



# White Over Green

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE 2/4 INFANTRY BATTALION ASSOCIATION

Registered at the G.P.O. Sydney, for transmission by Post as a Periodical, Category "A".

PATRON: Major-General Sir Ivan Dougherty, C.B.E., D.S.O. & Bar, E.D., B.Ec., LL.D (Hon.)

33rd YEAR OF CONTINUOUS PUBLICATION

Vol. 33 No. 9

PRICE 15c PER COPY

September 1978

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**MONTHLY MEETINGS:** Fourth Friday in each month at 8 p.m. at the Gallipoli Memorial Club.

**NEXT MEETING:** Friday, September 22nd 1978

## LAST CHANCE FOR LISMORE!!!!

As at September 1st there was still some accommodation available but the 'Big Fella' KIRK says to get moving on it or you will certainly miss out on what is shaping up to be our biggest Country Reunion since the end of the cause of it all. At the first of the month the count was 260 bookings. Our Patron, Sir Ivan Dougherty, will be in attendance, and our lovable M.P. Jim 'Have-a-chat' Brown advises me that 'Nifty' Ned Kenna V.C. will also be with us.....Beauty! You can contact Allan Kirk at 179 Dibbs Street, Lismore, 2480, or on 21 4464 — area code 066.  
Editor.

## LADIES NIGHT, 1978

On Friday, August 25th a small but keen band of members, their wives, families and friends, enjoyed a jolly get-together at the Gallipoli Club, feeling a little sad for those who did not make the effort to come and join in the fun and comradeship of the evening. S.V.P. Bill MacLennan paid special tribute to Athol Heath, who had spared no effort to give the 'first floor' a really festive 'White Over Green' appearance. Several apologies were received, most important of all being from our President, Harry Gjedsted and his lovely wife Marge. Harry is improving gradually but after a bout of duty at the Club that afternoon did not feel up to staying on for the evening's activities. It was good to see Bruce and Angela Cork (down from Palm Beach, Qld for son Stephen's wedding early in September), and as usual, we were

favoured with the presence of our Patron, Sir Ivan, and also that of Lady Mackay, still looking sprightly after her recent bout of illness. Dick Pinson and his happy band have lost none of their ability to ensure a swinging night — thank you boys!

So take a tip — watch W.O.G. next year for Ladies' Night publicity, and be sure not to miss out on a very ENJOYABLE evening.

## WELFARE REPORT AS AT 25/8/78

We have had a very healthy month. Our only customers were:—

NX 17403 DOOLEY, A.J. R.G.H.230. Larry was sent home on 21/8/78. I rang Yvonne this morning. Larry is very happy to be home. Still very weak but everything seems to have settled down, and he is back on normal diet.

NX 11220 McCAFFREY, Edward J. R.G.H. 530. Ted had just had cataract removed from his right eye. Doing well and full of beans. Will be at Lismore.

Good Health to all.....John Copland.

## IN THE MAILBAG

**FROM KEN MOSES, EAST BENTLEIGH to ALLEN LINDSAY**  
(A little belated, but none the less entertaining): 'Sorry I missed you whilst in Synday, and also sorry I missed the meeting in May.



Unfortunately I had promised to take Rosemary to a function and was in pain of death if I did not return at the scheduled time — I could remain in Sydney for ever. Women are demanding at times, as well as unreasonable, as I distinctly remember taking her out towards the end of 1948 to a prawn night at the Redfern Boiler-maker's Union social night.

'That's not the point of this letter. The May issue of W.O.G. was awaiting me when I threw my hat through the door on Thursday night. You know my views on 'Controversy Corner'. You spilt claret all over our only tablecloth a few years back when we entertained you at great expense and discussed the matter. When you have been away from headquarters for 32 years and travel around quite a bit, a 'social register' of members would be of great help. It is damn annoying to arrive back from a trip to some area to find out a couple of weeks later you have been around the corner from a 2/4 bod you could have spent a couple of pleasant hours with. So thanks to Jack Huston and Hughie Wittleton for raising the matter again, and PLEASE do something about it.

'I think my trip to Sydney was a success, but will know more about that when I hear from the publishers and the literary grants are announced. If it was a success you will be seeing a bit more of me in Sydney. The leg is coming along fine, the only trouble is that I find it hard to walk.

