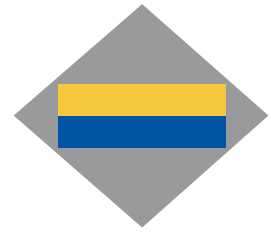


COMRADESHIP

www.2nd14battalion.org.au

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Hello to all our veterans, widows, members and friends. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at various functions throughout this year.

Recently 2/14 members attended the opening service at the 'Walk of Honour' at One Tree Hill above the 1000 Steps in the Dandenong Ranges National Park in Ferntree Gully. The 'Walk of Honour' is a joint project with 39th, 2/14 and 2/16 and features panels of various veterans of the Kokoda and Beachheads battles. The project, led by the very energetic Alfred Malia of 39th, is ongoing so you can purchase a panel of a loved one who served, and it will be displayed on rotation.

We have a busy schedule ahead as usual in April with a number of events including the Schools Anzac Service at Ferntree Gully and several individual school presentations.

You are all invited to attend the service at 10.00am at the 2/14 tree at the Shrine of Remembrance, followed by the annual reunion lunch at Victoria Barracks Officers Mess on Tuesday 24 of April. And of course, on Anzac Day the 2/14 will be represented in several locations across the country. Final details will be confirmed and available elsewhere in this issue, and on the 2/14 website and Facebook.

You will see a number of changes occurring this year as we manage a reducing income stream against increasing costs. One of our most significant costs is the production and mailing of Comradeship, the grant for which has reduced to less than \$1000 per annum, while costs have increased. We have been forced to make the difficult decision to revert to three issues per year and ask that you help keep costs to a minimum by choosing to receive the email version. Veterans and widows will, of course, continue to receive their print copy free of charge.

As we continue to support the veterans and widows of the 2/14 Battalion, and uphold and honour the proud traditions of all who served under the yellow and blue colours, I ask that you consider sharing the stories of the 2/14 with families and friends and encourage them to join up and attend our functions. Over the years, many other Battalion Associations have disappeared but with your interest and assistance we will go on. And of course, additional financial support by way of donation or bequest of any kind will be greatly beneficial in ensuring the 2/14th lives on in Australian history.

Regards to you all,
Craig Iskov
President

DANDENONG RANGES SCHOOLS ANZAC DAY CEREMONY 2018 FERNTREE GULLY NATIONAL PARK



The remembrance area in the Dandenong Ranges National Park at Upper Ferntree Gully

The 2/14, 2/16 and the 39th Battalion Associations are once again organising an ANZAC Day Service for Schools in the Dandenong Ranges at the Ferntree Gully national Park on Wednesday the 18th of April 2018 at 11.00am.

Veterans, widows and their families are cordially invited to this event which is supported by over 15 primary and high schools and 400 students and teachers.

The service is designed to commemorate the contribution that servicemen and women have made on behalf of their country in all theatres of war.

It is also intended to provide the students with a better understanding of the sacrifices that our servicemen and women have made in ensuring that we are able to live in a free and fair society.

Reserved parking will be available in the National Park car park and Veterans and invited guests will be seated under cover. Parks Victoria will have a golf buggy on hand to ferry anyone who needs it to the guest area, so please come along and support this important occasion.

If you would like to attend this function please RSVP to David Webb, Honourary Secretary 2/14 Battalion Association by e mail at ceyreste@sme.com.au by the 11th of April 2018

2018 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE BY 30 APRIL 2018

Membership Subscriptions fall due on 30 April 2018 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.**

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 (\$30 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 2017 your membership subscription will not be due until April 2019.

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.**

Comradeship

There is a significant cost to the Association in producing Comradeship, as our grant to produce the newsletter reduces each year with the decline in the number of veterans and widows. The Association is committed to continuing to provide a printed newsletter to our veterans and widows, however, we are looking to minimise the impact of rising costs for postage and production by offering Comradeship as an electronic copy, available by email. Please consider helping us to continue to support our veterans and widows by opting to receive an electronic copy of Comradeship only, and circle the appropriate response on the Remittance Form.

MELBOURNE REUNION Tuesday 24 APRIL 2018

10am: Wreath-Laying Service - *Note time* 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 **9.45 for 10.00 am Tuesday 24 April 2015.**

Please come along for a moment of quiet reflection before adjourning to Victoria Barracks for the Reunion Luncheon, later in the day. (There are several cafes in the area, for a quick cuppa before the Reunion.)

