



White Over Green

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE 2/4 INFANTRY BATTALION ASSOCIATION

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Next Meeting: 8 p.m., FRIDAY NIGHT, MAY 6, 1966, Royal Naval House, Grosvenor St., Sydney

ANZAC DAY

Our Anzac Day programme is well established these days. All are especially requested to be "On Parade", in "good order and condition", at 0800 hours, as the Wreath Laying Ceremony is our main Anzac Day gesture to Fallen Comrades. "Doc" will be there.

Fall in, 0800 hours: Corner of York and Erskine Streets, outside the Ex-Occidental Hotel.

Move off: March to Martin Place for Wreath-Laying Ceremony at the Cenotaph, with 4th Bn. A.I.F., breaking trail and "our" band heading us.

March on to main assembly area, probably in Phillip Street.

R.S.L. Info. Centre: Corner Martin Place and Macquarie Street.

After the March, 1130 hours: Buses at corner of Macquarie and Bridge Streets.

Luncheon, 1230 hours: At Manresa Hall, Carlow Street, North Sydney (just off Miller Street, opposite St. Leonards Park).

Band: "Our" band has been invited to again lead us as well as attend the Dinner. You can bet they will be there with kilts—sorry, boots on!

Note: Entering Domain, LEFT eight files will proceed behind banner, RIGHT files halt, joining on at rear of LEFT ranks.

0800, 25th APRIL

Perhaps you marched at your local R.S.L.'s Anzac Ceremony, or with your family or a close mate or two, paid homage at the Cenotaph Dawn Service?

But now, as the familiar and the "slightly familiar" faces foregather on the corner of York and Erskine Streets; as womenfolk pass out sprigs of rosemary; as our banner and flags are assembled, the spirit lifts, the old camaraderie comes flooding back; each cheery welcome and each firm handshake a weft and weave re-knitting the fabric of the comradeship of we, the living.

It may have only been at the April meeting since last we saw you, or perhaps long years. Perhaps we will see you again next meeting; or will you be heading back to your country town—or to renew your battle with the drought?

Maleesh for now old-timer, we'll have a good yarn at the Luncheon. There's "Doc" up front and we're

"On Parade" once more for the Wreath-laying and later, the March.

'Tis but a moment plucked from the year's long hours, that takes us back in memory—that sends us forward—in the unity of war-time days, to honour our dead.

THE SECOND ANZAC CORPS

One of the least-known and least-publicised facts of World War II would be that an Anzac Corp existed for a short period.

Apart from information in a Services' Christmas Book ("Khaki and Green", page 41) which gives the official formation date as early March, I quote the following from our Unit History, "White Over Green":

"... What lay behind the establishment of an Anzac force, just 25 years after the original Corps made history at Gallipoli?"

"... An Anzac force, together with elements of the British Army was formed for the purpose of protecting her (Greece's) northern front ... and it was finally decided that General Blamey should command the Anzac force in Greece."

"... The Australian Commander, General Blamey, made his reconnaissance ... on March 31."

(Quoted from Blamey's appreciation of the situation): "... I took command of the Anzac Corps on April 4. ..."

(Quoted from "Doc's notes"): "... On the morning of April 8 ... I ... came to Gerania, a little village close to the snow-covered giant Olympus. ... I called there because General Blamey's Anzac Corps Headquarters was established in the village."

Even Crete, with Freyberg in charge, was virtually a continuation of the Anzac Corps.

So, those of you who were in Greece with 6th Div. share with the late Lord Freyberg's N.Z. troops, the honour of being the only Anzacs of World War II.

DEATH OF THE "OLDEST" ANZAC

The above heading was used by the press in reporting the death on New Year's Day of the father of "Snow" Moores, believed to have been the oldest Anzac to serve in both the first and second World Wars. He was aged 86 and had served in the 47th Regt. of the 18th Bn. on Gallipoli; the Second M.G. Bn. in France and the 2/2nd M.G. Bn.

OTHER ANZAC DAYS

War-time Anzac Days were spent in various areas of operations and our Unit History describes several. 1940

"Anzac Day was quite an occasion, too. A party of over 300 members of divisional and brigade units, headed by both bands of the 2/4th Battalion marched through Tel Aviv. It was led by Colonel Parsons, and the salute was taken by Colonel G. A. Vasey, then administering command of the 6th Division. An impressive service was held in the Dizengoff Circle, and the Mayor and Town Clerk of Tel Aviv were present. At the conclusion of this service the march continued to Hayarkon Street where a site, which had been made available by the townspeople, was handed over as the Australian Soldiers' Club. The Mayor conducted the opening ceremony, and the premises were accepted by Colonel Vasey on behalf of the divisional commander. A fine meal was then enjoyed by all troops who had taken part in the march. This was especially memorable, as it was held during the sacred 'Feast of the Passover'.

