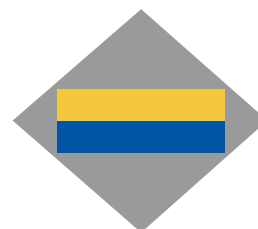


# COMRADESHIP

[www.2nd14battalion.org.au](http://www.2nd14battalion.org.au)

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## President's Report



Sadly, in the past few months we have lost many of our veterans, as have our friends in the 39th and 2/16th Battalion Associations. They will not be forgotten. In December we were involved in the opening of the magnificent Kokoda memorial cairns at Ferntree Gully National Park, a wonderful and moving concept that pays tribute to our Australian heroes. I sincerely recommend that people take the time to visit the memorials and especially the cairns on One Tree Hill. It is a credit to the perseverance of all involved, the 39th Battalion committee, Parks Victoria, Trevor Ingram from the 2/16th and especially our own wonderful Marg Briggs.

We have an exciting year ahead for the 2/14 family with several significant events to celebrate. We have the annual service at the 2/14 tree on Thursday 23 April followed by the Reunion lunch,

again at the magnificent venue of Victoria Barracks. The 26th of April this year is the 75th anniversary of the formation of the 2/14 Battalion. We will mark this auspicious occasion at the reunion lunch and later celebrate with a low key BYO picnic on Sunday 17 May. At this stage, we hope this will be at the Puckapunyal Army base where the men of the 2/14 gathered for the first time as a new Battalion, trained together and forged many life-long friendships. However, this venue is yet to be confirmed.

We then have the 70th anniversary of the landings at Balikpapan on July 1. Ian Hopley and Michael Ralston have organised a group tour to Balikpapan of nearly 40 people who will attend services and functions to mark this significant piece of 2/14 history. Twenty one brave men of the 2/14th gave their lives in this action which was to be very late in the war.

Finally, thanks to you all for your membership and your assistance as we continue to honour the brave men of the 2/14th Battalion and to support their widows, their families and each other.

**Craig Iskov**

President

2/14 Battalion Association

## BALIKPAPAN 70TH ANNIVERSARY TRIP

The trip to Balikpapan to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Balikpapan landings in July 1945 is well advanced in the planning stages. So far 37 people have lodged expressions of interest forms, and that includes 3 Balikpapan Veterans and their Carers, and 2 authors of books on the subject. If you are interested in going, you are strongly advised to get your forms in to either Michael Ralston, or Ian Hopley in Adelaide before the Australian Dollar drops any further. All expenses such as tours, bus hire, admissions, and meals where provided, will be kept to a minimum. With the added cost of your individual expenses such as airfares, accommodation at the Novotel, Visas etc., you should have the trip of a lifetime for under \$2,000 per person. The trip commences in Balikpapan on Monday the 29th June and finishes in Balikpapan on Saturday the 4th of July with a farewell dinner.

## 2015 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE BY 30 APRIL 2015

**Membership Subscriptions fall due on 30 April 2015** and we would be pleased to receive them by the due date. Please use the remittance form in this copy of Comradeship. To pay by internet please transfer to our Bank Account: **BSB 063000 Account No 0090 0598**, and include your name in the description.

### Couple Membership (\$40 pa)

For married couples or partners who reside at the same address. One copy of Comradeship will be mailed four times per year. If you are kinship members, which includes in-laws you will also have full voting rights of the Association and be able to attend all services and reunions.

### Family Membership (\$50 pa)

For couples and all children (including adult children) residing at the same address. One copy of Comradeship will be mailed four times per year. If you are a kinship member, which includes in-laws, all adults will have full voting rights of the Association and be able to attend all services and reunions.

### Single Membership at \$25 pa

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you are an existing **Single** member you may add your spouse or partner and children, if you wish, without them having to apply as new members. Additional lines have been added to the remittance form, which is enclosed with this copy of *Comradeship*, to accommodate the extra names. Please include the ages of children if they are under 18.

If you joined the Association between October and December 2014 your membership subscription will not be due until April 2015.

Please note:

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

## MELBOURNE REUNION - THURSDAY 23RD APRIL 2015

### 10.00am: Wreath-Laying Service, 2/14 Battalion Tree Shrine of Remembrance

A short service of commemoration will be held at the Battalion Tree, northwest corner of the Shrine of Remembrance (near the eternal flame) at 10.00am Thursday 23 April 2015.