12 noon to 4pm: Luncheon, Officers Mess, Victoria Barracks, Wells Street, Southbank. 3006. (Adjacent to Miles Street)

We are grateful, once again, for the support of the Mess Committee at the Barracks in allowing us to hold our Reunion in such an historic venue.

Access is at the rear of Victoria Barracks where you will see the security checkpoint. As the security check takes some time, we need to commence arriving at the checkpoint from 11 am.

Please read the security requirements below.

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

Cost: \$65 per head.

Includes a superb buffet lunch. Drinks will be available at Mess prices. Please see enclosed booking sheet for further information re dietary requirements.

Victoria Barracks is an active military base and the number of people that can attend is limited, therefore it is necessary to return the attached booking form promptly as the first forms received will be assured of gaining entry. Final date for booking and payment is **Friday, 13 April.**

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), though parts of this area can be quarantined for buses transporting school children to the commemorative services. 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 David Webb on 0417 442 299



Security Requirements

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 David Webb on 0417 442 299 as soon as possible if you have problem with ID and we will assist you.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN REPORT

Ian Hopley writes: Members who have travelled on a 2/14th Battalion trip to Balikpapan will be pleased to know that our long time Balikpapan supporter Russell Wood, former Country Business Manager of Coates, Indonesia, is doing well after surgery and well on the way to recovery. Russell and his family, are now residing in Yorketown on the Yorke Peninsula, South Australia. The Woods have adapted well to Aussie life and recently headed back to Balikpapan for a short trip to visit family and friends.

Russ and wife, Lisa are very proud that son, Richard has completed his basic training with the Australian Army and is now at Latchford Barracks in Victoria doing his RAEME training (same as Russ did many years ago).



Jason, Russ, Richard and Lisa Wood

ANZAC DAY 2018

The ADCC has agreed to maintain the original March protocols for 2018, provided that: **any unit marching with its banner MUST have a veteran with them, wearing their medals; and that such units must have only ONE descendant per deceased veteran, wearing the veteran's actual medals on their right breast.**

We have been told that these restrictions will be enforced strictly by the marshalls.



2018 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 11.00 am. Given that our actual step off was earlier than nominated last year, marchers should be in position by 10.20 am at the latest. Look for the Banner.

Vehicles will be provided by the RACV 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 requests should be made as soon as possible. Please contact David Webb on 0417 442 299 or ceyreste@sme.com.au)

The March organisers make the usual requests regarding forming up 6 abreast; neatness of attire;

being old enough to march the full distance without assistance; NOT carrying photographs; and not pushing prams or strollers.

- **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).**

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.

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.

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 **Rising Sun Hotel** at 2 Raglan St, South Melbourne (corner of Eastern Rd and Raglan St) after the March. Contact Trevor Ingram (phone: 04 1933 3347 or trevor.ingram@bigpond.com) with any queries.

WALK OF HONOUR

KOKODA MEMORIAL PLATEAU - ONE TREE HILL

Dandenong Ranges National Park.

The next stage of the Kokoda Memorial Plateau was opened at One Tree Hill on Sunday, 25 Feb, 2018. The "Walk of Honour" features information panels about members of the battalions that served in the Kokoda Track and Beachheads battles.

In a short ceremony, the Hon. Kim Wells, state member for Rowville, cut the ribbon in the presence of the 2/14, 2/16 and 39 Battalion Association presidents and representatives, and three veterans from the 39th Battalion. Mr Wells has been involved in the Dandenong Ranges National Park Kokoda commemorative installations since the early 1990s, when he, along with Margaret Briggs and her family, set about turning the climb up the mountain into what we now know as the "1000 Steps".



Hon. Kim Wells MP declares the "Walk of Honour" open

This new section of the pathway incorporates panels featuring veterans. The panels are printed on metal and are screwed to stainless steel frames placed along the pathway that links the top of the "1000 Steps" with the simulated "Kokoda Plateau" at One Tree Hill picnic ground.



Cherie and Jacky Clark with the panel for their grandfather, Walter Clark, killed at Brigade Hill

Commemorate Your Family Member

Veterans and/or their families are invited to purchase a panel of a loved one. The cost for a panel is \$200. Anyone interested in purchasing a panel can provide a good quality photograph of the veteran and the information as required on the order form. That information can be downloaded from the DVA WWII Nominal Roll website (<http://www.wv2roll.gov.au>) and will appear on the panel.

