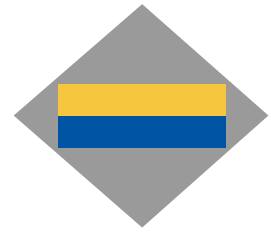


COMRADESHIP

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President's Report



As we approach the AGM, this will be my last report for the year as your President. A year of much activity, networking, laughter and some sadness. I salute our remaining veterans; and we have 69 still on the books around Australia, now all in their 90s, still strongly supporting the Association by attending functions, as they are able.

It was a privilege to attend the Brisbane reunion a few short weeks ago, just to let them know how we do things in Victoria. I was told by a few there that it is the reunion to attend up North. Congratulations to Trevor Pryor and his team in Brisbane for another successful event. It was great to catch up with friends, and family; we visited Dudley Warhurst in his retirement Villa, and had lunch with Matt Power and Bertha at their home at Mount Tamborine.

The service commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Kokoda and Beach Head battles conducted at the Melbourne Shrine, the Borneo trip, the completion of the final stage of the Kokoda Memorial at Ferntree Gully Dandenong Ranges National Park, were all high-lights for me last year and, I hope, to all who attended. Our recent Kokoda Concert with the award winning Hawthorn Band, presented in St George's Church in East St Kilda was an outstanding success, with over 200 people in attendance. In my opinion there must be an encore somewhere in the near future.

I believe we must keep and expand our involvement in all Australian Schools. Why? Because I believe they are going to be the future history tellers, when we are all gone. Australia's involvement in WW2 has not been taught well in schools, and it should be.

And so to the future: In planning the future, the question arises: will the 2/14th Association fade away, like so many others, when the last Veteran rides over the hill; God knows we have lost a few recently? Well, I for one don't think so. As you can see, the Association is as vibrant as it has ever been, and we, the next generation, have a responsibility to keep the memory and deeds of this Battalion alive. Future generations of Australians, new and old, need to know the real history, and we can all play a part in that.

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

A LASTING TRIBUTE TO PNG VETERANS

Veterans of the Papua - New Guinea battles can be remembered in a lasting tribute at the wonderful Kokoda Memorial - Cascade Gardens in Broadbeach, Qld.



Through a partnership with Gold Coast Council, you can now honour a family member or friend with their name inscribed on a paver, laid under their battalion insignia.

There are two types of pavers, the first is placed in the Honour Role 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. If you wish to pay by direct internet payment, please email chris.ingram@margni.com for details. Orders for 2013 will close on 31 October, 2013, and for 2014 on June 30, 2014.

General enquiries can be made to Craig Iskov 0428 737788 or ckiskov@bigpond.com

VISIONS OF KOKODA DIORAMA

Bob Iskov, with son Craig, Marg Briggs and Chris Ingram joined a gathering at the Upwey-Belgrave RSL club on Friday 27 July, to witness the unveiling of a diorama replicating real life scenes from the Kokoda Campaign.

Model builder and creator, Tony O'connor gave an overview of the design and construction of the diorama, commenting that he hadn't really appreciated the significance of the work until he experienced the reaction of people who saw it last ANZAC Day.

The diorama entitled "Visions of Kokoda" was unveiled by Mr Philip Davis MP, Member for Eastern Victoria, who walked the Track himself, four years ago. He complimented Tony O'connor on "bringing to life the difficulties faced by our soldiers in the Kokoda Campaign of 1942".

The group also visited the Upwey RSL "Running Rabbits" Museum, which has an excellent collection representing all conflicts and peacekeeping that Australia has been involved in since WWI. The diorama, which is in a large glass display will feature in the museum.



Upwey-Belgrave RSL president David Eaton, diorama creator Tony O'Connor, Kokoda veteran Bob Iskov and Eastern Victoria MP Philip Davis with the diorama.
Picture: Emma Sun

Sub-branch president, David Eaton, encouraged the public, especially school and community groups to visit the exhibition.

The museum is open between 10am and 2pm on Thursday and Sunday at 1 Mast Gully Rd, Upwey.

EVENT CALENDAR

2013

Kingsbury Services

Friday, 23rd August
9.30 am Reservoir High School
11.00 am Austin Health,
Repat Hospital Heidelberg

St Georges Church Service

Healing the Wounds of War
Sunday, 25th August, 10.30 am
4 Chapel Street, East St Kilda

Kokoda Campaign Memorial Service

Sunday, 25th August, 11.00 am
Osborne House, Geelong

AGM & 1st Committee Meeting

Sunday, 22nd September, 11.30 am
The Shrine of Remembrance

Annual Pilgrimage

Sunday, 22nd September, 2.00 pm
The Sanctuary,
The Shrine of Remembrance

2nd Committee Meeting

Sunday, 1st December, 11.30 am
East Malvern RSL

3rd Committee Meeting

Sunday, 9th March 2014, 11.30 am
East Malvern RSL

Wreath-laying Service

Wednesday, 23rd April 2014,
11.00 am
2/14 Battalion Tree,
north-west corner
The Shrine of Remembrance

Annual Reunion – Melbourne

Wednesday, 23 April 2014
(Details TBA December
Comradeship)

Kokoda Concert

“Brilliant!” “Amazing!” “Fantastic!” “So moving!” “Inspired!” “Inspirational!”

