



# White over Green

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE 2/4 INFANTRY BATTALION ASSOCIATION

PATRON: Major-General Sir Ivan DOUGHERTY, CBE., DSO & Bar., ED., BEC.,LLD., (Hon.).

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**NEXT TWO MEETINGS:-** At the Gallipoli Memorial Club, 12-14 Loftus Street, Sydney, commencing at 1400 hours in The Anzac Room (lunch available in the Dining Room between 1200 hours and 1400 hours):-

TUESDAY, 27th. JANUARY - Normal Monthly Meeting  
TUESDAY, 24th. FEBRUARY - Annual General Meeting (Committee will meet at 1130 hours in the Anzac Room.)

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:-**

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of The 2/4 Infantry Battalion Association will be held in The Anzac Room of the Gallipoli Memorial Club, 12-14 Loftus Street, Sydney, on Tuesday, 24th. February, 1987, commencing at 1400 hours.

**BUSINESS and AGENDA:**

- (1) Open Meeting - President calls for two minutes silence in memory of Fallen & Departed Comrades.
- (2) President welcomes Visitors & Members.
- (3) President calls for Apologies.
- (4) Reading and confirmation of the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting.
- (5) Business arising out of the Minutes.
- (6) Correspondence (a) IN and (b) OUT.
- (7) To receive and, if thought fit, adopt :- The Reports of the President, Secretary, Treasurer (including Balance Sheet and Financial Statements), Welfare Officer, Pensions Officer, Editor.
- (8) To elect Life Member(s) as recommended by the Committee.
- (9) To confirm the Committee's appointment of Ted Fox as Editor of "White over Green".
- (10) To consider, and to adopt if thought fit, the following Motions of which Notice of Motion has been properly given:

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (Continued):-**

**(10) Contd.:**

- (a) That this Association's Journal/Newsletter, "White over Green", shall revert to Monthly production;
- (b) That in the event of different circumstances prevailing to require other than Monthly production of the above Journal/Newsletter any decision to alter the foregoing decision be made on a recommendation of the then Editor endorsed by the Committee and approved/adopted at a normal Monthly Meeting of Members of the Association.

The two Notices of Motion were moved by A. Carpenter and seconded by A. Lindsay.

- (11) President to declare vacant all positions on the Executive and Committee, and to appoint a Returning Officer to conduct an election of Office Bearers for the ensuing year. *Incoming Pres Assumes the Chair*
- (12) Election of Office Bearers for Year Ending February 1988: Office Titles and the number of Officers to be in accordance with the details appearing at the head of this Newsletter. Returning Officer will announce the result of the election.
- (13) Incoming President assumes control of Meeting & proceeds to Gen. Business and Close of Meeting. *Proceeds in Gen Business & Close of Mtg*



PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT:-

It is with extreme pleasure that I submit my report for the Year Ending February '87 and I am confident that the enthusiasm of our Members, engendered over many years, is as great as ever. This is evidenced by the increasing number of Members attending at Monthly Meetings, the average now being in excess of fifty per Meeting. Our Monthly Meetings are conducted in a happy caring atmosphere .. HAPPY as members meet and enjoy the comradeship of old friends with whom were shared the privilege of serving our great Nation in the struggle to preserve Freedom .. CARING because we are all mutually concerned about the welfare and health of each other and those near & dear to us. These are the bonds which have kept our Association strong and virile & which will continue to do so.

To all Members who have suffered bereavements during the year I extend my heart-felt sympathy.

One of the highlights of the year surely would be the coach trip to Perth with the wonderful reunions in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth. The Vice-Presidents in the States visited all expressed appreciation of the visit and mentioned the enthusiasm it had engendered in their Members. Incidentally, our tour to Cairns in August this present year has already been booked-out, with a waiting-list commenced to cater for cancellations.

My report must also contain some mention of our Inverell Reunion which was a tremendous success. All Association Members have requested me to pass on to Ross and Nance Smith, their local committee and all others who helped in so many ways to make our stay in Inverell so wonderful, their grateful thanks.

Chic Sleeman and his committee have arrangements well in hand for our 1987 Reunion at Nelson's Bay. Because this is a holiday resort it has been necessary to arrange our activities for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 20th., 21st., 22nd. of October but it is felt that this period should not be disadvantageous as many Members will no doubt avail themselves of the occasion to take a holiday as well as attending the Reunion.