The 39th, 2/14 & 2/16 Battalions will each have 4 panels on display at any given time, 55/53rd and other battalions will have 1 panel on display. In addition, other panels are also available through this offer for private subscription. Each panel will

be displayed at One Tree Hill throughout the year. Parks Victoria have agreed to rotate the panels on a regular basis so that each panel can be displayed on the Walk of Honour.

Email your interest to 2.14battalion@gmail.com.au. We will then advise you to on how to send the order to the manufacturer. Payment must be made to the manufacturer at that time.

The photo below is an example of the information panels that are displayed at One Tree Hill in the "Walk of Honour".



The panel for Reginald (Stanley) Hunter showing the layout.

Please note: Other panels will be displayed on rotation as they are produced so there is no time limit on ordering a panel.

This is a unique opportunity to honour a 2/14 veteran who served in the Kokoda Track and Beachheads battles, in the outdoor setting of the magnificent Kokoda memorial at Ferntree Gully. We are proud of this achievement and encourage you to be involved, as the 2/14 Battalion Association continues to work tirelessly to honour our veterans.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP LIONEL LIDDELL SMITH



Past President Michael Ralston presents Life Membership to Lionel Smith, with his wife, Greta.

At the last AGM of the Battalion Association, the motion to award life membership to **VX16833 Lionel Liddell Smith** was passed unanimously.

On Wednesday, 22 November, 2017, a small group of Association members visited 98 year old Lionel, and his wife, Greta,

at their nursing home on the Mornington Peninsula. Children, Heather and David were on hand to support their parents.

Lionel was one of the Battalion's "Originals", enlisting in May 1940 and travelling to the Middle East for service in the Syrian Campaign. During 1942, he fought in the Kokoda Campaign, and was one of a group led by Lieut McIlroy, missing in action from 5 until 14 September, after they were cut off from the main force by the Japanese. Lionel spent the later years of the war in the Canteen Service, spending time in Port Moresby, Morotai and Manila.

An active member of the Battalion Association committee, Lionel served as president of the Association during 1976, and contributed much time and effort to the preparation of *Men of the 2/14 Battalion*, the companion volume to the *History of*

the 2/14 Battalion, prior to its publication in 1990. He was a regular at committee meetings, reunions and other events until well into his 90's.

Lionel shared with us that now his sight and hearing have deteriorated significantly, he spends his time quietly thinking about his life, remembering friends and experiences from the past.



Lionel Smith, proud recipient of Life Membership of the Association

KINGSBURY AWARDS 2017

Kingsbury Primary

Those who have attended either the ANZAC Day March or the Shrine Pilgrimage in recent years will be delighted to know that **Con Papapetrou** was one of the recipients of the award at Kingsbury Primary in November last year. While his citation paid tribute to the way Con has upheld the school values of Respect, Teamwork, Learning, Friendship and Safety during his time at the school, it is his dedication to honouring the sacrifice of the men of the 2/14 Battalion that has made a lasting impression on those in the Association to whom he has become a familiar face.

Dina Margi, who has also attended many of our functions, was the other award recipient. Her willingness to persevere when faced with challenges, to put the needs of her peers above her own and for inspiring others to greater achievements, qualities that Bruce Kingsbury demonstrated with his actions, were acknowledged in the award. (Dina's sister, Rayanne received the award in 2011!)



Craig Iskov and Sue Davies with Dina Margi and Con Papapetrou

Reservoir High School

Congratulations to **Amber Robertson**, who was awarded the Reservoir High School 2018 Bruce Kingsbury Scholarship for her essay on Bruce. In her essay, Amber included some interesting detail on the origin of the Victoria Cross. The instigation of an award for "gallantry of the highest order" to which "every grade and individual from the highest to the lowest may be admissible" faced opposition from senior military commanders at the time, who argued that only officers should be eligible. But the support of Prince Albert, with Queen Victoria's backing, overrode such objections, and Amber makes the point that "Bruce Kingsbury demonstrated how your rank isn't a factor regarding the level of courage, effort and devotion you put into serving your country, and that someone of the lowest rank can actually surpass a person of a higher rank if they devote themselves to their duty or will it."