'Cheers to everyone, and sorry I missed seeing a few more of you.

#### FROM GEORGE MOORE, MOLLYMOOK to BILL MACLENNAN

'I have just returned with my Jean from a five week's trip to Greece and Crete. Had six days' stay in Athens and then took a tour right around the Greek mainland for twelve days. Had a look at some of the old battle-grounds, but there's not much sign of those days left now.

'The War Cemeteries are very well kept by the Greek Government towns that were bombed heavily during the war are today showing no war damage. Thessalonika is a very modern city — not the way I saw it last, and Larissa is a beautiful town. Brallos Pass looks about the same, only now has a super highway through it. We had a twelve day stay on Crete to have a good look at the battle-grounds. Here again there is not much sign of those days. I spent my ten days there in the war on a Vickers Gun, so Jean and I made a special trip out to see the little old church on the hill.

'Crete today is a great holiday place, and well worth taking a trip to see. Being Australians we were always made very welcome during our trip through Greece and Crete — we sure had a wonderful trip. The people of Greece seem to be very prosperous these days — everything so tidy and clean. It's not a cheap country to live in these days, but I say to any 2/4th who wants a good trip — go to Greece and Crete. It will be well worth it to see those old sites again.

'Regards to all'

FROM FRED APTHORP, GRIFFITH to BILL MACLENNAN 'A recent article in the 'Fourth Infanter' by Ken Moses relating to a meeting with a Taxi-driver, a native of Heraklion, brings to mind an incident which occurred during the time we spent in that area, and for obvious reasons I am calling this article

#### 'IN BORROWED PLUMES'

'On May 20th, 1941, and before that day was many hours old, it became quite apparent that the long expected invasion of Crete by German paratroops was about to begin. This invasion was preceded by three bombing raids, plus ground strafing by the Luftwaffe, each succeeding raid seeming to increase in intensity. During this time, one group of paratroopers, finding themselves in a somewhat vulnerable position, decided that their most favourable place of safety was the Greek military barracks on the fringe of the aerodrome, and adjacent to our 'C' Coy. area. Having gained the sanctuary of the building, they lost no time in sniping operations, exchanging fire with

'C' Coy. troops.

'After several days of such action it was estimated that only one German remained alive, so it was decided forthwith to rush the building with the object of capturing or eliminating him.

'On gaining entrance, however, all that remained was three dead Germans but not a living soul — but a discarded German uniform was found and stores left behind had been disturbed. I might add at this juncture that during the quieter days before the evacuation of Greece the barracks were occupied by the Scottish Regiment — the Black Watch — who on evacuating left behind surplus items, including uniforms. It would be reasonable then to assume that the German, realising that the game was up, decided on a bold plan, donned a Black Watch uniform and walked out — probably in broad daylight — to rejoin his mates.

'This assumption was supported by Sgt. Harry Watts, who recalled seeing a man in Black Watch uniform passing through 'C' Coy. lines, who, on being spoken to by Watts, replied that he was making for his unit. Harry Watts did say that the fellow spoke with a rather thick accent.

'It would be rather interesting if this idea could be pursued for verification. If the fellow survived the war and is still alive, he would most likely be telling his grand-children how he put one over the Aussies on Crete!

'P.S. I really believe K.C. should forward his item about his taxi-driver acquaintance. It's interesting reading.'

Fred goes on to say that he would very much appreciate a copy of the newspaper clipping and picture of Col. Dougherty with Capt. Rungie and Mr. Menzies — for his scrap book. Perhaps one of our Newcastle boys could oblige if there is a spare copy about. Fred's address is 80 Kookora Street, Griffith.

FROM BOB LEVER to BILL MACLENNAN: 'My wife Gladys, daughter Dianne, son Bill and myself have just returned from a holiday in Cairns and the Atherton Tablelands. The day before we left, April W.O.G. with Wally McKenzies' letter arrived. As I intended to go to Wondecla and Herberton it was timely, and I was partly prepared for what I found.

'It was on the second trip into the area that we found anything. The road from the picture show is now only a track, which we followed right through to where it widened near some farms. We then turned and came back in the opposite direction.