These comments were heard over and over again by those of us who were lucky enough to have made it to the Kokoda Concert on Saturday 13 July at St George’s Uniting Church in East St Kilda.

But the comment that was uttered the most was, “This concert must be repeated!”

Hearty congratulations to David Robinson of the Hawthorn Band for conceiving the idea and to Chris Ingram for taking on the role of director and liaising with the Band to make it become a reality.



David Robinson of Hawthorn Band

The script was written by Jill Bear and Ross Wilkinson, a skilful blending of both general history and individual stories. Informative and detailed, it gave listeners an excellent understanding of what happened during the Kokoda campaign, leaving the audience both well informed and deeply moved. It was a very professional piece of writing.

And of course the narrators had been carefully chosen. Jill Bear, Trevor Pryor and Geoff Ingram were outstanding.



Geoff and Chris Ingram, Jill Bear and Trevor Pryor

The Musical items had also been most thoughtfully selected and in some cases especially written, and they served as a resounding exclamation mark to the narration. We shared the youthful patriotism of “Crown Imperial”, the wistfulness of “Sussex by the Sea”, the hopefulness of “Prelude to a New Age” and the haunting sadness of “Hymn to the Fallen”, “Nightfall in Camp” and “Brave”.

The Hawthorn Band, formed in 1888, has operated continuously throughout the years of the Depression and both World Wars. This is evidence of a remarkable and dedicated commitment. It was clear that all of the band members, playing under the direction of Wayne Bowden, had well and truly immersed themselves in the spirit of the Kokoda story, which was all the more impressive given the youth of so many of the performers.



Hawthorn Band with conductor Wayne Bowden

An absolutely standout performance, amid a sea of professional standout performers, was Bob Nichols’ grandson, Rob Muirhead. His beautiful rendition of “Danny Boy” left barely a dry eye in the church, and his cheeky rendition of the Battalion’s Marching song had us feeling fistical”, ballistical and very militaristical” for quite a few days afterwards.



Rob Muirhead singing “Danny Boy”

And so we come to an oft heard phrase on the night, “This concert must be repeated!”



Veterans in attendance: Norm Mattila (2/27 Bn), Bob Iskov and Max Caldwell (2/14 Bn)

Helen Armstrong

BRISBANE REUNION 2013

Almost 80 turned out for this year's Queensland reunion, including 11 veterans from the 2/14th, 39th and 53rd Battalions and the PIB. Half a dozen apologies from regular supporters were well received including the lame excuse from Aiden Grimes that he was completing his 85th crossing of the Track.

Again it was a day of wonderful comradeship between friends of all ages and from diverse walks of life. We were blessed with the presence of two excellent guest speakers in author, commentator and Chair of the Kokoda Track Foundation, Patrick Lindsay, and also Afghanistan veteran and VC recipient, Ben Roberts-Smith.

Also in attendance was at least 1 Vietnam veteran and 3 others from Afghanistan. During discussions it emerged that many Afghan vets and their families were using the Kokoda Track as both physical and mental rehabilitation. A number of those suffering post-traumatic stress had made the trek as part of their recovery.

The informalities were first halted by President Michael as he outlined the activities of the Association over the past 12 months, including the development of the memorial at Ferntree Gully National Park, the activities at Kingsbury Primary and Reservoir High Schools and the recent Kokoda Concert.



Patrick Lindsay addressing the Reunion

Hoppers (SA Rep, Ian Hopley) related tales of a highly successful pilgrimage to Balikpapan for ANZAC Day this year and heralded another trip in 2014.

Patrick Lindsay spoke of the spirit that pervades not just the veterans and their deeds but also the spirit in the room that honours them and

will perpetuate their stories. He picked up on Michael's call to educate the youth, when he talked of the role of the Foundation and in particular the development of a training college just outside Kokoda. The college will soon begin the process of filling the void in teacher numbers and also in community health workers. He estimated at least half a million children do not have adequate access to these services. The Foundation is obviously doing a great job in looking to the future and providing for those whose families gave such great service to our servicemen.



Ben Roberts-Smith VC being thanked by Peter Dornan

Ben Roberts-Smith, VC, continued the "spirit" theme when he spoke of the ANZAC spirit, carried on by the other vets in the room and providing stimulus to those in conflict at present. He explained that today's soldiers were driven by the same priorities; that they believed in what they were doing and they went into action with their mates and intended to come out with their mates.

Both speakers impressed as humble men of action and their presentations were appreciated by everyone.

The annual renditions of Danny Boy and the Battalion Marching song were certainly an improvement on previous years. (WELL DONE!) Danny Boy was sung to the DVD accompaniment of Rob Muirhead's rendition at the Kokoda concert. This meant that those who sang were inspired to make up for those who were overcome by emotion at the performance.

My thanks to Ann Pryor, Fran Ralston, Elisa Nowak and Kylie Grant for their assistance in organising the event. To all who provided transport for our vets and to those who contributed prizes to the

raffle, thank you also. And to all those who attended, you made it a great day. Thanks.

BRUCE'S BROTHER.

Author, physiotherapist and sculptor Peter Dornan, brought "Bruce" along as usual, but this time he had company. Peter has sculpted another figure, a current soldier in Afghanistan. They complemented each other well and was well received by the Afghanistan veterans in attendance.



Our Veterans.



