



White Water Green

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE 2/4 INFANTRY BATTALION ASSOCIATION

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MONTHLY MEETINGS: Friday, January 26th, 1979 at 8.00 p.m.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Friday, February 23rd, 1979 at 8 p.m.

At the Gallipoli Memorial Club, 12 Loftus Street Sydney.

MAJOR GENERAL SIR IVAN DOUGHERTY BIOGRAPHY

Without doubt the most amazing thing has happened. Since Alex. Sheppard has been working on this Biography he has had numerous contacts, but has been working under difficulties as most printers have been on holidays.

However, he has a definite quote from New Century Press, a verbal quote over the 'phone from Ron Pike of the Streamline Press, and he will be in receipt of one from Printcraft Press when they go back to work some time after January 15th.

We have agreed upon the price quoted by New Century Press, who state: "..... this is a VERY good price and is on the basis of "most favoured customer"....." The customer referred to is none other than our publisher, Alex Sheppard.

You will find enclosed an insert which gives the new price — it has been reduced to \$12.00 per copy, plus \$2.50 postage. You can delete all reference to para 4 of my note in the December W.O.G. and take this as right. So don't delay — get your order form in with the money as soon as possible. Please let us know if you will be picking the book up personally from the Gallipoli Memorial Club to

save postage. It will be available about the second week in April.

Cecil Chrysal — Chairman Biography Committee.

POSITION VACANT!!

As is customary, at our next Annual General Meeting in February all offices automatically become vacant — including that of Editor of W.O.G. Having been very involved in this office since February 1971, I sincerely feel it is time for me to step down and give someone else a turn.

Whilst the job is time consuming it is neither difficult to learn nor to perform. I personally believe the Editor should be able to type or have access to a typist, and for convenience sake should live in the Sydney metropolitan area.

To the lucky holder of the office in the future, be he assured that all the help he could possibly require will be promptly forthcoming from the current Editor.

Bill MacLennan — Current Editor.

PRESENTATION OF BATTALION MEDAL AND PLAQUE

A 2/4th Battalion Medal and Plaque were recently presented by the Association to Mr. Bob Scott, curator

of the Victoria Barracks' Museum. Those present on that occasion were our President, Harry Gjedsted, John Copland, Cec Chrystal, Athol Heath and Bill Parry.

There will be more detail on this item in February WOG.

NEWCASTLE NEWS

The Annual Dinner of our Newcastle Association members and friends was held at the University on the night of December 15th.

Our hosts were George and Heather Mitchell, and a record roll-up of 55 attended.

Tom and Sheila Gorman, who were passing through Newcastle after a recent trip up north, stayed over for the dinner, and we all certainly enjoyed their company.

Bill (Bully) Hayes returned from Singapore and attended the dinner. However, since then problems developed with his left leg which necessitated amputation below the knee. Bill is in Royal Newcastle Hospital, Ward 300 c, is in good spirits, and most of the local boys have popped in to see him. He swears he can still wiggle his toes!

Jack Mann has handed me a snapshot of the grave of Vic Makepiece. Vic was taken prisoner of war in Greece and died in Germany about 17.2.1942. Any relative of Vic's wishing to have the snap may obtain same by dropping a note to me at this address — Jim Sherritt, 26 Mulbinga St., Charlestown, 2290 or phone 049 434581.

All Newcastle members extend New Year greetings and if coming our way do let someone know.

Regards, Jim Sherritt.

IN THE MAILBAG From Charlie (Punchy) Hood, West Kempsey to Bill & Gwen MacLennan:

'Whilst renewing my dues, thought I would give a little chatter about myself.

'When Esca last wrote you about me (that I was well, etc.) I had been in hospital for two days, having a minor adjustment to my waterworks. Esca was very surprised — when doing his bit for the R.S.L. — to see me in bed.

'Have been in and out of the local hospital since having my prostate removed, and it was getting me down. Eventually finished up being flown down to R.G.H. by Air Ambulance on 12th December, where I saw the top urologist (Dr. Maher). Was x-rayed, checked out, etc., etc., and was finally operated on the Monday.

'The operation was such a success that I was kicked out of the place on the Friday before Christmas — flew home to Port Macquarie then bus to Kempsey.

'Sorry I did not notify anyone, but I was in such low spirits when I arrived at R.G.H. — due to continual treatment since April (in the local hospital) — that I could not make an effort. Sorry and all that — won't let it happen again (if there is an again).

