2/2nd PIONEER BATTALION ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER **MARCH 2013**

BATTLE HONOURS

Middle East
Syria
Java
New Guinea
Tarakan
Balikpapan

SECRETARY
Jenny Davidson

PRESIDENT
Col Hamley

TREASURER
Ken Fraser

EDITOR Tom Prince

Please address all correspondence to the Secretary

Coming events

Association AGM	Tuesday, April 9, Fairfield-Alphington RSL (1.30pm start)
2013 Annual Reunion	Saturday, April 20, Fairfield-Alphington RSL, 7 Railway Place, Fairfield (from 11am — please RSVP by Monday, April 8)
ANZAC church service	Sunday, April 14, St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne (10:30am start)
ANZAC service Essendon RSL	Sunday, April 21, Queens Park, Moonee Ponds (3pm at the Cenotaph followed by afternoon tea in the Council Chambers opposite the park)
ANZAC Day march	Thursday, April 25 (assemble in Flinders Street, east of Swanston Street, near Federation Square at 9.30am; post-march luncheon to be held at 12.30pm at the Waterside Hotel)
Annual pilgrimage	Sunday, June 16, Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital Memorial Garden, 2.30pm

Annual general meeting

The Association AGM will be held on Tuesday, April 9, at the Fairfield-Alphington RSL, commencing at 1.30pm. All members are welcome.

2013 annual reunion

The reunion will be held on Saturday, April 20, from 11am to 3pm, at the Fairfield-Alphington RSL, 7 Railway Place, Fairfield (directly opposite the Fairfield Railway Station — Melways reference 30K11). Lunch is $20 per head with drinks at bar prices.

Please complete and return the enclosed booking form with payment made out to 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion Association by Monday, April 8. Catering numbers will be determined by the number of pre-bookings received. Anyone attending without a pre-booking may have to order and pay from the full menu (also, it's possible you might not be accommodated in the same room as the reunion).

Car parking is available at the rear of the RSL, which can be accessed off Gillies Street. As always, friends and family of the Pioneers are encouraged to join our Pioneers in remembering their experiences and mates, especially those who are no longer with us.

ANZAC church service

This year's service will be held on April 14, at St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne, at 10.30am. All veterans and serving defence force personnel, as well as families and friends, are invited to attend what is guaranteed to be an impressive service.

ANZAC service — Essendon RSL

The service will be held on Sunday, April 21, at 3pm, at the Cenotaph, Queens Park, Moonee Ponds. It will be followed by afternoon tea in the Council Chambers, located opposite the park.

ANZAC Day dawn service

Veterans, their children, and members of the public are invited to attend the dawn service, commencing at 6am on ANZAC Day. As with previous years, attendees are asked to be in place on the Shrine forecourt by 5:45am. No lights or noise please and be aware that there is no parking in the Shrine grounds or on Birdwood Avenue.

ANZAC Day March

This year's ANZAC Day march arrangements have changed <u>again</u>.
Please note that the 7th Division including the 2/2nd Pioneers, will assemble in Flinders Street, east of Swanston Street, near Federation Square at 9.30am.
The banner will be set up early so please look for it at the assembly area.
RACV cars are available to collect veterans from home, to the march and then either back home or to the reunion (but not both). Please check with ANZAC House if you would like to arrange this.
We look forward to seeing you wearing your medals, hats and ties.
March protocol is to be followed by all marchers:

- All marchers form up and march six abreast.
- Family members should be old enough to make the march without assistance.
- Attire neat and tidy (no torn denim, dirty joggers, sporting attire, etc.).
- No carrying pictures of relatives.
- Relatives' medals are to be worn on the right breast (left breast is for the recipient of the medals).
- Veterans in cars may have one carer with them.
- No prams or pushers are allowed in the march.

March group photo

You are invited to join the marchers for a group photo once the march concludes and everyone arrives at the Shrine. Once we arrive, everyone will promptly move close to the roadway, where we'll take the photo. Please support anyone present who needs help to make it happen.

Post ANZAC Day march luncheon

This will be held at 12:30pm at the Waterside Hotel, situated on the corner of King and Flinders Street in the Melbourne CBD. All family and friends are thoroughly welcome to attend and catch up for a yarn or six.

