



White over Green

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE 2/4 INFANTRY BATTALION ASSOCIATION

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Patron: Major-General Sir Ivan Dougherty, C.B.E., D.S.O., E.D., B.Ec.
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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Friday, 7th February, 1969 - Reserve this Date

A Merry Xmas and Happy New Year to All

The President's Christmas Message

Another eventful year has passed in the history of our Association, and once again we are on the threshold of Christmas and a new year.

1968 has been a memorable year for us, and the support and encouragement members have given our Committee, and me, in attending various functions has not only been gratifying, but truly reveals the strength and wonderful comradeship that is the hallmark of our Association.

We commenced the year with a Barbecue Picnic Day at Bundeena, and I do hope that we can repeat this type of family day-out in the coming year. Progressively through the year we have seen the formation of the Association of 4th Infantry Battalions become a reality, with its impressive Parade and Wreath Laying Ceremony on November 10, led by the magnificent band of 4 Bn. R.N.S.W.R. I do appeal to our members to join this Association.

We had a well-attended Wreath Laying Ceremony, March and Reunion on ANZAC DAY, and were joined at the Reunion Luncheon, for the first time, by 4 Bn. A.I.F. 1914-18 Association.

We were intensely proud to see Her Majesty the Queen recognise our Patron's dedicated, loyal and efficient service to our country, both in war and peace,

with a knighthood, which event we celebrated with a cocktail party in honour of Sir Ivan and Lady Dougherty.

We were guests of 4 Bn. R.N.S.W.R. at the presentation of the Queen's and Regimental Colours at Victoria Barracks by the Governor of N.S.W., Sir Roden Cutler, V.C., K.C.M.G., C.B.E. We saw the Inaugural Competitive Shoot at Holdsworthy by 4 Bn. R.N.S.W.R. for the 2/4 Aust. Inf. Bn. Marksmanship Trophy, and experienced another well-attended, well organised and thoroughly enjoyable Country Reunion at Cowra.

In all these activities, and in our work during the year, as in past years, we are motivated by the encouragement, understanding and assistance given to us by our wives, sisters, relatives and friends whose interest contributes so greatly to the success of our Association. As a token of our appreciation our last function of the year is our "Ladies' Night", and this night was also a tremendous success this year. Again, I extend my sincere thanks to Dorothy Searle, Lorrie Pollock, Marge Stack and Barbara McWilliams, for the wonderful work and assistance they have given to our Association.

This year, as always, has been very demanding on

our Committee, and to them I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude for the support and encouragement they have given me in the administration of our Association's affairs. The "life line" of our Association is, of course, "W.O.G.", and to our Vice-President/Editor and to "Cock" Robin I extend our Association's sincere thanks for a tremendous job well done.

The coming year will be the 30th anniversary of the raising of our Battalion, and this will add specific importance to our **ANZAC DAY March and Reunion** and our **Country Reunion**. Our ANZAC DAY Reunion will be held in the Drill Hall of 17 Bn. R.N.S.W.R., Carlow Street, North Sydney, and Port Macquarie is the venue of our Country Reunion. We are depending on **YOU** to make these two occasions memorable in the history of our Association and ask that you make plans **NOW** to be "On Parade" in Sydney on ANZAC DAY, 1969.

And now, with 1969 at hand, I extend on behalf of our Patron, Major-General Sir Ivan Dougherty, myself, Marjorie and your Committee our sincere best wishes to all our members and their families, to the next of kin of members, to our friends of 4 Bn. A.I.F. 1914-18, and 4 Bn. 1939-45, to the Commanding Officers, Officers, N.C.O.'s and men of 4 Bn. R.A.R. and 4 Bn. R.N.S.W.R., and to our friends everywhere, for a Happy and Merry Christmas, and Good Health, Good Luck and Prosperity in the coming year.

HARRY GJEDSTED.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 1969 fall due on 1st January next. The executive would appreciate an early remittance from those in a position to do so.

Remember this year to remit your \$2 to **GEORGE STACK, 40 O'Keefe Crescent, Eastwood**. This covers membership and the printing and posting of "White Over Green" for 12 months. A good response now will be a great encouragement to the incoming executive to be elected at the Annual General Meeting on Friday, 7th February, 1969, at 8 p.m., at Royal Naval House, Grosvenor Street, Sydney.

T.P.I. members are, of course, entitled to free membership.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting and Election of Office Bearers for 1969 will be held at the usual meeting place, Royal Naval House, Grosvenor Street, Sydney, at 8 p.m., on Friday, 7th February, 1969. Members are reminded that Country and Interstate Vice-Presidents are elected at this meeting and any financial member is eligible for these positions. He should be proposed and seconded in the usual way. A request to any member attending the meeting will see this is done.