'With Dianne driving the car, Bill and I walked up each side of the track. At one point Dianne saw a slight slope in the ground that could have been a truck entrance. Here we went into the bush and found three or four concrete floors. One was most likely a cookhouse, because there were some steel pickets driven into the ground in the shape of a camp fireplace used with hydraburners, and the remains of a grease trap. Another looked like an ablution block, which I estimated was in the 2/4 Bn. area. If I remember correctly, the 2/8 Bn. was on the opposite side of the road, as was the Bde. H.Q. All that area was cleared and ploughed.

'We then moved on till Bill found some broken pipe and rubble on that side of the track, and when I worked out where I thought the entrance to Bde. H.Q. had been, I looked for the 2/11 Bn. cairn. Dianne asked me how big it was. I said: 'About as big as that stump' She turned around and looked at the bush and said: 'There it is, to the left of the stump'. When I went to take a photo a snake was in the way, so rather than dispute passage I reckoned I had got close enough and took one from there. Dianne took another one from the track and one of the old picture show. They are still to be developed.

'The next day we went to Trinity Beach. There we found a notice naming Vasey Esplanade. The board tells of Major General Vasey's death on 5th March, 1945, in a 'plane crash near the mouth of the Barron River. I took a photo of this but light got to the film and half of it was spoiled. The board shows 6 DIV. and 7 DIV insignia and the



colour patch reproductions.

'From there we went to Palm Cove and found, as Wally said, a gem of a place. There are some very nice homes and general store on beach front. There are also a couple of motels on the road in. Like Wally, I missed the plaque.

'Whilst in the area I tried to find Dead Man's Gully, where Bde. H.Q. camped during the barge training period. This was a hard one. I had about three places picked as possible till we visited a bird and animal sanctuary. I am sure, by the terrain of the place, that this was the place where we camped.

'Am enclosing a print of the 2/11 cairn. If anyone knows if the 2/11 Bn. have an association in W.A. and has an address, I will be pleased to send them a print.

'I hope to be able to get along to a meeting in the near future. Best wishes to everyone in the association.'

## NEWS FROM VICTORIA

Thanks to Claude Raymond for an up-to-date Victorian Nominal Roll. Claude tells us that endeavours are made from time to time to contact those who are not in evidence around the Anzac Day period. Many are ex 2/22 Bn., who keep in touch with their small organisation, which sends out an annual bulletin and holds a dinner in Melbourne in January. Some addresses are incomplete, others very doubtful because of the passage of time, whilst some are only based on meagre information. Most Melbourne 2/22 Bn. men attend that unit's march on Anzac Day and meet their old mates in some pub or other after the march. 2/4 hold a reunion with the 2/8Bn. in the Melbourne Town Hall on the Saturday preceeding Anzac Day, and after the march meet at the Caulfield R.S.L. for their reunion.

**THE FUTURE OF THE R.S.L.A.** by A.C.Cameron (Past President of the R.S.S.A.I.L.A. Q'ld.). Some months ago, Tom Provians sent us the following comments of a man who is vitally interested in the future of the R.S.L. They were written in November, 1977, after we had re-printed Sir Ivan Dougherty's thoughts on this subject in that month's W.O.G. The younger generation of the A.C.Cameras and the Wal McKenzies (Indooroopilly) having intermarried, Wal took the opportunity of obtaining these comments:

'To assess Sir Ivan Dougherty's remarks (W.O.G. Vol. 32, No.11, pp. 1 and 2) on the future of the R.S.L. we must go right back to basics, look at its Rules and By-Laws, its Aims and Objects, its Motto, its Memorandum and Articles of Association, its Standing Policy, all of which throw some light on its reason for existence. From these it will become fairly clear what can and should be done.

'The League had its beginning on 6th June, 1916, when men who had returned from theatres of war to Australia saw that some sort of organisation would be needed to look after the interests of demobilised soldiers. This principal aim has remained substantially unaltered through the ensuing 60 odd years, though the rules under which it functions have been amended periodically.

'At present the League's membership is something over 273,000 in all States. The exact number of persons eligible for League membership is not known. However, members fall into certain natural groups, depending on which war they served in. According to Repat Dept. figures, there are still more than 80,000 survivors from World War I and preceding wars, most of whom are members. The vast majority served in World War II. Of the total of about 56,000 who served in Korea, Malaysia and Vietnam, probably about 40,000 are members.