Vale: Max Herron

We were saddened to hear that **Max Herron**, long-time Secretary of the 2/1st and 2/2nd Pioneer Battalions Association (NSW) passed away on March 9. Max served in the 2/1st Pioneers and will be greatly missed by all who knew him. On behalf of all members of our association we send our condolences to **Peg** and family.

POW Memorial Wall service, Ballarat

Col and Val Hamley attended another impressive annual service at the Ballarat POW Memorial Wall, on February 10 this year. They were accompanied by Treasurer **Ken Fraser** and **Christine Veal**, although for a number of reasons most of the regular Pioneer members were unable to attend.
Col says it was very pleasing to meet **Lorraine Wright and John Hoppe**, who had been enquiring as to whether anyone knew Lorraine's grand-uncle, **Reg French**, a painter and signwriter in Headquarters Company. She was very excited when Col told her he clearly remembered Reg at Puckapunyal!
Lorraine's family has no photos of Reg so she would be thrilled if any Association members or family had any they could share. Contact President, Col, if you can help.

2013 annual Pilgrimage

Instead of the 2013 pilgrimage service being held at the Shrine, it will be in the Memorial Garden at Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, at 2.30pm on Sunday, June 16. The change is due to major construction works at the Shrine.
The new venue will allow members to see the garden and the plaques commemorating the 2/2nd Pioneers, including the new plaque for POWs in Borneo, which was unveiled at the Remembrance Day Service on November 9, 2012. The names of those 2/2nd Pioneers who have passed away in the preceding twelve months will be read out during the Service and wreaths will be placed at the Memorial.
We encourage all Pioneer friends and family members to attend. Come and share the memories with the Pioneers at the garden and during afternoon tea after the service.
Entry to the Hospital car park is via gate 8 on Waterdale Road, Heidelberg. For disabled parking see Security at Gate 9 (also on Waterdale Road).

Vale: Tom Gore

Well known Pioneer identity **Tom Gore [VX46755]** passed away peacefully at his home on February 21 this year after a relatively short illness. Tom was a valued Committee member for many years and will be sadly missed. To his wife **Carol** and family members we extend our deepest sympathy.



The following is part of the RSL Address given by **Col Hamley** at Tom's memorial service on March 14, 2013.

"Tom enlisted in June 1940 and was posted to the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion. In March 1941, the Battalion was posted to the Middle East where they were engaged in action against the Vichy French in Syria. When the 7th Australian Division was recalled from the Middle East in January 1942, the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion was shipped to Java to help stem the Japanese advance beyond Singapore. After a short encounter with the Japanese, the unit (including Tom) was taken prisoner of war.
Tom was sent to Burma and, after enduring the horrors of the Burma Railway, he was later shipped off to Japan, where he spent the rest of his days as a prisoner working in coal mines. After his return to Australia, Tom joined the Committee of the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion Association — he had remained on that committee ever since.
Tom was a real identity in the Battalion and was well respected for his straightforward approach, his generosity, and sense of humour. Tom was, I'm sure you'll all agree, "a fair dinkum Aussie". He served his country and his comrades well."

Pioneers and Association membership numbers surge

We are proud to be able to boast that current membership of the Association is 694, consisting of 66 Pioneers and 628 family and friends (with 133 receiving their newsletter by email).

The Association encourages the families of all Pioneers to join. If you know of anyone who would like to become a member, please ask them to contact Jenny Davidson with their email address or mailing details. Don't forget to include the name of and relationship to the Pioneer.

2/2nd Pioneer Battalion website

If you get a chance you're encouraged to visit the Battalion's website at www.2nd2ndpioneerbattalion.com . It contains many topics relating to the Pioneers including history, photos, soldier's profiles, soldier's stories, a notice board, coming events, and much more. Younger Generation member, **Cary Sandell** (grandson of late **Charles Douglas**), has put a lot of effort into setting up and managing the site. All members are encouraged to visit the site.



Give it a try if you have web access.

To receive your newsletter by email

Thank you to all who have requested the newsletter via email rather than post. The response has been great. It makes our job easier and also means you can receive the photos in glorious **colour**. If you would prefer to have your newsletters emailed then please forward your email address to Jenny at jada1952@bigpond.net.au .

