumbarum. Finally, in the Finnestere Mountains at Shaggy Ridge it supported the A Company attack on Palliers Hill. The remainder of its time in that Campaign was spent on active patrolling but Ken was evacuated to Australia seriously ill with scrub typhus from which there was a high mortality rate and malaria.

He spent several months in hospital before rejoining the Battalion after its return to Australia in 1944. During this time he was guilty of a number of misdemeanours including an unauthorised visit to his new wife.

The Battalion moved to North Queensland and undertook amphibious training in preparation for a seaborne invasion of the Philippines in support of US forces. However, the Australian involvement in this attack was cancelled and the Battalion moved to Morotai in the Netherlands East Indies (now Indonesia) for the seaborne landing at Balikpapan on 1 July 1945.

D Company supported the other Companies in the advance to and capture of Manggar Airfield but from there, D Company took the lead to secure the surrounding area including the feature that became known as Waite's Knoll after L/Corporal HA Waites who was killed in action during the attack. Private HV Hill was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal whilst using a Bren light machinegun and an Owen sub-machinegun to repulse four night-time counter-attacks by the Japanese against the newly won position.

After the Japanese surrender and the War ended, the Battalion moved to the Celebes for post-war peace-keeping operations until it was selected for movement back to Australia and disbandment. As a later arrival to the Battalion, Ken was transferred to the 2/10 Battalion at Balikpapan and marched out of 2/14 on 22 November 1945.

He returned to Australia on 10 January 1946 and was discharged from the Army on 18 January 1946 in Brisbane.

Ken died on 5 July, 2012, but only recently have we been informed of his passing.

V205034/VX83474 Lance-Corporal Norman Ensi MATTILA

Norm Mattila was a soldier in a South Australian unit, the 2/27 Battalion, a sister Battalion to the 2/14 and 2/16 Battalions in 21 Brigade. As he lived in Melbourne he joined the 2/14 Battalion Association and made many friends as he participated in our activities. It is appropriate that we remember Norm as "one of us".

Norm was born in Bendigo on 4 February 1922 the son of a Swedish sailor who had "jumped ship" in Williamstown. Norm enlisted in the Militia on 5 November 1941 when he was living in St Kilda. Those attending his funeral were told that when his unit was in camp on the Mornington Peninsula he would absent himself to catch the train from Frankston to go dancing in Melbourne with his sweetheart.

By this stage of the War, Army authorities were encouraging Militia soldiers to transfer to the AIF and so Norm transferred on 12 August 1942 and went to Port Moresby in the Australian Territory of Papua, with 2/27 Battalion.

2/27 Battalion was held back in Port Moresby as the infantry reserve against the two-pronged attack against the Territory Capital from along the Kokoda Track and at

Milne Bay. Finally, with the Japanese defeated at Milne Bay, Brigadier Arnold Potts, the Commanding Officer of 21 Brigade, was able to secure the Battalion's release to reinforce the by now sadly depleted Brigade at Brigade Hill.

Potts pushed the fresh 2/27th forward to be the lead Battalion against the advancing Japanese force. Unfortunately, the Japanese were able to bypass the Battalion and put pressure on the other battalions and Brigade Headquarters. Carrying its wounded, 2/27 took to the bush for nearly three weeks until it was able to regain the safety of Allied lines when it found an American position to the east of Port Moresby.

By this stage the Japanese advance had been stopped at Iorabaiwa Ridge and their retreat to the North Coast began. 21 Brigade were withdrawn to rest, recuperate and be reinforced. Each of the three battalions were then required to provide a company strength (120 men) unit to the newly formed Charforce which was to operate as an independent force to chase and cut off the retreating Japanese.

The whole Brigade was then sent to reinforce the attacking troops at Gona before they had properly recovered and been reinforced. Often fighting in chest-high swamps against hidden Japanese positions, Gona has often been described as the worst battlefield of any campaign anywhere in World War Two. 2/27 Battalion finished the Gona battle with only 70 men - 1/10 of its original strength!