Please come along for a moment of quiet reflection before adjourning to Victoria Barracks for the Reunion Luncheon, later in the day.

### 12 noon: Luncheon, Officers Mess, Victoria Barracks, Wells Street, Southbank. 3006. (Adjacent to Miles Street)

**This is at the back of Victoria Barracks where you will see the new security checkpoint.**

**We need to commence arriving at the checkpoint from 11am.**

**Please read the security requirements below.**

A ramp is available if access is required for wheelchairs or walking frames.

**Cost: \$60 per head.**

Includes a superb buffet lunch, beer,

wine and soft drinks. Spirits at your own expense.

Please see enclosed booking sheet for further information re dietary requirements. Vic Barracks is an active military base and the number of people that can attend is limited, therefore it's necessary to return the attached booking form promptly as the first forms received will be assured of gaining entry.

If you do not make a booking, you will not be admitted, as a list of guests needs to be provided in advance for security reasons. Please make sure you have your **Driver's License** or **Passport** or other **government issued photo ID** with you on the day.

**Dress Code:** Smart Casual.

**Master of Ceremonies:** Rob Eden will be hosting the event as usual.

Please contact him (0439 990 449) if there is something you would like to have included in the program.

**Public Transport:** Southbound trams from Flinders St, with the exception of Route No 1, travel along St Kilda Road to the Shrine of Remembrance. Disembark at tram stop 18 (Adjacent to Coventry Street)

**Parking:** 2, 3 and 4 hour car parking is available in Birdwood Avenue, (behind the Shrine). The City of Melbourne operates

ticket machines and enforces parking restrictions in the area.

Parking for the Wreath-Laying Service will be available at the back of the Shrine on the grass, but you will need a permit which you can obtain by telephoning John Smith on 0427 522 999.

### Security

**The Department of Defence has strict security in place for admission to the Barracks. If you do not make a booking you will not be admitted.**

**Visitors to Victoria Barracks Melbourne are reminded that;**

- **Government issued PHOTO ID is mandatory to obtaining access. Those who are unable to provide Photo ID will be refused entry.**
- **All visitors may be subject to a SEARCH of their carried items. Refusal may result in access being denied.**
- **Visitors will be escorted at all times whilst on base.**

**We are not allowed to take photographs.**

**Please phone Rob Eden on 0439 990 449 or John Smith on 0427 522 999 as soon as possible if you have problem with ID and we will assist you.**

## MEMORABILIA

Just a reminder that the Battalion has a securely stored collection of items donated by those associated with the Battalion. Darryl Thomson, son of Lieut Alex 'Sandy' Thomson, as our Memorabilia Officer, is always pleased to receive items that can be used to tell the story of the 2/14 Battalion and those who served in it. If you have anything that you would like to pass on to us, please contact Darryl, whose details can be found in the contact list on page 8.



## MEMORIAL PAVER ORDERS

**30 June, 2015** is the closing date for the next order of memorial pavers to be included in the 2/14th Battalion section of the Veterans of the Papua - New Guinea, Kokoda Memorial at Cascade Gardens in Broadbeach, Qld.

There are two types of pavers, the first is placed in the Honour Roll for men who made the ultimate sacrifice in the PNG campaigns. Their surnames are in capitals on the paver. The other type is for veterans of the PNG campaigns. The lettering of their names is in lower case.

The cost per paver is \$60 including laying. Orders can be placed through Karen Brkic 03 9318 5394 or lydia\_brkic@hotmail.com and general enquiries can be made to Craig Iskov 0428 737788 or ckiskov@bigpond.com



## One Tree Hill Memorial Opening

Governor of Victoria, His Excellency the Honourable Alex Chernov AC QC and Mrs Chernov, were guests of honour at the opening of the final stage of the Kokoda Track Memorial in the Dandenong Ranges National Park at Upper Ferntree Gully, on Sunday 14 December, 2014.

The memorial now extends from the entry to the park at Ferntree Gully, and includes the Kokoda Track Memorial Wall, an area used for commemorative events; the Isurava amphitheatre around four pillars inscribed with Courage, Mateship, Endurance and Sacrifice, that echo the memorial at Isurava in Papua New Guinea; and an education area with interpretive panels detailing the Kokoda Track campaign.