Personal pars

Note: some of these messages were received prior to Christmas

Kevin Sweet, brother-in-law to the late **G.S. Murphy**, wrote to thank the Association for their continued work and for putting out the newsletter.

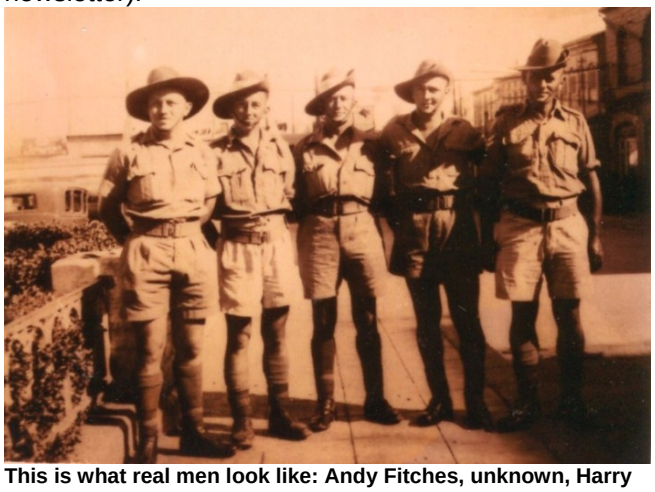
Bob McGrath says he enjoys receiving the newsletter and wishes everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Jim McFadden says he's very grateful for the December newsletter. He sends everyone his best wishes for 2013.

Milada Matek wishes everyone a merry Christmas and many blessings for the New Year.

Olwen Kitson says she is trying to piece together the story of her great-uncle, **William John (Billy) Waite [VX56152]**. "Billy was part of Dunlop Force and survived the Thai/Burma Railway, but sadly never came home," says Olwen. "He died along with several others (Australian, British and Dutch) on the wharf in Bangkok, on March 27, 1945, as a result of Allied bombing."
Olwen is been trying to find information about the camp in Bangkok. She thinks it was possibly in the railway yards alongside the wharf area, and may have been used en route to Changi. She says she would love to hear from anyone with any further information (no matter how small). She can be contacted through the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion website.

At the 2011 Pilgrimage a young man brought along a copy of a photo of five 2/2nd Pioneers taken in Beirut in 1941 (shown below). **Col Hamley** was able to help identify the Pioneers as Andy Fitches, unknown, Harry Pugsley, George Jackson and Jack Guy. We would appreciate if he could please contact the Secretary, Jenny Davidson (details on the front of the newsletter).



This is what real men look like: Andy Fitches, unknown, Harry Pugsley, George Jackson and Jack Guy. Beirut, 1941.

Bert Neasbey wishes everyone a happy Christmas. He says he is well and enjoyed a nice 90th birthday with his family. He added: "I hope it stays that way."

Bob and Rose Milliken hope everyone is keeping well. They hope the Java trip (see our previous newsletter) went well and have looked into similar travel destinations. Bob has further information on upcoming Asian tours and anyone interested should visit www.cruiseandtravelcentre.com.au or call (08) 9335 4322.

Glenda Atkins, daughter to Flora Barnstable (widow to Fred Barnstable), says she has scanned some photos from previous Pioneer reunions, which she has passed on to **Cary Sandell** for the Pioneers website. Flora has now settled into a Nursing Home in Bendigo, after relocating from Numurkah five years ago to be closer to her family. Glenda says Flora always takes great interest in reading the Association newsletter, and was very interested to hear all about the trip to Java.

Sharon Lee informs us that her father **Ernie Lee** passed away in May last year. “Our parents would have celebrated 71 years of marriage just 22 days later,” she says. Ernie is survived by his wife **Queenie (Tania)**, children **Judy, John, Terry and Sharon**, two sons-in-law, two daughters-in-law, 12 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren.

Peter Taylor wrote to advise of the passing of his mother, **Elva Taylor, widow to the late Lloyd Frank Taylor**. Peter’s dad was a close friend of **Harold Ramsey.**

Neil MacPherson gave the eulogy at the funeral of his mate and fellow Pioneer, **Ted (Bluey) Rowe**. Neil described their enduring friendship which began during training and lasted throughout service in the Middle East and Java, while they were POWs in Java, Burma and Japan, and which endured for many years after the war.