Norm saw further action with the Battalion in the Markham-Ramu Campaign culminating with the battle at Shaggy Ridge. Finally he took part in the landing at Balikpapan on Borneo Island and the subsequent peace-keeping operations on the Celebes Islands (Sulawesi) in the Netherlands East Indies. Norm returned to Australia and was discharged from the Army on 20 December 1945. He was home for Christmas.

His recollections of his time in the Army included burying his dead comrades when the Japanese started shelling the area and a shell exploded in the grave he had just excavated, narrowly missing him, and having to rebury the bodies uncovered by the blast.

On another occasion he was sent out by himself to observe Japanese positions after having seen another of his comrades shot and killed whilst acting as a forward scout. Despite this, Norm did his duty.

In 2011 Norm attended a Kokoda function where he was presented with a charcoal sketch of the Kokoda Track and it brought back sharp memories of the steepness of the terrain.

We are indebted to Norm's son Andrew and Peter McMahon, the son of a comrade of Norm's, for these recollection's of him related at his funeral.



Norm Mattila unveils the 2/27 Battalion Plaque at Ferntree Gully

BALIKPAPAN TOUR 2015

Whilst it is early days, the 2/14 Battalion Association is putting together preliminary plans for a commemorative tour of Balikpapan to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Allied landings with a commemorative service to be held in Balikpapan between 29 June 2015 and 5 June 2015.

As with past 2/14 Battalion Association Balikpapan tours, in order to keep costs to an absolute minimum, instead of using a tour company, we will put together an itinerary and then it will be up to participating persons to arrange their own airfares and book accommodation. This will allow participants to shop around for the cheapest airfares available and also make their own arrangements for stopovers en route or on return. Please note: This is not a travel agent 'organised' tour as such.

The Association will attempt to negotiate a discounted rate at a Balikpapan hotel to keep everyone together and in conjunction with our Balikpapan expatriate supporters, arrange the appropriate local tours and services. A costing for the tours including the buses, National Park admission prices and extras will be advised in due course but will be kept at cost. Meals, visas, travel insurance will be individual expenses however where a group meal is arranged, a costing will be provided. It is normal practice that we also provide a gratuity to our bus drivers and translators. Time permitting, we may visit the Balikpapan Primary School and make a donation. Tours/events are subject to prevailing conditions, weather and availability and are subject to change.

As a rough estimate, a 3 or 4 star hotel room with breakfast in Balikpapan is in the vicinity of A\$80/100 per room per night. The bus charter etc, depending on numbers is approximately A\$20/25 per person per day. National Park tours are approximately A\$60 per person.

Further initial information is available from:

Ian Hopley (SA) 0433 019 441
Trevor Pryor (Qld) 0407 500 588

Depending on the health of our remaining veterans and any possible corporate or other financial support we can obtain, it is hoped that one or more of our veterans may accompany us.



Japanese gun emplacement on Mt Batuchampar, Balikpapan

Optional Papua New Guinea Stopover Extension.

Many members and supporters have expressed interest in the past in visiting Papua New Guinea without actually walking the Kokoda Track.

In conjunction with our supporters at Our Spirit Tours, we are proposing a 3-day/2-night stopover in Port Moresby for those persons who would like to visit the Bomana War Cemetery, Port Moresby city tour and see Ower's Corner, the commencement of the Kokoda Track which allows a great view of the Owen Stanley Ranges and Imita Ridge. This extension will be conducted by Our Spirit Tours and Air Nuigini.

Air Nuigini fly to Singapore 4 times per week so participants availing themselves of the PNG stopover can continue on to Balikpapan via Singapore and meet with the group to commence the Balikpapan arrangements. The estimated cost of the stopover including airfares from Brisbane to Port Moresby then to Singapore and returning to Brisbane is \$2200. Participants would still be required to arrange an airfare to and from Balikpapan and Brisbane if necessary.

