



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. & Bar, E.D., B.Ec., LL.D (Hon.)

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MONTHLY MEETINGS : Fourth Friday of each month at the Gallipoli Memorial Club, 12 Loftus St., Sydney, at 8 p.m.

NEXT MEETING : Friday, March 23rd, 1979.

THE NEW PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As newly elected President of our Association, just what does one begin one's very first report?

Commencing with the Annual General Meeting held at the Gallipoli Club on February 23rd, you will note from the above heading that there have been some quite significant changes in the executive and committee for 1979-80.

As advised in February W.O.G., Harry GJEDSTED had decided for various reasons not to allow himself to be nominated for President again, and in declining, immediately nominated "yours truly", who was duly elected unopposed. I in turn had much pleasure in proposing Ted FOX for the office of Senior Vice-President, who was also elected unopposed. Athol HEATH was returned as Secretary, Allen LINDSAY as Treasurer, John MEEHAN as Assistant Secretary and Bill PARRY and John COPLAND as joint Welfare Officers, all unopposed. Ken "Dasher" DEACON, at present on holiday in West Australia, was elected in absentia to the most onerous and time consuming office of all – that of Editor.

In deciding to revert to the constitutionally correct number of six committee men, the meeting elected these offices by ballot – there being nine nominations. The result was as listed above.

Last, but by no means least, there have also been some changes in our list of Vice-Presidents. Artie KLEEM replaces Tim WEST as Southern N.S.W. V.P., and a new office

of Far Northern Rivers V.P. was created, which Allan KIRK won in a canter.

Four new Honorary Life Members were proposed and accepted by the meeting for services to the Association over a number of years. These gentlemen were Peter DENVER, Russ McWILLIAM, Dick PINSON and Tom PROVIANs, all of whom we hope can be present at our Anzac Day dinner this year to accept their badges.

After months of serious discussion at committee meetings Honorary Membership to our Association also became a fact as the A.G.M. Nominations for the first three recipients of this award – Harold SILVER, Norm HARRIES and Major-General Gordon MAITLAND – were accepted and passed, and to these three gentlemen, on behalf of the Association, I extend a very warm welcome to join us in our future activities, with the exception of marching with the unit and voting at meetings.

In taking over the Presidency from Harry after a reign of some thirteen or fourteen years – during which the Association has gone from strength to strength both financially and numerically to the position of being undeniably the strongest single service unit group in this country – one has only to re-read his report in last month's W.O.G. to realise just what the Association has achieved under his leadership and guidance. It is also undeniable, and has been said many times, that he has always had a good and dedicated team in close support. True enough, but

the body — no matter how good — is of little use without the head. In my remarks to the Annual General Meeting after the elections I said that Harry was going to be a difficult act to follow, but promised to pursue my new duties to the best of my ability, a pledge which I shall surely carry out. So in your retirement, Harry, and on behalf of all members, I wish you well, and thank you again for a tough job extremely well done.

As I commence my term of office I call on all members for your continued support, and for even greater attendance at monthly meetings, Anzac Day march and dinner, annual Church Parade and Country Re-union. Remember always that this is your Association and that without your regular support and attendance it becomes meaningless and useless, so I ask you to front up on the occasions that require your presence.

Before concluding, two items regarding Anzac Day require mention. Firstly, most of the men marching on Anzac Day regard it as a solemn and sacred occasion and are quite prepared to leave the consumption of liquor until after our two parades have been completed. The full co-operation of every member marching is expected in this matter. Secondly, we would like to remind all members that only those people who served in the 2/4th Australian Infantry Battalion are entitled to march with the Battalion on Anzac Day. Everyone is therefore advised that this ruling of the Association will be strictly enforced, and no relatives, friends or children will be allowed to march with the Battalion. We ask for your co-operation in this matter, and so ensure that no one's feelings are hurt.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy and successful year to all

Bill MacLennan — President

WELFARE REPORT as at 23rd February, 1979.

- NX 148 DOUGHERTY, Sir Ivan. Good news that Sir Ivan is progressing well at home. He visits R.G.H. for physiotherapy.
- NX 5227 PEAD, John. John is back in the Guildford Nursing Home. He has been there for 3 years.
- NX 11220 McCAFFREY, E.J. Now at home and full of beans.
- NX 5151 KEOUGH, W.J. Bill has been in R.G.H. twice. Very dangerously ill. Now at home in the care of his wife Elsie. She very kindly keeps in touch.
- NX 5087 PERRAM, Ron. Has been in R.G.H. for several weeks with lung trouble. Ron was 8 Pl. "A" Coy. P.W. Germany, where the lung trouble was caused by work in the mines. He was discharged on 19th Feb. back to Urunga.
- NX 13375 ALEXANDER, Thomas C. R.G.H.7. X-rays and tests for spots on lungs. Tom was with the Royal Scots in India. Joined "A" Coy. in Palestine. He left us in 1941 for Bde. H.Q. as batman to the late Capt. Lou Loughran. He has been at Graithewaite Convalescent Home at North Sydney for six years.
- NX 5167 BROWNJOHN, Cyril (Jim). R.G.H.510. Tests for ear trouble. He was with the Signal Platoon

and lives at Helensburgh.

