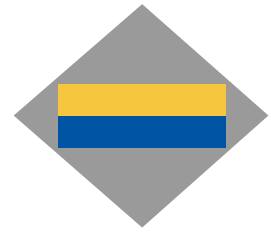


COMRADESHIP

www.2nd14battalion.org.au

Print Post Approved PP3394340023



VOL XXXII No.3
September 2012

President's Report



As I write this report in our study in Eltham, with the rain belting down outside, and the temperature a dismal 9 degrees, it is hard to comprehend that just a couple of weeks ago, I was in Queensland, enjoying 23 degrees, sunshine, and the hospitality of our 2/14th Battalion connections in Brisbane and Surfers Paradise. What a great reunion it was up there, combining with the Papuan Infantry Battalion (PIB), New Guinea Infantry Battalion HQ (NGIB HQ), Pacific Islands Regiment (PIR) Association, and with 12 Veterans in attendance. Trevor Pryor and his team do a magnificent job in Queensland. Trevor is currently organising Veterans from that State to come down to Melbourne to our 70th anniversary function, to be held at The Shrine of Remembrance on the 9th of September. Please support this worthy function, and let our Secretary,

Chris Ingram, know you are coming. Present indications are that over 100 people will be in attendance, including the Premier of Victoria.

By the time you read this issue of Comradeship, the following events we are involved in, should have occurred in Victoria, and all my marvellous committee members can have a "breather" (for a while at least).

1. Melbourne Racing Club, 'Back to Caulfield' PB Lawrence Stakes Day, in honour of the 70th anniversary of the Kokoda Campaign.
2. St Georges' Uniting Church annual memorial service in Chapel Street, East St Kilda.
3. Hawthorn Football Clubs annual Kokoda Match against the Gold Coast Suns.
4. Kingsbury service with Kingsbury Primary at Reservoir High School and at the Repat Hospital, where our Battalion History book reprint will be presented by the author's son, Bill Russell.
5. Opening of the upgrade of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walk, at Ferntree Gully National Park.

So there you have it, a busy time ahead, please support your Association. Become a member, tell us what you are good at, and we will give you a job, and join in our functions, as we look towards 2013 and beyond.

**Till the next time,
Michael Ralston, President.**

70th Anniversary of the Kokoda Track Campaign

2/14 Battalion Association Service, Sunday 9 Sept 2012

Don't forget our special service to be held in the Forecourt of the Shrine of Remembrance on Sunday, 9 September at 2pm. Guest speaker will be Patrick Lindsay and live music played by the Bands of the 2/10 Field Regiment RAA and 4/19 Prince of Wales Light Horse, including the new composition, Kingsbury VC by Sean Nihill. Followed by afternoon tea in the visitors' centre,

If you haven't let Chris Ingram know you are coming, please contact her on 03 9561 5790 or chris.ingram@margni.com

REMINDER

2012 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS - \$25

These fell due on 30 April 2012 and whilst many have already been received, we wish to remind those who are still outstanding to please send in your renewal. The remittance form for this purpose is included with this newsletter.

If you wish to pay directly by internet or bank transfer please email chris.ingram@margni.com for banking details. Make use of the tear off slip at the bottom of the remittance form to keep a record of your payment.

If you joined the Association between October and December 2011 your membership subscription will not be due until April 2013.

The very latest we can receive the 2012 subscription is the end of October 2012. If your subscription is not received by this date you are in danger of falling off the list, which means you will no longer receive Comradeship, and we know you don't want this to happen.

Please note:

- Payment for veteran membership is optional.
- Widows of 2/14 veterans are not required to pay the membership fee.
- Do keep us informed about Changes of Address

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN REPORT

IAN HOPLEY

Greetings from the land of the Crow eaters.

I have recently caught up with our South Australia 2/14 Battalion veteran brothers, Don (SX 33575) and Keith (SX 24140) Lambert.

Both Don and Keith are well and send their best wishes to our members.

Don recently celebrated his 65th wedding anniversary to wife Mary. Congratulations to both Don and Mary on such a momentous occasion.

Don has provided me with their original army photos that we can now put into a "then" and "now" context.



Don Lambert
"then"

Don Lambert
today



Keith Lambert
"then"

Keith Lambert
today

MELBOURNE EVENTS

SHRINE EXHIBITION OPENING

The Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance currently has a display about the Australians in the Papuan Campaigns of 1942-43 entitled Kokoda, Milne Bay, and the Beachheads. The Exhibition was opened on 22 June, with Col Blume, Bob Iskov and Max Caldwell in attendance.



Col Blume and George Cops (39th Bn) share a moment at the Exhibition opening.

BACK TO CAULFIELD

Saturday 18 August saw three 2/14 veterans join members of the other 21st Brigade battalions at the annual Lone Pine Ceremony at Caulfield Racecourse. This year the service commemorated the 70th anniversary of the 1942 Papuan campaign.