The special committee headed by Allen Lindsay is actively collating information, and ideas, for our 50th. Anniversary celebrations which will take place in Sydney in November 1989. A suggestion arising at Inverell Reunion was that each Member who attends the Anniversary Reunion should be asked to wear a suitable photograph of self taken during his Army Days.. could be of some merit.

Our Monetary Funds are healthy, ever under the watchful scrutiny of our Treasurer, so that will ensure that our 50th. Reunion is the success that it's importance demands. My thanks must again be recorded for the loyal support given by all Association Members in respect of our functions, meetings and parades. My special thanks go to our Office Bearers and Committeemen, whose responsibility it is to ensure the smooth running of the Association.

To our Patron Sir Ivan, and the Gallipoli Memorial Club under Harry Gjedsted, may I say that your help and support has done so much to weld our Association into what it is today.

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT (Continued):-

In closing I wish all Members, and families, Good Health and Happiness for the ensuing year, and I express the hope and the belief that our 2/4 Battalion Association will go from success to success.

It has been my pleasure and honour to serve you as your President and I look forward to another rewarding year should I be re-elected for a further term.

Respectfully Submitted: Alf Carpenter.

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SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT:-

Another year in the history of our Association has passed successfully and now we may look forward to a new and equally satisfactory year.

During 1986 our main functions, i.e. Anzac Day and Country Reunion, were well attended and once more some "long time no see" old faces presented themselves - obviously one of the benefits (not Fringe) of retiring from the Work Force. It would be nice to see more of our Members attend the 0800 hours March and Wreath-laying Ceremony next Anzac Day.

Two Church Parades were attended by Members of this Association, one at The Garrison Church to commemorate the Greece and Crete campaigns and our annual Association of 4th. Infantry Battalions Parade at St. Anne's Church at Strathfield, where our Colours are "laid up". Again it would be appreciated if more Members could/would attend these annual parades.

As must be expected now that the passing of time is affecting all of us, we lost quite a number of old comrades during 1986 but it is gratifying, especially to grieving relatives, that increasing numbers of our Members are nowadays free to attend and pay their last respects to a departed comrade.

During the year the Association purchased a supply of Miniature Battalion Medals which can be obtained from me @ \$6.00 or posted @ \$6.50. Miniature medals were designed to be worn at night; that rule is not always applied but we do mention here that they should not be worn on Anzac Day when only full-size formal issue medals may be worn.

Our Monthly Meetings have been well attended and I urge all Members to be regular in presenting themselves, thus encouraging the hard-working Committee to continue being hard-working.

I wish all Members and their families a happy and worry-free 1987.

Fred Staggs - Hon. Sec.

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EDITOR'S ANNUAL REPORT:-

On behalf of Retiring Editor Laurie Waterhouse, and myself, I report that all Association equipment (etc.) needed for the printing of our Newsletter is now, with the great co-operation of Harry Gjedsted, located at the Gallipoli Memorial Club from where the Journal will be produced henceforth with assistance from volunteer "W.O.G. Wrappers and Folders of the human kind". I, personally, am still wearing a Learner's Badge as Editor and I do seek your forbearance if my inexperience causes (too) many errors. With Laurie's tuition (until he migrates North) I can only improve.

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Ted Fox.

Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements (etc.), and any other Reports, will appear in the February issue of this Journal.

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ASSOCIATION CHRISTMAS PARTY:-

Taking the place of a normal Monthly Meeting, our Christmas Party was held at the Gallipoli Memorial Club on the afternoon of Wednesday, 17th. December, 1986, and was attended by sixty-six 2/4thers including our ladies. The atmosphere was similar to that which prevails at Country Reunions & everyone had an enjoyable and convivial time, especially as President Alf had injected our Treasurer with a "generosity potion" which resulted in the club staff being kept busy attending to our needs, which they did with their usual efficiency and courtesy.

After officially welcoming Sir Ivan & Lady Dougherty and similarly addressing all present, President Alf formally thanked Laurie Waterhouse for his past efforts as Editor and requested Heather Fox, as the incoming Editor's wife, to present flowers to Joy Waterhouse, the retiring Editor's wife, as a tribute to support of Laurie so freely given by her throughout his term of service to the Association.