Down in Gaza, some 200 troops from the battalion attended a service at the famous war cemetery there, and another forty represented the unit at a similar service in Jerusalem. The year 1940 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of Anzac Day, and many of the men felt keenly the significance of this occasion.

Captain John Copland, temporarily seconded from the battalion, was responsible for timing and organising the march of United Kingdom and Commonwealth troops in Jerusalem from the Russian compound to the Y.M.C.A., where a most impressive service was held and broadcast to the world."

1941: Far less peaceful, but perhaps in keeping with true Anzac spirit:

"The day at Megara on April 25 was a very long one for the battalion, one of suspense and anxiety—waiting for the next move. Enemy planes flew inquisitively overhead but miraculously found no trace of the hundreds of troops concealed there.

Everyone was tired, worn out, dirty and unshaven and hungry for a good hot meal and drink. Most of the men slept hidden in the crops and olive groves which were scattered over the area.

Came the dark and movement began. Orders were passed to companies and platoons and later the whole of the assembled troops were formed into groups of 600 personnel, and a start was made in the direction of the harbour to board our old friend, the "Pennland". Word was received that the "Pennland" had been sunk in a brave attempt to run the gauntlet of the German bombers. This was grim indeed.

The next message received was that transport was available for a move to Argos via the Corinth Canal. Some other units were attached to the 2/4th Battalion for this move, and because of a shortage of serviceable transport it was necessary to break the battalion and attached troops into two groups. After a long march back the tired troops of the first group to be moved, crawled and scrambled into the vehicles, and settled in for another forced night drive.

The convoy was about to move when a further message was received that four destroyers had pulled into the bay and we were to get there with all speed to embark, time being a most important factor. Back

down the track and a further halt! All vehicles had been destroyed—then to be told there were no ships at all. This we found out shortly from a patrol was a false report as the ships were in fact there and were due to pull out at 0300 hours. The time then was 0230 hours.

With all possible speed, the whole group moved in the direction of the harbour—then into boats and water craft of all descriptions and out to the destroyers, and so we left Megara and Greece."

1942: Australia again! Mt. Lofty, Adelaide leave and preparations for seven days' disembarkation leave:

"Anzac Day was observed by a church parade at Stirling Oval. The units which took part in this moving ceremony included the 2/3rd Field Regiment, 2/2nd Field Company, 2/7th Field Ambulance, 3rd Company A.A.S.C., 2/11th Battalion, 2/4th Battalion, and Headquarters, 19th Brigade."

1943: Northern Territory.

1944: Atherton Tablelands.

1945: New Guinea.

1946: Peace again. Activities recorded in No. 1, Vol. 1 "White Over Green".

So the years have passed; years of rather uneasy peace, with time out each Anzac Day to honour the dead and renew friendships with we who remain.

In Sydney of course, we are also fortunately able to honour—and fraternise with—the men of the original 4th Bn. A.I.F., and we look forward to seeing them lead us for the wreath-laying, and visit their luncheon and entertain a few of them at our luncheon.

We are certainly the better for such close ties with these men!

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

April meeting accorded "Nedda" Kenna, V.C., Honorary Membership, and ask him to honour our Association by accepting this gesture intended to show how proud we all are he served with the 2/4 Bn. in New Guinea. Perhaps this action should have been taken years ago.

Actually, Honorary Membership for Fred Staggs was seriously discussed at the end of his long and capable session at the helm (a tough period it was for the Association, what with 10 p.m. closing, etc.), but Fred was one of those opposed to such a move—for him or others. Our V.C. winner had not come into these discussions, which were based on Fred's outstanding contribution to the Association.

Now, the April meeting also wished Fred Staggs to accept Honorary Membership and a motion to that effect was passed.

We trust he will reverse his previous thoughts on the matter and accept this honour.

The good news is that "Paddy" Reid (S.A.) has booked with (—) (no free advts, please!) in the hope of flying over to Sydney on Anzac morning, after conducting the Dawn Service at Hindmarsh.

Paddy's health has improved more than somewhat; he feels "on top of the world"; and has even had a couple of short but very satisfying rounds of golf, for after about 20 months lay-off, the old masterly touch was well to the fore (or should that be "Fore!").

He sends best wishes to all and was rather disappointed that Dubbo "Show" will not be going on as that was his old home town. (We'll make it there yet, "Paddy!"—Ed.).

"Paddy" touched on the subject of the drought when he remarked that Tommy Mort was "lucky" (good management?—Ed.) to have transferred his stock from Bourke to Keith, S.A.