'Enclosed is a cheque for \$15 to pay two years' membership, with the remainder to go to general funds.

'Wishing you all the very best for 1979 in Health and Happiness.'

COCKS COLUMN

On a recent train trip to Sydney, Bruce and Angela Cork with daughter Fiona spoke to a fellow passenger — a very

lovely person dressed in white (no doubt a sister from a Holy Order) who turned out to be Jack Reynolds' sister. It was she who said 'Do you belong to the 2/4th?'. Bruce doesn't remember how it came up but when Sister M. Emmanuel started talking quite a few members from Kyogle, Casino and Kempsey were mentioned.

Phyl and Cecil Chrystal report the arrival home of their son Rolfe with his lovely English bride Maggie — Rolfe having been overseas for the last 7½ years. A wonderful Christmas reunion was had with Sue and family from Melbourne, Angela and Amanda and families, with grandchildren everywhere and now in a state of recovery.

Exciting news from **Jean Jacket (via Phyl and Cec)** who leaves Hobart at end February to visit her Son, Graham Jnr. and family in San Francisco — Jean's first overseas trip. Bon Voyage and Good Luck, Jean!

Fred 'Lofty' Taylor reported recently that **Ron Rayment** was in Lady Davidson Hospital awaiting an artificial limb. Some recent copies of W.O.G. are being sent to him and we wish all the best for an early discharge.

We also have news that **Ian Duff** has recently been appointed the new Pipe Major of the Parramatta Pipe Band, and will no doubt be leading us on Anzac Day in Sydney. No doubt Ian is a member of the MacDuff Clan.

And now for the latest interesting bulletin from 'our man in the North' **Tom Provians**.

'The Aye Kayes have done it again — for the uninitiated that means Allan and Carma Kirk. Ably assisted by Doug Stebbing, Fred Varley and Mel McInnes, sixty-three W.O.G.s and families were entertained at the East Lismore Bowls Club for the Lismore 1978 Christmas break-up. Not a bad effort after such a most successful 1978 Country-re-union and in 2/4 manner equally as enjoyable an occasion. Not being satisfied, the Aye Kayes doubled up on the Sunday with a family and friends Bar-B-Q for twenty two people. That is what you could call nourishment with some punishment!

'Bruce Cork reports playing host to **Esca and Beb Riordan** who, as the occasion was most important, were given the pleasure of the use of the Water Bed. Please direct further inquiries to 34 Cameron Street, West Kempsey.

'**Rusty McWilliam** called on Bruce, played him snooker, drank his jungle juice — sorry, home brew — no ill effects, we understand. Rusty then went to Canberra to visit his son, Ian, to Melbourne for the Cup and then back to the cyclone country.

'During the Lismore evening somebody divulged the fact that Harry Wright and Jack Hughes were having a birthday on the Sunday (a better reason still for the Bar-B-Q) and that Bill and Aimee Facey's wedding anniversary was right then. Congrats and well wishes all round and the usual armtwisting took place. Hilda found that Carma's birthday was 19th December, so she had three 'SAGGs' to work on — being an expert on this subject.

'**Harry and Ada Whitman** saw Stan Lever at Yenda, Vic., and Stan Doggett at Bethungra, Victoria, and all are well and happy. The Whitmans, seen dragging the bottom out of the river near Herb's cabbage patch, assures us of sufficient fish for the table and will be going via Brisbane to Caloundra for the Christmasholidays.

'Jack and Joan Hughes have purchased a new 'S' waggon and really intend touring. Jack possibly thought his house too big after having trouble with a painful right wrist.

'Max Nerney is back at work at Urbenville, proud to have sone John in 5/9 Bn. R.A.R. Engoggera, Q. Went to his passing out parade at Wagga and stopped John to ask him where he could find him —had grown too fit for Max to recognise!

'Dave and Ella Crosthwaite still milking the prized guernsey herd and became so carried away that Dave took the wrong coat home.

'Blue and Billy Soul proud of the four grandkids, and now know who the bosses are.

'Clive and Ailee Brown have two married daughters, who have six more, so Clive is considering giving away the Casino Meatworks to care for the large family.

'Jack and Kath Schiebel are retired, and relaxing and enjoying it.

'Fred and Laureen Varley as usual trying to keep in the background - have no chance if Allan wants some help. Doug Stebbing plays the same game and doesn't get away with it either.