John Ringrose accepted this Editor's appointment of him as official "NAME-TAKER" for our various functions and compiled the following list of those attending the party:-

Sir Ivan & Lady Dougherty, Alf Carpenter, Doreen Manuel, Harry & Hilda Wright, Alex Dick, Gaydon Adrien Collis, Harry & Marge Gjedsted, Les Jones, Sheila McIntosh, Molly Irvine, John & Nell Hawkins, Delma Silver, Vera Walsh, Laurie & Joy Waterhouse, Wal & Molly Johnston, Garry & Joan Hart, Jim & Belle Sadler, Frank Ivey, Ken & Fi Kesteven, Alex ("Biscuits") & Meg Arnott, Dave & Sally Follington, Mick ("No-change") O'Regan, Lionel & June Clarke, Phyl Chrystal, Rex & Olga Everson, Norm & Nita Auberson, Les Fox, Alex & Jean Maxwell, Vic Forbes, Ferd Pegg, Andy Phillips, Fred Staggs, Enid Latimer, Cec & Mrs. Lawson, Larry & Yvonne Dooley, Harold & Noni Bowman, Lang & Colleen Stronach, Allen Lindsay, Athol Heath, John Meehan, "Slim" Powers, Ray ("Mick") Hyem, Ken ("Slim")-did anyone know he was "Ken" Venn, Ted & Heather Fox, & John Ringrose.

We apologise for any omissions and record apologies from Bill & Gwen MacLennan, Bob & Nina Fergusson.

NOTE for Phil ("Blah") Smith:- You will be interested to see the name of Ray ("Mick") Hyem who was an original member of the Pioneer Platoon and then your batman in the Mortar Platoon before being taken P.O.W. in Greece.

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NEWCASTLE NEWS:-

The Novocastrians held their Christmas B.B.Q. at the home of Doreen Manuel on Sunday, 14th. December. A most enjoyable day was had by all. Those in attendance were:-

Alf Carpenter, Doreen Manuel, Pat & Gwen Bruty, Doug & Deidre Milne, Jack & Mary Partridge who had come down from the Pear Tree, George & Heather Mitchell, Joe & Gwen Bohle, Noel & Marie Woolcott, Chic & Dot Sleeman, Guy & Kath & Kobe Mitchell, Jean Palmer, Ron & Suzette Miller.

A delicious meal was very capably cooked by President Alf (a better cook than a carpenter) assisted by Ron Miller.

Thanks, Doreen, for making your home available.

George Mitchell.

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WELFARE REPORT:-

Visited at Tregothan Nursing Home, Leura:  
NX3939 - Barker, E. - visited by Bob Lever who reports that Ted is reasonably well.

Visited at Concord Repat. Gen. Hospital:  
NX8584 - Buckley, S.E.W. - Ward 430 - Sid was seriously ill and is since deceased.

Visited at R.S.L. Nursing Home, Narrabeen:  
NX164 - Copland, J.S. - visited by Ken & Fi Kesteven and Heather Fox - John looked very well and was in good spirits (the mental kind) but he says he is eating too much and putting on excess weight (which was not apparent to his visitors).

Briefly at the Sanitarium Hospital:

NX931 - MacLennan, W.F.F. - Bill was taken to the hospital on the night of Sunday 14th. December, 1986, with a severe and unaccountable pain in his back. After tests on the next day he was ordered to rest in bed and elected to do so at home in order to obtain the additional comforts available there.

LAST POST:-

NX58	- Chrystal, C.H.	✓
NX42537	- Wilson, W.N.	✓
NX3654	- Campbell, C.C.	✓
NX5530	- Bonham, S.R.	✓
NX160558	- McCloy, J.N.	✓
NX66444	- Sargent, A.	✓
NX191891	- Gillard, C.A. (18/10/86).	✓

Harry Wright.

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THE BOMBER COMMAND MEDAL:-

Harry Gjedsted has supplied data concerning a new medal which has become available to ex-members of Bomber Command. I quote from his letter:

"Our Association has an unsurpassed record for initiatives & for getting things done for the benefit of Members and others. One of our "firsts" was the introduction of our Battalion Medal, and as was expected our action has been followed by other Associations including the Commando and "Rats of Tobruk" Associations.

The attached article on "The Bomber Command Medal" should therefore be of interest to all our Members, especially those who transferred to the R.A.A.F. whilst we were in Darwin and who served in Bomber Command in Europe."

The article about the medal is reproduced on the last page of this Newsletter.