Following the ceremony, the veterans were treated to a most delicious lunch and an afternoon of racing in the comfortable surrounds of the Melbourne Racing Club committee room. Special thanks go to Ian MacDonald of the Melbourne Racing Club for the invitation and Almila Erturk for her work in organizing the day.



Max Caldwell, Bob Iskov, Betty Caldwell, Noel and Jill Bear, Chris Ingram and Cam Thompson ready for lunch

ST GEORGE'S MEMORIAL SERVICE

This service continues a tradition that began in 1916, with the memorial service for Andrew Gillison, chaplain to the 14th Battalion, First AIF. The Gillison family continue to be involved in the service, which now adopts the theme of "Healing the Wounds of War". This year the 70th Anniversary of the Papuan campaigns was

commemorated, in particular the sacrifice of Bruce Kingsbury VC.

Two of our veterans spoke: Cam Thompson recalled the harsh conditions the troops had to endure in Papua, while Bob Iskov quoted the Duke of Wellington's faith in the private soldier, highlighting the courage and fortitude of which the ordinary soldier is capable. Bob recounted a telling example of mateship when, having been lost in the jungle for a number of days after the battle at Brigade Hill, his party of 16 cut 4 minties into 4 pieces and shared them around.

From the 39th Bn, Rev Peter Holloway paid tribute to their chaplain, Father Norman 'Nobby' Earl, who insisted that the troops see the local population as human beings like themselves, a respect that was repaid by loyal service from the 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels'.

The performance by the 2nd/10th Field Regiment Royal Australian Artillery and 4/19 Prince of Wales Light Horse Band of Kingsbury VC, a musical tribute written by Sean Nihill, was a highlight of the morning.

Our thanks for this service go to the ministers at St George's, Angela Tampiyappa and John Bottomley. As always, the beautiful floral decorations were provided by Elvala Ayton, in memory of her late husband, Phil Ayton.



Bob Iskov speaking at the St George's Memorial Service

2012 HAWKS KOKODA MATCH

Following the church service, Bob Iskov headed off to the MCG, where he joined Gordon McLean and Lionel Smith for the annual Hawthorn Football Club Kokoda match, this year against the Gold Coast Suns. The veterans accompanied the players onto the field, where the team shook their hands before running through the banner.



Hawks getting ready for the run through

31st Queensland Reunion

Again the weather was magnificent as 82 of us gathered beside the Brisbane River for the 31st Qld reunion which this year was held jointly with the PIB/PIR Association to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Kokoda campaign.

We were blessed with the presence of Matt Power, Arthur Toombs, Dudley Warhurst, George Priestly, Don Thomas, and Jack Thompson from the 2/14th; George Palmer, Bill Bellairs, Jim Stillman and John Akhurst from the 39th and Alan Hooper and Frank Wust from the PIB. Unfortunately Clarrie Meredith of the 53rd called in on sick parade and Dick Payten, president of 7th Div Assn, was forced to miss the day.

Special guests included former Governor General, Major General Michael Jeffery and Mrs Jeffery, Consul General for PNG, Paul Nerau and the RSL's Qld ANZAC of the Year, Aidan Grimes.

Michael Jeffery gave a brief but emphatic history of the campaign while Aidan spoke passionately about the importance of telling the story of the Campaign and fixing it firmly in Australia's history. President Michael Ralston reported on the activities of the association which impressed many of the first timers. Dick Payten has often remarked on the strength of our association.

There was great interest shown in the presentation by Ian Hopley of the recent pilgrimage to Balikpapan that included veteran tour guide Matt Power. Ian emphasised the significance of this less well known campaign, the excitement in locating Waites' Knoll and the enthusiasm of a group of ex-pat Aussies who are keeping the traditions alive in Borneo.

It was a wonderful day where the vets could meet up with one another and with the many families and supporters. Again, the friendships among the younger generations are encouraging for the future of the association/s.



Standing (R-L) A Toombs, G Priestly, G Palmer, M Power, D Warhurst, Maj.-Gen. M Jeffery.

Seated: (R-L) F Wust, A Hooper, J Akhurst, J Stillman, B Bellairs, J Thompson, D Thomas.



Paparazzi capturing the vets



Bill James with Gloria and Jim Bisset



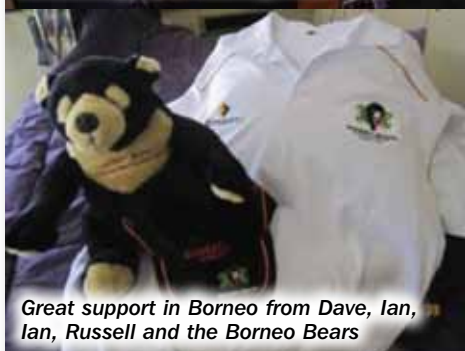
Ross Darrigan, Michael Ralston, Ian Hopley, Aidan Grimes and Greg Ivey (PIB)



Dudley Warhurst, Matt Power and Terry Brennan



Jim Bisset, Aidan Grimes, Paul Nerau



Great support in Borneo from Dave, Ian, Russell and the Borneo Bears

THE SECOND FOURTEENTH BATTALION:

A History of an Australian Infantry Battalion in the Second World War

By W.B. Russell

If you haven't already purchased your copy or copies of the reprinted battalion history, they are still available. The cost of \$60 includes post and packaging to anywhere in Australia and they are available to all members and friends of the Association.