Standing: Doug Henderson (Vietnam), Ben Roberts-Smith VC (Afghan), George Palmer (39th), Michael Clarke (Afghan) George Priestley (2/14), Peter Webb, Sean Mulqueen (Afghan).

Seated: Bill Bellairs, Jim Stillman (39), Clarrie Meredith (53), Jack Thompson, Don Thomas, Dudley Warhurst, Arthur Toombs, Matt Power (2/14).

Many friendships were renewed or forged during the day.



Doug Henderson chats with Matt Power. Behind him, Ben Roberts-Smith discusses things with Jim Stillman and Clarrie Meredith. In the background, Ross Darrigan talks to the Palmers while Peter Dornan, Chris McCarthy, Rudi Bianci and George Friend are in earnest conversation.

THE SECOND FOURTEENTH BATTALION: A HISTORY OF AN AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

BY W.B. RUSSELL

The Association has a plentiful amount of copies available, so if you haven't yet purchased your copy now is the time to do it. The cost of \$60 includes post and packaging to anywhere in Australia and they are available to all members and friends of the Association.

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

OBITUARIES

VX17982 Sergeant James Watkin 'Jim' COY MM



According to Army records Jim was born in South Melbourne on 26 October 1917 and was living there when he enlisted in the Army on 28 May 1940. His military records at the National

Archives show that he was a single man working as a labourer at the time of his enlistment although this was later changed to Printer's Assistant. It also showed that he had enlisted with his second name as Walker not Watkin.

He was initially posted to 2/2nd Medium Regiment in the Artillery but very quickly transferred to the Infantry and marched into the 2/14 Battalion on 30 May 1940.

Jim, or Jimmy as he was popularly known, was posted to 10 Platoon in B Company and took part in the Syrian, Papuan, and Borneo campaigns.

Jim's first action with the Battalion was against the Foreign Legion troops of the Vichy French in Syria, who were collaborating with the Germans. Jim recalled: "Cruiser pulls in offshore. Aircraft drop bombs. Our artillery opened up. I said to my mate, 'This is all right'. Then we got into it. We lost blokes. Lost a few men." On 12 June, 1941, in the action to cross the Zahrani River, south of Sidon, the Battalion was advancing through a cornfield against French machinegun positions and tanks when Jim was shot through the shoulder; "not bad but I thought I was dying".

He was evacuated to the nearest field hospital where he recovered and rejoined the battalion for its return to Australia and posting to Papua to meet the Japanese threat. The Battalion was the first AIF unit to return from the Middle East and travel up the Kokoda Track.

During the fighting at Isurava in the 2/14 Battalion's initial engagement against Japanese forces, 10 Platoon suffered heavily in repeated attacks against its position. These included the death of its popular commander, Lieutenant Harold "Butch" Bisset, whereupon Private Coy assumed temporary command during its withdrawal under fire.

At Gona, Jim, by then Platoon Sergeant, survived the initial attack when B Company was severely hit trying to follow General MacArthur's requirement that the village be taken that day. Because of the hasty planning, inadequate reconnaissance and preparation, it meant that the Company was attacking against unknown numbers and locations.

On seeing his Company Commander, Captain McGavin, killed by an enemy sniper 15 metres away, Sergeant Coy immediately killed the sniper and single-handedly destroyed two enemy machinegun posts with hand grenades.

He carried two wounded comrades back to safety and then assisted the Battalion Adjutant, Captain Stan Bisset, regain control of the position. Later that evening he suffered a gunshot wound to the chest which also fractured his right shoulder blade. He refused to be evacuated until he had reported the situation to Captain Bisset after which he lapsed into unconsciousness.

Sergeant Coy was awarded the Military Medal for this action.

He missed the Markham-Ramu campaign whilst recovering from his wound and rejoined the Battalion for its part in the sea-borne landings at Balikpapan in Borneo in July 1945. After Peace was declared, the Battalion served in the Celebes (now Sulawesi) in a Peacekeeping role.

Jim marched out of the Battalion on 23 August 1945 and returned to Australia where he was discharged from the Army on 6 October 1945.

Jim was a member of the RSL at the Port Melbourne sub-branch until it finally ceased operating whereupon he transferred to the Williamstown sub-branch. Being a top sportsman, he represented the RSL at state level cricket. We learned at his funeral that he was a net bowler for Bradman's Invincibles before they left for the 1948 tour.

During the war he played football and cricket for the Battalion team that, in 1940, was the champion football team at Puckapunyal. Jimmy played in the centre alongside names like Zantuck and Vandenberg whose sons and nephews went on to play AFL football at the top level. He also played alongside the Bisset brothers; before the war Stan was invited to join St Kilda Football Club but instead chose to play rugby and was selected to play for Australia.

He maintained a casual modest air and when he spoke, it was with a carefully measured nonchalance. He attended an information session at the Hawthorn Football Club several years ago as part of a panel of veterans. The Club was attempting to walk the Kokoda Track for the first time and its players were soaking up the atmosphere of the Track's history from the veterans who had been there. After a presentation about the battles on the Track, the players were able to ask questions of the veterans.

Of course, one of the players was Richard Vandenberg, nephew of one of the 2/14 Battalion characters, Jack Vandenberg. During a lull in the questions, Jimmy was asked why he had taken charge of 10 Platoon when Butch Bisset was killed and the NCOs were either killed or wounded. Typically Jimmy, very calmly he replied, "Well, someone had to do it!"

