

COMRADESHIP

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President's Report



This has been a busy and sometimes challenging, but a very rewarding year. The commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Kokoda and Beachheads Campaign, including the awarding of a Victoria Cross to Pte Bruce Kingsbury, is a significant part of 2/14 Battalion history. In my recent discussions with a range of people, I was a little disappointed to find that not many were aware that the Kingsbury VC was the first ever awarded to an Australian fighting on Australian soil. However, after a number of fantastic events around the country this year, including through our partner schools, I am confident that the legacy of our 2/14 men will live on.

The changes to an entitlement to march in Anzac Day services are still a concern and we are monitoring the official announcements, so we have a clearer understanding for 2018. This particularly relates to the Melbourne march and I envisage that we will be forced to consider our options in the near future.

On a bright note, another wonderful trip to Balikpapan took place with SA veteran Keith Lambert and family members accompanying Ian Hopley. We appreciate the work that goes into organising such an event and it is fantastic that a number of veterans have now been able to revisit the Borneo battlefields through Ian's work.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the committee members and everybody that takes a role in supporting the 2/14 Battalion Association. Please all have a wonderful and safe Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Regards,

Craig Iskov

President 2/14 Battalion Association

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS BUY

AVAILABLE - 1 DECEMBER 2017 TO 31 JANUARY 2018

If you are having trouble deciding what to get for that special person, why not purchase the **History of the 2/14 Battalion by W B Russell**. This is a wonderful book and a must read for descendants of Veterans or anyone interested in the History of the Battalion.

We are offering it at the special Christmas price of \$60 which includes P&P. If you indicate on your order, which is included in this copy of Comradeship, we can send it directly to your relative or friend, if that is what you would like.

So that you get your copy in time for Christmas please order NOW using the Christmas order form and mail or email this directly to Chris Ingram. Contact details are on the order form.

If you order two or more copies the price will reduce to \$50 per copy, including P&P. Requests for multiple copies must be made by the same purchaser.

Please note that overseas postage will be additional. Please email or phone Chris on chris.ingram@margni.com or (03) 9587 5546 to obtain a quote for overseas postage.

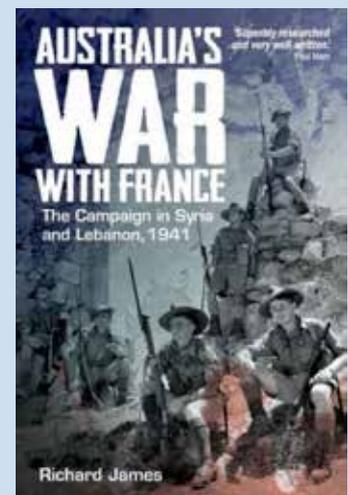
BOOK REVIEW

Richard James: *Australia's War with France: the Campaign in Syria and Lebanon, 1941*

The 2/14 Battalion owes much, in recent years, to the work of the James family in drawing attention to its actions and recording the memories of its veterans. The work began with father, Bill James' indispensable *Field Guide to the Kokoda Track*, and continued with son, Andrew's biography of Stan Bisset, *Kokoda Wallaby*.

Now another son, Richard, has made his contribution with a fascinating and readable account of the war in Syria, entitled *Australia's War with France: the Campaign in Syria and Lebanon, 1941*. Richard's work was on the short list for the Vogel Literary Award for an unpublished manuscript earlier this year, and has since been taken up and published by Big Sky Publishing.

Richard sets the scene for the conflict in some detail, outlining the manoeuvring in diplomatic and military circles on both sides prior to the Allied invasion of Syria and Lebanon, in June 1941. He then moves on to describe the progress of the campaign, in which 400 Australians lost their lives; the success of the Allied forces; and an evaluation of the outcomes.



Through interviews made in 2014 with a number of veterans, including Bob Iskov, Matt Power and Dudley Warhurst, of the 2/14 Battalion; archival records, and on-the-ground research, Richard illuminates a neglected campaign in a thorough, yet highly readable way.