You can order on the remittance form enclosed with this copy of Comradeship or you can contact Chris Ingram by telephone, (03) 9561 5790 or email chris.ingram@margni.com to order.

BACK COPIES OF COMRADESHIP

I would like to thank Ethel Ferguson, Dudley Warhurst and Les Cook for sending me their old collections of Comradeship. These donations have helped greatly with the collection I have been able to put together for the State Library of Victoria.

These will be held in the Serials Section and will be there for future researchers into the lives of those who served during the WW2 and, I'm sure, will be a valuable resource.

There still seem to be a few missing issues and I wonder if members would mind looking through their old papers to see if they can find any of the following issues:

- Volume I - any issues from 1982
- Volume III - No. 1 - probably issued in March 1984
- Volume VIII - any issues from 1989

And I can't help but wonder how news got around the Association prior to 1982. So if anyone can help me with that advice I'd love to hear from you.

Chris Ingram, Phone 03 9561 5790 or email chris.ingram@margni.com

OBITUARIES

VX16372/333816 Corporal KRAMME John Henry 'Jack'

Jack was born in Melbourne on 29 July 1918 and lived on the family farm at Mossiface. He enlisted in the CMF on 14 February 1939 at Bruthen in Gippsland in the 52nd Battalion initially and then 37th Battalion. With the outbreak of war he transferred to the AIF on 23 May 1940 and marched into the 2/14 Battalion on 27 May 1940. Jack was posted to 13 Platoon in C Company where he saw active service in Egypt, Palestine and Syria.

Promoted to Corporal and transferred to 15 Platoon as a section commander, Jack was badly wounded on 7 July 1941 during the successful C Company attack on a Vichy French outpost at Daraya. This action was part of the Battalion attack on Damour in the Syrian Campaign.

Jack was evacuated to hospital and left the Battalion on 10 July 1941. Upon recovery he was posted 21 Infantry Training Battalion and finally discharged from the Army on 19 July 1944 with the rank of Sergeant.

He returned to farming at Mossiface and married Eileen Beryl McGirr in 1945. For a time in the early 1970's, Jack joined several other former battalion members, including Con Vapp and Lindsay Bear, working for 'Sandy' Thomson at J F Thomson Pty Ltd, a steel fabrication plant in

West Footscray.

Jack was active in civic affairs with the Shire of Tambo. He was also an active participant in this Association making the train trip from Bairnsdale every year for the reunion until recent years when ill health restricted his movements. Jack was President in 1980.

He is survived by his two children, nine grand children and twenty great grandchildren.

VX16951 Corporal ALLEN Harry Frederick



Harry was born in Brunswick on 20 October 1920 but stated 1919 when he enlisted in the Army on 24 May 1940. This was to avoid the need for parental or Court permission being under the required age. He was following his brother Lawrence (Laurie) who had enlisted on 16 May 1940 and who marched into the 2/14 Battalion on 20 May 1940. Harry marched into the battalion on 27 May and joined Lawrence in 11 Platoon in B Company.

The brothers saw action in the Syrian Campaign where Harry was wounded in the attack on Jezzine and both were taken prisoner by the French on 24 June 1941. Harry was looked

after by French nuns where he later reported that he was fed red wine with his meals.

The brothers were returned to the battalion on 21 July 1941 after the Armistice was declared and the Campaign ceased.

They next saw action on the Kokoda Track where B Company was on the exposed left flank at Isurava in the area known as the canefield. Harry was severely wounded during a fierce attack that killed the Platoon Commander, Lieutenant G Moore on 28 August 1942. Harry was evacuated and did not return to the battalion.

Unfortunately, Laurie was killed at Brigade Hill on 8 September 1942. Whilst recuperating at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, Harry's weight dropped to just 50 kilograms.

Little is known of Harry's later war service but at the time of his discharge on 17 September 1945, he was posted to Army Records in Melbourne, with the rank of Sergeant.

Harry trained as a carpenter after the war and retired to Swan Hill where he celebrated his 69th wedding anniversary with his Lucy who he had married before he left for the Middle East in June, 1940.

Harry died on 11 July 2012. He is survived by his two daughters, five grand children and twelve great grand children.

BALIKPAPAN 2013

Following the success of our past two trips, the Balikpapan ANZAC committee which is made up of Aussie expatriates working in Indonesia have issued a very cordial invitation for 2/14 members, kinfolk and supporters to join them for a very special ANZAC Day 2013 and associated festivities.