COCK'S COLUMN

Waiting at the assembly point for the Association of 4th Infantry Battalions first Reunion, met **Dick Pinson**, also his brother, **Wal**, with his twin sons, **Robert** and **Richard**. They look alike, dress alike and are two very nice boys. Then our boys started to arrive—**Russ McWilliam**, **Harry Gjedsted**, **Cec Chry-**

stal, **Ken Kesteven**, **Peter Cook**, **Ken Webb**, **Athol Heath**, **Dick Latimer**, **Fred Searle**, **George Stack**, **Reg Angel**, **Dick Faulder**, **Bill Parry**, **Cedric Bignold**, **Bill Luck**, **Noel Woolcott**, **Joe Rognini**, **Harry Wright**, **John Jordan**, **Sid Thompson**, **Vic Francis**, **Ted de Satge** and friend, **Bob Lever**, **Fred Staggs**.

Now some news and addresses: **Cedric Bignold**, 74 Castle Howard Road, Beecroft, of "D" Coy., is joining our 2/4th Association.

Sid Thompson (Sig. Pltn.), now Postmaster at the Military P.O., Holsworthy. Sid recently visited H.Q., Black Watch, Dalhousie Castle, Perth, Scotland, and was pleased to see the 2/4th Bn. as an affiliated unit.

Vic Francis, ex Melbourne, now 78 Lennox Street, Newtown. Vic sends his regards to **Dick Parry**, hopes he is O.K.

Dick Latimer has given away the North Coast, is now at 2/123 Artarmon Road, Artarmon. Pleased to have you and Enid back with us, Dick. Dick met **Russ Reston**, brother of the late **Dick Reston** (killed in Derna Wadi). Russ is anxious to contact **Bill Goodall** (C Coy.).

Ted de Satge with his friend—I am sorry, Ted, you introduced me, but I did not get around to writing down his name.

Ken Kesteven, 36 Lower Cliff Road, Northbridge, and I had a good yarn of old Tobruk days.

It was a grand first reunion, march and wreath laying of the combined 4th—very well organised. I met the boys of the wonderful 4 R.N.S.W.R. Band—it is world class. The boys were **Bill Butters**, **John Weatherly**, **Bob Smith**, **Bert Wheeldon**, **Roy Jones**, **Frank McGuiness**, Bandmaster, and **Reg Rhodes**, Drum-major. They played a request for me, "Our Director" (my favourite) and I like it better than ever now, after the excellent way they played it.

North British News: It was a pleasant surprise to walk in and meet **Jack Ormiston** from Breakfast Creek, Cowra district. Jack was just about to go when our friend there, Jack Maloney (not the 2/4th one) entertained him till I arrived (for which we were very grateful). This was Jack's second visit to the N.B.—it was his first contact; on his previous visit he had not met any 2/4th-ers. Jack said that Breakfast Creek was named by Hume and Hovell on their exploration of the Lachlan River Valley. They made their breakfast camp there. Jack mentioned how proud he was to have been a member of the 2/4th Bn. after the many complimentary remarks from all sections of the community on the bearing and behaviour of Association members at the Annual Country Reunion held this year in Cowra.

Jack had recently seen **Tim West**, **Ted Harris** and **Hylton Batchelder**, all of whom hope to take time off to attend the 1969 Country Reunion at Port Macquarie. Kind regards to you, Mrs. Ormiston (Phyl). I'm sorry I was unable to get to the Reunion. By the way, Jack, I saw **Gordon Chrisp** who was very sorry he had missed you and would very much like to have a yarn about old Cowra days. He hopes he can strike you next trip.

I had a note handed to me—**Norman Lane** from Panania had called in and will call again. Sends regards to all.

In the mail box a letter from **Frank Frizell**. Frank was away down south at Whitemark, Flinders Island, Tasmania, visiting his mother and sister. He's back home now, I met him at the N.B. last Friday. He looks well, said he had not had a drink for over six weeks. Of course, I am writing of the amber liquid. Frank reports seeing **Bruce Mulquinny** who is on crutches—he broke a bone in his foot in a car accident. (**Jack Heaney** diagnosed gout, without sighting.) Sorry to hear about your hoof, Bruce, hope it mends quickly.

Then **Jim "Happy" Davis** arrived, his first visit for some time. Jim reports, "At the Banks Hotel, Newtown, played dominoes with a chap and during conversation found out he was a 2/4th-er, **Terence Sparks**, NX46647, of Don Coy., lives at Flat 5/24, Cambridge Street, Enmore. He is again going to join the Association. "Happy" has also seen **Jim Henry**, A Coy, and has **Bill Anderson's** younger brother living with him.