75th ANNIVERSARY KOKODA CAMPAIGN

Melbourne

The ceremony to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the actions along the Kokoda Track, organised by a joint committee of representatives from the 2/14, 2/16 and 39 Battalions, was a great success. About 600 people were in attendance in the forecourt of the Shrine of Remembrance on 26 August, including the Honourable Linda Dessau, Governor of Victoria; Lt Gen. Angus Campbell, Chief of Army; Maj Gen. Michael Jeffrey, former Governor General of Australia; various members of Parliament representing the Prime Minister, the Minister for Veterans Affairs, the Leader of the Federal Opposition, the Premier of Victoria and Victorian Minister for Veterans; and Mr Des Callaghan, representing the President of the RSL. Writer, Patrick Lindsay performed the duties of Master of Ceremonies.

Among the 16 veterans in attendance were 2/14 Battalion veterans Cyril Allender, who had fought in the campaign, Max Caldwell and Les Cook. They were joined by Arnold Forrester, Cecil Driscoll, Alan Moore, Maxwell Kirwan, Leslie Arnel, Pat Hannah, Jim Bruce, John Akhurst, Bill Stuart and George Copps of the 39 Battalion; Bill Grayden and Norman Hay of the 2/16 Battalion; Leo Inglis of the 55/53 Battalion; and Don Collins from the PIB/NGIB/HQ/PIR Association.



Noel Bear, son of Lindsay Bear DCM, MM chats with 2/14 Battalion veterans Max Caldwell and Cyril Allender

In her address, Victorian Governor, Linda Dessau AC, spoke of the courage and sacrifice of the men who fought to defend Australia despite having to endure appalling conditions, as well as being outnumbered and ill-equipped for the task. She acknowledged the bravery of Bruce Kingsbury VC and Charlie McCallum DCM, and the enduring pain

felt by the families of those who never returned. In closing, she encouraged the audience to never forget what the veterans who were with us had achieved in defence of Australia and our way of life, or the sacrifice of those who never returned.

After the conclusion of the ceremony, the Governor took the opportunity to speak to each of the veterans who were in attendance.



Max Caldwell with the Governor of Victoria, Hon. Linda Dessau, AC

Later in the day, about 330 guests repaired to the RACV Club in the city for an anniversary luncheon.

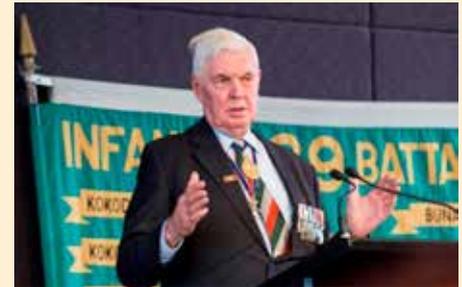


Guests at the anniversary luncheon

On this occasion, the address was given by Maj Gen. Michael Jeffrey, Governor General of Australia from 2003 to 2008, Governor of Western Australia from 1993 to 2000 and long-time patron of the 2/16 Battalion Association.

Maj Gen. Jeffrey spoke from his own experience of military service in Papua New Guinea during the 1960s when, as commander of the 1st Battalion, Pacific Island Regiment, he directed exercises along the Kokoda Trail that simulated the battles fought 20 years previously. He was thus able to demonstrate a deep understanding of the challenges of the Kokoda Trail and the qualities essential to lead men successfully in such circumstances.

He alluded to the dismay that Lt Col. Ralph Honner would have felt when he arrived to command the battle weary 39th Battalion at Isurava, following their six weeks in the field, but also paid tribute to Honner's ability to inspire his men and turn them from a 'rag-tag lot' into an fighting unit capable of doing everything that was required of them, and more.



Maj Gen. Michael Jeffrey delivering the address at the luncheon

Unlike some writers of recent times, Maj Gen. Jeffrey had a firm grasp of the actual numbers of troops deployed on both sides at Isurava, and the advantage that Japanese commander, Maj Gen. Hori, had in being able to cycle his regiments in and out of action; a luxury not available to the Australian commander, Brigadier Arnold Potts, who had to deploy every available man to hold the ground under attack.