Michael Ralston (Vic) 0417 550 861
John Smith (Vic) 0427 522 999

Travel to Balikpapan can be arranged through a number of airlines and budget airline Air Asia has flights to Balikpapan. Some suggested budget Singapore flights can be made through Air Asia or Scoot Airlines. Flights via Bali, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore or Jakarta can also be made through airlines including Garuda, Malaysian Airlines, Singapore Airlines, Silk Airlines, Lion or Citilink. Some routes may require a stopover en route.



Bomana War Cemetery, Port Moresby

Expressions of interest

2015 will be a busy year for military commemoration especially with the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings in April and the 70th anniversary of the end of World War 2.

Initial indications are that the 2/14th Balikpapan 2015 tour will be very popular and it is essential that we start planning as soon as possible. Whilst airline bookings for the period are probably not yet open, it is suggested that interested participants commence their own planning and lock in the dates. Numbers will be strictly limited and if necessary, a selection ballot will be held. If interested, please RETURN the EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM inserted with this edition of COMRADESHIP.

The past three tours to Balikpapan have been extremely successful and we urge all members, associate members and our supporters and their families to support us. Our Australian expatriate friends in Balikpapan will be assisting.

PROPOSED BALIKPAPAN TOUR ITINERARY – 29 June to 5 July 2015

No.	Day/Date	Place	Event
1.	Mon 29 June	Aust-Balikpapan	Arrive Balikpapan by own arrangements
2.	Tue 30 June	Balikpapan	Tour Balikpapan incl. Manggar Beach & Waite's Knoll. Balikpapan International School visit
3.	Wed 01 July	Balikpapan	Yellow Beach landing site & Pasar Ridge Commemoration Service. PM: Manggar Besar River cruise*
4.	Thu 02 July	Balikpapan	Kampung Batu (Petrosea) Japanese guns PM: Somber River village & Proboscis monkey cruise
5.	Fri 03 July	Balikpapan	Bos Samboja National Park – orangutans & sun bears PM: at leisure
6.	Sat 04 July	Balikpapan	At leisure. PM: Farewell dinner
7.	Sun 05 July	Balikpapan-Aust	Depart Balikpapan by own arrangements

*All tours/services etc subject to prevailing conditions/weather/availability and are subject to change. The association and organisers can take no responsibility for cancellations/changes

70 YEARS AGO - OPERATION RIMAU

Some of you may have watched Australia's Secret Heroes about the Z Special unit, on SBS recently. Two 2/14 Battalion originals, Lester Royle and Albert Sargent, later trained with Z Special, and Ian Hopley has provided some insight into the activities of one of them.

VX 15290 Lieut Albert Leslie Sargent

On a recent trip to Singapore, I went to the Kranji War Cemetery where I located the grave of Lieut Albert Leslie Sargent, VX 15290. Regrettably, on our last visit to Kranji, we had been unaware that a 2/14 Battalion member was interred there.

Lieut Albert (Bert) Sargent joined the 2/14 Battalion in 1940 as a private and saw action with the 2/14 Battalion in the Middle East and Papua New Guinea including the Kokoda Track. He is mentioned on no less than 10 occasions in Bill Russell's book "The History of the Second Fourteenth Battalion".

Lieut Sargent was a very talented mortar man and his skills in this area are mentioned in the official history. He is also credited with inventing a device known as the "Sargent Adaptor" for producing an air burst at any required height with 3 inch mortar bombs as well as for use in booby traps with hand grenades. He was commissioned in the field in PNG in 1942.

During the Kokoda campaign, the official history records that: "Sgt Sargent with two others including Private Hall (wounded) were overrun but eluded the Japanese. He fell in with some 2/16th men including Sgt Murphy M.M. and Bar. The last named when they reached safety six days later spoke in the highest terms of Sgt. Sargent's initiative and leadership, qualities unfortunately lost to the Battalion when Lt. Sargent volunteered for guerilla forces with whom he later lost his life" p.169

According to Matt Power, Bert Sargent was a professional soldier who "just wanted to be able to do more" hence his decision to transfer to the "Z" Force commandos in October, 1943.