'Sydney visitors Harry and Hilda Wright and Tom and Sheila Gorman arrived on the scene and were doing a slow crawl home via Newcastle.

'Allan and John and Doreen Hughes (NOT Jack) on deck. Allan and his wife were involved in a very serious accident quite some time ago, from which she will never fully recover — bad luck, old son, do hope things improve. John would like to hear from Slim Desmond — his address is 3 Crown Street, Lismore, 2480.

'Bill and Aimee Facey retired to Evans Head and are proud to have son Bill in the Navy in West. Aust. Hope you recovered from your 1978 anniversary folks. What were the two broken ribs for Aimee? You can't row the new boat with those.

'Urban (Herb) Hoather going into animal training — (Cabbage Patch nevertheless) — and seen coaxing neighbour's dogs to watch his joint but sends them home to feed. Herb played host to the Provians on the Sunday night, and part of Monday morning too.

'Joyce Lister is trying to get Jack on a tour by threatening to put a so-and-so bull in and locking the gate. Careful, R.P.Sarge, she could mean it!

'Tim Lamond smiling all the way to the bank with cattle prices — a slice of watermelon would be a fair comparison.

'Bill Darragh is T.P.I. in Ballina Rest Home and would like Athol to contact him re W.O.G. monthly.

'Vic and Beryl Slade OK and report Nancy Slade and family all well.

'Ken McInnes is a tired, retired stretcher-bearer with a sunburnt upper lip.

'Roy and Dorrie Andrews scrambling to see who gets to WOG first every month.

'Joan Chaseling will have Bill and Debbie and Julie and Bryan home for Christmas and has had a ring from John in U.S.A. who will be visiting her in June.

'Ted and Jean Boyd seen enjoying themselves at the break-up.

'Laurie and Ev McCosker down from Brisbane — you couldn't keep Evylin away, and Laurie does not have to have his hair pulled.

'Mel and Lila McInnes always busy in Lismore, if not with their store then it is the usual story — busy with their family — they have 4 and 9/12ths grandchildren. Mel's maths are lousy — it was 7/9ths, due in January.

'Doug Grove, Kim and Bill were seen to be enjoying themselves — especially Doug if the profile reflection is any indication. He made a comment which we won't report.

'Tom and Freda Clarke are milking gamely on and hoping for rain.

Ken Andrews' store is at Bex Hill, via Lismore, for any W.O.G.s who would like to call.'

(Thanks mate, for a good run-down on the folk at the Lismore 'do' — will try again next year to make itEd)

AN APOLOGY 22nd January 1979

This month's W.O.G. will be very late, mainly because the printers re-opened only this morning after a month's closure for moving of premises, and secondly because my typist and I have been very busy preparing for our younger daughter Sue's wedding last Saturday. Will be making amends by getting another issue out in a week's time.

Bill MacLennan — Editor.

ONE MAN'S WAR (Continuing the story of Bill Neave's escape from Rabaul as a survivor of Lark Force —begun in December issue.)

'The Company commander told his men he would surrender with them because, if they had an officer with them, they were more likely to be treated properly as prisoner of war. But, he said, if any wished to try to escape, they had a chance of being picked up on the south coast of the island if they could cross the Baining Mountains. He said any who wished to try to escape had his orders to do so and would not be treated as deserters.

'Bill Neave takes up the story: 'We were warned by the Australia-New Guinea Administration Unit (ANGAU) chaps that it was impossible to cross the mountains. We had no food, no ammunition or medical supplies. Most of the men surrendered. They looked at it in this light: if they surrendered, their next-of-kin would at least know where they were. I thought I would take the risk and try to get back if I could. I wanted to get back. I'll tell you what — I was scared. Anybody who says he was not scared is not telling the truth. I was one of a party of six who left from that particular point. We picked up a couple of others in the jungle later.'

'More than 800 of Lark Force's 1400, which included six nurses, were taken prisoner. The remainder, mostly in small parties, tried to find some means of escape from the island. 'The first night out', continued Neave, 'we found a deserted native village. The natives had all gone bush when the bombing started. We found a fowl, which we ate. We knew we were going to have a pretty tough trot. We had no food whatever, so we would have to rely on what we could get from the natives. Most of the natives were frightened of us. They knew if they helped us the Japanese would kill them.'