The ANZAC Day service will be conducted at the Pasar Ridge memorial and sponsored by Chevron Oil and a number of local businesses. Entry to Pasar Ridge is normally strictly limited and special permission will be granted. We have a special invitation to attend the traditional ANZAC Day 'Hangi' and the ANZAC Day AFL cup followed by the annual ANZAC "Sportsman's Night" which includes surprise celebrities from Australia.

In order to keep our costs low, we will not be engaging a tour company but meeting in Balikpapan on Sunday 21 April. Participants are free to make their own travel arrangements and can include stopovers in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur or wherever they may wish. A number of low cost carriers offer very good deals to Balikpapan from most Australian capital cities.

We will nominate a hotel where we will base the event and bookings can be made via a travel agent or on-line. At least one previous 2/14 Balikpapan participant will be on hand to coordinate the week and assist with tours etc. The only additional costs will be a share of the bus cost, any admissions payable and meals/drinks/visa/travel insurance and miscellaneous

land travel i.e. taxis/boat. The local expatriates have assured us of a great time of Balikpapan fellowship and will be sponsoring one or two of our 2/14th Battalion veterans to attend.

Numbers will be strictly limited but we would encourage as many members to consider joining us for this unique event in 2013.



Tank Memorial



Manggar Bridge

To register your interest and/or for further enquiries, please contact:

John Smith:
0427 522 999
smithy@mmnet.com.au

Ian Hopley:
0433 019 441
hoppers@net2000.com.au

APRIL 2013 Tentative itinerary

Monday 22
- Arrive Balikpapan

Tuesday 23
- Tour Yellow Beach, Manggar and Waite's
- Knoll areas

Wednesday 24
- Kampung Batu (Petrosea) and/or Manggar River cruise.
- School visits and/or shopping

Thursday 25
- Balikpapan ANZAC Day services

Friday 26
- (Optional) Bos Samboja Orangutans and Sun Bears.
- Balikpapan. PM: Traditional Hangi with local expats

Saturday 27
- Balikpapan ANZAC Cup (local AFL team).
PM: Sportsman's
- Night with Australian celebrities

70 YEAR AGO - KOKODA TRAIL CAMPAIGN

Background

First shots between the Japanese and Australian and Papuan forces in the Kokoda Trail campaign were exchanged on 24 July 1942.

A month later, the 39th Battalion of the Australian militia, had taken up position at Isurava on the track over the Owen Stanley Mountains that runs between Kokoda and Port Moresby. After taking Kokoda on 8 August, the Japanese were consolidating their position, trying to establish the size of the force ranged against them, and somewhat distracted from 7 August by the landings by US marines on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands.

The 39th had been at Isurava for two weeks patrolling and training under their new commander, Lieut Col Ralph Honner. They had already been in the area since mid July, initially sent to defend the airfield at Kokoda. As militia men, they were intended to be used on Australian soil, for home defence. Their role was meant to be garrison duties at Port Moresby, but they were now in the process of learning soldiering on the job. However, 6 weeks at the end of a very long supply line was beginning to tell, and the 39th was in 'poor shape'.

On 16 August, as Ralph Honner took over the 39th, the 21st Brigade: comprised of 2/27 held in reserve, 2/16 following, and 2/14 leading the way, under Brigadier Arnold Potts, began the journey from Ower's Corner, 30 km out of Moresby, over the Owen Stanleys, to reinforce the situation. They were physically at the peak of fitness, experienced in battle and eager to get among the Japanese and sort them out.

There was, however, a third protagonist in this fight. The conditions in which it took place.

The Track

The Track has been famously described by Kingsley Norris, senior medical of the 7 Division thus: "Imagine an area of approximately one hundred miles long. Crumple and fold this into a series of ridges, each rising higher and higher until seven thousand feet is reached, then declining in ridges to three thousand feet. Cover this thickly with jungle, short trees and tall trees, tangled with great, entwining savage vines. Through an oppression of this density, cut a little native track, two or three feet wide, up the ridges, over the spurs, round gorges and down across swiftly-flowing, happy mountain streams. Where the track clammers up the mountain sides, cut steps - big steps, little steps, steep steps - or clear the soil from the tree roots."...

"About midday, and through the night, pour water over the forest, so that the steps become broken, and a continual yellow stream flows downwards, and the few level areas become pools and puddles of putrid black mud. In the high ridges above Myola, drip this water day and night over the track through a foetid forest grotesque with moss and glowing phosphorescent fungi. Such is the...route for ten days to be covered from Ower's Corner to Kokoda."