Sorry I missed out mentioning that **Les** and **Ena Anderson** were visitors to the Cowra Reunion. Hope I can report personally of your attendance at Port Macquarie, '69. Incidentally, **Dick Bawden** advises that the R.S.L. Club at Port Macquarie has already been booked for the long weekend in October, 1969, for the Country Reunion. As it will be our 30th Anniversary **Dick** hopes for a record attendance.

On a recent trip to Portland I called in at the R.S.L. Club and enquired for any "White Over Green". Was introduced to **Jack Curran** of 4 Bn. 1939-45 A.I.F. He told me that **George Coles** was a member of the club, but had not been there lately. He gave me **George's** address at Wallerawang, but **George** was not at home when I called. I later called at Lithgow R.S.L. Club where the Assistant Sec./Manager, **Herb Wilson**, made me very welcome. Also met Committeeman **Bill Chambers** who kindly gave me the names of 2/4th-ers who were members. They are **Hylton Harvison**, **Jack Hines**, **Les Bayliss** and **Tom Ousby**. **Tom** was in the club when I arrived. He said he knew me as soon as I walked in the door—not bad after 25 years. **Tom** asked after the boys of the Sig. Pltn. to which he belonged until he transferred to 1st Army Sigs. after Crete.

Mr. Herb Wilson, incidentally, invited me and all members of our Association to call at any time we are going through. Thanks, **Herb**, for your hospitality. I spent a very pleasant morning in your club.

A Many Thanks Section:

Many thanks to our wonderful President, **Harry Gjedsted**, also **George Stack**, **Fred Searle**, **Harry Wright**, the Committee and those who help to get out "W.O.G.", and to those who give me news for the column.

Many thanks also to **Jack Heaney** and **Jean** who were kind enough to pick **Eileen** and I up on Ladies' Night and take us to the **Royal Naval House**. Also to **Joe** and **Ena McGrath** who drove me home.

So thanks sincerely to all the workers for the Association and "W.O.G." and to those who have helped me with the column.

I wish you one and all a very Happy and Holy Christmas and a Bright and Prosperous New Year.

J. ROBIN,
20 Adderstone Avenue,
North Sydney. 2060.

FLIGHT FROM GERMANY

May, 1944

Continuing the account by the late **Bill Irvine**, M.M., of his escape from a P.O.W. camp in Germany in 1944.

We were lucky that night not to have been picked up as we were wandering right in the middle of a village and had a very miserable time getting out of it—at one period we were nearly bogged in a filthy creek just outside the village. We thought we were nicely clear till we stumbled on to some military barracks where some Jerry soldiers were quartered. We walked only a few yards from what looked like a 3.7 ack-ack gun and a machine gun mounted on a tripod. The guards could not have been doing a very good job, otherwise they must have seen and challenged us. We certainly gave that place away very smartly after that. There was no rest for the next couple of hours as we were almost running at times.

We were very particular in hiding up the next day. It started to rain again but we crawled right under the low branches of the young pine trees and tried to sleep. We started off again before dark and wandered through the thick pine forest passing one spot twice so we knew we were lost for the time. We sat down and got our bearings with the compass. We set out across an open field in the general direction of Czechoslovakia, reached the other side and went into the pines once again. We had not gone far when we saw a main road with a squad of German soldiers marching along it, so we got down into a gully which also had an old track running parallel with it and a big dump of firewood stacked alongside. We had reached the track and were watching the soldiers on the main road when an unarmed German soldier with a bicycle walked within 3 yards of us. He looked straight at us, not saying a word, but he kept going up the track in the same direction as the squad of soldiers on the main road. Every few yards he would look back at us as though he was trying to make up his mind whether he should question us. The track was overgrown with scrub, and as soon as he got out of sight we made off for the forest on the other side of the main road. We had reached some very thick scrub when we heard what sounded like a search party so we got down as close as we could to the ground and lay there very quietly. Two chaps came within a few yards of us with rifles, so we were again very lucky not to have been taken in.

During this period we had not had anything hot to drink so we decided to risk a fire in the middle of a forest and boil the billy. We made the fire with small very dry twigs which did not smoke very much and it was worth the risk. We had some very rough mountainous country to travel over, and with our packs it was harder than anything we had done in the desert for it was forced march every night and again, when it rained, during the day. One night, when we had

been in some very rough country, we decided we would go along the main road so, when we struck it, we set off in single file with the Scotsman in the lead. It was almost pitch black, and after we had gone a few kilos we became rather careless—it was too late when we realised that there was a fellow on a bike only a few yards behind us. He rode up to us and asked us who we were and where we were going. We told him that we were going to a working camp at Kriegsdorf. He seemed surprised but, as he was unarmed, he could do nothing about us being on the loose. He rode off muttering that he did not understand why we had no guard. There was an aerodrome only a few hundred yards ahead and this chap was apparently one of the airmen from the drome.