4BN. W.W.1.

HOBBS, Arthur. R.G.H.5. Now discharged.

1372 HENNESSEY, Phillip S. R.G.H.430. Tests for lung complaint. Now discharged. Phil lives at Regents Park. Is a member of Lidcombe R.S.L.

3151 LEAVER, John B. R.G.H.120. Rather a severe stroke but very cheerful. Lives at Whale Beach.

DUNLOP, Leslie E. R.G.H.630. Was away from war for tests when we called 12th Feb. Now discharged.

LAST POST

NX 5134 MEADS, Bruce John. Died after a long illness on 13th Feb. Frank Rowell, who is now the Liaison Officer of the T.P.I. Association rang to tell me. Our deep sympathy goes to Mrs. Enid Meads and her family.

NX 8745 GAMBLE, E.J. Sad news that Ted died suddenly of a massive heart attack early on 21st Feb. The funeral was held to-day 23rd. Feb. The family did not wish for any R.S.L. or Bn. Assn. part in the service, but a number were there in private capacities, including Bill MacLennan, Cec Chrystal, Alan Bohle, Peter Cade, "Massa" Brooks, Ken Kesteven, Des Finch, Dick & Enid Latimer, Harry & Hilda Wright. Ted was a great favourite. Our deep sympathy goes to Ted's wife Hazel and to David, Wendy, Penny and Kim and their families.

In conclusion, and at the start of a new Association year, I must record my appreciation of the dedicated work and support of the regular visiting teams, including Bill Parry, David McGillivray, Harry Wright, George Stack, and Laurie Waterhouse. Mention should be also made of Vera Walsh who visits R.G.H. just about every week to see our members. There are also reserve visitors on call including Ron Stennett, Bill Key, Bob Adams, Bob Lever, Ted Hopkins and Bill Poplin. The team spirit is great.

One last word.....please channel any Welfare calls direct to me or to Bill Parry. We are in constant touch. Our addresses and phone numbers are on the front page of W.O.G. Valuable time is lost when people ring Athol at the club or his wife Pat at their home. Athol then has to ring me anyway.

Best wishes and good health to you all.

John Copland — Welfare Officer

STOP PRESS

NX 72312 BURNS, Len J. Sad to report the death of Len, ex "A" Coy., who passed away late in February.

PIKE, Dot. Dearly remembered as the wife of our old friend Fred Searle. It is with deep regret that we report Dot's passing, after a series of heart attacks and recurrent illnesses, on March 2nd. She will be very sadly missed at our country reunions and other functions by those who have come to love her over many years. Our deep sympathy goes out to husband Vic and their families.

A SPECIAL LETTER

A couple of days after the funeral of our old friend

Ted Gamble, Bill McLennan received the following letter from Mrs. Hazel Gamble:

"It is with deep sadness that I inform you of the death of your fond member, my husband Edward James Gamble, NX8745, who passed away very suddenly on Wednesday, February 21st, 1979. I know this will be a shock to you and to the many members of the 2/4th Battalion, of which he was so justly proud, and honoured to be amongst the first of its original members.

"Many members attended the service held at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium on Friday 23rd and it is my deep regret that I and my family did not get to speak to many of them. I would appreciate it greatly if, on behalf of my family and myself, you would convey to all those present, and to those who knew and loved Ted but were unable to pay their last respects, our heartfelt thanks and gratitude for their loyal friendship over the years. Their presence, and the knowledge that they also cared, helped us to carry on his own personal attitude and wishes in times of distress — "chin up and keep smiling".

Best wishes to all members, Very sincerely,
Hazel Gamble."

We thank Hazel for this very beautiful letter. In deference to Ted's wishes there was no official representation of the Battalion nor Guard of Honour at his funeral. He wished to go out of this life as quietly as he had lived. In my opinion, if any man in this Battalion was entitled to a Guard of Honour, it was that soldier — Ted Gamble. Farewell dear friend.....Bill McLennan.

COCK'S COLUMN.

Hearty congratulations to David McGillivray, who will have celebrated, on March 4th, his 72nd birthday, which is also the 50th anniversary of his arrival in Australia. In line with the misguided thoughts on Scottish tradition, David has not given one thing away - his accent is still 3 pick handles broad. Glad you decided to stay, Dave!