'Since the W.W.2 component is the largest, and since practically all present executives fall into this category it must be remembered that their ages range from the early 50's upwards, and indeed most of them have turned 60. Therefore Sir Ivan Dougherty's appreciation, based on a projection for the next 50 years, is clearly unrealistic. Most observers closely in touch believe that by the year 2000 the

League could not function as it has done hitherto, and indeed the decision on its future may well have to be made well before then.

'I know of only one man from W.W.1 still serving the R.S.L. in Q'ld. in an executive capacity. He is exceptionally fit, mentally and physically, for his age — early 80's — but no longer attends many meetings, and none at night. Thus his contemporaries are not now a force in the League, and have not been for some years. In fact many of them now need assistance, which can be given to them both by the League, in War Veterans' Homes and by Repat. Dept. in various Government institutions, which have mostly been set up as a result of League pressure.

'The object of the League, 24 in number, fall into 3 main categories. The first 3 are concerned with preserving in various ways the fellowship and welfare of the ex-service community. These have largely been achieved, and in some cases strengthened, over the years.

'Numbers 4 to 9 deal with promoting the status of serving members of the armed forces, vis-a-vis the community in general, including a general watch on matters concerned with the defence of the nation.

'Numbers 10 to 24 are mainly domestic, referring to the means whereby the foregoing objectives can be achieved. Included in this category are the establishment of institutions such as Clubs, which serve the dual purpose of providing congenial surroundings for the social benefit of members, their families and friends, and of raising money for the funding of other objectives.

'Therefore, in the near future, categories 1 and 3 will become largely obsolete, due to the advancing age of members. Only category 2 incorporating as it does the encouragement of loyalty and service to the nation by younger men, can be seen as a continuing duty, with no time limit. Even here, considerations of age will tend to diminish the importance of the League's role.

'The numerical strength of the R.S.L., despite continuing increases over the last 9 consecutive years, must start to decline in the foreseeable future, unless either a new war brings an influx of new members, or conditions of eligibility are altered, to admit members not in the category of 'returned soldiers'.

'Since no declaration of war has been made by Australia since 1945, and the many subsequent wars have all been undeclared, the first possibility seems unlikely. There will of course always be wars, and they are being fought right now in several theatres, but not in the classic form of 1916—1918 or 1939—1945.

'The second possibility, to admit new classes of members, is the subject of current debate. Some States have already admitted, or are in favour of admitting, various types of associate members, varying quite widely, such as all ex-servicemen, regardless of whether they served in an active service zone, serving members of all branches of the armed forces, relatives of present members, and civilians of good character who have no military service.

'It should be noted that admission of all ex-servicemen, regardless of their area of service, would not prolong the life of the League. They are in the same age bracket as present members. It is doubtful if many of them would now wish to join, unless other considerations, such as eligibility to join Clubs, were significant factors.

'The other proposals are clearly designed to prolong the life of the League. But equally clearly, they would bring about profound changes in its character. They are not acceptable to a large but at present unknown number of present members, possibly the majority. They do not see it as possible or desirable to continue the League in so drastically modified a form. This view can be summarised by saying: 'When its time for us to go, let's go with a bang rather than a whimper'.

'This brings us to the League's assets, and their future disposal. In almost every town and village through mainland Australia and Tasmania it has assets of one kind or another. In many cases these are real estate, the buildings of halls, clubs, meeting rooms, etc., and the furnishings and fittings. Most are locally owned and administered, and their eventual handing over to some other, but like-minded, organisation presents little problem. It has already been done, or is in process, in



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many places. Some have been transferred as going concerns to Local Government Authorities. Some existing Clubs have made provision through their Rules for League members to relinquish control by degrees. Many now have non-R.S.L. members serving on their Committee or Board of Management. Having established what have now become community assets in the very best tradition, members are now moving aside, transferring the control and eventual ownership to younger men. Since most are autonomous, this is a local prerogative, and reference to District, State or National levels of the R.S.L. is not required.

'Similarly with money. Whilst a Sub-branch is alive and functioning it can dispose of any or all of its money in any way consistent with its Rules. Should it become defunct, the rules on disposal of real property or money are quite explicit. As Sir Ivan correctly points out, some have already gone out of existence or amalgamated with neighbouring Sub-branches.