Amber's personal reflection on what Bruce Kingsbury's sacrifice means to her espouses values many of the men of the 2/14 Battalion shared along with her:

Personally, as a young child I've been forced to observe many events and situations that have negatively impacted me, but it was my decision to let go and to move on from those things. Bruce Kingsbury demonstrated a huge amount of bravery through his actions, and I would like to think that I showed bravery through my ability to move on and not let the negative things I've seen, change me as a person or rid me of my motivation. Just as the saying goes, no one's story is of lesser importance than another's, it also goes that no act of bravery is of lesser importance

than another. Despite demonstrating bravery, courage and a strong sense of determination, Private Bruce Kingsbury also showed devotion and persistence to duty throughout the course of serving his country. Similar to bravery, everyday, people all around the globe show devotion to their duty. It doesn't matter if it is devotion to your career, your education, or even a relationship, everything is just important as another. As Bruce Kingsbury demonstrated his devotion to his career, or what he called his duty, I devote myself to my education because I understand how important education is, and also that education is the key to a successful future. Being exposed to many negative factors that can affect a person's life such as lack of education, made me understand how important it really is. In life the most that someone can truly ask for is a good career, a family, and happiness, which is what I wish for now and in the future.

Veteran, **Max Caldwell**, was on hand to present Amber with her award at the Reservoir High Awards Night.



Con and Dina after the 2017 ANZAC Day March

OBITUARIES

VX 15318 PRIVATE CLETUS EDWIN REID



Army enlistment records show that Cletus Edwin Reid was born in Benalla on 26 March 1920 and that he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 13 May 1940 at Seymour. He was then transferred to the Recruit Receiving Depot at Caulfield Racecourse where he attested on 16 May.

Cletus noted on his enlistment form that he was currently serving with the Militia in 59 Battalion (the Hume Regiment) although his service file cannot be located. He noted also that his occupation was a clerk which was to have an influence on his early postings.

He was posted to 2/14 Battalion and marched in at Puckapunyal Camp on 20 May 1940 and attached to the Quartermaster's staff. On 20 June 1940 Cletus was promoted to acting Corporal Clerk in the QM's Store.

On 19 October 1940 the Battalion boarded the Aquitania in Sydney and sailed for the Middle East where they disembarked on 25 November 1940. During the voyage, though, Cletus committed a couple of indiscretions and was demoted back to the rank of Private.

After a couple of months with the Battalion at the Julis Camp in Palestine, he was transferred from 2/14 Battalion to 2/1 Ordnance Store Company on 13 January 1941 and then nearly twelve months later to 2/2 Ordnance Store Company on 1 January 1942. Reinforcements to the Middle East were generally attached to a Training Battalion for familiarisation and more specialised training before allocation to a front line unit.

On 28 May 1942 Cletus was again transferred, this time to the AIF Middle East Reinforcements Staging Camp although by now the Australian troops were progressively being returned to Australia to meet the Japanese threat to our North. Finally he embarked for Australia on 24 January 1943 and disembarked in Sydney on 27 February 1943.

After short postings to 2/6 Field Ambulance and then 153 Australian General Transport Coy, Cletus relinquished his storeman's proficiency grading and

was transferred to 2/14 Battalion on 26 July 1943. He was posted to D Company as a rifleman and on 31 July 1943 embarked with the Battalion for Port Moresby and the forthcoming Markham Ramu Campaign.

The Battalion disembarked in Moresby on 2 August 1943 and moved to a large tented camp at the east end of Jackson's Airstrip. For six weeks they trained vigorously until the American paratroopers supported by an Australian artillery battery landed and secured the Nadzab area. Engineers rapidly upgraded the emergency landing strip to support transport aircraft and 2/14 Battalion landed there on 15 September.

The Battalion's first task was to move into the Atzera Mountains on the north side and secure the tracks to prevent the Japanese from escaping to the north coast. 18 Platoon was in the lead and, as it approached the Busip River on 18 September 1943, it was ambushed by a Japanese patrol and fired on from several directions. A native guide was wounded and Cletus suffered a gunshot wound to the right knee.

He was immediately evacuated and returned to Australia for treatment and convalescence. He finally rejoined the Battalion on 18 May 1944 in Queensland after its return from New Guinea. In June 1944 Cletus qualified at an advanced driver's course and rejoined the Battalion as it waited and trained for its next assignment that was expected to be supporting the American landing in the Philippines. However, this planning didn't eventuate so it was back to training and waiting for whatever was next.

In mid-1945 it was finally decided that 2/14 Battalion would take part in the 7th Division invasion of the Japanese occupied island of Borneo at the oil port of Balikpapan. The Battalion landed on 1 July 1945 with D Company in the lead. The principal objective was to secure the town and the airfield at Manggar further up the south-east coast. All objectives were seized but D Company suffered further casualties.