Jim was a self confessed "naughty boy" and stories of his larrikanism are legion. Stopping at Bombay on the way to the Middle East, Jim and his mates were "thrown down the steps" trying to gain entry to Lady Lumley's Ball for the British army. Not prepared to take 'no' for an answer, they marched back up the steps; the Red Caps were called, and they spent the night in jail. Jim's record shows that he was often absent without leave (AWL), and on one occasion during the slow months of 1944, Jim, by then a sergeant and bored with the interminable training in Queensland, decided to go home to visit his wife, Leonora, whom he had married after returning from

the Middle East. Members of his platoon asked if they could come along. "Yeh" said Jim, "pack your kit." After a couple of weeks he turned himself in and advised the others to do the same. "You don't want to get shot as a deserter." That cost Jim a stripe, which he soon regained, and was probably the only time in Australian military history that a platoon sergeant took his whole platoon with him when he went AWL.

He was a committee member of the 2/14 Battalion Association Incorporated for over 60 years, attending many reunions, ANZAC Marches and other events. He represented the Association along with other veterans at several AFL Kokoda matches involving either or both Sydney Swans and Hawthorn football clubs. He was recognised in 2008 with Life Membership for his service to the Association. In 2010 he was accorded the honour of leading the 7th Division in the Melbourne ANZAC Day March. In 2012, the Association was contacted by the Premier's Department asking if there was a Kokoda hero who could attend a luncheon with the Premier. Whilst Jimmy was becoming increasingly frail, he attended and had pride of place at the luncheon next to the Premier.



For 40 years after the war, Jim worked on the Melbourne waterfront. Working alongside him were many highly educated post-war immigrants from Europe; men whose study and qualifications were not recognised in Australia because they had not been carried out in English.

Jim and Leonora were devoted to each other and raised two children, Colin and Annette. Jim was particularly proud of them and of his grandchildren, Georgina and Patrick.

Jim died on 16 May 2013, when his strong spirit finally yielded to the weakness of his body. In all his life, apart from the war years and his final 12 months, he lived in the same area of Port Melbourne; being christened, married and buried from the same church.

Son, Colin remarked of Jim at his funeral: "A simple life, lived brilliantly."

VX16190 Private William Maxwell 'Max' CURTAIN



According to Army records, William Maxwell Curtain was born on 3 January 1920 at Cape Clear, southwest of Ballarat. He was living with his family at Glenferrie when

he initially enlisted in the Citizens Military Forces on 16 March 1938. He was posted to 10th Field Regiment in the Artillery before marching in to 24/39 Battalion where he was serving at the outbreak of war.

Like many at that time and aware that the CMF could not serve outside Australian Territory, he transferred to the AIF on 22 May 1940 at Caulfield, and marched in to the 2/14 Battalion on 24 May 1940. He was posted to 18 Platoon in D Company where he saw active service in North Africa and Syria. In Syria (Lebanon), the platoon was commanded by Lieut Stan Bisset, and saw action at Alma Chaab, Adloun, the Merdjayoun Road, Jezzine and Damour. There are photographs of Max with his 18 Platoon comrades at Tripoli Fortress and in Syria in one of the battalion histories.

With the outbreak of the Pacific War, 2/14 Battalion was the first of the AIF troops to return to Australia and then be shipped to Papua where it relieved 39 Battalion on the Kokoda Track. This was, ironically, Max's pre-war battalion.

At Isurava, D Company was particularly heavily engaged in the fight and repelled repeated attacks. While holding their position to cover the withdrawal of the 39th and 53rd Battalions, the Bren gunner from Max's platoon, Private H C 'Winks' Wakefield was successful in holding the enemy at bay, and was awarded the Military Medal for inspiring the rest of the platoon to hold their position, with his display of courage under fire.

Heavy fighting on the Track and then later at Gona, saw the battalion suffer heavy casualties through enemy action and illness. Out of a total strength of 790, only 59 paraded at the end of the Campaign at Gona.

Max was evacuated to Australia suffering from malaria and dysentery, like many of his comrades, and marched out of the battalion on 25 December 1942. Little is known of his later war service but he was eventually discharged from the Army on 4 April 1946. His war records show that he wanted 2/14 Battalion shown as his unit on discharge.

VX106820 Private Gordon Douglas MCLEAN



According to Army records Gordon was born in Malvern on 17 November 1922 and enlisted in the Army on 20 September 1942. However, like many, he falsified his age to enlist and family recollections are that

his mother was not happy. The records show that he was living in Carnegie when he enlisted at the Watsonia Army Barracks.

After a period in a Recruit Training Battalion, Gordon marched into the 2/14 Battalion on 30 May 1943 whilst it was training at Ravenshoe and was posted to Headquarters Company. The Battalion was undergoing reorganisation and training in new techniques. One of these involved firing hand grenades with four second fuses from launching cups on the end of the Lee Enfield rifle.

After the successful defence of the Wau airstrip and capture of Salamaua in 1943, Allied command

decided to assault the town of Lae on the north coast of New Guinea by a two-pronged attack from the sea and paratroop landing at Nadzab. The 2/14 Battalion travelled to Port Moresby by sea and was flown in to Nadzab after the area was secured and a temporary airstrip constructed.