In identifying the "glue" that held the men together, the Major General spoke of the high morale that comes from a sense of belonging; having to rely on those around you, and knowing that they were relying on you; a shared, common purpose in holding back the Japanese; inspired leadership at every level from section and platoon to brigade; a sense of humour; and hope in a higher power, summed up in his personal observation that "I have yet to meet an atheist in a fox hole."

He concluded his speech with a reminder that it is the soldier who ensures our freedoms, as those who fought the Japanese along the Kokoda Trail did for us, in 1942.

Another highlight of the event was the performance of Slim Dusty's "Kokoda



KOKODA DAY IN SYDNEY

A very impressive Kokoda Day ceremony was held on November 3 at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway in the Sydney suburb of Concord. Over 200 people were in attendance including some six veterans of the Second World War.

Sadly, as far as we know, there are now no 2/14th Battalion veterans residing in Sydney. Most of the veterans still with us are from the 55th battalion, a unit raised later in the war and one containing a fair number of 'youngsters'.

See below for some photos from the day:



Our veterans: Cyril Allender, Max Caldwell and Les Cook



Les Cook and Craig Iskov share a story over lunch

Overall, the day ran very smoothly, the result of a great team effort, particularly by the organising committee of representatives from each battalion: Merren and Norman Stockdale (39th Battalion), Trevor Ingram (2/16th Battalion) and Sue Davies and Craig Iskov (2/14th Battalion), who have worked together over the last twelve months to bring the day to a successful conclusion.

The veterans who attended expressed their gratitude that the 75th anniversary of the Kokoda Campaign was recognised in such an appropriate way.



Wreathes at the Eternal Flame



7 Division veterans in Sydney



Students lay a wreath at one of the memorials on the Kokoda Walkway at Concord.

CANBERRA

The Australian War Memorial marked the 75th anniversary of the Kokoda and Beachheads Campaign with an Ode service for Pte. Bruce Kingsbury VC. The service was held on 2 November and was supported by DVA and 12 Kokoda veterans from all branches of the Armed Services involved in the Papua New Guinea campaigns. The group included 2/14 men **Les Cook** and **Cyril Allender**, Bill Grayden from 2/16th and George Palmer and Bill Stuart from 39th as well as Navy and Air Force veterans.

An account of Bruce Kingsbury's life was presented and a number of dignitaries including Director of the Australian War Memorial, Dr Brendan Nelson; Chief of Army, Lt Gen Angus Campbell; Minister for Defence, Marise Payne; and Maj Gen Mark Kelly (ret'd) from DVA took part in the wreath laying at the Pool of Reflection. 2/14 Association president, Craig Iskov proudly

laid the 2/14 wreath at the foot of a photograph of Bruce Kingsbury that was displayed for the service.

The Director of the Australian War memorial then presented the 2/14 Battalion Association with the photograph of Bruce Kingsbury that

was displayed for the service.

The Kokoda Ode service is available online at ABC iview until Jan 31 2018 as below.

www.iview.abc.net.au/programs/australia-remembers-kokoda-75-years#pageloaded



Craig Iskov, Dr Brendan Nelson, Les Cook, Bill Grayden, Marise Payne and Mark Kelly with the portrait of Bruce Kingsbury

SERVICES of REMEMBRANCE

Reservoir High School and Austin Health

Once again, successful services to commemorate Bruce Kingsbury's sacrifice were held on 25 August at Reservoir High and Austin Health.

Being the day before the combined ceremony at the Shrine of Remembrance, several Association members, including President Craig Iskov, were involved in overseeing final arrangements there, and were unable to be in two places at once. However, a group of stalwarts attended the service in the new Performing Arts Centre at Reservoir High School, to hear Kingsbury Primary students speak of their reactions to being involved in the ANZAC Day march, and year 7 students from the high school present their work on Bruce Kingsbury and the 2/14 Battalion. Niamh Koop's imagined letter from Bruce's father was particularly moving in its empathy for a father grieving for his hero son. Once again, Kingsbury Scholarship winner, Matilda Fordjour, impressed us with her grasp of Anzac values and her heartfelt passion for this country.