Shortly after, the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima caused the surrender of all Japanese forces. 2/14 Battalion moved to a peace-keeping role to secure its area and prepare the people for return to civil administration. The Battalion moved to the Celebes Islands (now Sulawesi in Indonesia) to continue this role but Cletus sought early release and returned to Australia on the troopship Cheshire.

Cletus marched into Camp Pell at Royal Park on 20 November 1945 and was discharged from the Army on 14 December 1945.

He joined the Association after the war and took part in many events including the Last Parade at the Kokoda Battlefields in 1998 to remember his mates. He also took part in a recent joint Australian War Memorial and Professional Photographers project that photographed World War Two veterans. Cletus' photograph, seen above, is now in the War Memorial Collection.

Lest we Forget

EVENT CALENDAR 2018

Ferntree Gully Schools Service

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

2018 Reunion

Tuesday, 24 April 2018
10:00am 2/14 Battalion Tree Service,
Shrine of Remembrance, NW corner
12 noon Victoria Barracks for reunion
lunch, entry after 11:30 am

2018 Anzac Day March

Wednesday, 25 April, 2018
Assemble Flinders St East, nr St Pauls,
10.45 am
Step off 11.00 am

Committee Meeting

11.30am, Sunday, 3 June 2018
East Malvern RSL

Queensland Reunion

July 2018 Thursday, 26 July, 2018
Riverside Receptions, New Farm

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
Followed by September Committee
meeting.

Shrine Service

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

2018 Picnic at Puckapunyal Army Base (Proposed)

Sunday 21 Oct, 2018 TBC

BALIKPAPAN AND BEYOND, 2017

Paul and Kathy Macdonald

It was quite by accident that we came across Ian Hopley, Trustee and South Australian Representative, 2/14th Battalion Association, who, in October 2017, took us on a guided 'military history' tour of Balikpapan, Borneo, Indonesia.

My husband, Paul, and I have always wanted to visit the site where Paul's great uncle, VX50561 Lance Corporal Harry Waites (nick named 'Crow'), of the 2/14th Battalion, was mortally wounded in Balikpapan in WW11; to explore further the history leading up to his death; to see the small hill that was named after him (known as Waites Knoll); and to visit his grave on Labuan Island, Malaysia, where Uncle Harry was eventually buried.

Having a few spare moments one day in August, I googled 'Lance Corporal Harry Waites' and came across the 2/14th Battalion website and then the Comradeship Newsletters. The newsletters contained a range of interesting articles, including Ian's previous trips to Borneo. I emailed the editor, Jill Bear, to ascertain whether Ian was intending to have any other trips. Thankfully, Jill put me in touch with Ian straight away, and some weeks later, here I am, writing about our wonderful trip.

We have completed some extensive research into Uncle Harry's background and came across some interesting information about him, which I can tell you about at some other time!

As some of you would know, Balikpapan and Labuan Island, are not tourist destinations, and therefore are not easy places to get to – no direct flights from Melbourne. Thus our journey, combined with a short stay over in Singapore, took us on 9 different flights with 5 different airlines! All part of the fun.

We decided that we would get to Balikpapan a day early (Saturday 30 September 2017), in case we had delayed flights and to 'settle in'.

Sunday 1 October 2017 - Balikpapan

This evening we met Ian for the first time and our travel companions – Keith Lambert, a veteran of the 2/14th Battalion and his family: daughter, Deanne and son, Brian; granddaughters, Debbie and Tami and Tami's husband Richard.



The Tour Group

Ian provided a comprehensive briefing of what the next 3 days would entail. He also gave us a 'heads up' that no matter what planning went into this trip (some 9 months I believe), things may not go to plan. The group concurred that they were more than happy to "go with the flow".

Ian had arranged access to a minivan and four wheel drive, these were to be our modes of transport for the most of the trip, except for a jaunt down Manggar River in a local fishing boat.

Monday 2 October 2017

An early start after breakfast, where we met our drivers and the fabulous Ian Hale, an ex-pat and ex-serviceman, an Olympian, representing Australia with shooting in the 1984 (Los Angeles) and 1988 (Seoul) Olympics and also honoured in the Victorian Clay Target Association Hall of Fame (2016) who we learnt later, is also extensively involved with the Borneo Bears, Australian Rules team and the local RSL in Balikpapan. Ian, who could also speak Indonesian, had organised access to several of the places we were to visit. We were also fortunate to have, Meta, a young Indonesian woman, who worked for Coates Hire, our guide, particularly with the language and direction to local points of interest. Thanks also to Stuart Brown, ex-serviceman, President of the local ANZAC Day Memorial Committee and Manager at Coates Hire who provided one of the vehicles and led the memorial service at Pasir Ridge.