The battalion's initial role was to patrol into the Saruwaged Mountains between Nadzab and the coast to prevent the Japanese from escaping over the mountains to Finschhafen. It was then required to fly into Kaiapit which had been secured by the 2/6th Commando Squadron after a vicious battle against the Japanese.

Unfortunately at this time, Gordon was injured by the premature detonation of a grenade being fired from a grenade launcher. He suffered facial injuries and permanent damage to his hearing.

Gordon marched out of the Battalion on 26 September 1943 and was evacuated to hospital. He returned to Australia where, after a further period of treatment he was discharged from the Army on 27 December 1943.

Gordon was an active member of the 2/14 Battalion Association and regularly attended its functions where he enjoyed the company of his comrades. On several occasions he was invited to propose the relevant Toasts at Reunions.

He will be missed.

VX147608/V281508 Corporal Douglas Walter WATKINS



Army records in Canberra show that Douglas Walter Watkins was born in Colac, on 24 December 1922 and was living there when he decided to enlist, putting his age up by 12 months. Doug enlisted in the

Citizens Military Forces (Militia) at Geelong on 19 February 1942.

He commenced fulltime duty on 8 May 1942, initially at Caulfield Racecourse and then with 4 Recruit Training Battalion at Watsonia. On 3 June 1942, Doug marched in to the 2/14 Battalion, and disembarked in Port Moresby on 5 September where, as a reinforcement, he was posted to the Battalion Band. Bandsmen doubled as stretcher bearers whenever the Battalion went into action but Doug stayed with the "Left Out of Battle" group in Port Moresby as the first stage of the Kokoda Campaign was played out.

However, before the Battalion went back to the front line at Gona in the Campaign's final stage, it received a new Salvation Army representative, Captain Eddie Cooper. As was custom, the Commanding Officer appointed an assistant to the "Salvo" from the Battalion's ranks and Doug was chosen for this task. With the Salvation Army propensity for serving just behind the front lines, this meant that the posting was by no means, a 'safe' one. A benefit was that it earned Doug early promotion to Corporal.

Doug continued with this role through the Markham Ramu Campaign, until the Battalion returned to Australia in 1944, when Eddie Cooper transferred out of the Battalion and Doug reverted to being a bandsman. It was in this role that he served under fire as a stretcher bearer at Balikpapan, where he rescued a wounded tank commander, Cpl John Blackberry of 1st Australian Armoured Regiment.

He related this incident for the March 2010 edition of the Association newsletter, Comradeship, prior to taking part in a pilgrimage to Balikpapan that year. He added a postscript that he had been visiting the Armoured Corps museum at Puckapunyal in 2009 when he recognised the tank commander in a photograph. After identifying his name Doug was able to make contact with him in Sydney and happily renewed their acquaintanceship with a visit to his home.

After Peace was declared and while still at Balikpapan, Doug marched out of 2/14 Battalion on 28 November 1945 and transferred to 2/10 Battalion to await discharge. He returned to Australia and was discharged from the Army on 30 January 1946. Like many of his comrades, he was in hospital several times during his war service and suffered from a range of tropical illnesses.

After the war, Doug continued to serve the community by earning a commission in the Salvation Army and it was in this role that in recent years he was appointed 2/14 Battalion Association Chaplain.

Unfortunately, in the July 2009 edition of Comradeship we prematurely announced Doug's passing which elicited a rapid response to report, in the words of Mark Twain, that the news of his death was greatly exaggerated! Doug accepted the apology with good humour.

Life Member: Ethel Joyce FERGUSON, wife of VX45445 Corporal Robert Lindsay 'Bob' FERGUSON

Ethel was born on 23 December 1925 and she met Bob just over 16 years later, when the Battalion was in training at Yandina, Qld in 1942.

When Bob was alive, he coordinated the 2/14 reunions in Euroa. These gatherings started out as a "Barrel on the Creek" and then for the last 40 plus years, they became a mixed family affair. Bob died 25 years ago, and since that time, Ethel took on the responsibility for the coordination of the gatherings, firstly at the Sevens Creek Park and then, more recently, at the Euroa RSL Clubrooms. For her work in providing support to members in this part of Victoria, Ethel was awarded Life Membership of the 2/14 Battalion Association.

Ethel died, aged 87, on May 15 at the Violet Town Nursing Home where she had spent six very contented months.

(The editor acknowledges with thanks, the works of Ross Wilkinson, Helen Armstrong and Dr Phil Shehan in preparing these obituaries.)

70 YEARS AGO

RAMU-MARKHAM CAMPAIGN

1943 was the year of the New Guinea offensives. During 1942, the Japanese had landed not only at Buna, Gona and Sanananda, the beachheads north of Kokoda, but had also set up bases at various points further along the northern New Guinea coast, at Madang, Lae and Salamaua. The Allies, generally speaking Australian troops with US naval and air support, first turned their attention to the area around Wau and Salamaua. The intention there was to ensure Japanese forces were not concentrated exclusively at Lae. Six months later, when the Allied troops began the offensive, the plan had been carried out so effectively that when the 7th and 9th Divisions attacked Lae in September, it fell swiftly and relatively easily.