Students presenting their research on Bruce Kingsbury

Reservoir Acting Principal, Lea Volpe, and Kingsbury Primary Principal, Christine Campbell both paid tribute to the work of the armed forces in preserving Australia's freedoms and way of life; a theme carried on in Jill Bear's presentation to the students of what she thought the men of the 2/14 would want the young people of today to hear.

David Webb performed an important role in unveiling a new photo board to honour past Kingsbury Scholarship winners.

After a short wreath laying ceremony

at the school's memorial tree, we then partook of a wonderful morning tea, before driving to Heidelberg Repatriation facility of Austin Health for the service in the Chapel and Remembrance Garden there.

Following a welcome from Veteran Liaison Officer, Robert Winther, Michael Ralston reflected on the important role the 2/14 Battalion Association plays in maintaining the collective memory of the Pacific War.



Karen Brkic laying the wreath at the 2/14 Battalion Memorial at Heidelberg Repat

After a delicious lunch, Rob Winther took us on a tour of the gallery and heritage space being developed in an area that included the old hospital kitchens.

Shrine Pilgrimage

Following an AGM that became a moving feast, (from the Rats of Tobruk hall to the Shrine of Remembrance,) the annual Shrine Pilgrimage was held on Sunday, 25 Sept at the Shrine of Remembrance.



Students from Kingsbury Primary lay a wreath at the Shrine, alongside Craig Iskov

Once again, we are grateful for the support of the Shrine, in particular Shrine Governor, Lt Col. Don Reid, for their involvement in this ceremony. David Webb spoke of the impact on families of the mental and physical trauma that played out in the lives of those affected by their service in World War II, and how

the sacrifice of those men contributed to the fair, free and multicultural society we live in today, before Gavon Armstrong read the Battalion's Roll of Honour.

Windsor Primary School

2/14 Battalion Association President Craig Iskov visited Windsor Primary School on Friday 10 Nov, to take part in their Remembrance Day service. The school was formerly known as Stonnington School and was attended by Bruce Kingsbury in the early 1920s.

The entire school of 200 students assembled in the Kingsbury Early Learning Centre for the service; this area features a photograph of Bruce Kingsbury. Craig gave a short talk on Bruce Kingsbury and how his life reflected the current values of the school, which are Respect, Responsibility, Inclusivity, Valour and Passion.

Craig was very impressed with the students' interest in the service and the thoughtfulness of the questions asked, including by some very young students. One question was about Bruce Kingsbury's grave and as Principal Anne McPhee had spent some time teaching in Papua New Guinea, she spoke to the students about the beauty and tragedy of Bomana War Cemetery.

The Prahran RSL provides the Windsor school with a Bruce Kingsbury scholarship each year for a Year 5 student. This covers all costs for Year 6. The teachers at the school nominate the recipient and look for a student who has demonstrated 'courage under fire' and managed to continue at school through adversity.



Craig Iskov presenting a copy of the Battalion History to Windsor Primary School Principal, Ann McPhee



QUEENSLAND REPORT

Passing of Dick Doyle

I was recently informed of the passing of Dick Doyle. I fondly remember Dick as a wonderful gentleman and particularly as he made the trip from Northern NSW to visit my dad in his final weeks. He was a regular supporter of Battalion events until illness forced him to forgo the trips to gatherings including the Qld reunion.

Unfortunately, a communication glitch meant that the information arrived quite late and Ross's detailed eulogy could not be delivered at his funeral. The following details are from his son Richard's letter.

"Dad died on 6th December 2016 in Goondiwindi, QLD four days short of his 94th birthday. He had been in reasonably good health until just a few weeks prior. It was mercifully quick. A blessing really.

As you know dad had been suffering from Dementia for some time and since 2010 had been living at "Kaloma", an excellent aged care facility in Goondiwindi that he had help establish. All of his children were with him at the time of his death. His funeral and wake was a great celebration of his life and the local RSL sub-branch conducted a service for him. I would be most grateful if you could inform the Association."