"Paddy" was pleased to read in "W.O.G." of Harry Gjedsted's election to the presidency—"a bit of new blood is always good—why wear out the old faithfuls?"

He has taken careful note of the unofficial rendezvous point in the N.B., so keep a weather eye out, me mateys, for a "sky-pilot" looming up on the weather bow!

Sincerely hope you **can** make it, "Paddy".

Incidentally, "Paddy" has become a Life Member. Next to "kick the tin" with the hy. arty. (£10/10/-) would be Peter Hill, who was quite definite over the phone, that he would have a cheque in the next mail.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Hullo, Cobbers of the old 4th.

During the last half century scores of articles, dozens of books and countless pars have been written of the mighty deeds of the Anzacs; how we landed at Anzac under appalling fire, stormed the cliffs with rifle and bayonet against overwhelming odds, fought like demons, etc. etc. So we did, but let us for a change look back a bit and remember the earlier and lighter events of 1914-15.

You old blokes of the first White over Green, do you remember the early August 1914 days when we arrived in ones and twos and little groups at Victoria Barracks at unearthly hours of the night from country, town, village, farm, sheep stations and camps north, south and west, dead scared that the war would be over before we could take part in it?

Do you remember the awe with which we beheld all the Brass, red tabs, Sam Brownes, swords and all the glittering paraphernalia of the officers and n.c.o.'s of the old Regulars?

Remember the long wait for medical inspection, enlistment papers and, lastly, issue of equipment and ill-fitting uniforms that made us feel that at last we were on the way to becoming soldiers?

Remember saluting with shy self-consciousness sergeants, corporals, anybody who looked important until told to "Cut it out"?

Remember Sergeant Major Adams with the walrus mo who first lined us up and got us into some sort of order to march us off to Kensington racecourse to a chaotic camp, the comfortable (?) beds—two blankets and a ground sheet spread wherever we could find a level spot in the grandstand?

Do you remember the interminable drill on the Kensington sandhills (no Australian Golf Club in those days), and after a week or two the pride of showing our friends and relations our military progress in a series of battalion ceremonial manoeuvres?

Remember the night attacks on an imaginary enemy in Centennial Park when we sent numerous spooning

couples scampering from cosy nooks like scared rabbits?

Remember being flooded out of our camp at Randwick Racecourse (there was a race meeting at Kenso. so we were evacuated from there to Randwick). Anyone who had a home handy to go to was given leave to go there until the camp dried out. We must have been keen for everyone was back in camp two days later?

Remember the officer's horse bolting madly when the third battalion band struck up during a parade? Who ever expected that officer to become one of Australia's greatest soldiers, which he did.

Remember the march through the city a week or two before we embarked? How many fell out before the march was over? I was one of the many.

Remember the farewells as we boarded the "S.S. Euripides" at Woolloomooloo?

Remember the morning we sailed through the Heads and about 2000 of the 3000 troops on board were horribly seasick?

Remember the enormous convoy that formed up at Albany and the excitement during the sinking of the "Emden" by "H.M.A.S. Sydney"?

Remember the bad fish that poisoned hundreds of us on the "Euripides"?

Remember the night we disembarked at Alexandria and the hot chocolate and buns the "Sallies" had for us before we entrained for Cairo?

Do you remember (who doesn't) the route marches over the desert with full packs, rifles, ammo. and equipment, about 100 lbs. all told; how we cursed Major McNaughten for leading us on horseback on these marches until one day he appeared on foot with full equipment and led us on the toughest twenty mile route march of all?

Remember Captain Storey's white arab that had to be stained to a bay colour because white horses were not allowed in the army?

Remember the leaves in Cairo (bet you do) and riding on the tops of trams because there was no room inside, the gharry races from Mena to Cairo, the battle of the Wazir—and other sports.

Remember the trip from Alexandria to Lemnos on the old tub "Ionian" (we called her the "One Onion"), the couple of weeks of mock attacks on Lemnos, scrambling down rope ladders and nets into waiting boats then dashing ashore in training for the coming invasion, buying beautiful bread and horrible whisky (so-called White Horse) from the Greeks?

Remember the night of 24th April, when our dear old C.O. Colonel Onslow-Thompson addressed the battalion for the last time and broke into tears before he could finish his address?

Remember sailing in darkness through the night and in the gloom of early dawn clambering down into picket boats from the Navy, the boats commanded by the indomitable little Midshipmen of the Royal Navy, the silent progress to the shore; silent except for the inferno of rifle and machine gun fire and an occasional louder explosion from Beachy Bill or one of our own warships?

Remember—but the rest is history?