'Later they found another village, where the natives cooked two fowls for them. On the second day they found some disabled trucks with tins of food which had been punctured, but they managed to salvage a few tins of bully beef.

'For about three weeks the party trekked through the jungle, climbing mountains, descending into deep ravines and following precipitous jungle tracks from village to village. Often they went four or five days without a meal, relying only on what they could get from natives, or what the natives told them was edible in the jungle. 'Word went ahead like wildfire that soldiers were coming', Neave said. To a black man, a soldier is a fighting man, and they expected us to come marching along with bands playing and all that sort of thing. But when we went begging for food our prestige went down flat. Eventually we did what they said couldn't be done — we crossed the Baining Mountains.

'On the south coast we came to a place called Put Put a sort of small Chinatown. I had dysentery very badly. There was a doctor there, but he told me he couldn't do anything for me. There were two other Australians there and they were going to surrender. The doctor told me I should do the same. He said: 'You won't live a fortnight'. I told him they said we couldn't get across the Baining Mountains and we did, and that I'd be home for my birthday (July 19).'

'They bought some rice at Put Put and then pressed on down the coast. Their only weapons were a sniper's rifle with two or three rounds of ammunition and a revolver with two rounds. Eventually they came to Tol Plantation, the scene of one of the most infamous massacres of the war. Neave is reluctant to talk about the massacre. Official histories record that more than 200 Australians who had escaped from Rabaul had gathered at the plantation. Some gave themselves up, others were captured by the Japanese. About 160 men were shot or bayoneted to death in four separate groups. A few escaped by feigning death.

'Neave's party, then eight strong, escaped into the jungle before the killings started. They had to cross a wide, shallow river. Others trying to cross the same river had been machine-gunned. Neave's party learned later from natives that the Japanese had left only half an hour before they crossed. They headed for Gasmata, on the south coast, but found that the Japanese had taken it. They were then cut off, with the enemy ahead and behind them. They could not walk on the beaches because the Japanese were searching for the telltale footprints.

'At a village named Tui the headman allowed them to stay in a hut after they told him the Japanese were killing their men and molesting their women, and that they (the Australians) would return later with American soldiers and drive the Japanese away. By this time they were exhausted, wasted from starvation, malaria and dysentery. 'We were just like skeletons, with beards and long hair and dressed in lap-laps,' Neave recalls. 'We lay there for two or three weeks.'

'It was at Tui that Bill Neave's mate, George Coates, died. Coates had been a workmate at Dergholm Station before the war and had been with him right through. His other mate, Lance Howlett, was lost in the sinking of Montevideo Maru. Two of their party, who had been off to another village, brought back some quinine in a beer bottle. 'I think that saved us,' he said. 'One night a message came through for us to hurry back night and day to Jacquinot Bay to be evacuated. The message came from a Catholic missionary there, Father Harris.'

'Neave's party learned that a large group of Australians who had escaped the massacre at Tol, and others who had made their way across the island, were living at Jacquinot Bay awaiting evacuation. Jacquinot Bay was 30 miles away and it took them four days to get there, helping and carrying each other. On the way, staying overnight in a village, they encountered a native who had come to the village, with a party of others to 'kill the white masters'. He was a very bad man. We had a hand grenade as well as our rifle and revolver, and I went up to the chief and said: 'If you don't kick this fellow out I'll throw this bomb over your hutfinished!. He got him out pretty quickly.

'They arrived at Jacquinot Bay to be met by Father Harris. 'I'm sorry to have to tell you, boys' he said, 'the ship has gone and won't be coming back. Apparently the native who brought us the message stopped at a sing-sing for four days on the way. As it turned out, we were four days late.' The official history shows that the ship, the Laurabada, left Jacquinot Bay on April 9, taking 131 soldiers, 21 civilians and four Navy men. It reached Port Moresby on April 12 — probably the day Neave's party reached Jacquinot Bay.

'The party stayed on at Jacquinot Bay for some time. A coastwatcher, who had left on the ship, left behind a radio and an engine to charge its batteries. With this transmitter, a civilian radio operator named David Laws, who had also escaped from Rabaul, was able to contact Army authorities at Port Moresby. Laws was to remain a close friend of Neave. The official war history shows that, as a member of 'M' Special Unit, he was killed in action in 1943. Efforts to get the authorities from Port Moresby to pick them up, or send food and medical supplies, failed. The party was joined by three more stragglers, one of whom died.

(To be continued)