Rest in Peace old soldier

Jack Thompson's Centenary

Christmas and New Year are not the only celebrations that are approaching. We're looking forward to December 28 as the date Jack Thompson can raise his bat to recognise another great Australian century.

What Great Numbers!

2/14 Battalion Association supporter and Kokoda Track venturer, Aidan Grimes has just returned some amazing numbers. On Remembrance Day, 11th of the 11th, Aidan completed his 111th crossing of the Track! While he celebrates the achievement, it would not have detracted from the marvellous education his clients would have received including a detailed description of the exploits of the 2/14 Battalion.

Rather than collapse for the rest of the day, Aidan was guest speaker that evening at the Remembrance Day dinner in Port Moresby and, I am advised, enhanced a wonderful event.



PNG Remembrance Day Dinner

Col. Dave Buller, (HADS); Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin, (Australian CDF); Brigadier-General Gilbert Toropo, (PNGDF Commander); Aidan Grimes; WO2 Matt Christophers, (FSB) (future son-in-law!); Glen Maitland, President, Port Moresby RSL.

A Wonderful Visit

Ann and I are just back from a caravanning trip in which we visited her sister in the central NSW town of Tottenham. That gave us the chance to catch up with other local residents, 2/14 veteran Clarrie Cunningham and his wife Marj. We weren't expecting to find Clarrie and Marj in Tottenham as they had moved into a nursing home in Condoblin. However, I discovered them accidentally when I drove

past their house and found Clarrie watering his garden. The hadn't liked the nursing home so came back home to Tottenham!



Clarrie and Marj Cunningham at home

It was great to see them in good spirits and back at home where daughter, Christine, is providing great support.

Finally, another photo from the 75th Kokoda Anniversary ceremony at Cascade Gardens, featuring the Battalion banner and a couple of youngsters, that's worth sharing.



Kokoda 75th Anniversary ceremony at Cascade Gardens, August 2017

A Merry Christmas and New Year's wishes to all from Queensland.

Trevor Pryor

FILM REVIEW

Kokoda... the Spirit Lives

The new feature documentary made by Patrick Lindsay and Limetree Studios, Kokoda... the Spirit Lives was shown around the state at several RSL clubs during late August and September, commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Kokoda Campaign in 1942.

The film retells the story of the Kokoda campaign, making use of recent interviews with surviving veterans, as well as footage of interviews from films that Patrick has made previously and archival footage from 1942. Where this film builds on those previous works, is through the use of drone footage taken over the battlefields and the Track, giving a new perspective and enriching the viewer's understanding of the difficulties the terrain posed for the embattled forces.

Michael Ralston provided this assessment: "I liked the way they had 'grabs' from Kokoda: *the Bloody Track*, and *The Last Parade*, and the drone shots were fantastic."



The memorial site at Isurava as filmed by a drone

Patrick is in the process of negotiating with the television networks for future broadcast, perhaps around Anzac Day next year.

OBITUARIES

NX79241 CORPORAL RICHARD JAMES BROUGHTON DOYLE



Army records in Canberra show that Richard "Dick" Doyle was born in Sydney on 10 December 1922. The family was living on Garden Island Naval Base where his father was a Royal Australian Navy Officer who eventually rose to the rank of Rear Admiral.

On graduation from secondary school, Dick commenced studies in Veterinary Science at Sydney University after the War broke out.

With the commencement of the Pacific War, Dick enlisted in the AIF on 18 December 1942, just after his 19th birthday. He had attempted to enlist in the RAAF, his first preference, but colour blindness prevented this. So he attended Victoria Barracks to enlist in the Army and attested at the Recruit Reception Depot over the road in the Moore Park/Sydney Showgrounds military camp. Interestingly, his enlistment details in the Veterans' Affairs Nominal Roll show his residence at enlistment as "Gordon Island"!