Those who take the challenging 1000 Steps Walk up the mountainside from this area, pass a series of brass plaques that mark the stages of the Kokoda Track campaign from Ower's Corner to Deniki. This is the original section of the memorial, the vision of Marg Briggs and Kim Wells MP, implemented in the 1990s.



*The Kokoda Plateau memorials at One Tree Hill*

The final stage, at the end of the Walk, atop One Tree Hill, replicates several of the memorials to be seen on the Kokoda Plateau.

As well as retelling the story of the campaign, these memorials pay tribute to the men of the 39th Battalion who defended the plateau through a series of battles against the Japanese in late July and early August of 1942. Dedicated volunteers from the 39th Battalion Association spent many hours constructing these memorials in honour of their forefathers.

Heartfelt thanks for their involvement in the project go to Parks Victoria and the state government, but we particularly acknowledge Marg Briggs and Trevor Ingram (2/16th Battalion Association) and representatives from 39th Battalion Association, for their dedication and commitment over many years spent seeing this project through to completion.

The park will ensure the preservation of the memory of the sacrifice and courage displayed by our fathers during the dark times of 1942 for generations to come.



*The Governor, Hon Alex Chernov, with members of 2/16th Battalion Association including Trevor Ingram (4 from left), veteran Jack Wilmott, and Marg Briggs (front right), standing in front of the memorial to the native carriers who served on the Kokoda Track*

## 2015 ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIVE MARCH ASSEMBLY PLAN (MELBOURNE)

**Assembly Point: Flinders Street East (St Paul's Side), next to Federation Square.**

**Step Off - The 7th Division**  
**"step off" time is 10.00 am so marchers should be in position by 9.30 am at the latest. Look for the Banner.**

Vehicles will be provided for all veterans who would prefer to ride and they will be brought to the assembly point. The vehicles will be labelled with the unit. There will be no open trucks or land rovers, just cars and maybe mini buses. Meet at our form up point, at the 2/14 banner, and we will arrange a vehicle for you if required. (Transport request must be made before 10th March 2015. Please contact John Smith on 0427 522 999 or email [jlsmith1946@gmail.com](mailto:jlsmith1946@gmail.com))

The March organisers make the following points:

- All marchers are requested to form up and march 6 abreast.
- Veterans are to march directly behind their unit banner, accompanied by one carer if needed. That carer should be of an age where they can directly assist the veteran. Veterans having difficulty completing the March, and all WW2 Veterans, are encouraged to use the transport provided, but must remain in the vehicle until the March is completed.
- If a Veteran must fall out of the March, he or she should be directed to a Marshal for assistance. Unit Associations are to continue moving so as not to disrupt the momentum of the March.
- Descendants are to march behind the Veterans, and be old enough to march the full distance (approximately 1km), without assistance.
- Representation of your Veteran forebears is to be restricted to one descendant per Veteran and the descendant is to wear the Veteran's medals on the right breast (the left breast is reserved for the original recipient of the medals).
- Descendants are to dress in

appropriate clothing, as your forebears would have done. Therefore, all marchers should wear neat and tidy clothing, out of respect for the fallen (torn denim, sporting attire, dirty joggers are not considered appropriate).

- The carrying of framed photographs of relatives, and the pushing of prams and pushers, is not permitted.
- Veterans are requested not to join or leave the March other than at the Assembly and Dispersal points.

We will march up to the forecourt of the Shrine past the VIP dais and perform an "eyes right" at the Eternal Flame, the banner and flag bearers will dip the banner and flags at the same point before the entire party left wheels past the Flame and disperses beyond the main flag poles.

Children from Kingsbury Primary School will hold the ropes from the banner (4 students) and will carry the flags (2 students). They will be wearing their school uniforms, which are in the Battalion colours.

Once again our comrades from the 2/16 Battalion Association have kindly extended an invitation to join them for lunch and/or drinks and a chat at the Lord Palmerston Hotel after the March. The hotel is located at the corner of Palmerston Crescent & Kingsway in South Melbourne.