By the time the 2/14 commander, Lt Col Arthur Key reached Myola he knew he had a problem of immense proportions. At that time there were about 1100 fighting men heading up the track,



"A little native track"

who would have to be kept supplied with food and ammunition, but with a 6 day trek to get to Myola, and still 2 days short of Isurava. Key held the 2/14 at Myola for a few days while he tried to get something sorted. Air drops into Myola were a solution, but initially, much was lost, until successful techniques were developed. Getting the wounded out was going to prove even more challenging.

Battle of Isurava

On 26 August, the four day battle at Isurava began, the 39th holding, while the 2/14 arrived, company by company and took up position. From the first, the battalion was fighting on territory not of their own choosing, with the constant threat of encirclement. The 2/16 were deployed across the Eora Creek valley at Abuari to stop any Japanese flanking movements there. The fighting intensified over the course of the four days, until, on 29th the attacks were so fierce that there was a strong chance of C Company being overrun. It was at this point that Bruce Kingsbury made his valiant charge, firing the Bren gun from his hip through terrific machine-gun fire and clearing a path through the enemy, only to be cut down by a sniper's bullet when his patrol paused to regroup. For this he was awarded the Victoria Cross.



Isurava

But his was not the only gallant action on that day. Charlie McCallum, covering his platoon's withdrawal further up the hill, was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, Lt 'Mocca' Treacy and Lt George Pearce were awarded the Military Cross and Cpl Lindsay 'Teddy' Bear, Albert 'Snowy' Nielson and Harold Wakefield, the Military Medal. Many years later, Alan Avery, himself an MM from the Syrian Campaign, put the action into perspective: Everyone who was up there should have got a medal that day.

On 30th August, realising they were outgunned and outnumbered, the decision to withdraw was taken, as Brigade HQ at Alola had also come under fire. Unfortunately, in the process, 172 men of the 2/14 were cut off. Many rejoined the battalion over the following days, but many remained lost

for weeks, and some never returned, including the commanding officer, Lt Col Arthur Key.

Fighting Withdrawal

Between 30 Aug and 20 Sept, the battalion fought a series of intense rearguard actions designed to slow the Japanese, and allow the evacuation of the wounded. The latter could not have been achieved so successfully without the vital contribution of the Papua New Guinean stretcher bearers, the 'fuzzy wuzzy angels'.

By 6 Sept the 2/14 and 2/16, now numbering about 400, out of the 1000 who had begun the advance, had fallen back to just south of Efofi, (about half way between Kokoda and Moresby) where they were joined by 2/27, who had taken up position on Mission Ridge and Brigade Hill. (A total of about 900 men.) It was here on 8 Sept, that a large Japanese force outflanked the Australian positions, including Brigade HQ, and Brigadier Potts called for an attack to relieve the situation, to which the 2/14 responded. By the end of the day, the 2/27 had been cut off, but the remnants of 2/14 and 2/16 were able to make their way back to Menari, and the Japanese advance had once more been delayed.



Ioribaiwa looking towards Imita Ridge

On 17 Sept, the Japanese reached Ioribaiwa Ridge, just 60 km from Port Moresby, where, for the first time, Australian artillery, stationed at Ower's Corner, had the Japanese within range, to the cheers of the remaining 2/14 troops. "Mix that with your rice" was one enthusiastic cry. The Japanese who had optimistically set off in July with 10 days rations, were now, nearly two months later, literally at the end of the road, defeated by the same problems of supply that had so hampered the Australian forces, and by the delays that the Australians had inflicted upon them. At this point, what was left of the 21st Brigade was relieved by 2 further brigades, the 25th and 16th, who would carry out the advance back across the mountains to the beachheads of Buna, Gona and Sanananda, on the north coast.

The roll of honour from the Battalion for the action was 8 officers and 108 other ranks; fathers, sons, brothers who are mourned to this day; young men in their prime who sacrificed their future lives for the men they served alongside and the families they left behind. In physical conditions that tried everyman and his equipment to the limit, the battalion had met a ruthless and implacable foe, representatives of an alien culture. For them, it was a desperate fight to preserve their country from an intolerable tyranny. The men of the 2/14 were in the forefront of that fight and acquitted themselves with the utmost honour.

Lest we forget.

Made it! A brief account of my Kokoda Track Adventure in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

Geoffrey M Barker, teacher at Reservoir High School

My adventure started with a night in a hotel in Port Moresby, the capital city of PNG. Early the next morning a small plane took six trekkers, including myself, over the mountain range that we would hike back over following the narrow Kokoda Track. The plane landed in Popondetta and the fun and 'anything can happen' in PNG began. We had our own backpacks, but the other backpacks that were checked in the day before had not arrived! This meant we had no tents, food, cooking utensils, ropes or the other equipment needed to make it back to Port Moresby.

Having no fear (well a little) we boarded a wooden benched truck, nicknamed the 'Chiropractic Express' and went off, to a very different supermarket than we have in Australia, to buy some supplies. The next few hours were spent in the truck to Kokoda Village. We travelled along a bumpy dirt road, crossed through rivers, as there were not many bridges, and then became bogged in the mud. Fortunately, another truck was able to pull us out of the bog and we eventually reached the village of Kokoda.