Following the fall of Lae, the Japanese attempted to retreat to Bogadjim, near Madang along either side of the Finisterre Ranges – the northern coastal route going through Finschhafen and the southern route passing through the foothills north of the Ramu and Markham Rivers.

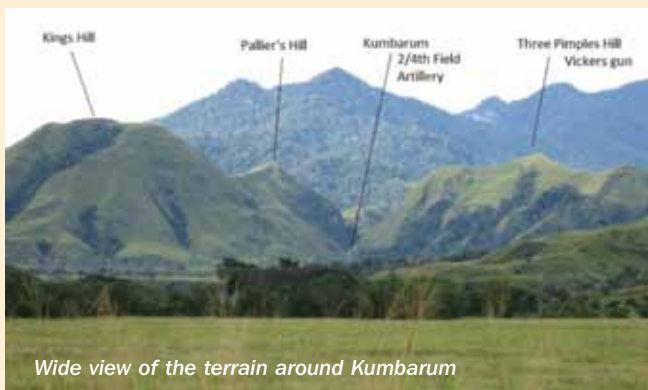
On 9th July, Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Honner, formerly commanding officer of the 39th Battalion, took up his appointment to the 2/14th Battalion, in time to supervise the embarkation of the Battalion for its return to New Guinea at the end of the month. The Battalion remained in Port Moresby for the next 6 weeks, until the fall of Salamaua, on 11th September and the imminent attack on Lae.

In a clear indication that this campaign would not suffer from the problems of planning and supply that had dogged the Owen Stanley Campaign the previous year, on the morning of 15th September, the Battalion was transported to Nadzab, the airfield outside Lae, in 42 plane loads, over a period of three and a half hours. They were immediately despatched over the Atzera Range north of the airfield in pursuit of the Japanese in retreat from Lae who were attempting to cross the range and join their comrades retreating along the coast.

However, this deployment was short-lived, and on 20th September, the Battalion was recalled to Nadzab, and a few days later emplaned, to Kaiapit, 100 kms west along the Ramu-Markham Valley, with the rest of the 21st Brigade, in order to prevent a Japanese force advancing overland from Madang from uniting with those who had escaped from Lae.

The Battalion made rapid advance up the valley to Wampun, where, on 2nd October, Lt-Col Honner was wounded while trying to make contact with a forward company. Several changes of command took place over the next few weeks, until the arrival of (then) Major Phil Rhoden on 20th October.

In the intervening period the Battalion had been involved in one of the most daring actions of the campaign. On 11th October, the 2/27 Battalion was heavily engaged with the enemy further along the Faria River from Kumbarum, where the 2/14th were deployed, when the 27th's supply line was cut by Japanese fire from a hill behind them, which came to be known as Pallier's Hill. The action to remove the Japanese from this dominating feature was undertaken by 9 Platoon under NX142877 Lieut Nolan Pallier. It involved traversing a saddle between King's Hill and Pallier's Hill, and attacking uphill into an entrenched Japanese position. Supporting fire was provided by Vickers medium machine guns firing at right angles to the line of advance from Three Pimples Hill to the right, and 2/4th Field Artillery with a 25 pounder in the valley below.



Wide view of the terrain around Kumbarum

From the point of view of the assaulting platoon, however, the situation was far from encouraging. The following account of the attack, given by VX23671 Cpl John "Bluey" Whitechurch, who led a section in the assault, is quoted from Russell's History of the 2/14 Battalion. (Clarifications in brackets are provided by the Editor):

"Our platoon commander (Lieut Nolan Pallier) came from Battalion H.Q. (on 9th Oct) with orders to occupy King's Hill, a high feature towering 1000 feet above the Battalion. We set off, twenty-eight of us in all, in single file up a trail which ran almost straight up the hill. The grade was so steep that it was necessary to cut steps into the trail.

"An hour and a half later we reached the top of King's Hill, sweating and panting and thoroughly exhausted. We lay down to rest on some level ground which sloped up to a small pinnacle forming a natural terrace.

"Another hill a thousand yards further on in front of us was connected by a narrow-backed ridge with a small pimple halfway between the two hills. This ridge sloped down slightly to the pimple, then gradually sloped up on to the summit of the other hill, which came to be known as Pallier's Hill. The right side of this ridge was very steep and sloped down for a hundred feet or so to a sheer drop of hundreds of feet to a swift-running stream a thousand yards away and as many feet below.

"It was when we were sitting around in the glaring hot sun, talking and smoking after breakfast, that Lieut Pallier came over from Platoon Headquarters with the unbelievable news that the Japs had occupied Pallier's Hill. This was soon confirmed by an exchange of shots opened by our forward sections in an effort to prevent the Japs from digging in.

"The continuous fire coming from the direction of Shaggy Ridge suggested that the forward battalions were being hard pressed. Our Battalion was also in a nasty position on the level ground, being under fire from Pallier's Hill.

"The difficult terrain between us and the enemy made it look an impossible task we were to do. We realised that if the attack was not successful, few of us would live to the tale, and that in any case there would be many of our cobbles left lying around before it was all over.

"We were to advance along the ridge, keeping along the side and a few yards from the top, until we had almost reached the summit of Pallier's Hill, there fan out and charge over the top. Covering fire would be supplied by the Vickers gun section on the hill to the right, and by our artillery on the level ground near Battalion.