The nearest parking will be at Federation Square car park. The RSL will also provide golf buggies at the entrance to the car park at the Russell Street extension to take veterans to the start of the March. Buses will be available opposite Simpson and his Donkey in Birdwood Avenue to return veterans to the City. Please note scooters are no longer available, so if you feel you are unable to march, cars are available. Golf buggies will also be along the March route in case of an emergency.

**ANZAC DAY**  
CENTENARY  
**25 APRIL 2015**



## QUEENSLAND REPORT

Greetings to all from the sunny (hot, humid) north, and best wishes for your New Year.

Our year ended on a sad note with the sudden passing of Battalion stalwart, **Arthur Toombs**. Ten of his Battalion family joined Dot and the immediate family to remember and celebrate his 91 years. Relatives revealed a wide and rich range of aspects of Arthur's life and all emphasised the importance of family to him.

Representing the Battalion was important to Arthur and he never declined an opportunity to attend events throughout Brisbane and the Gold Coast. The Toombs family always swelled the numbers at the Queensland reunion.

While Dot unashamedly admits to missing her good mate, she sees his legacy in the wonderful family support she is enjoying.

### Matt Power

Better news comes from Mt Tamborine where Matt Power is snubbing his nose at grim medical reports. He is feeling pretty good and getting on with things. His well-being and strong approach have also helped Bertha, who is feeling, and looking, quite positive.

The Powers have enjoyed plenty of visitors over the holiday period and have appreciated the support.



Matt Power with Michael Ralston, Darryl Thomson and Ian Hopley

### Dudley Warhurst

Dudley is poking along steadily and while he admits to "slowing down", he still made it along to Arthur's funeral. Other than that, the body doesn't allow much partying however he is ever ready to discuss any current events (and receive a top up to his whiskey supply).

### ANZAC Day 2015

Just a warning – it is expected that the march will commence at 9.30am this year.

### Qld Reunion

The reunion will be held on Thursday, 30th July and will return to Riverside Receptions at New Farm.

### Yandina State School Bursary



Trevor Pryor with Cameryn and bursary winner, A'Eisha

The annual 2/14 Battalion bursary was presented at the Graduation Parade in December. It did an old principal's heart wonders to see the 2/14 Battalion's history included as part of the school's curriculum. Students were asked to present a piece of persuasive writing which showed why the association between that school and the Battalion should continue.

Both Cameryn (runner up) and A'Eisha (winner) emphasised the service of those who have gone to war, in particular, those of the 2/14. They also recognised the need for youth to listen to their stories so neither they, nor the men and women who told them, will ever be forgotten.

A'Eisha (12 yrs old) opened her writing with the poem "Final Inspection" before completing her arguments as to why the school should maintain the relationship with the 2/14 Assn.

### The Final Inspection

by Sergeant Joshua Helterbran.

The soldier stood and faced his God,  
Which must always come to pass,  
He hoped his shoes were shining,  
Just as brightly as his brass.

"Step forward now, you soldier,  
How shall I deal with you?  
Have you always turned the other cheek,  
To my church have you been true?"

The soldier squared his shoulders,  
And said, "No Lord, I guess I ain't,  
Because those of us who carry guns,  
Can't always be a saint.

"I never passed a cry for help,  
Sometimes I shook with fear,  
sometimes, God forgive me,  
I wept unmanly tears.

"If you've a place for me here Lord,  
(It needn't be real grand,  
I've never expected, or had too much),  
But if you don't, I'll understand."

There was silence around the throne,  
Where the saints have often trod,  
As the soldier waited quietly,  
For the judgement of his God.

"Step forward now you soldier,  
You've borne your burdens well,  
Walk peacefully on Heaven's streets,  
You've done your time in Hell."

### The 2/14th Battalion and Yandina State School by A'Eisha

The author of this poem calls war, "Hell". Can you even begin to imagine what it would be like going to war, leaving your family behind? I can't and I hope you or I never have to experience that feeling. In 1940 the 2/14th Battalion were doing just that, getting ready to go to war. To fight for their country, our country and for our freedom. I am sure you will agree that Yandina State School is very lucky and grateful to have a connection with the 2/14th Battalion Association. These veterans have experienced war and because we can learn so much from them I strongly recommend that this association continue because if we lose it, we lose part of our history.