At Kokoda we had a chance to visit a small museum and see the site of our first battle field on the Track and some memorials that had been built to honour the soldiers. Straight away it started to sink in what battles and events took place over this rugged land. After a night in a hut, with protection from the mozzies via a borrowed mozzie net, we set off walking along the Track. The first hour or so was easy and settled us into the heat and humidity and eased us into the thickness of the jungle growth. The next few hours involved some hill climbs and we arrived at the site of the Isurava battle field. The memorials made of granite said the words 'Courage, Endurance, Mateship and Sacrifice'. Here, our lead guide conducted a memorial service and gave us an insight into the immense battle that took place where we stood. One minute away was Kingsbury Rock, the place where Private Bruce Kingsbury made his incredible stand and was then shot and killed. He was awarded the Victoria Cross because of his actions and to know I was standing where the man whose name is also remembered as the suburb of Kingsbury, where many Reservoir High families live, was very special.

We spent the following nights sleeping in village thatched roof huts, some with walls and some without. It didn't take long before the things we take for granted in our Melbourne lives were not with us. When the sun goes down it became dark, very dark, apart from the stars. There was no electricity therefore, no lighting, no water taps to wash your hands before dinner and no porcelain sit down toilets! Thankfully, our team of amazing local porters arrived into camp on the second night with our

supplies on their backs. No more sharing of cups to have 2 minute noodles!



Every day we hiked for about eight hours over some of the steepest terrain I have ever been on, walking up and down the mountains would be better described as climbing. Most of the climbs took over two and half continuous hours, then, you have to go down. Whenever you knew there was a river coming up, you began to realise it also involved a very long steep climb down, a crossing of a river either on long logs or wading through it, and then a very long steep climb up. Once or twice it was flat, such as the Brown River Valley near Nauro. However, it was soon apparent that here the climbs were replaced by muddy, boggy swamps. It took hours to get through these areas and twice we meet a trekking group coming the other way. In the darkness of the thick rainforest canopy, being eaten by mozzies, we exchanged hints and tactics on how to tackle what lay ahead.



Now and then we would take short excursions from the track to see the ammunition dumps, crashed aircraft and fighting trenches. We also met one of the last remaining Fuzzy-Wuzzy Angels who carried many injured Australian soldiers to help.

The people of the villages we passed were all smiles and very friendly. Many people in the

village sold us fruit and some sold handmade artwork and colourful 'bilums', small bags with a shoulder strap. The village of Kagi was a highlight for me. This was the region where many of our porters and their families lived. At the end of eight and a half hours of trekking the Kagi village children greeted us with a welcome song.

It was here that I met 'Jonsey', the Education Administrator of the region. Under torch light I presented him with the gifts from Reservoir High including twenty five solar calculators and stationary. Early the next morning we trekked to the local Kagi school and mounted a commemorative plaque, dedicated to Bruce Kingsbury and the men of the 2/14th Infantry Battalion, on behalf of Reservoir High and the 2/14 Battalion Association. Future trekkers from the school community who venture along the Kokoda Track will be able to visit the outside foyer of the new building of their Elementary School to view the plaque.



Nine days after we arrived, we spent a couple of hours descending a steep slope to the Goldie River. The running water was a welcome sight and a chance for a refreshing swim and to wash off some of the mud! Apart from my boots and socks, I left my hiking clothes on as they were already soaking wet from sweat. Then it was packs on for the last big climb which was filled with the excitement of passing under the finishing arches of the Kokoda Track at Owers' Corner. Before passing under the arches our team leader said a few words in memory of the men whose footsteps we had walked in. In comparison to their campaign 70 years ago, we had it easy.

Lest We Forget.



Proud to meet a legend of Kokoda

Edited text from Mildura Weekly, June 8, 2012

By Alan Erskine



Bob Thompson talks to the Mildura Weekly's Alan Erskine about his experiences on the Kokoda Track 70 years ago.

His short-term memory may not be that great, but ask 94-year-old Bob Thompson anything about the fighting on the Kokoda Track, 70 years ago, and he's as sharp as a tack. Still got a grip of steel too...I would have loved to have seen him in his prime, standing shoulder to shoulder with his mates as they stopped the Japanese advance towards Port Moresby.

It was big Bob Thompson who watched on August 29, 1942, as his mate Bruce Kingsbury made his suicidal, but successful, one-man onslaught on the enemy through terrific machine-gun fire at Isurava. Kingsbury rushed forward, firing his Bren gun from the hip and clearing a path through the enemy, before Bob and his mates joined the fray, routing the opposing forces. Less than a minute later, as Thompson and Kingsbury stopped by a rock to check on two fellow Aussies, a lone Japanese sniper killed the 24-year-old Kingsbury with a single shot.