While Dick was away in camp, Japanese midget submarines entered Sydney Harbour defences in May 1942 and an unexploded torpedo was found on the small beach immediately below the family home in the Garden Island Naval Base.

After various postings to recruit and advanced infantry training battalions in Australia, Dick was sent to Port Moresby as a reinforcement for the 2/14 Battalion which had suffered losses during the Kokoda fighting. He marched into the Battalion on 16 December 1942 and, as the Kokoda Track fighting was over and Gona had already fallen, the reinforcements were held back in Port Moresby.

On 15 January 1943 the remnants of the Battalion, 57 in all, flew from Dobodura to Port Moresby where Dick marched in to 17 Platoon in D Company. The Battalion then returned to Australia and camped at Ravenshoe on the Atherton Tablelands to prepare for the next stage. Fully reinforced and somewhat refreshed, the Battalion again embarked for Port Moresby between 31 July and 6 August 1943.

On 15 September 1943 the Battalion emplaned at Wards Strip for the recently captured Nadzab airfield in the Markham River Valley. A wide kunai covered river plain surrounded by sharply rising mountain ranges was a different battle environment from that previously encountered by the Battalion, but the numerous tropical illnesses remained.

On arrival the Battalion had to secure the right flank in the Atzera Range and D Company was the advance force for this task. After initial contact the Battalion was ordered back to Nadzab to fly on to Kaiapit which had been captured by 2/6th Commando Company in a brave action. The Battalion's role was to secure the area and commence an advance into the adjoining Ramu River Valley.

The land was quite flat and the advance on foot was quite rapid. At Wampun, finding no enemy or water, the Battalion pushed on searching the surrounding area. The Battalion CO, Lt Col Ralph Honner found himself isolated and was wounded by enemy fire. D Company came to his assistance and was able to inflict heavy casualties on the enemy and force them to withdraw. The advance continued into the Ramu Valley to Dumpu forcing the enemy into the Finisterre Mountains at Shaggy Ridge where D Company provided covering fire for attacks against Japanese positions at Palliers Hill.

In 2005, Dick was one of a number of veterans interviewed by the Brisbane Courier Mail for a project titled The Peace Generation. During this interview, he described how a companion gunner was shot and killed beside him as they manned a Bren Gun. This soldier had complained that he couldn't see the enemy position so Dick took over the gun and fired a couple of bursts. As he rolled away he noticed that his mate had been fatally shot.

The Battalion returned to Australia after the successful Markham-Ramu Campaign and camped on the Atherton Tablelands while the Army decided what was next for them. It appeared that General MacArthur wanted the Australians to assist in his planned invasion of the Philippines so they moved to Townsville and commenced training for amphibious landings. However, at the last minute, MacArthur decided it was to be a landing by US troops only, and General Blamey had to find another task for the Australians.

On 2 June 1945 the Battalion embarked for Morotai in the Netherlands East Indies (now Indonesia) to prepare for the invasion of Balikpapan on the south-east coast of Borneo. On 1 July 1945 the Battalion landed amid some confusion, with 2/27 Battalion being landed on the wrong beach. However, by the afternoon all immediate goals had been achieved and the following day the Battalion set off northwards up the East Coast road to capture Sepinggan and Manggar airfields.

Up to this point the opposition had been light due to the intense pre-invasion bombardment but casualties began to occur with the advance to the airfields. Both were captured with minimal opposition by 4 July but it was then at Manggar that the Japanese fought back with everything they had. From concealed positions in the hills behind the airfield, the enemy raked the airfield with an intense barrage of various calibre artillery weapons up to 150mm naval

guns.

Over several days the battle waged supported by an offshore naval bombardment and air bombing and strafing of the Japanese positions. Finally the enemy were defeated but not before a D Company patrol located and destroyed one of the 150mm naval gun bunkers.

During the next two weeks the surrounding area was secured by active patrolling during which another stronghold was located and attacked with several flamethrowers, one of which was carried by Lance Corporal Dick Doyle. This was the only time during the entire war that the Battalion used such equipment.