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TRIVIATA:-

The mailing address of our Treasurer is shown on the front page of this Journal but the unpublished fact is that he resides in TRANQUILITY PLACE. Tranquility?? With Allen-Lindsay?? Is that at all possible, Gloria?

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VALE - Cecil Henry CHRYSTAL:-

After a long and uncomfortable illness, in the early morning of Thursday 4th. December, 1986, Cec Chrystal answered the "LAST CALL" and was laid to rest on Monday 8th. December after a Service at St. James' Anglican Church, Castlecrag.

The Church Service was conducted by the Reverend John Griffiths who had been the Rector of that church, for which the acquisition of land and the building of it had very greatly involved Cec, and he was the same Minister who had performed the marriage ceremonies for Cec and Phyl Chrystal's three daughters and the baptism of their many grandchildren.

At the church the eulogy was delivered by Sir Ivan Dougherty who referred to Cec's pre-war, wartime and post-war service to Australia and his local community.

In particular, Sir Ivan referred to that occasion during the early days of the war in Greece when, to the south-west of Vevi, Cec reported that a number of German machine guns were being dug in near the railway line and road junction. Communication facilities were somewhat restricted at the time but Cec relayed the enemy position to 2nd. Royal Horse Artillery by telephone via 2/4 Bn. H.Q. and directed their fire on to the German position with ultimate success. Cec was born in Cootamundra, N.S.W., on 4th. May, 1917, and at the age of 20 years, in 1937, he joined 4th. Aust. Inf. Bn. (Militia). In that Unit he was commissioned as a Lieutenant in February 1939. He transferred to the 2nd. A.I.F. at the outbreak of W.W.2 and became NX58. On 4th. November, 1939, he was posted to 2/4 Aust. Inf. Bn. and subsequently was promoted to the rank of Captain. After the war, and his "release from Active Service", Cec qualified at Sydney University as a Real Estate Agent and Valuer with the Degrees of "F.R.E.T., R.E.I.V. (Aust.)" and "Q.R.V.", later being appointed a Justice of the Peace and, in a ceremony at Victoria Barracks in 1948, being awarded the Efficiency Decoration.

Cec's post-war service to the community included Presidency of the Castle Cove Public School Parents' and Citizens' Association, Chairman of Roseville Golf Club's Legacy Day Charity Committee, President for two terms of our own Association and, of course, he was Chairman of the two Committees which produced our Official History & the "Dougherty" Biography.

At Northern Suburbs Crematorium the R.S.L. Service was conducted by Ted Fox.

Harry Wright recorded the following personnel as being present to pay their last respects to Cecil Chrystal:

Sir Ivan Dougherty, Alf Carpenter, Allen & Gloria Lindsay, Fred Staggs, John Hawkins, Ted & Heather Fox, George Stack, Harold & Del Silver, Norm Auberson, Ferdie Pegg, Athol Heath, Bill & Gwen MacLennan, Harry & Marge Gjedsted, Dick Pinson, Vic Forbes, Cec Powers, Rex Everson, Tom Gorman, Alex Maxwell, Allan Bohle, Bill Parry, Chris White, Bob Fergusson, Dave Follington, Larry and Yvonne Dooley, Frank Ivey, Ric & Alison Carter, Ken & Fi Kesteven, Trevor Richardson, Peter Cade & daughter Margaret, Harold & Noni Bowman, Lang Stronach, Barney Turley, Jack & Joan Huston, Harry & Hilda Wright, Jean Jackett & daughter Clare McShane, Enid Latimer, Dr. Tom Selby (b Div.), Steve McDougal (6 Div. - 2/ Regt.), Bob Apple & Frank Johnson (Sec. Treasurer of North-bridge R.S.L.).

VALE - S.E.W. (Sid) BUCKLEY:-

After a short recent illness Sid Buckley died on 23rd. December, 1986, and his burial at Field of Mars Cemetery, Ryde, took place on 29th. December.

The eulogy spoken by Alf Carpenter dealt with Sid's service to Australia and its Allies in two wars - i.e. WW2 & Korea. At the outbreak of WW2 Sid enlisted in the 2nd. A.I.F. and became an original member of 2/4 Aust. Inf. Bn., number NX8584. He sailed in the first convoy to the Middle East in January 1940.