Bob, now in an aged care facility in Walkerville,

Adelaide, has vivid recollections of that day, and wrongly still blames himself for Kingsbury's death. "We should have kept going, we shouldn't have stopped," he said. Bob, a platoon sergeant with the famed 2/14th, is the bloke who wrote the citation for Kingsbury, making a successful recommendation for a Victoria Cross, which was awarded posthumously to Kingsbury, the first-ever VC awarded to a soldier on Australian soil.

Bob describes Kingsbury as a fighting soldier of the highest order, displaying a complete disregard for his own safety and showing great initiative and superb courage by the actions that cost him his life. "His was without doubt the action that saved Battalion Headquarters, as well as causing heavy casualties amongst the enemy," Bob said. "His coolness, determination and devotion to duty in the face of great odds was an inspiration to his comrades."

Kingsbury is buried at the Bomana War Cemetery, alongside his mates.

Bob tells me and good friend, Ian Hopley, a former Mildura police officer, that he's glad he doesn't have to go through that battle again! Bob had a nostalgic trip, alongside other veterans back to the Kokoda Track in 2004. This time he flew in, but not that much had changed. The natives were as friendly and welcoming as ever, the Track was still a challenge, and it still rained every day. He recalls the old diggers being thrilled when the then Prime Minister put his plane at their disposal. The Australian consul-general in PNG remembers the veterans' visit, too ...commenting in one documentary that it was the only time his beer fridge and wine cellar had been drained!

EVENT CALENDAR 2012

70th Anniversary, Kokoda Campaign Special 2/14 Battalion Association Service

Sunday, 9th September, 2.00 pm
2/14 Battalion tree,
north-west corner
Afternoon tea to follow
The Shrine of Remembrance

AGM & 1st Committee Meeting

Sunday, 23rd September, 11.00 am
The Shrine of Remembrance

Annual Pilgrimage

Sunday, 23rd September, 1.30 pm
The Sanctuary, Shrine of Remembrance

2nd Committee Meeting

Sunday, 2nd December, 11.30 am
East Malvern RSL

2013

3rd Committee Meeting

Sunday, 3rd March, 11.30am
East Malvern RSL

Balikpapan 2013

22nd - 27th April
Balikpapan, Kalimantan

Graduation of the 2011 Kokoda Kids

Queensland veterans were invited to attend the graduation of the 2011 Kokoda Kids in Brisbane, recently. 70 teenagers from around Australia have spent the past 14 months, training for and completing the Kokoda Challenge, walking the Track and being involved in community service.

In a fast moving, exciting ceremony, hosted by ambassador and Olympian, Duncan Armstrong, the "kids" were congratulated on their achievements and personal development. 2011 was the first time a group from Melbourne had been involved.



WHEN A VETERAN PASSES AWAY

When one of our veteran members passes away the Battalion Association is here to assist the family in any way possible. If it is the family's wish we can present a eulogy at the funeral with particular emphasis on his war service. We also honour his war service by publishing an obituary in Comradeship so that old comrades and friends are informed.

However, we can only do this if we know that a member has passed away, so we respectfully request that family members inform the Battalion

Association in the event of their loved one's passing by contacting the Secretary, Christine Ingram at chris.ingram@margni.com or telephoning Chris on 03 9561 5790.

In case you did not know, widows will continue to receive Comradeship at no charge. Just keep us up-to-date with any changes of address and we will ensure that regular copies will continue to be sent.

CONTACTS

PRESIDENT - Michael Ralston
1/35 York Street, Eltham, 3095
Tel 9439 4990

VICE PRESIDENT - Robert Eden
326 Nicholson Street, Fitzroy, 3065
Tel 9419 4393

SECRETARY - Chris Ingram
36 Finch Street, Notting Hill Vic 3168
Tel 9561 5790
chris.ingram@margni.com

ASST. SECRETARY - Margaret Briggs
Tel 9561 2247

TREASURER - Karen Brkic
18 Khartoum Street, West Footscray, 3012
Tel 9318 5394

EDITOR - Jill Bear
26 Merton St, Camberwell, 3124
Tel 9889 3466
jillebear@gmail.com

**WELFARE TRUSTEES - Robert Eden,
Ian Hopley, Michael Ralston**

MEMORABILIA OFFICER - Darryl Thompson
22-24 Jarrah Drive, Braeside, 3195
Tel 9588 1444