Our first point of interest today was to see the Tanjungpura Military Museum. Unfortunately this did not go to plan, even though Meta and Ian had pre-arranged security clearance, the powers that be would not let us in and the museum, although open, was inaccessible. Not to worry, it was interesting just observing the comings and goings on the busy streets – motorbikes everywhere, men pulling small carts along the road with food and produce, small shops selling a range of wares, washing hung out over the balconies of small flats, one on top of the other etc.

Next stop, the Reservoir Meriam Japanese canon site, left abandoned on the top of a hill, in immaculate condition, just 'sitting' amongst local houses and a small school. The view was spectacular – looking over the blue roof tops of houses, down to the sea and in the distance, the oil refineries. Balikpapan is a sea port, with its main industry being two oil refineries that make naphtha, kerosene, gasoline and diesel fuel.

It was lunch time! We stopped off at Batakan Beach Café – a cafe right on the beach which provided us with sea breezes, a welcome relief from the heat. We enjoyed a local Indonesian lunch of our choice, washed down by a cold drink. This also gave us a chance to get to know our travel companions.

Manggar River was our next stop. We stopped on the bridge that crossed the river to get an overall view of where the 2/14th travelled upstream and where the men were eventually dropped off to fight their way through the dense tropical rain forest towards what became known as Waites Knoll.

The next stop was of particular interest to Paul, as this is where his Uncle Harry was mortally wounded. Luckily in previous years, Ian and some veterans were able to pin point the exact location of this small hill, or Waites Knoll. We were lucky to have the opportunity to see this location and be allowed on the land where the Knoll is located, as it is now privately owned with a house being built nearby.

The owner of this land gave us permission to walk around his property and take photos of the Knoll.

Ian provided the owner with copies of photos of the captured Japanese cannon and a geo-spatial map marking the location of Waites Knoll. This was presented to the owner by Keith and was a fitting close to a remarkable day.

On the way back to our hotel, we were taken to Yellow Beach, where the 2/14th first landed. The beach is where fish farmers dry fish on rows and rows of drying racks ready to send to factories to make fish paste, a staple in most Indonesian and other Asian dishes. We were pre warned about the smell, and they were not wrong!



Fish drying on Yellow Beach

Unfortunately the beach was littered with plastics, a stark reminder of the problem that not only exists here, but around the world.

Tuesday 3 October 2017

Up early this morning to attend the memorial service for Uncle Harry and for Keith and his mates of the 2/14th Battalion.

It was only a short drive up to the Memorial, located at Pasa Ridge, on property owned by Chevron Oil. We entered the facility amid tight security. The Memorial for the Australians that had fallen was just inside the front gate in a beautiful, treed setting with manicured gardens around it. A small area was dedicated to those who lost their lives and is where the Australians living in Balikpapan hold their ANZAC Day ceremony. It had a peaceful, quiet atmosphere, even though set within the grounds of an oil refinery.

The Memorial has been made out of parts of a Matilda tank. The design of the Memorial, incorporating the tank was very clever and a fitting tribute to those who fought the battles. The 2/14th flag, in blue and yellow colours, was draped over the track of the tank and nearby were two amazing wreaths - one for Uncle Harry and the other for Keith (and his mates who were killed).

Stuart Brown welcomed everyone and read out the history of the 2/14th action and made mention of Uncle Harry. Keith and his family, and Paul and I placed our wreaths in front of the Memorial. Then Richard played the bugle call: the Last Post and there was a minute silence. It was very moving.

We then drove to our next destination - a war memorial down by the coast. We spent a brief moment here visiting the beautiful gardens which

had a range of unusual flowers, not seen in Australia.

Whilst we were there we had to detour as there was a huge ceremony/military parade happening in a park - unfortunately we were not allowed to stop and look. This was where the original cemetery was and where Uncle Harry and his comrades were buried.

Ian took us to a small market and Batik material shop for those of us who were in need of a bit of retail therapy.

We went back to the hotel for lunch and then we were taken to the Australian International School - a private school for Australian expatriates and for families from other countries who work in Balikpapan. The school had organized our boat trip on the Manggar River, and we stopped to pick up the school principal (Sue, an Australian) who was coming with us.