He remained with our battalion until the cessation of hostilities in 1945 and saw active service in the first campaign in Libya, then Greece and Crete, the Northern Territory of Australia and the Atherton Tablelands, finally the Aitape to Wewak campaign in New Guinea.

Upon discharge from the 2nd. A.I.F. Sid intended to join the Army of Occupation but "gave it away" when he learned that he would be required to spend considerable time in re-training at Greta Camp. In 1950 Sid volunteered for active service in Korea and fought with 3 Bn. Royal Australian Regiment. This Regiment was subsequently awarded the United States & America Presidential Citation.

The following is quoted from a letter reprinted in the Monthly "W.O.G." of September 1952, the writer being Sgt. G.A. Wells of 3 Bn. R.A.R. and a mate of Sid Buckley:

"On October 2nd. the big push started and we crossed the Imjin River, the country being rugged and heart-breaking. Battle Orders had been given, Hill 238 had been taken by "D" Coy., Hill 199 by "A" Coy., and the battalion moved on across the "Koyang-dai" Valley and attacked such hills as 180 where was wounded your own Sid Buckley, who had built up a great reputation as a leader of men and a great soldier."

Sid was wounded in the forehead at Yalu River. He had an Owen Gun and had shot an enemy soldier whom he thought was dead but that was not so. Armed with a Russian-made sub-machine gun the "dead" soldier shot Sid. A metal plate was inserted in Sid's forehead wound but some years later in West Aust. he was admitted to Perth Repat. Hospital where the plate was removed and a bone graft was performed, which gave Sid much relief. Sid Buckley certainly gave more than one man's share of Service to Country and no doubt his war service and injury finally contributed to his death.

The R.S.L. Ceremony at the graveside was performed by Alf Carpenter and participated in by Harry Wright.

According to Harry Wright's records the following 2/4thers were in attendance: Alf Carpenter, Allen Lindsay, Fred Staggs, John Hawkins, Laurie Waterhouse, Ted Fox, Ken Kesteven, Alex Maxwell, "Slim" Venn, Dick Pinson, Alan Bohle, Trevor Richardson, John Ringrose, Bob Fergusson, Athol Heath, George Stack, Frank Ivey, Dave Follington, Des Finch, Rex Everson, Ted McCafferey, Harry Wright, Cliff "Squizzie" Taylor, Harold Bowman, Ted Wilson, Tom McNamara, Jack Eastham, Jack Garvey, Vic Forbes, Tom Tracey, and Doreen Manuel, Jean Maxwell, Joyce Ringrose.

Apologies for inability to attend Sid's funeral were received from Harry Gjedsted, Len Bloomfield.

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VALE - Colin Charles CAMPBELL:-

Colin Campbell died on Thursday 11th. December, 1986, and was buried at Wauchope on Monday 15th. December.

He was an original member of 2/4 Aust. Inf. Bn., NX3654, and will be remembered for a number of unusual incidents associated with his army career.

As a member of the Transport Platoon in the early "horse & buggy" days he changed the old expression "man bites dog" to "man bites horse" when he avenged himself in the above manner after being savaged on the shoulder by Regimental No. 333, a horse he described as "part-broken, part-outlaw, and all vicious".

He was responsible for re-uniting two sisters of Polish descent who believed each other to be dead. One was a lass he had met in Sydney and to whom he had promised to write after leaving Australia. The other he encountered serving in a gift shop in Qastina, Palestine, whom at first he thought was the same girl from Sydney, their likeness was so great. Detective work established that her father and elder sister had migrated some years previously to Australia hoping to earn enough money to send for her mother and herself, and as far as she knew they were dead. Colin wrote to the girl in Sydney, confirmed that her history was the same as the lass in Qastina, obtained a photograph from her and took it to her sister. The Sydney girl thought that her mother and sister had been killed in Poland. Thus the sisters were re-united.

Colin was a country lad and knew something about snakes and lizzards so that when, in the Aitape (New Guinea) area, a member of a wood-gathering party bent down to pick up a reptile, which he had identified as a "legless lizzard", he was knocked sprawling by Colin who correctly recognised it as a death adder - 2 feet long, 4 inches wide, & with fangs more than 3/4 of an inch long. Perhaps Colin's best-recalled exploit is his escape from the German Army, with Ted Steel and Percy Lane, after two days in captivity in Greece. This remarkable story is recounted in our War History.