Informal group portrait of some members of 2/14 Infantry Battalion taken during training manoeuvres. VX15290 Sergeant (Sgt) Albert Lesley Sargent is sitting in the front row holding a letter (AWM P00838.001)

In 1944, Lieut Sargent volunteered to be part of Operation Rimau.

The Operation Rimau memorial at the Kranji War Cemetery reads:

"In September 1944, when Singapore was under Japanese occupation, 23 British and Australian members of Services Reconnaissance Department / Z Special Unit travelled from Australia by submarine to the outskirts of Singapore Harbour. Their mission was to attack and destroy enemy shipping from small submersible boats using magnetic limpet mines. The party included 6 former members of the highly successful raid launched against Japanese shipping Operation Jaywick. They were intercepted by Japanese forces and in the actions that followed, 13 were either killed in action or died of wounds. The remaining 10 were captured and subsequently executed on 7 July 1945".

Regrettably, Lieut Sargent was one of those executed, barely a month before the end of the war.



A number of letters from Lieut Sargent to his family including letters informing Lieut Sargent's family of his death, newspaper cuttings and information on Operation Rimau in which Lieut Sargent died including a portrait can be viewed

at: <http://cas.awm.gov.au/item/PR86/251>

Ian Hopley

Editor's Note: In a surprising occurrence of serendipity, the day before I received this report from Ian I was looking at a 1984 edition of Comradeship provided by Dudley Warhurst. In it there is an article about the exploits of Lester Royle, the other former 2/14 man who joined Z Special. Lester was a particular friend of 'Teddy' Bear. They had joined the Victorian Scottish Regiment together prior to the outbreak of war, and Lester's mum was a surrogate mother to Lindsay for many years.

For some years, now, I've been trying to track down Lester's movements after he left 2/14, but the Z Special guys, being covert operators, were notoriously secretive, and the on-line unit records reflect this. I had a period of 7 days, from 7 to 14 July, 1945, when Lester was on overseas service in Australian Mandated Territory, that I couldn't match to any action. In that issue of Comradeship, there is a reference to an operation where Lester was part of a group who went into action to capture some Japanese who could confirm the fate of the Rimau group. Given the date of Albert's execution, I now think that this was probably the missing action, mounted to confirm a report the unit had just heard. At the time, Lester was unaware that his former 2/14 comrade, Bert Sargent, was one of the Rimau men who had just been executed.

2/14 MEMBER AT KRANJI WAR CEMETERY, SINGAPORE.

During research into the battalion Roll of Honour, another former 2/14 Battalion member was identified as being buried at the Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore.

Pte Phillip G. Scott VX19648 joined the battalion on 5 May, 1940 and trained with the battalion until 19 Oct, 1940 when he transferred to the newly formed 2/29 Battalion.

He accompanied the 2/29 Battalion to northern Malaya and was involved in the defence and subsequent fierce fighting withdrawal through the Malay Peninsula. Ultimately, only 130 members of the Battalion reached Singapore.

With the fall of Singapore, Scott became a POW. Members of the 2/29 were sent to Burma and

Thailand to work on the infamous railway, while others were sent to Java, Sumatra, Borneo, and Japan. A total of 582 members of the 2/29 Battalion paid the supreme sacrifice both in battle and in captivity.

Despite experiencing the rigors of being a POW under the Japanese for over 3 years, Pte Scott survived and was liberated in Parak Baroc (Sumatra), now Indonesia. His name is recorded in the Herald newspaper of 15 September 1945, as having been liberated in Sumatra, from where he was evacuated to Singapore for medical treatment.

Regrettably, he died of illness on 20 September, 1945, aged 37, before he could return home.