We drove to the mouth of the river where our boat was waiting for us, amid much laughter, waving and excitement from the locals. We walked to the end of the pier followed by the locals and there was our boat! A long thin wooden boat with a "putt putt" motor steered by a golf stick connected to the throttle and a rope to assist with steering. We all clambered down some rickety old steps helped by the locals, sat atop the cabin or at the front of the boat or where we could fit - and away we went, with a diesel motor periodically smoking! Great fun! Even Keith managed to get on board. He was incredible; an amazing man; super effort for a 97 year old veteran.

We travelled upstream for about 1.5 hours, just to see what it was like for the soldiers to navigate the terrain and to see in the distance how far it was for 2/14th to get to the drop off point for Waites Knoll.

We stopped off at a different spot to disembark the boat - easier this time. Our car and bus were waiting to take us back to the hotel. Along the way we saw hair raising motor bikes wind in and out of traffic, local street stalls selling weird food, small motor mechanic shops, people just sitting around talking, smoking, kids at school etc.

On the way home we stopped off at the Batki Haji Orphanage that the 2/14th has a relationship with, to present a small donation of money, but to also 'inspect' the ablution block for the girls that the 2/14th Association financed and arranged to be built the last time they were here. About 15 girls, aged between 10-15, came out to greet us. There were only a few buildings on the block, an office, a dormitory which housed bunk beds, a very basic kitchen, eating area and then another building which was the ablution block.

We had some photos taken with the girls and waved goodbye. Ian told us that some of the girls were orphans and others came from broken or abusive homes.

On that somber note we returned to our pristine rooms at the hotel. Definitely puts things into perspective visiting the orphanage.

Wednesday 4 October 2017

Off to see the Sun Bears and Orangutang Rehabilitation Project in the Bos Samboja National

Park today. Quite a long drive, about an hour or so into the true Borneo jungle! The turn off was quite hard to find with a very small sign at the start of a very bumpy road.

We were greeted by 'security' - a man in an official uniform with a couple of locals sitting in a hut, enjoying the cool shade of the thick forest!

We had to park our van and take one of their buses further into the forest. We drove about 5 minutes down the road to the Sun Bear enclosure. They are smallish black bears with very long claws (in fact look very similar to a wombat but bigger!). We could walk across a very rickety fly over - which took you over the bear enclosure. There were 6 bears here, all asleep. It's great they are protecting them as they are apparently sought after for their liver! And used as 'entertainers' in side shows and kept as a family pet until the family lost interest in them.

Back onto the bus and along further into the forest to see the Orangutans. We saw a big male sleeping in a large hut on stilts. His name was Romeo. The Orangutans are housed on an island surrounded by water. This way the orangutans are 'contained' and cannot escape as they do not like water and cannot swim. We walked around the island a short distance. A local ranger took his canoe around to where we were standing and encouraged the Orangutan to leave his sleeping post and come out to 'join' his guests, to which he obliged by swinging across a large cable, nearby to where we stood - long dandy, red hairy arms - what a sight - coming to rest, where he ate the watermelon provided to him.

Then we walked up a track to a hotel/restaurant complex, literally on a hill in the tree tops - fantastic view - you felt like you were in a tree house. We had lunch here - it was so hot and steamy in the valley that it was a welcome to be higher up with some breeze.

I also spoke very briefly to some Canadian girls, who came out of the bush covered in mud and wearing long waders and overalls. They were most excited and stated that they were here on work experience for a week and had been assisting digging holes for the posts for another Orangutan enclosure. One girl said it was a great job and proudly stated, "I've saved another Orangutan today!"

We had a short rest in the afternoon and then went down to our farewell dinner. We were to stay another day and then fly to Singapore for 6 nights and then onto Labuan Island to visit the Commonwealth War Cemetery where Uncle Harry is buried.

Thanks to all, especially Ian, for a wonderful, rewarding and memorable trip.

Thursday 12 October 2017 - Labuan Island

Today we spent the better part of the day travelling to Labuan Island - Singapore to Kuala Lumpur then on to Labuan.

Labuan Island is known as an off shore financial centre and also the off shore support hub for deep water oil and gas activities. It is also a tourist destination for people travelling through Sabah, nearby Bruneians and scuba divers.

We hired a car for the day, air conditioned at that! We saw most of the Island and what was to be seen there. Plus being able to cool off in between sites!

The first was the Labuan Commonwealth War Cemetery, a peaceful, well-manicured and maintained lawn cemetery. It took us a little while to find Uncle Harry's grave - the cemetery had a large metal cupboard set into a wall which contained a book with all the names of those buried in the cemetery along with the plot number and a visitors' book. Uncle Harry was buried in plot B, Row 13, No 6.