The 2/14th Battalion was formed on the 26th of April 1940 and between the 11th of May and the 5th of August 1942 they camped near Yandina. The soldiers trained at the bottom of Mt Ninderry. The bush and landscapes helped them get ready for war. They would climb Mt Ninderry twice a day with their full packs. In their packs they would carry dry food, canisters filled with water and all of their ammunition. In

## QUEENSLAND REPORT CONTINUED

their spare time they wrote letters and got acquainted with the community. The greatest battle they fought was along the Kokoda Track. The Japanese had invaded Papua New Guinea and they wanted to take over Port Moresby, which was important to the defence of Australia.

I am sure you would agree that ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day are two very important days for Australia. We pay tribute to and thank all the brave men and women who fought for our country, and for the freedom we have today. Some of them paying the greatest price of all, with their lives. We are also grateful for the soldiers who are ready to defend us today. Australia's war experiences have helped shape our nation. Therefore through our continued association with the 2/14th Battalion Association we can tell the veterans how much we value the contributions and sacrifices they made for us. War is documented in books, photographs, movies and in museums but only those who have experienced war can bring the stories to life and take us back to the past. As these brave men and women pass, so too does the history of their experiences.

For a long time the students at Yandina have had a strong association with the 2/14th Battalion and I am certain the students have learned a lot from their stories and their input at our ANZAC

Day and Remembrance Day parades. Each year the students have great fun hosting members of the 2/14th for different parades. It is wonderful to see the students and the veterans talking together. I strongly believe that the association with the 2/14th battalion must continue, as it is important.

Firstly because students need to understand the meaning of war and how it not only affects us personally but Australia as a nation and also those who have served our country. Secondly it gives the veterans a chance to keep their stories alive and connect with the youth of today. Lastly it gives us a chance to thank them for their dedication and bravery. It is vital that our association continues because it is a wonderful way to explore and learn about the subject.

For these reasons I think we should include the history of the 2/14th Battalion in the school curriculum. We should continue to invite members of the 2/14th to our ANZAC Day and Remembrance parades. One suggestion I have for future students is to record and document these wonderful stories and memories in a book so they will never be forgotten just like those who tell the stories.



Trevor and A'Eisha (holding the 2/14th Bn trophy) with principal, and great supporter, Rob Jennings.

## EVENT CALENDAR 2015

### Committee Meeting

11.30am, Sunday, 1st March 2015  
East Malvern RSL

### 2/16th Battalion Reunion/Lunch

11.30am, Sunday 22nd March 2015  
Old Hepburn Springs Hotel,  
Hepburn-Newstead Road, Hepburn  
Springs

### Yarra Valley Schools Legacy Service

11am, Tuesday 21st April 2015  
Dandenong Ranges National Park,  
Ferntree Gully. Light lunch provided.  
2/14th members welcome

### 2015 Wreath Laying & Reunion Lunch

10.00am, Thursday 23rd April 2015  
**Wreath Laying** at 2/14 Battalion Tree,  
Shrine of Remembrance

12 noon, **Reunion** (Entry from 11am)  
Victoria Barracks  
St Kilda Rd, Melbourne

### 2015 Anzac Day March

9.30am, Saturday 25th April 2015

### Traditional 2/14th Picnic

11am, Sunday 17th May 2015  
(Awaiting final approval to hold inside  
Puckapunyal Army Base)

### Committee Meeting

11.30am, Sunday, 7th June 2015  
East Malvern RSL

### Balikpapan 70th Anniversary Trip

From 29th June 2015 to 5th July 2015

### Queensland Reunion

Thursday, 30th July  
Riverside Receptions, New Farm

### Committee Meeting

11.30am, Sunday, 20th Sept 2015  
East Malvern RSL

### Annual General Meeting

11.30am, Sunday, 20th Sept 2015  
East Malvern RSL

### Annual Pilgrimage

The Shrine of Remembrance Melbourne  
Sunday – Date and time to be advised

### Committee Meeting

11.30am, Sunday, 6th December 2015  
East Malvern RSL

## 2014 KINGSBURY AWARDS

The 2014 Reservoir High Awards Night was held on the 10th of December last year. Those representing the Battalion were Vice President David Webb and Past President and Welfare Fund Trustee Michael Ralston. They were ably assisted by Veteran Max Caldwell.