Esca Riordan, Bub Graham and Harry Dowling represented our Association at Colin's funeral and Esca reports that the church service was impressive. As the casket was carried from the church a Piper played "Flowers of the Forest" and this was repeated when Colin was committed to his last resting place. Esca was invited to participate in the graveside ceremony. The following eulogy was delivered by a member of Wauchope R.S.L. Sub-Branch:

"Time is catching up with us all; already many a gallant son has passed this way & now lies in this hallowed and sacred piece of Wauchope soil. The son that has gone to join them this day is one that this town and this country can well be proud of. He was one of those 6th. Division heroes who fought so valiantly in North Africa, Greece, Crete and New Guinea. In courage they were never defeated. His Unit was 2/4 Infantry Battalion, of which he was so proud. We are also proud to have known him. His name is mentioned quite often in his Battalion's War History and his exploits are legend.

We, his mates of schooldays and later years, will miss him and his ever ready antidote for any of our problems.

(Contd. next column).

VALE - Colin Charles Campbell (Contd.): -

We heard the Minister tell of his many exploits and no doubt Colin Charles Campbell's war service finally caught up with him and hastened his end, but so long as men and women may walk in freedom, in peace and with honour, he will rest easy. He was a good man. Like us all, he had his moments of strength and his moments of weakness, his time of glory and his time of darkness. We say 'Farewell, old Mate, you have earned eternal peace -

Your duty done, nor time nor evil chance stain your name,

Or bring you sence of loss!

To his family, his mates and many friends, we of Wauchope R.S.L. Sub-Branch offer our sincere and deepest sympathy."

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NORTHERN N.S.W. NEWS:-

Sitrep from Bub Graham: Esca Riordan:

Hasn't seen Bill Sherwin for a while, but he is O.K.

Geoff ("Spike") Galvin has moved to the Forster area and was helping Phil ("Blah") Smith to build a house in that locality. John Smith of Macksville is keeping in good shape.

Sees Tim Ellis from Hernani occasionally at the Bowraville races.

No recent contact with "Massa" Brooks of Coffs Harbour.

Jim Brown has successfully completed a Fund Raising Appeal of \$100,000.00 for a Hydro-Therapy Pool at the Kempsey District Hospital to commemorate Kempsey's Sesqui-Centenary Year.

Harry Dowling and myself (Esca) are in good health but Sam Hughes hasn't been in the best of health of late.

Best Wishes to Association Members for 1987.

Esca Riordan.

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WESTERN AUSTRALIA NEWS:-

Sitrep from Doug Slinger:

I quote from Doug's letter the main items: "We wish to record our appreciation of Laurie Waterhouse for the fine Editor he has been and the good friend he has also been to the W.A. Contingent since we came into being. We thank you (Ted) for taking on the task of keeping the lines of communication open in the interests of 2/4th. Battalion Assocn. members everywhere. We do enjoy reading about old comrades-in-arms over there, and about ourselves, and we consider the "W.O.G." Journal a very important aspect of keeping the Association alive. We are a small group and our main way of operating over here at Perth is to meet for Quarterly Luncheon-Get Togethers at the Perth Anzac Club, to enjoy a few drinks with the meal and each other's company, along with our Ladies. These Get Togethers have been successful in keeping us intouch and most of us come along when the events are notified.

I, personally, have a very good appreciation of what a great Association we have become. My attendance at Gosford, Wagga Wagga and Inverell Reunions has produced wonderful experiences through meeting up with old comrades and finding new ones as well. Hopefully, I and Wilma will arrive at Nelson's Bay, and "Dasher" and Lily Deacon - and it would be great if some of the other West Australians could come too. (Contd. Page 6).

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# THE BOMBER COMMAND MEDAL

LEN BARTON.

A new medal has been made available to ex-members of Bomber Command. It is of cupronickel, 36mm diameter, on a straight fixed suspender. The obverse displays the central motifs of all aircrew brevets around the initials "RAF", and a crown above. The reverse shows the underside of a Lancaster bomber, flanked by the dates 1939-1945, and circled by the words, "A Tribute To The Aircrew of Bomber Command", in upper case type. The ribbon has a narrow red stripe to the centre, on a broad dark blue ground, with a light blue border to either side.

Although this is an unofficial medal, nevertheless the distributors require positive proof of service in Bomber Command before selling it to an applicant.