Tom Provians has given us the latest bulletin of the No. 100th Airborne Division as follows:

"Bob Gardner caught filling the face in Kyogle after his sojourn in Concord. Word has it that he reported back there in January and he and Dawn have gone over to W.A. to visit their son.

"Allan and Carma Kirk, Wink and Win Walker, Harry and Ada Whitman, Max and Phil Cook, Laurie and Ev McCosker, Norm and Jean Everson, Norm MacIntyre and Selby Dean were guests on a January evening at a Morning-side domicile and a hearty time was had by all. Vera Provians stood the strain better than somebody else who had to be present! The Aye Kaye's had brought daughter Allison's in-laws to Brisbane on their way home to England. Don't know why the big "mug" had such a "slice of watermelon" look on his face!

"Des Finch contacted and still growing roses and breeding fish — good combination I suppose. Grapevine news that a load of fowl "you-know-what" for his roses was far from required standard — must have been from some H.Q. Coy. bloke, Des.

"For those members who have a sweet tooth, the "Choko picker" has now become an expert jam and

pavlova maker (of the Everest type). He and Hilda noted entertaining Enid Latimer at Ryde Club on the occasion of her birthday, and Dick came along as he couldn't find a better excuse for a celebration. This correspondent will keep Enid's secret as to how many - birthdays, I mean.

"Ted (Buff) Wilson also spotted keeping his bowling hand in trim by bashing the bandits.

"Ted McCaffery recovering from eye op. and still able to quaff a couple and roll a bowl.

"Sailor Harvey has cataract trouble and arthritis. However it doesn't affect his jaw or swallow — Thora agrees.

"Dasher (Wun Putt) Deacon and Lili off to W.A., also to visit son — took these blokes 37 years to return, so guess the coast would be clear by now.

"Fred (Bill) Staggs cornered at Hornsby R.S.L. Club over a few ales. Fred's mother has had a serious fall in Ipswich, so he will be proceeding to the Sunshine State in the very near future. He had also seen Darby Bevan who is now an inmate of Harbor View Activity Centre, McMahon's Point.

"News also from Jack and Phil Ormiston — Jack still growling because he is getting too young and awaiting a golfing challenge from "Wun Putt". Had contacted Arthur Kleem, now retired and enjoying such a state of affairs.

"Leo and Eileen Lynch and family going very well. Leo is now a contender for the "Cabbage Patch" award of the Northern Rivers — look out, "Urb".

"Peter and Margaret Cade and family sparking — saw his cheery face at the A.G.M.

"Wink and Win Walker in Sydney helping an elderly relative refurbish her unit and Wink acting as a very able backstop to the Queensland V.P. at the Annual General Meeting. A beaut way to celebrate the official day of retirement!

"Cec and Phil Chrystal contacted. Pleased to know Cec is making a really good recovery - with Phil around he could not do otherwise. Very sorry to hear that Phil's mother passed away recently at the age of 88. Our sincere condolences to the family.

"Harry and Marj Gjedsted in the process of moving living quarters, and under Marj's guidance Harry is also making a good recovery. Spies report he wasn't moving house one Sunday arvo but doing some weight lifting — 5 fluid ounces per.....Good luck to you Harry.

"Xmas card from the founder of this column and good to receive - look after yourself Jim — hope to see you one day.

"More news when all Xmas correspondence has been sorted out — better late than never.

Cock's Column Roving Reporter

ONE MAN'S WAR (Concluding the story of Bill Neave's escape from Rabaul as a survivor of Lark Force - from December and January issues.)

"One night, Neave and Laws received word that the native who had earlier threatened to kill them was going to lead the Japanese to them at 7 o'clock the next morning. It was decided he had to be killed. They drew straws to see who would carry out the execution. Laws drew the short straw.

"After a long search they found him at 4a.m. Neave recalls: "When he came out, we told him to make talk to God. He tried to grab the rifle, but Dave shot him. His

brother came out and made a run towards me. I pointed the revolver at him but I didn't shoot because he stopped straight away.

"On the way back, the natives told us about a small boat that was hidden — one the plantation owners used to wander around the islands in. They also told us where there was a 44 gallon drum of petrol, so we were getting somewhere.

"When we got back (to Jacquinot Bay) I saw Father Harris. I said: "Pray for us, father. We carried out what we had to do, but it's my funeral." He said: "I'll do that for you." At this point in the narrative, Bill Neave was overcome with emotion. We took a short break before he continued.

"They found the boat where the natives told them it was hidden. "It was about 17 or 18 ft. long," said Neave. The engine was seized and the sump had a large hole in it. They patched the sump with wood and cloth, but for two days they were unable to get the motor running. On the second day, as Neave and Laws were working on the boat, Father Harris came to them. He told them they had better get it going soon, because the Japanese would be there any day. "I don't like your chances," he said, "you've evaded them and they will make an example of you."