With the war's end on 15 August 1945, the Battalion went into peacekeeping mode which entailed rounding up and guarding Japanese prisoners, clearing booby traps and unexploded bombs and shells, and restoring civil administration until the Dutch forces returned. This occurred at both Balikpapan and then the Celebes Islands (now Sulawesi) until the Battalion left to return to Australia on 22 January 1946.

Dick obtained an early discharge and returned to Sydney University to complete his Veterinary studies. Upon graduation he moved to Boggabilla, on the NSW-Queensland border, to work with his uncle on the family farm and stayed there for the rest of his life. He became involved in the community participating in a range of activities and served a term as a shire councillor.

Dick was proud of his service with 2/14 Battalion and joined its post-war association. He took part in its reunions and commemorative activities whenever he could.

He will be greatly missed



Dick Doyle with son Richard and grandson Nicholas in 2005

N156385/NX116882 Corporal Frederick Charles RIGBY

Army records in Canberra indicate that Fred was born in Wallsend on 27 February 1923, where he was living when he enlisted in the Militia on 14 November 1941. On 31 December 1941 Fred was called up for full time duty and marched in to the 16th Motor Regiment, a militia light armoured regiment.



EVENT CALENDAR 2017/18

Committee Meeting

11.30am, Sunday, 3 December 2017
East Malvern RSL

Committee Meeting

11.30am, Sunday, 4 March 2018
East Malvern RSL

Ferntree Gully Schools Service

11am, Wednesday, 18 April, 2018
Dandenong Ranges National Park,
Upper Ferntree Gully.

2018 Reunion

Tuesday, 24 April 2018
10:00am Tree Service
12noon Victoria Barracks for reunion
lunch, entry after 11:30am

2018 Anzac Day March

Wednesday, 25 April, 2018

2018 Picnic at Puckapunyal Army Base (Proposed)

Sunday 20 May, 2018 TBC

Committee Meeting

11.30am, Sunday, 3 June 2018
East Malvern RSL

Queensland Reunion

July 2018
Details to be confirmed

Kingsbury Services

Reservoir High & Austin Health
Details to be confirmed, usually last
Friday in August.

AGM and Shrine Pilgrimage

AGM – 23 September 2018 ,
10:00am
ROTA Hall, Albert Park
September meeting to follow.

Shrine Service

23 September 2018, 1:30pm
Wreath Laying in the Sanctuary



The Motor Regiments were providing a degree of mobile armoured protection for Australia's coastline but, with the defeat of the Japanese in the Papuan Campaign, the threat to Australia diminished and these

units were disbanded. On 9 July 1942 Fred transferred to the AIF for overseas service and was allocated the new number of NX 116882.

After undergoing several training courses in signals, Fred was transferred to 2/14 Battalion in Queensland on 3 July 1943, as it was preparing for its next duty in the New Guinea Campaign. He was posted to the Battalion's Mortar Platoon which was to play a vital support role in the ensuing actions.

The Battalion returned to Port Moresby on 2 August 1943 and encamped for training at Austin's Crossing, southeast of Port Moresby. On 15 September 1943, the Battalion emplaned and flew to the recently captured Nadzab to take part in the advance up the Markham-Ramu Valleys culminating in the battle for Shaggy Ridge.

The Mortar Platoon played an important part with its highly trained ability to bring accurate explosive fire onto the enemy positions whenever required. Occasionally members of the platoon were required to act as infantry and on one occasion Fred was part of a patrol to climb a steep ridge that took eight hours to reach the pinnacle.

After defeating the Japanese in the campaign, the Battalion returned to Australia and trained continuously in Queensland for its next campaign which many believed would be in the Philippines. However, General MacArthur changed his mind and instead, General Blamey deployed the Australian forces to capture several locations in Borneo.

Fred suffered several attacks of malaria as a result of the New Guinea Campaign and spent several periods in hospital for treatment. However, like many of his mates, during the long months of 1944 when the Battalion was away from action, he also occasionally took extra, non-approved, leave for which he was punished.