"We left the protection of the pinnacle and formed up with that frightening sensation of danger which now threatened our lives at any moment. The boom of our artillery, the whine of a shell hurtling through the air to burst among the enemy with a resounding crash echoing and re-echoing over the hills and valleys was a signal for us to start.

"We went down the hill and along the ridge, pausing now and then to regain our breath or to assist one another in the more difficult places. On reaching the pimple we left the 2-inch mortar man, a Bren gunner and three rifle bombers to add to our covering fire.

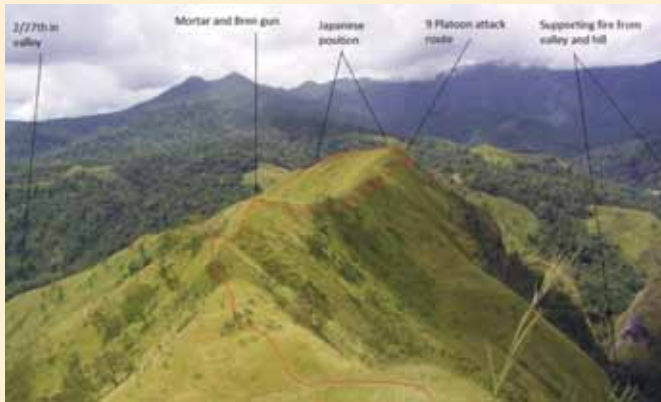
"The action we had started since leaving King's Hill, although we were in full view of the enemy all the time, caused our previous nervousness to disappear, but we were expecting to feel the searing impact of a bullet against our bodies or to be swept off our feet down over the cliff into the stream below.

"The artillery fired at regular intervals (of a minute), which seemed like an eternity to us, wishing they would reduce the interval to a minimum.

"We were nearing the summit of Pallier's Hill when the artillery fire cut out, leaving the mortar bombs bursting among the enemy and the accurate fire of the Vickers guns tearing up the ground, on the peak of the hill, as our sole support.

70 YEARS AGO - Continued

"The ridge we were following became even more difficult; a false step now could have meant sliding down the steep grade to hurtle to certain death in the creek below.



View along the saddle from King's Hill to Pallier's Hill, showing dispositions and attack route

"Our covering fire ceased altogether; then the expected hail of lead came. At first a few intermittent rifle shots and a burst from a machine-gun, gradually increasing in intensity until it became one continuous roar.

"We moved on hurriedly and fanned out, taking cover under the brow of the hill less than twenty feet below the Japs whom we still could not see.

"One chap slipped, but managed to save himself from going over the cliff. Then the critical moment arrived. The excited jabber of the Japs was followed by a shower of grenades hurled down upon us from above. It looked as though it was all over for us. Some of the grenades landed above us and slipped and slid down the loose soil between our feet, aided in some cases by a hearty push or kick. (Japanese grenades were smaller and less effective than those used by the Allies.)

"Most of them slid too far down to do us much harm on explosion. Only one of us (Lieut Pallier) was unable to carry on. We threw our own grenades up, and with the whizz of their shrapnel ringing in our ears, we scrambled up those few remaining yards of hill, a feat accomplished after artillery barrage had loosened the soil, enabling us to gain a foothold.

"We could see them now and opened fire on their heads as they bobbed up above their fox-holes. Their fire began to slacken off. One of our chaps (VX17821 Sgt Lindsay 'Teddy' Bear) gave a shrill bloodcurdling yell that startled even us, and was partly responsible for some of the Japs running headlong down the hill in panic. Unable to stop at the edge of the cliff, they plunged to their doom hundreds of feet below.

"The right flank was under heavy fire; some were falling wounded or killed. The platoon sergeant (Sgt Bear), already wounded, charged in, bayoneting some Japs before he fell.

"We had regained our breath and quenched our thirst when the reactions of our long pent up emotions began to set in. Although we were greatly outnumbered, we had killed many of the enemy, sent others hurtling over the cliff in panic and demoralised their reserves across the valley. The thrill of such a victory accomplished under very difficult circumstances with so few casualties (three killed and five wounded) and the relief of coming through all this alive caused an almost unbearable excitement, a tendency to jump about, to shout and to yell, but we refrained from all these things and there was only an excited babble of voices as we moved about the fox-holes in search of souvenirs.

"We made our way back along the ground we covered, still marvelling at the success of the attack and wondering why the Japs had held their fire until it was too late. We were sincerely thankful to all those who supported the attack with such accurate and effective covering fire."

The platoon commander, Lieut Pallier, though wounded had continued to direct the attack and was mentioned in despatches for his leadership and courage. The superhuman feats of the platoon sergeant, were recognised by the award of the Distinguished Conduct Medal to Sgt Lindsay (Teddy) Bear, M.M. The section commanders were VX26258 Cpl Ted (Heigh-ho) Silver, VX23671 Cpl "Bluey" Whitechurch, and VX61294 Cpl Bill Parfrey, who was wounded. When Cpl Parfrey was wounded, QX22369 Pte "Lofty" Back took over the section and led it fearlessly until he was killed in action. Cpl Silver and Cpl Whitechurch were awarded the Military Medal, and Pte Back was mentioned in despatches.