WEB MASTER - Ben Edwards
webmaster@2nd14battalion.org.au

CHAPLAIN - Doug Watkins
Tel (03) 9898 8172

AREA REPRESENTATIVES

Bob Nichols - Western Victoria
Tel 5344 9434

Bruce Rogers - South West Victoria
Tel 5562 7078

Bill Vandenberg - Mallee
Tel 5026 4535

Gavon Armstrong - CNE & Riverina
gavnhelm@bigpond.com

Gary McCulloch - Gippsland
Tel 5144 4435

Darren Benson - Geelong
Mobile 0424 179 017

Eric Jones - Tasmania, North
Tel (03) 6433 3418

John Vandenberg - Tasmania, South
Tel (03) 6265 8071
jandpvandenberg@bigpond.com

Ian Hopley - South Australia
Mobile 0433 019 441

Trevor Pryor - Queensland
Tel (07) 3482 4768
teepee_au@yahoo.com

Jan Erskine - Mildura
berka@ncable.com.au

Ron Inglis - NSW
Tel (02) 9642 3563
inglisrw@gmail.com

Around The Traps

VX15237 Bob Iskov is very proud of the group of his grandchildren who, at the time of going to press, were walking the Kokoda Track to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Owen Stanley Campaign. Along with grandson, Richard, (pictured with Bob below at the St George's church service), were granddaughters Megan, Brylie and Natalie. We trust they have made it home safely, with a new appreciation of their grandfather's fortitude and courage.



We recently heard from Sandy Forster that her husband, **VX14065 Peter Forster** has not been well and is now in hospital. Sadly the nature of his illness means that he won't be able to return home and Sandy is looking for a high-care place in a nursing home for him. This, of course, is a very sad and stressful time for both her and Peter, and I'm sure those of you who know Peter as a friend and comrade will be sorry to hear this news. Until recently Peter was active in the Association and was a valued member of the Committee.

NX15338 Ernie Mewburn is under the weather at the moment having suffered a series of strokes. His wife, Jeanne, tells us he is now having speech therapy, and hopefully he will soon regain his speech. In the meantime he enjoys receiving cards and letters so if you would like to write to him you can do so C/- Belview Nursing Home, Warruga Place, Wellington, NSW 2830.

Thelma Turner, widow of **NX105248 Kenneth Turner** has donated a number of audio tapes from Kenneth's collection and wonders if any members may like to have them. They are all of English brass bands, including the famous Black Dyke Mills Band. If you would like more information about the tapes please contact Chris Ingram at chris.ingram@margni.com or telephone (03) 9561 5790.

VX17982 Jim Coy MM has also suffered a stroke and is in hospital, at Cabrini in Malvern. While his mental state is good, Jim's eyesight has deteriorated considerably, to the point that he is now legally blind. Daughter Annette is looking for a care facility where Jim and his wife of 70 years, Leonora, who also requires care, will be able to be looked after together.

Norma Davis, widow of **VX91044 Allan W Davis**, died recently. She had been living in the same retirement village in Patterson Lakes, as Eva Lane who had lived in Yandina, Qld and knew many of the 2/14 boys from their time there in early 1942.

Len Retallack has been in contact with us. His father, **VX15285 Ben Retallack** was with the Battalion in 8th Platoon and Len misses him badly. He would be grateful for any information from anyone who knew his Dad. His address is 63 Tatura Undera Road, Tatura, Vic 3611.

Carol Gibb, daughter of **VX36915 Lyall Douglas Gibb** contacted us recently to let us know she has her father's diary and papers from his army service in WW2. He joined up in July 1940 and saw service in the Middle East and PNG. Lyall died some years ago aged 70. Carol is looking to hear from anyone who remembers Lyall and may have served with him. If you would like to make contact please do so through our Secretary.

Darryl Thomson recently came in contact with the "Honouring Our Heroes" Committee, made up of Euroa and Longwood residents. Knowing the strong connection the battalion had with the Euroa area, we thought members might be interested to hear that the committee aims to acknowledge the three First World War winners of the Victoria Cross, Lieutenant Leslie Maygar, Captain Frederick Tubb and Corporal Alexander Burton, who came from the then Shire of Euroa, in North East Victoria.

The Committee believes that Euroa was the only Shire in the Commonwealth to have three VC recipients. The Committee's goal is to commission three life size bronze statues of the VC winners, to be unveiled on the centenary of Anzac Day, 25th April, 2015. As this project is one of national significance, there is a great need to have financial support from corporate businesses, as the project cost is beyond the means of this small rural community.

If you would like to contribute to this cause contact Margaret Cavanagh: Margaret.Cavanagh@westnet.com.au or PO Box 330, Euroa or 0417382569



Moshe Dayan

A note from "Light's Out": A little bit of trivia for the Vets who served in the Syrian Campaign. Remember we had three Jewish guides as we moved forward on day one? You maybe remember that the name of one of the guides was Moshe Dayan, and of how he was looking through his binoculars and received a bullet in his eye. His wound was so severe he couldn't be fitted with a glass eye, and for the rest of his life had to wear an eye patch. After he retired from the Israeli army, of which he was Chief of Staff, he became Minister of Defence, a post he held during the wars against Israel in 1967 and 1973. His strategic ability made him one of the main reasons that their army was able to win against Egypt and the surrounding Arab countries. He died in October 1981 at the age of 66 years. His eye patch was sold at auction for 70,000 dollars.