'It is worth noting that Sub-branches are continually donating sums of money to a wide range of local and national causes, so there would be no problem in winding up a sector of the League at any level from Sub-branch up.

'Institutions such as hospitals and war service homes are under the control of the Government, not the R.S.L., and their continuance is an open ended commitment to be determined by the Government of the day.

'In summary then, machinery exists to wind up the League at any time; to dispose of some of its assets, and to transfer the control of others, whose continuation is desirable, to other hands. The only important decision still to be made is whether the life of the League should be prolonged indefinitely in a modified form. There is little possibility of the continuing administration of its vast assets by a rapidly declining membership. It is noted that kindred organisations such as Legacy expect a peak demand on their services in 1987. After that, because of the fairly narrow limits of the age group of members, it will all be over in a very few years.'

#### A SPECIAL THANK YOU!

The Association extends its grateful thanks — once again — to Monty Siems for the gift of a beautifully mounted Australian 50c piece pendant (the original coin now out of production), which was raffled on Ladies' Night. Despite the smallish crowd, our Association coffers were swollen to the tune of approximately \$78.00 and the lucky lady now wearing this beautiful gift is none other than our Substantive Treasurer's wife, Gloria Lindsay. Congratulations, Gloria, thank you again, Monty!

#### COCK'S COLUMN

We recently had a phone call from Rex Everson, when he mentioned having seen Ern Bugden (NX 4042) in the 'local'. Ern will be remembered as Sir Ivan's driver in the desert.

From Slim Pollock we have news of the recent death in a Veterans' Home in Queensland of W.F. Anderson (NX 46544).

Our Queensland scribe, Tom Provians, gives us the following items of news over recent months.

'Caught up with Stan Sutherland on Anzac Day. He had a run of outs last year then ran out of work, regained employment only to have a fall and break his leg. Stan reckons things just had to come good, and they have — good news indeed.

'Laurie McCosker has been informed he has thrombosis in one leg, so it won't be long before the McC. image will have to be reduced. He's OK he informs me. Ken Franklin had to rush off as Delores was due out of hospital that day — will run a check as soon as time permits.

'A real surprise visitor for Anzac Day was Selby Dean. Found out he was in Caloundra visiting daughter Rosemary and family, so hauled him down. He stayed the night at the Provians domicile and went on his way none the worse for wear. A ring from him on arrival in Caloundra confirmed this.

'The W.O.G. contingent to 6 Div. Association March and Dinner

consisted of Wink Walker, Wal McKenzie, Selby Dean, Harry Whitman, Norm MacIntyre, Bill Sumpter, Laurie McCosker, Norm Everson, Stan Sutherland, Ken Franklin and yours truly, so we feel, despite a lower attendance at the Dinner, that the W.O.G.s pulled their weight — the fast diminishing supplies were as good a gauge as I could get — thirsty hounds.

'Received a letter from Betty Rungie, Adelaide, putting me onto Lt. Col. Nevis Farrell's track, and have received a phone call from the gentleman himself informing me that he and Mrs. Farrell have retired to the Sunshine State and are living at 12 Attunga Crescent, Buderim, Q'ld., and very busy with a new home in the 'Ginger' Country (still part of Joh's), so you can all see that even the Senior Trumps realise we Bananalanders have even more to offer than the 'Better Beer' and 'Bent Fruit'.

'A phone call to Duncan Russell has just confirmed that he is still plugging along as gamely as ever. He assures me that he still has 'Memories' — I'll cop from him next time I see him. Dunc sends his regards to all, with an invitation to a light ale for anyone who cares to drop in.

'Hugh Wittleton, staying with daughter at Kallangur, has just come on the scene via train and a practice run on a skateboard, which had been left on Roma st. Railway Station — managed quite well and didn't suffer any after effects. Also tells me that he has taken up golf and has learned a completely new vocabulary. Dasher had betted and his scouts to Townsville. Hugh and Eileen have been on an extended tour down south, taking in Anzac Day in Sydney.'

#### STOP PRESS.....

Have just spoken to Larry Dooley, who reckons he is well on the way back. He has put on a few pounds in weight and says he will be fighting two rounders next week — still losing, but in there having a go regardless. Larry and Yvonne tendered their apologies for Ladies' night and were most sorry to have to miss the occasion. Editor.