C. M. Humphries,
Speedex Studios, Bourke

COCK'S COLUMN

Teddy McCaffery reports that Barry Herwig was sighted at Baulkham Hills Bowling Club. Barry lives in that area, and he's OK.

Friday, 18th March, at the North British, Johnny Morrison, Bill Sandstrom, Jack Gaffney, Rus McWilliam and me. The boys departed early, but I waited in case any others came in, as Dick Morris said he may, but Dick could not make it.

I heard that Charlie Evans (Sigs.), Barry Herwig, Jack Heaney, Jack Keating and Ken Webb had been in. Met Gordon Chrisp homeward bound.

Jack Heaney reports that he enjoyed a beer with Ron Stennett (the man who fed the eagles at Adelaide) at N.B.

Now the April Meeting:

The boys as I saw them:—Fred Searle, George Stack, John Jordan, Harry Wright, Johnny Morrison, Bill Luck, Slim Pollick, Stan Bowen, Peter Cook, Ken Webb, Rex Everson, Rus McWilliam, Dick Morris, Sid Young, Ernie "Ollie" Twist, Les Leach, Harry "Soccer" Coomber, Bill Mitchell and Mick Steel.

Some news from them:

Peter Cook had a beer with Bill "Bing" Riley at the Arncliffe Scots Club—any of the boys who wish to contact "Bing", can do so around 5 p.m. there. Peter also had a game of golf with Slim Pollick and on the Day of Days went for a trip on the Harbour with Harry Gjedsted. Rus McWilliam and Johnny Meehan could not make it.

"Bing" Riley said he had a beer with Lou Evans at the Paddington R.S.L. Peter Cook met Ken Webb and Tom Hopper.

Bill Stewart's son, Allen, Cadet at Duntroon, is doing exceptionally well. Only one extra duty, lowest of the whole intake. Congrats Allen.

Harry "Soccer" Coomber, Greenacre. Harry met "Speed" Elsley (Trans.) at the Metro Drive-In. "Speed" has given away soccer coaching, and has taken on refereeing (poor kids).

Ernie "Ollie" Twist had a night out with Elliot Schofield. Attended the Minstrel Show at the Auburn R.S.L. It was a good show.

Harry Wright had a ring from Tom Provians. Tom was down on a flying visit for the funeral of his mother-in-law. Our sincere sympathy to you Tom, Vera and family. Tom will see us at Kempsey.

Mick Steele: We are all very sorry to hear that Mick lost his mother recently and we offer Mick and family our sincere sympathy.

Sid Young met Rex Gilliland and learned that Rex is due to go into Concord. Sorry to hear of this Rex. We wish you a speedy recovery.

Page Four

Les "Lizard" Leech and Ernie Twist, are organising a camping expedition for the next Kempsey Reunion, taking their families with them. They have a caravan and tents. Hope you have good weather mate.

A letter from Esca Riordan to George Stack and passed on to me. Some extracts:—

"Just before Christmas we had a visit from Perce Dallan, his wife and son from Wagga. They had been on a holiday to Queensland and were making their way leisurely down the coast.

After Christmas a few of the local 2/4ers met casually at the local club one Saturday morning for a few refreshments. Jim Brown, Harry Dowling, Tom Malcom and self.

Later in January we had a phone call from none other than Tom Provians and family, who were returning to Brisbane. I went down to the club for a couple of hours and had a few noggins. Tom said he had seen some of the boys in the city.

During February the North Coast District Council held their Annual Meeting at Sawtell and again the 2/4ers were well represented. Bub Graham, Jim Brown and self.

On Monday night after a Legacy meeting, we were having a few refreshments at the club, when I saw a figure of solid proportions cross my vision. It was none other than Jack Chaseling from Kyogle. He was down here on business so we yarned till the club closed. He and Allan Kirk are going to organise the boys and girls from that end for the Reunion. Thanks Esca."

Received from Padre Reid two large excellent photos: first taken at Anzac Eve Reunion of 19th Aust. Inf. Bde., 1965. A group of five, Padre Reid in the centre. They are standing in front of the 19th Aust. Infantry Brigade, 6th Div. A.I.F. Banner, between their shoulders can be seen the numerals 2/4.

Second photo: The men marching along King William Road. Padre Reid in the front row on the left. Many thanks Father for the photos. You are looking well, hope you feel and keep that way.

A nice letter from Rick Carter, which we hope include next issue.

"COCK" ROBIN.

Remember to make your 9th ANNUAL COUNTRY REUNION

Booking NOW to —

**E. J. Riordan,
63 Cameron Street,
WEST KEMPSEY**

Held at Kempsey, October 1, 2, 3, 1966