"I got a bit wild," Neave recalled. "I picked up a lump of wood and hit the crankshaft, and Dave said: "I think it moved, Bill." "Sure enough it did move, and we eventually got it working."

"They left Jacquinot Bay with 10 men aboard the creaky little craft. None of the men had done any sailing; the compass did not work; they steered "by guess and by God".

"Father Harris did not show up before we left, because he knew we were going to grab him and put him on the boat," said Neave. "The Japanese knew he had helped us, so we knew what would happen to him. I heard later that he was executed, but can't verify this." Before leaving, they radioed Port Moresby, saying they were putting to sea in an unseaworthy boat, and asking if they could be picked up. They were told to sail for Buna, about 300 miles south.

"It was the monsoon season, with strong currents and waves "as high as a house", said Neave. The boat's engine kept cutting out and they drifted miles off course. At one stage he had a bad bout of malaria and went into a coma. His comrades thought he was dead and were about to throw him overboard when one of them noticed he was still breathing. "That's how close I came to not making it," he said.

They were at sea six days and nights. The only food they had was a few coconuts which went bad. Eventually, they saw land and some lights, which they took to be Buna, but they were unable to get their small craft over the reef to make landfall. The current carried them away to the north. As it happened, luck was with them. The lights they saw were either Lae or Salamaua — both of them held by the Japanese. The next day they landed at Sio, on the Huon Peninsula on a coral reef half a mile from the shore, from which natives came and rescued them. They had half a gallon of petrol left.

They found some food in a house left by civilians who had evacuated. They got their radio going and asked Port Moresby for food, medical supplies and petrol. "They didn't send any food or medical supplies, but they dropped some petrol from a plane," said Neave. "It was aviation petrol — no good for our boat!"

Later they set off for Bogadjim (south of Madang) where they thought they would be picked up and taken overland to Port Moresby. On the way, one spark plug after an-

other broke down because of the aviation fuel. Eventually they drifted ashore, where they were found by a coast-watcher who took them to Bogadjim, where a missionary fed them well and they rested for some weeks, gaining strength for the long walk inland across the Ramu Valley. Neave said he believed the missionary was later killed by the Japanese.

"Anybody who helped us had no hope", he said. "They just got them and finished them".

From Bogadjim, over the Finisterre Ranges and through the Ramu Valley to Bena Bena (in central New Guinea), it was a repetition of their trek through New Britain. There were by then 13 of them (they had picked up three others in New Guinea, also from the 2/22 Bn.), living off what they could get from the natives.

"Bena Bena is right up high in the mountains", said Neave. "That's where the natives are really war-like tribes — with bones through their noses. But they were really good to us — better than a lot of the more civilised blokes."

At Bena Bena they encountered six American airmen who had made a forced landing. They were picked up in a night plane and flown out, taking one Australian with them. "But they wouldn't pick us up", he said. "Apparently there was a difference of opinion between one of our officers and an American officer. They sent word to us that if we wanted to get to Port Moresby we would have to walk to Wau — about 200 miles away over the Finisterre Ranges. They flew in some boots and stuff, but they wouldn't pick us up. It took us about three weeks to walk down to Wau, over mountains, gullies and gorges. The natives were very good to us in New Guinea. They knew we were coming and gave us food. We were really picking up well and putting on weight. There was an army base at Wau. From there they flew us to Port Moresby."

Bill Neave's army records show he was "derelict" in the jungle for 183 days — for which he was paid two shillings and two pence (22 cents) a day "sustenance". After a long period of treatment for malaria, he joined the 2/4th Battalion (Sixth Division) as a reinforcement in Queensland. He saw action with the battalion in the Wewak area in 1945. He came through the war without being wounded. But he had his near misses. In New Guinea, a hand grenade landed at his feet — and failed to explode.

Bill Neave was acting platoon sergeant in the action at Wirui Mission, Wewak, on May 15th, 1945, where Pte. Edward (Ted) Kenna of Hamilton, won the Victoria Cross. He married Gladys, a girl he met during the war, in 1947, and moved into the house where he still lives in Casterton. He has a son and a daughter living in Perth and a son at Mildura. He often talks to his distant children on the phone. "My phone bill the other day was \$200", he said, "but I don't mind". He has three phone points in his house to make sure he will hear it if one of his children rings. Because, in the night time, he is alone with his memories.....and his prayers.

(THE END)

TWO REMINDERS.

Orders are flowing in for the Sir Ivan Dougherty Biography. Many outlets have been tapped for the sale of the book, so to avoid disappointment we advise that you send your order in immediately. Also, until further notice, please send copy for W.O.G. to Bill MacLennan at the address on the front heading under "President"