Paul Nicoll wrote to advise of the passing of his father, **Peter George Nicoll [NX168092]**, in March last year. Paul says his father was a proud Pioneer who served in Papua New Guinea, Morotai, Tarakan and Balikpapan. He says his father has some incredible wartime stories, such as seeing General Douglas MacArthur come ashore at Morotai, and flying directly over active volcanoes (something you’d never do today) on his way home in a PBY Catalina flying boat. Paul says he learned about the Association’s Java trip in the December newsletter. He actually lives in Java and decided — after contacting the Association — to visit some of the locations seen during the visit.

Eulalie Sauer, widow to George Sauer sends her best wishes and hopes everyone has a great New Year.

While holidaying in East Gippsland, Association secretary **Jenny Davidson** visited **Rita Bailey (widow of Bill Bailey)** in Orbost. A great time was spent sharing Pioneer tales and Rita reminisced about the many Victorian and interstate functions that she attended with Bill. Rita was very proud that her granddaughter, Bree Bailey, had visited Hellfire Pass and paid a tribute to her grandfather, who was a POW on the Thai-Burma Railway. Rita sends her best wishes to **Col Hamley** and the Pioneers who knew Bill (the ‘boys’ send their best wishes to you too Rita).



Bree Bailey, granddaughter of Bill Bailey, in Thailand.

Dawn Mackay says she enjoys receiving the newsletter and sends her best wishes to everyone. Dawn’s dad **Hugh Thompson** died on the Burma Railway when she was eight years old.

Haydn Friend sends his greetings from Papua New Guinea and says he enjoys receiving the newsletter (which he asked to be emailed rather than sent via surface post).

Check out this photo of a ‘Cribbage Board’ taken at **Ken Fraser’s** 60th birthday. The board was made by Ken’s father, **Stan Fraser**, while a POW. The family was told the fine details are made from tooth brushes.



Tom Prince, grandson to **Maureen Peters** and Pioneer **Bill Prince** [VX75272], will be running 10km in The Age Run Melbourne this July in order to raise money for Diabetes Australia.
Tom will once again be joined by his dad, **Kevin Prince**, for this year’s ANZAC Day march. Kevin has lived in Italy for more than 20 years but has nonetheless managed to attend the last three consecutive marches. Please get in touch if you would like to donate to the Diabetes Run (Tom is the editor of the newsletter).

Seasons’ greetings were also received from **Patti Wright, Bonnie Dargaville, Yvonne Sweeney, Lyn Makeham, Stuart Milne, Glenda Atkins, Jim Busine** and **Margaret McQuillen.**

Lorraine Lingford, daughter of **Kevin Power (VX20765),** sends thanks for the newsletter and ‘keep up the good work’. (We will Lorraine).

Barbara Hay was prompt in inquiring about the new ties and was the first to purchase one for each of her sons. She says they will love having them and as a result we welcome 4 new members to the Association.

Please keep those letters coming! We love receiving your letters and hearing your news. Others also look forward to catching up with those they cannot see or speak to, via the newsletter.

And now for some humour…

What caused the airline to go bankrupt? Runway inflation.

Did you hear about the fire at the circus? It was in tents.

An Irishman walks into a bar in Dublin, orders three pints of Guinness and sits in the back of the room, drinking a sip out of each one in turn. When he finishes them, he comes back to the bar and orders three more. The bartender asks him, “You know, a pint goes flat after I draw it; it would taste better if you bought one at a time.” The Irishman replies, “Well, you see, I have two brothers. One is in America, the other in Australia, and I'm here in Dublin. When we all left home, we promised that we'd drink this way to remember the days when we drank together.” The bartender admits that this is a nice custom, and leaves it there.

The Irishman becomes a regular in the bar, and always drinks the same way: ordering three pints and drinking them in turn. One day, he comes in and orders two pints. All the other regulars notice and fall silent. When he comes back to the bar for the second round, the bartender says, “I don't want to intrude on your grief, but I wanted to offer my condolences on your great loss.” The Irishman looks confused for a moment, then a light dawns in his eye and he laughs. “Oh, no,” he says, “Everyone's fine. I've just quit drinking.”

There were these two cows, chatting over the fence between their fields. The first cow said, “I tell you, this mad-cow-disease is really pretty scary. They say it’s spreading fast. In fact, I heard it hit some cows down on the Johnson Farm.”