Six year 10 students competed for the **Bruce Kingsbury Scholarship**, with essays that were all of an excellent standard. It was hard to pick a winner. The Scholarship is awarded to a student whose achievements are multiple and varied, who has aspirations to complete VCE and tertiary studies. This student has the potential to make a major contribution to Australian life and society, and this year the \$1,000 scholarship was won by **Lucy Lu**. The funds are paid to the school which then draws on the proceeds as needed by the student with their further studies. Each winner receives a scholarship certificate and a 2/14 Battalion colour patch badge.

Lucy's essay carefully considered the plight of John Metson and put a very real human face to one of Australia's true heroes. Lucy has undertaken some solid research, shown empathy towards her subject, and both compassion and maturity in her approach.

A previous winner, and speaker at a recent 2/14 reunion, Jennifer Phan, was featured in the Age newspaper on December 17 2014 in an article on High VCE Achievers. She has applied for the RMIT Bachelor of Applied Science (medical radiation), and we wish her every success.

Bruce Kingsbury Scholarships were also awarded to **Guwanya Kodithuwakku** and **Christian Wibowo** from **Kingsbury Primary School**. The two \$300 scholarship awards were presented at the school's graduation evening on December 15th.

Guwanya was selected by the school as an outstanding student who has involved herself in all aspects of the school community throughout 2014. Guwanya was also appointed as a senior Junior School Councillor.

Christian was the Kingsbury Primary's 2014 School Captain and was selected by the school for the Kingsbury award in recognition of his performance as a positive role model.

President Craig Iskov, Secretary John Smith, and Welfare Trustee Rob Eden represented the Association at the school's graduation evening on December 15th.

**Michael Ralston & Rod Eden**



*Michael Ralston and Max Caldwell present the award to Lucy Lu*

## JOHN METSON INSPIRES LUCY LU

*Below is the conclusion to Lucy Lu's prize-winning essay, in which she outlined her response to the story of John Metson who, when he was wounded in both ankles and cut off from the rest of the Battalion after the battle at Isurava in August, 1942, chose to crawl on hands and knees, rather than be a burden to the others in his party. Metson and those he was with were later betrayed to the Japanese and killed at Sangai village, where they had been left to await rescue.*

"Our nation wouldn't be what it is, if it wasn't for heroes like Corporal John Metson. His actions, his smile, his warmth, his positivity, his fortitude, these are all the qualities that I see our generation and future generations need more of. People that we all should look up to.

"As an average 16 year old girl raised by one inspiring, strong woman, I grew up learning that my life wasn't going to be easy and that day after day, God is going to test me to my breaking point. I grew up in a broken family without a father figure, without much warmth, I have been through lots of obstacles in my life, and many left deep scars in me. Looking at those scars remind me of what my priorities are, what my purpose in life is, and importantly who I am. I really want to participate in the Bruce Kingsbury Scholarship because I feel like this is one of the ways I can help my mother with

her financial burden, to tell her that her daughter can finally make her proud and do something really meaningful. Another reason I want to participate in the Bruce Kingsbury Scholarship is because I like to push myself, I like to see how far I can go, I'm usually not really that good at writing at school, but I think this is an amazing opportunity given by God and 2/14th Battalion Association to advocate my skills.

"I had a lot of dreams growing up, a lot. I wanted to be a teacher, police officer, military officers, makeup artist, company owner, mayor, and even an actress. I always had this deep inspiration to be a policewoman, because I always believed that the gender of a person shouldn't determine the line between what a person can or can not do. Everytime I see police officers or anything military related, I look up in admiration, I feel that a doctor has the lives of hundreds in their hands, but a police officer or soldiers hold thousands or even millions of lives in theirs.

"Reading and learning about the 2/14th Battalion and the past heroes of our countries, really inspires me to do something more worthy and meaningful in my life, I want to live my life full of love, passion, devotion and strength just like those men who fought in World War II."



## OBITUARIES

### T27163/TX11776 Private Eric William JONES



Eric William Jones was born in Wynyard, Tasmania, on 7 May 1921. He was living in Burnie when he enlisted in the Militia on 16 October 1942 at the military training camp in the grounds of the historic country mansion, Mona Vale, near the town of Ross. The northern Tasmanian militia regiment was 12 Battalion and served mostly as a garrison force in the Northern Territory. However, little is known of Eric's movements during this time.