Compiled by **Ian Hopley**



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SMALL WORLD

As you know, Robinvale was a soldier settlement area so there were a few 2/14 blokes who ended up there apart from those like Norm Stringer and Jack Vandenberg who came from thereabouts in the first place. Jack's son, John Vandenberg was on the same training course as me when we went to PNG as Cadet Patrol Officers. For the 4 months we spent in Sydney at the training college, I had no idea who he was other than another bloke from Victoria. Later I spent a night with him and Pam at Goroke when we cried into our beer about our fathers.

John wrote a short story for Comradeship about his father and Bill Russell in the 2/14, but also post-war when Bill was a Schools Inspector for the Education Department. Bill was at the Robinvale school one day and John was called out of the class. Naturally he thought he was in strife but instead, Bill introduced himself and told John what a fine soldier his father was.



Jack Vandenberg had a particular role in the unit

Dad told me about the terrible circumstances in which Jack died. Jack had this old freezer unit on his property for the rabbits, sheep, etc, that he killed. In those days the freezers did not have an internal latch system and Jack accidentally locked himself in. A number of similar incidents occurred prompting a law to provide for internal latches for all walk-in freezer units. It is also the reason why we have to remove the doors from refrigerators when we put them out on the nature-strip for collection.

My boss at a PNG station called Kabwum in the mountains between Lae and Madang was John Absalom whose father, Arthur, was 2/14 Battalion Padre in the later stages of the war. Dad had left the Battalion before Arthur was Padre. After I got married, Louise and I were on a trip to Wewak and got talking with the European manager of the hotel we were staying in and he said that his father was also in 2/14 Battalion. Unfortunately I've long forgotten his name.

In PNG, I was stationed in or worked at places where 2/14 had been operating such as Nadzab and Kaiapit in the Markham Ramu Valleys. I was also qualified to use explosives and did a lot of work with the Defence Force destroying unexploded bombs.

Not long after Louise and I came back to Australia, in the early eighties, we went for a holiday to Echuca and took in the Tisdale Winery. I got talking to the older bloke behind the bar giving us the samplers and it was Lindsay Ferguson who knew Dad quite well.

In 2000, Dad talked to me about joining the Association and helping out because the Secretary (John Stirling) needed help with a view to retiring. Dad said that because I was a qualified Municipal Clerk, I should know all about taking minutes and meeting procedures and would be ideal.

I was working at Monash Council at Glen Waverley then and Municipal Clerks had long been abolished. John Stirling's retirement village was just around the corner. I met John at his unit, and took on the role as Assistant Secretary for twelve months to enable John to complete 40 years as Secretary. I was round at his place every couple of days until he died because he knew everything about everybody in the Association. I got to meet the lady living in the unit next door to John, and it was Lindsay Ferguson's widow.

I'm pleased that we, as the children and grandchildren of these magnificent men, are able to do these things for them at their final parades. I know from the funerals that I have attended to deliver the eulogies, many of the families have come up to me afterwards to say that they never knew what their husbands, fathers, grandfathers did in the war because they never talked about it. It also upsets me that many of them die without our ability to give them the send-off they deserve.

One of the problems that Jill and I have with preparing the eulogies or obituaries is the lack of information. We rely on our two books by Russell and McAllister and other printed material such as the AWM Nominal Rolls. Also, we search the National Archives and, if we're lucky, the serviceman's file has been digitised and we can get the whole story. Unfortunately, whilst all WW1 records have been digitised, this is not the case with WW2. For a small cost, it is possible to get the files digitised, by going to www.naa.gov.au. Please consider doing so.

Ross Wilkinson

WEBSITE

Have you checked the website lately?

The Iskov family have been bringing the Battalion website up-to-date.

As well as a recent report on a significant ceremony involving the family of one of 2/14 Battalion's indigenous servicemen, Harry Saunders, you'll find other information of relevance to the Association.

There's a complete list of the Honour Roll available under the History tab. If you have a copy of Men of the 2/14th, you'll find a Name index has been included under the Memorabilia tab.

**Go to www.2nd14battalion.org.au and bookmark it.
Come back regularly to see what's happening.**