Paul at Uncle Harry's Grave

We eventually found the grave and it was an emotional moment for Paul and I. We spent a little while there, took photos and marveled at how we had seen where he was mortally wounded over the other side of Borneo, on the Indonesian side; where he was buried near the coast and then where he had been reburied on Labuan Island, Malaysia.



Grave of Harry Waite at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery on Labuan

We then drove to the Surrender Park where the Japanese surrendered to the Australians. The park had a memorial but unfortunately some people had vandalised parts of the memorial. The park was near the coast and again well maintained. It was very hot walking around.

We saw other points of interest, returned back to our Hotel to get ready for our next flight to Kota Kinabalu on our way home back to Melbourne.

Finally, we can highly recommend, for those interested in following some of the steps of 2/14th Battalion, our trip to the east coast of Borneo with Ian and then on to the west coast of Borneo, to Labuan Island.

Once again thank you to Ian Hopley, Ian Hale, Meta and Stuart Brown, the people of Coates Hire and Chevron Oil and of course Keith Lambert and his family for a most memorable trip, we felt honoured to experience.

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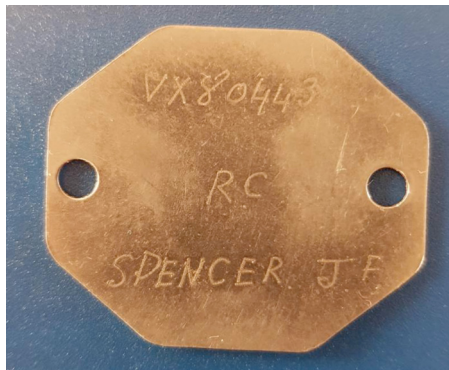
ID TAGS FOUND!

When I was travelling through the Atherton Tablelands in 2007, visiting the places where the 2/14 Battalion had been encamped, I was disappointed to find the area where they trained around Kairi had been submerged in the 1950s beneath Lake Tinaroo.



The area of Lake Tinaroo where 2/14 Battalion were stationed in 1944-5

However, following recent low rainfall in Far North Queensland, the level of the dam had fallen to such a point that local fossicker, Andrew Wickham was able to survey part of the area. He found a standard issue identity disc for **VX80443 J. F. Spencer**, who marched into the 2/14 Battalion in June 1943.



Identity tag for John Francis Spencer

It turns out that John Spencer was born in Wangaratta and had quite an interesting war service, having enlisted three times!

On the first occasion John enlisted as VX53136 on 10 April 1941, giving his date of birth as 2/1/1921. After a quick trip to the Middle East and back, he was discharged on 14 Jan 1942 for having made a false declaration on his enlistment, having been only 17 years old at the time.

He then enlisted again on 11 Feb 1942 as VX75267, again giving date of birth as 2/1/1921. After spending some time in hospital, he went AWOL in May, but enlisted a third time on 29 June 1942, giving date of birth as 2/1/1923. John Spencer was now VX80443 and marched into the 2/14 Battalion where he took part in the Ramu Markham Campaign in 1943 and the landings at Balikpapan in July 1945, serving his country well.



John Spencer on his second enlistment in February 1942

In early 1945, John was court martialled for being AWOL as VX75267 and sentenced to 90 days detention. Eventually, the army recognised that VX75367 and VX80443 were the same person and resolved the extended AWOL period for VX75267 as having been served out by VX80443.

Following the Balikpapan campaign, John returned to Australia for discharge, which occurred on 7 January 1946 at Royal Park Victoria.

A portion of his Service record is marked as being on closed access with the date 1993, which suggests that John Francis Spencer may have been alive at that point.



Craig Iskov and Lt Gen (Ret) Ashley Power with John Spencer's ID disc

Wangaratta RSL President Lieutenant General (Ret) Ashley "Ash" Power said it was a unique Army Service record and interesting as Spencer was one of a number of Wangaratta and district men who joined the 2/14 Battalion.

2/14 Battalion Association would love to know if John Francis Spencer has any living relatives to whom we could hand over the disc, or who may be able to shed light on John Spencer's life. All enquiries to Craig Iskov at 2.14battalion@gmail.com

INVITATION FROM 2/16 BATTALION

The 2/14th Battalion Association are cordially invited to join with the 2/16th Battalion Association following the Melbourne ANZAC march, at the **Rising Sun Hotel**, 2 Raglan St, South Melbourne for a bite to eat, a convivial drink and a chat. Adequate seating has been reserved from 11.30am.