During late 1942, the Army was seeking to have Militia soldiers transfer to the AIF with a possible expanded role in the Pacific War in mind. Eric duly transferred and received his new "TX" service number and, on 21 July 1943, he marched in to the 2/14 Battalion as a reinforcement prior to its return to New Guinea for the Markham-Ramu Campaign. He was posted to the Signals Platoon in Headquarters Company.

On 30 July 1943, advance elements of the Battalion left Ravenshoe on the Atherton Tablelands, by train for Townsville via Innisfail and on 31 July boarded HMAT Duntroon for Port Moresby. The remainder followed several days later aboard HMAT Taroona. Once at Port Moresby, the Battalion was progressively bussed to a large encampment at Bootless Inlet that had the name "Tent City".

Once again in the tropics, a much stricter anti-malarial program was implemented with more effective medication but it still did not prevent the onset or recurrence of malaria amongst Battalion members.

On 14 September 1943, after the capture of the Markham Valley area around Nadzab and subsequent construction of an airfield, the Battalion was flown to Nadzab to play its part in the consolidation of the Valley and the advance on Lae. The Battalion was then flown further up the valley to Kaiapit and took part on the further advance to the head of the valley and then on into the Ramu Valley culminating in the defeat of the Japanese at Shaggy Ridge.

Eric did not take part in this operation as he remained in Port Moresby as part of the Battalion's Left Out of Battle (LOB) group comprising of 4 officers and 60 other ranks under the Battalion Second in Command, Major

Bill Landale. The LOB group formed an important part of the Battalion's wartime operations. Whilst its day-to-day functions were to administratively support the Battalion on the battlefield, with the maintenance of signals communication an integral part, its principal reason for existence was far more important.

The LOB group was composed of a nucleus of Battalion functions so that in the event of a major setback for the Battalion that destroyed its fighting effectiveness, the LOB group would be the core around which a new Battalion could be formed. This group had to keep themselves in a constant state of readiness in the event it was required on the battlefield.

After completion of the Campaign and mopping up operations, the field force returned to Port Moresby and the Battalion regrouped. On 8 March 1944 it departed by sea to return to Townsville from where the various members returned to their home states for leave. Those returning via Victoria initially stayed at Camp Pell (in Royal Park, Melbourne) from where they moved to the camp at Watsonia and took part in a march through Melbourne on 19 April 1944.

After leave the Battalion regrouped at the Brisbane suburb of Strathpine where it spent several months before moving to Kairi on the Atherton Tablelands for further training. However, as the war progressed, the need for Australian troops decreased, particularly when the Australians were advised by McArthur that they were no longer to be used to support the invasion of the Philippines. Soldiers were invited to make application for early release on the basis of trade qualifications and industry need.

And so, Eric marched out of the Battalion on 25 October 1944 and returned to Tasmania where he was discharged from the Army on 27 November 1944.

### Q146337/QX51763 TOOMBS, SERGEANT ARTHUR HENRY



Army records in Canberra show that Arthur Henry Toombs was born in Brisbane on 17 October 1923 and was living in the Brisbane suburb of Salisbury when he enlisted in the Army on 14 April 1943. There is some confusion with his Army records which reports his surname as "Toombes" but his next of kin as "Toombs".

Initially Arthur joined the Citizens Military Forces (CMF) and was posted to the Reinforcement Training Unit at the Jungle Training Centre Canungra in south-east Queensland. He soon

transferred to the AIF and marched into the 2/14 Battalion on 30 May 1943.

At the start of the War the Battalion was armed with the .55 inch Boys Anti-tank Rifle but this weapon proved to be unsuitable for the jungle warfare of Kokoda and Milne Bay. Back in Australia in 1943 to recover and refit from the arduous Papuan Campaign which had cost the Battalion so dearly, Arthur was posted to the newly formed Tank-Attack Platoon armed with the much bigger 2 Pounder guns.

In an attempt to overcome a negatively defensive mentality that was settling in Australia in the early part of the Pacific War, Anti-Tank regiments were renamed as Tank Attack units. They were also re-armed with bigger 6 pounder artillery pieces to deal with the development of heavier tanks as the war progressed.