The other cow replies, “I ain't worried, it don't affect us ducks.”

A 2007 study found that the average Australian walks about 900 miles a year. Another study found that the average Australian drinks 22 gallons of beer a year.

That means the average Australian gets about 41 miles per gallon. Bloody good value that!

My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was 60. Now she's 97 years old and we don't know where the hell she is.

An Englishman, a Scotsman, an Irishman, a Latvian, a Welshman, a Frenchman, a Turk, an Aussie, a Yank, an Egyptian, a Jap, a Mexican, a Spaniard, a Greek, a Russian, an Estonian, a German, an Italian, a Pole, a Lithuanian, a Swede, a Finn, an Israeli, a Romanian, a Bulgarian and a Swiss went into a night club. The doorman says, “Sorry, I can't let you in without a Thai”

The wife complained to her husband that he only ever wanted to make love when he was drunk. “That’s not true at all,” said the husband. “Sometimes I want a kebab.”

MORE PHOTOS FROM THE 2012 JAVA TRIP



The group with locals (mainly excited children) at the Railway Station near Leles



The wreaths placed at the Memorial at Jakarta Commonwealth War Cemetery



The entrance to Military Barracks which was the POW Bicycle Camp during WW2



Using a 1940’s map, a current map & GPS to locate the site of the Allied Hospital in Bandung

Obituaries

The Association has been advised that the following Pioneers passed away since our last newsletter.

Beaton, H.J. (Bert)	November 2012
Carney, F. (Fred served under the surname Snackenberg)	February 2013
Dawson, R.	July 2012
Gore, W.T. (Tom)	February 2013
Lee, E.A.	May 2012
Nicoll, P.G.	March 2012
Smith, D.O. (Mick)	Unknown (NSW Pioneers news)

Lest we forget

***Important note:** Please let Col Hamley or Jenny Davidson know if anyone, either Pioneer or spouse, has passed away.*

Association ties

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, the Committee has re-introduced the Battalion tie, this time under the title of "Association tie". They are now available at $20 each for Pioneers and family members. Anyone interested in purchasing one should forward payment with order details to the Secretary, Jenny Davidson, at the address shown on the front of the newsletter, and your tie will be posted to you. Anyone who obtains one is encouraged to wear it during the ANZAC Day march.

Donations

Your donations are always gratefully received and we thank everyone for their generosity.

Please keep up the good work!

$100	Jim McFadden
$80	Lorraine Wright
$50	Dawn Mackay, Glenda Atkins, Flora Barnstable, Kevin Sweet, Rita Bailey, Lorraine Lingford, Lyn Makeham
$30	Bob and Rose Milliken, Bert Neasbey
$25	Bob McGrath, David Tuck
$20	Milada Matek, Yvonne Sweeney, Eulalie Sauer
$10	Yvonne Sweeney, Barbara Hay, Christine Veal
$5	Rev Bill and Lesley Pugh

The Ladies Auxiliary

We were saddened to hear that **Janet Coulson** passed away recently. Janet was a long time President of the Auxiliary and a great supporter of the Pioneers. Also condolences to **Carol Gore and family** following the passing of **Tom**, he will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

Wendy Apostolopoulos

PROPOSED VISIT TO KAPOOKA CHAPEL Weekend 26 - 27 October 2013

The Association is planning a weekend trip to visit Kapooka Army Camp where the 2/2nd Pioneer Colour Patch is prominently displayed in the Chapel. Saturday night accommodation will be at Wagga Wagga with dinner at the local RSL. Sunday morning we will travel to Kapooka to view the window displaying the Colours in recognition of the Members of our Reformed Battalion, who in 1942, were the first Unit to undergo training there.
If enough people from Melbourne & Sydney are interested we will arrange to travel by bus.

Please complete the enclosed and return by post or email with your details by 30th May 2013 if you are interested in joining us.

As we have close to 700 Members further information regarding the tour will only be forwarded to those who have lodged an expression of interest.

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Pioneers Dub Smith, Harold Ramsey and Col Hamley with fellow ex-POWs and family Members at the launch of Patti Wright's book 'Ray Parkin's Odyssey on HMAS Warramunga.



Col Hamley with Patti Wright and the Commanding Officer of HMAS Warramunga at the book launch