A decisive factor in the success of the attack was the close supporting fire given by QX31735 Pte John Cobble with the 8 Section's Bren gun, and Ptes NX152202 Bill Patterson and QX50855 Bob Malcolm with the Platoon's 2-inch mortar. These three had been left at the "Pimple", halfway across the razor back, for that purpose. They gave their supporting fire without thought of themselves and two of the three were killed in helping to save their comrades.

Total casualties in 9 Platoon were Pte "Lofty" Back, Pte John Cobble, and Pte Bill Patterson killed, and Lieut Pallier, Sgt Bear, Cpl Bill Parfrey and NX148515 Pte Alf Edwards wounded.

A company of the enemy had been routed and over thirty killed. The line of communication to the 2/27th was again open.

Note: Lindsay Bear, DCM MM, Ted Silver MM and John Whitechurch MM, along with Bruce Kingsbury VC and Alan Avery MM, were all original members of the highly decorated 7 Section of 9 Platoon.

Jill Bear

WHEN A VETERAN PASSES AWAY

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

But we can only do this if we know that a member has passed away, so we respectfully request that family members inform the Battalion Association in the event of their loved one passing away by contacting the Secretary, Christine Ingram at chris.ingram@margni.com or telephoning Chris on 03 9561 5790.

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

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Around The Traps

Evelyn Betty Crilly wife of 2/14th **VX 13894 Leslie Crilly MM** has passed away peacefully and unexpectedly on the 13th July at the Tongala Aged Care Facility where she had only been for 10 days of respite care. Les Crilly had predeceased "Betty" in October 1998. Their children - 5 boys John, Colin, Neville, Laurence and Noel attended the funeral at the Rushworth cemetery.



This plaque in the Kyabram Memorial Gardens commemorates Les's service and decoration

VX15237 Bob Iskov was one of the veterans in attendance at the first Executive Excellence 'Kids of Kokoda' Lunch in Melbourne. Other veterans attending were Alan 'Kanga' Moore, Peter Holloway, John Akehurst and George Cops.



Veterans Alan 'Kanga' Moore, Bob Iskov, George Cops and Peter Holloway at the Kokoda Kids lunch

Ian Blume reports that his father, **VX28343 Col Blume**, our oldest veteran, is not travelling too well at the moment. He has had several collapses and was transferred to urgent care. A recent scan found that his prostate cancer had spread to his back and pelvic areas. Anyone wanting to send a message to Col, please contact him through his son Ian at mustmarq@blue1000.com.au

In June, Sandy Forster, wife of **VX14065 Peter Forster**, reported that Peter is making a remarkable recovery from his stint in hospital 3 months ago - something she describes as 'nothing short of a miracle.' He recognizes everyone and is able to converse normally. Consequently his quality of life has improved significantly. For anyone wishing to visit him, he's at Ely Kay Residential Aged Care, 45-51 Elliott Street, Mordialloc.

VX16374 Matt Power recently had a fall which resulted in a fractured vertebrae, however, he is recovering well and was able to be at the Queensland reunion at the end of July.

Kingsbury Primary School now recognise the passing of each of our veterans with by lowering their flag to ½ mast on the day of his funeral. The name of the veteran is placed on the flagpole so students and parents can understand the link the school has with and the high regard in which are held the members of the 2/14th Battalion.

We acknowledge with great sadness the passing of 39th Battalion stalwart and great mate of 2/14 Battalion, **Rev Charles Turley 'Peter' Holloway** on 13 June. Peter had only just returned from a visit to northern Queensland to attend the Rocky Creek Memorial 39th/49th Disbandment Commemoration Ceremony at Tolga. Although a little shaky on his feet, he gave a wonderful address, virtually without notes and as always, demonstrated an amazing memory for 70 years ago. Our sympathy is extended to Peter's family.



Rev Peter Holloway, with his daughter Mary at the MCG

NSW members may be interested to attend the 2013 Lt Col Ralph Honner Oration Dinner to be held by the Kokoda Track Foundation on Friday 18 October at 7pm at the Kirribili Club, 11 Harbourview Cres, Lavender Bay. The oration will be delivered by **Captain Bede Tongs MM**, of 3rd Battalion who fought on the Track from 5 September, 1942. For further details contact: Jonathan Bluhdorn 02 9252 2992 or jonathan@kokodatrackfoundation.org

The memoirs of Lt. Col. Frank Sublet "**Whatever Man Dares**" are now available for sale at \$25/copy plus \$15 for registered express post (if applicable). 2/14 members who pre-order copies can collect them in person when they attend the AGM in September. Contact Trevor Ingram of 2/16 Battalion Association for order details: 03 9870 1524 (ah), mob 0419 333 347 or tingram@globalskm.com

Mrs Isobell Tunzi, widow of **VX31148 William "Bill" Tunzi**, has informed us that her grandson, Sergeant James Tunzi LONG, has been awarded the Conspicuous Service Medal (CSM) in the recent Queens Birthday Honours List. Sergeant Long's award is for meritorious achievement as a Section Commander and Platoon Sergeant, Rehabilitation Platoon, 1st Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment. His citation pays tribute to his leadership and professionalism in managing the rehabilitation of seriously wounded, injured and ill soldiers. James' maternal grandfather, the



late Bill Tunzi, served with the 2/14 in the Middle East. James, who has undertaken tours including East Timor (twice), Tonga, Iraq and Afghanistan, is very proud of his grandfather's link with the 2/14.

Sgt James Tunzi Long CSM