Infantry battalions were reorganised to accommodate the changing style of warfare and the discarded 2 pounder guns were distributed amongst the infantry units. However, for the remainder of the war the term "Tank-Attack" was a misnomer as the Battalion did not meet any enemy tanks.

The Platoon was attached to the Pioneer Platoon and assisted it with patrolling, escort duty and the construction of tracks in the Kumbarum area near Shaggy Ridge. Whilst Jim McAllister records in his book, *Men of the 2/14 Battalion*, that this was not spectacular work, it was nonetheless vital as 2/27 Battalion relied on this support for its supplies and removal of casualties.

In 1944 the Battalion was back in Australia for a well-earned rest in the Atherton Tablelands at Kairi. There the Platoon topped the 7th Division Tank Attack Course but also spent the time gaining competency in handling other weapons such as the 2 inch mortar and Bren light machine gun.

In early 1945 the Battalion moved to Townsville to train for proposed sea-borne landings when the Americans initially planned to use the 7th Division in their landing force to retake the Philippines. But, this was not to be as the Yanks decided to go it alone. Left to mop up the islands they left behind, the 7th Division was to land at Balikpapan in Borneo on 1 July 1945.

Again they met no enemy tanks but the Platoon provided vital fire support in a light artillery role. This included firing armour piercing and high explosive shells very effectively at Japanese bunkers.

By this time Arthur had been promoted from Corporal to Sergeant and the War was just about to end. He moved with the Battalion to the Celebes on 30 September where the Battalion was engaged in a post-war peace-keeping operation until Dutch forces returned to resume administration of their colony.

On 22 November Arthur marched out of the Battalion and was transferred briefly to 2/12 Battalion, from where he returned to Australia and was discharged from the Army on 18 January 1946 at Brisbane.

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## AROUND THE TRAPS

The Hopleys called in to see Matt and Bertha Power in mid-January.

He looks fine. Matt reckons he feels like an imposter given the dire warning re his health and imminent departure when his doctor reckons he is now doing well and doesn't want to see him for another 3 months. He amused youngsters, Kim and Anna Hopley, with some of his stories.

Ian also fixed up their computer email receiver systems so Matt is back on email should you wish to contact him.



*Ian Hopley and daughters with Matt and Bertha Power*

Trevor Pryor called in to see **Jack Thomson (VX142459)**, who is going quite well for a bloke recently turned 97. Jack still gets up to the local RSL for a "beer and a bet". He combs RSL and Vets publications for mentions of the Battalion and recently found pictures of the unit landing at Yellow Beach. Jack was keen to hear of Association news and displayed a precise recall of action in New Guinea and Borneo.

Trevor has also been in contact with **George Priestley** from 39th Battalion, who said he is doing well except for some stitches in his arm. He has to have a little more work done shortly and should be ready to join me for a game of golf late in March. Remarkably, George is still heavily involved in Veteran's golf at Woodford and local districts.

On New Year's Day, **Peter Forster** celebrated his 94th birthday. Due to the closeness of his care facility to their home his wife, Sandy visits him

every day and often twice a day.

Their dog, 'Charlie', comes every night and after giving Peter his nightly cuddle proceeds to provide pleasure for other dog-loving residents as well.

Sandy believes Peter's attitude to change is his secret for longevity. He is the greatest role model for people of all generations. "Go with the flow" or "Roll with the punches" would be his motto ... and it is certainly working for him.

His friendly demeanour hasn't changed over the years inspiring love in those around him.

When Sandy asked him if he felt he was well cared for at Fairway Hostel he replied, "Very well cared for." So the shared care of Peter is working a treat.



*Sandy and Peter Forster celebrating Peter's 94th birthday.*

Long time friend of the Battalion, author **Harry Gordon** has passed away, aged 89. Harry had a long career in journalism and was well known as the Australian Olympic historian. In 1962 he published a biography of **Reg Saunders**, The Embarrassing Australian. Reg was Australian's first aboriginal commissioned officer and brother of 2/14th member, **Harry Saunders**, killed at Gona. In researching the book, Gordon interviewed several members of 9 Platoon who'd served with Harry. In recent years, Gordon again interviewed several of our veterans in preparation for a revised edition of Reg's biography. Sadly, Harry Gordon has died before this revision could be completed.