The Battalion became part of a 7th Division force comprising 21 and 25 Brigades which landed at Balikpapan by sea on 1 July 1945. Thick, black oily smoke covered the area as the large oil storage tanks in the port were set on fire by the Japanese. They were slowly forced from their positions but fought hard.

The Mortar Platoon played an important part in the advance with concentrated, accurate bombing of positions as the infantry moved forward. This support was vital as the Battalion advanced on Manggar airfield which was defended by fanatical

Japanese supported by large naval guns dug in to well protected bunkers. These positions were heavily and accurately bombed by the platoon enabling the infantry companies to attack the positions and take the guns, and thus the airfield.

However, the Japanese were not done yet and a number of fanatical counter-attacks occurred, with the Mortars again playing their part with controlled, accurate shooting.

With the end of the War, the Battalion's function changed into a peacekeeping role that entailed the apprehension and detention of Japanese survivors and the gradual return to the civilian administration of the pre-war Netherlands East Indies. The Pioneer and Mortar Platoons played an important role in the location and destruction of booby traps, unexploded ammunition and bombs.

After several weeks the Battalion moved to the Celebes Islands (now Sulawesi) to continue this work including the repatriation of Japanese soldiers to Japan. Unfortunately, one of the problems that the Battalion had to deal with was the emergence of communist based rebels wanting independence for Indonesia.

In early January 1946, Netherlands East Indies Forces returned and the island was handed over to them. The work of the 2/14 Battalion was over and it prepared to return to Australia to be disbanded.

On 12 December 1945 Fred was promoted to Corporal and returned to Australia on 22 January 1946 with the Battalion. However, as he had not served long enough for discharge, he was transferred to the General Details Depot in Sydney and then to the Quartermaster's staff at Greta Army Camp until his discharge on 30 May 1946.

He was proud of his service with the Battalion and will be missed.



Fred Rigby at a recent Anzac Day march

Lest we Forget



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BALIKPAPAN 2017

Nine intrepid travelers took part in this year's Balikpapan tour. We were honored that 2/14 Battalion veteran, Keith Lambert, from Adelaide accompanied the group with his son Brian, and other family members. We were also privileged to have Paul and Kathy Macdonald attend. Paul is the nephew of the late Cpl Harry Waites of Waites' Knoll fame.



Keith Lambert and family: Richard, Tami, Debbie, Keith, Deanne and Brian

The group met in Balikpapan and visited Manggar Beach and surrounds including a boat cruise along the river in conjunction with the Australian International School; Waites' Knoll battle site; the Reservoir Gunung Meriam Japanese cannon site; and various places of interest around Balikpapan, including the Yellow Beach landing sites.



Paul Macdonald at Waites' Knoll

We also visited the Bos Samboja National Park orangutan and sun bear rehabilitation project and after animal viewing, had lunch in the Samboja Lodge tree house hotel.



Stuart Brown, Ian Hale, Keith Lambert and Ian Hopley at the Pasir Ridge Memorial Service

We were very fortunate in that our great supporter, Ian Hale in Balikpapan, assisted the

group tirelessly, including arranging our service at the Pasir Ridge memorial in conjunction with Stuart Brown, president of the local ANZAC Day Memorial Committee. Wreaths were laid by Keith Lambert, on behalf of the Battalion, and by Paul Macdonald, on behalf of Harry Waites. A unique part of the service was Keith Lambert's granddaughter, Tami's husband, Richard Portakiewicz, a bugler in the Army Reserve, playing the Last Post.

A highlight of the tour was a visit to the Batki Haji Orphanage where we met a number of the children, who made a big fuss of veteran, Keith Lambert. In a quick 'whip around' we were able to present a small donation to the orphanage and we certainly hope the 2/14th Battalion will embrace Batki Haji as a project in the future.

We are very grateful to Balikpapan Coates Hire for allowing us to 'borrow' their executive assistant, Meta Ferlina, who acted as guide and translator for our visit.

A big 'thank you' to all who participated this year, and to our wonderful Balikpapan support team.



Keith Lambert returns to Manggar River