The question has been asked, why a medal for Bomber Command? Perhaps these facts may explain. 33% of the deaths in the Royal Australian Air Force in World War 2 occurred in R.A.F. Bomber Command. From September 1939 to

May 1943 the Command posted 8327 aircraft missing, and 1795 aircraft crashed and written off on return from operations over enemy territory. As a tour of operations was calculated as 30 sorties over the target, when the number of aircraft shot down equalled 4% or more of the total dispatched, then the odds were against a crew ever completing a tour. In January 1944 during raids on Berlin losses were 6.1%. Raids on Stettin, Brunswick, and Magdeburg lost 7.2%. One raid on Leipzig lost 78 aircraft or 9.5%. On a raid on Nuremberg on 3rd March 1944, 96 out of 795 aircraft failed to return — a massive 11.8%! Each flight over enemy territory was a battle — a battle against flak and night fighters lasting up to nine hours. At least 15 Victoria Crosses were awarded in Bomber Command.

Aircrew who volunteered for Pathfinder Squadrons were allowed to assume the rank and pay of the next higher rank, but their tour of operations was extended to 45 sorties. If they completed their tour they reverted to their original rank and pay.

Much has been written denigrating the effectiveness of the R.A.F. bombing programme, but most writers ignore the heavy German involvement in counter measures. By September 1943 a total of 8876 88mm guns, 24500 light flak guns, and 7000 searchlights were in use, employing 1 million people each night. The Luftwaffe estimated that for every bomber destroyed they

expended 2313 heavy shells and 2458 light flak shells. One third of the German optical industry was employed on producing anti-aircraft equipment, and one half of the electrical industry was producing radar sets for defence. Albert Speer, the German Minister for Armaments stated that it was not the destruction but, because of the vast amounts of war material and personnel required to combat the air raids, "this was the greatest lost battle on the German side". (vide "Spandau Prison Diary")

A comment has been made that "even the bloke who swept out the hangar can get the Bomber Command Medal". I don't recollect too many hangars on the wind-swept, icy lowlands of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, but I do remember ground staff servicing aircraft in the open dispersal bays around the perimeter with the snow thick on the ground, and sleeping on bare concrete in tin Nissen huts with no heating, and short rations, and being bombed by the Luftwaffe almost nightly. However I don't think any ex-member of Bomber Command would wear this medal for self glorification, — as is inscribed on the medal, it is "A TRIBUTE TO THE AIRCREW OF BOMBER COMMAND".

Enquiries regarding this medal should be addressed to:—

John Burrige  
9 Albert Street, Claremont  
W.A. 6010

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Mr. Len Barton, author.)

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## WESTERN AUSTRALIA NEWS (Contd.):—

We would like it to be made known that we always enjoy members of the Association looking us up when they venture to Perth & quite a few have dropped in on us at various times and we have been able to entertain them. The "WELCOME MAT" is well & truly out in Perth for visiting 2/4thers and we are now looking forward to the arrival of President Alf for the Australian Surf Championships on 26th. & 27th. March—hopefully we can all lunch together and then go on a suitable outing during the visit. On behalf of all 2/4thers and their ladies here, I wish all Members a Happy, Healthy & Prosperous New Year.

Doug Slinger.

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## EDITORIAL:—

There might not be an "Editorial", as such, in every issue of this Journal but when there is I would like it to be understood that it will have been composed & printed without bias towards Race, Creed or Politics. Especially in respect of Politics, any editorial comment will have been made

irrespective of what Political Party is in Government.

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## EDITORIAL (Contd.):—

Further, Editorial content and comment in this Journal will be confined to matters of concern or interest to our Country, our 2/4 Bn. Association, or Returned Service Personnel.

The future of The Department of Veterans' Affairs is of concern inasmuch as there are reputed to be moves afoot to amalgamate it with The Department of Social Security or other Welfare Department.

It is vitally important to the ex-Service community that there should be a separate Minister and Dept. of Veterans' Affairs to specialise in matters affecting Veterans. Members are urged to write to their local Member of Federal Parliament requesting them to reject any moves to amalgamate The Dept. of Veterans' Affairs with any other Government Department.

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## MORE TRIVIATA:— "A Bee or Not a Bee":—

The Queen Bee is a hardy soul,  
She thumbs her nose at birth control;  
Which is the reason beyond a doubt...  
There are so many sons of bees about.

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