It was not long before he was out of sight so we took to the friendly shelter of the pine forest once again. There was a train line running into the forest which we followed for about a kilo then thought it better to leave in case we were being followed. They have barking deer in Europe and occasionally we mistook its bark for that of a dog. If we had not been told about this before we cleared out, no doubt we would have been in a bad panic. About this period we were getting close to the Czechoslovakian border. It was also our first view of the American bombers flying over in a tight formation. It gave a great boost to our morale and we were feeling much more confident about the outcome of our adventure, although there were numerous obstacles to get across before we could ease up.

There appeared to be a big increase in the railway traffic around this area and the trains were running a shuttle service towards the Russian front. We had to cross the line here and the country being wide open we decided to go down in a depression where there was a railway bridge and get across there. We thought that maybe it was guarded at the bridge and had pins and needles until we got quite clear of the line. We had not reached Czechoslovakia at this period, although we were in Sudetenland. (The old Czech border had big concrete pill-boxes right along the frontier; they were alongside our working camp at Kunan.) Our next obstacle was a river so one of us stripped and tried it for depth and then the rest of us took off our trousers and followed. Got everything wet either in the river or with the rain. We made camp just inside the forest on the Czech side of the river, but it was very miserable, like the majority of the camps we had.

It was almost impossible to sleep. However, the Scotsman must have had an easy conscience as he could sleep anywhere. The next day we started off towards Czechoslovakia and it was not long before we ran into two chaps who were after mushrooms. We had a talk to them and they impressed on us to be very careful. However, we were doing the best we knew how. We saw the U.S. Air Force over again and we were in good spirits whenever we saw Allied planes around. We heard some bombing so it looked as though the Allies were forcing the issue on Germany in her own country. We must be getting close to the Czech border. We had been travelling close to a road and noticed some cherry trees which had fruit on

them, so we left one of our number to watch the road while the others helped themselves. However, we were so intent on the job that a man and a woman drove right on to us before we could get down out of the tree. He pulled up and I guess he was just as embarrassed as we were, for he would not have had much chance against the four of us. He turned out to be a Czech and after a lot of difficulty with the language problem we managed to follow his instructions to get across the border into Czechoslovakia. We had been told by two Englishmen who had been on the loose in Czechoslovakia that we would know that we had reached this country by the fact that it was open country after leaving the forests and it certainly was correct. We could see people working everywhere in the fields, so we decided to take the plunge and try our luck with them as they could either be friends or otherwise.

We were dressed in British battle dress and I had an Aussie tunic, so we were not hiding anything and these people just stood and stared at us. We could not speak their language but we waved to them and they seemed most friendly and waved to us in return. Our destination at this time was a place called St. Hastines and we had been told by the Czech who caught us in the cherry tree that we were not very far off. We had not travelled very far through the fields when we decided to have a rest on a piece of rising ground, so went to earth. We had only just got settled when we saw a chap coming towards us with a hoe on his shoulder. We thought, here comes trouble. However, when he came up to us we could see we had nothing to fear from him as he appeared very friendly. We managed to have some sort of conversation with him in German. He asked us where we were going and when we told him that we were bound for St. Hastines he looked so surprised we guessed something was wrong. He explained by actions and words that the Germans had stationed some of the Gestapo and Hitler Youth in the monastery. This place was a connecting link in the underground movement and I guess quite a few P.O.W.'s had passed through there before it was given away. At this time we were only about one hour's walk from the place and would have carried on in that direction as soon as we had finished our rest. **Tony Machan** was this fellow's name, and he proved to be, perhaps, the best friend we ever had (afterwards he was persecuted by the Communists and died leaving his wife and two kiddies). He got us to move into the middle of a wheat crop so that we would not be so conspicuous. He asked us if we were hungry and when we told him we had very little left, he said he would come back that night about 10 p.m. with some food—he would whistle a few times, and when we answered he would know the coast was clear and could proceed. He turned up with a 5 kilogram loaf of bread which was a round loaf—about 18 inches across and 5 inches deep. It was the largest loaf of bread I'd ever seen. He also brought some milk and bacon fat and we had a regular banquet, but paid the penalty later as most of us were sick. He stayed with us till late and when he left said he would be back the following night with a very good friend who would also help us.

(To be continued)