



ISSUE 1/98

**“MICE OF MORESBY” – MEMBERS BULLETIN**

**Remembrance Station - Concord  
Walkway (report by Alex Bell)**

Briefly I recently called on Alice Kang, Executive Officer Repatriation Hospital, Concord having noted that the Department of Environment is clearing work along the shores of Brays Bay. This indicates that the sighting of the Sanananda Remembrance Station will take place during the second half of this year. Future stations will reflect some improvements noted since work first commenced on the walkway project.

**Memorabilia Storage Cabinet  
Glebe Municipal Library**

The custom built cabinet for the units memorabilia was delivered to the library Friday 16th January. The cost \$2114 .00 was met in full by the Trustees of the 'Remember' Publication committee. This news should encourage members who

have not parted with ' Service Souvenirs', that they will consider doing so now. (The security control is presently maintained by a one key, one person arrangement).

Responding (somewhat impulsively) to a special request by Leichardt municipal Council (responsible for the Glebe Library), I agreed to arrange a display. for the days Monday to Thursday inclusive, 20th to 23rd April 1998, hours as below:-

FOR DELIVERY OF SERVICE SOUVENIRS OR INSPECTION OF THE  
MEMORABILIA CABINET BETWEEN 10am to NOON EACH  
WEDNESDAY PRIOR ARRANGEMENT BY A TELEPHONE CALL 9642-  
6903 IS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY

Note that the library staff are in no way responsible for our records nor are their normal duties to be interrupted under any circumstances.

### **Memorabilia Cabinet Unit Emblem**

Personal research through the wood carvers association led to a meeting with Mr Harry Clancy; a semi-retired cabinetmaker and wood carver.

The outcome being that he will be doing a 55/53 Unit woodcarving for the memorabilia cabinet. The modest cost to the association being a donation to cover some special carving tools normally not in the recommended range of the average carver.

Discussing details with Harry at his home at Seven Hills I discovered he has a collection of car Models. The display is really spectacular and thought flooded back of our own ' Spider Webb' who would have been thrilled to talk over ' model cars' with Harry. - Hopefully the unit emblem should be finished and in place by Anzac Day.

### **Enemy Reconnaissance Flight Over Sydney February 1942**

Warrant Officer Nobus Fujita, who flew a two seater reconnaissance plane

over Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart in February 1942, died late 1997 in Tokyo aged 85 years.

Fujita, a graduate of the Kasumigaura Navy Air Corps, was one of the ablest scout plane pilots in the Japanese Navy, when Submarine 1-25 surfaced off Sydney some two months after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour.

The attack plane was designed to be catapulted from an inclined steel track on the forward deck of the submarine and could remain aloft for 5 hours. Taking off from the submarine 160 kilometres east of Sydney, Fujita flew over La Perouse, Botany Bay continuing towards Parramatta and then on to observe 23 vessels in Sydney Harbour. Fujita, worried for his own safety had difficulties in locating the submarine on the return flight. A similar flight was made several days later over port Phillip Bay and on the 1st March, 1942 over Hobart, Tasmania.

On 15th and 29th September, 1942 the same plane flew over Oregon USA and released fire bombs in the forests. Due to wet conditions, the bombs were ineffective. Fortunately, the idea of using fire bombs in Australia was not considered then although the bushfire threat was extremely grave.

### **The Enemy Landing - Milne Bay 1942**

It appears that Japanese plans for the invasion of Milne bay were fully circulated to all enemy fighter pilots in the Pacific region. Not only did our units patrolling in the Kailie area capture diaries and other important documents, passed onto New Guinea Force Headquarters, indicating the proposed landing (refer 'That Mob', pages 51, 52, and 57) but another Japanese pilot in the Salamaua area killed by a member of 2/5 Independent Commando Company was carrying similar evidence of the impending assault on this strategic New Guinea port (Daily Telegraph 12th December 1997, page 46).

Did you know?

That the defence positions located at the three plantations and two mission stations and surrounding positions as located by the Giffin/Richard steam at Milne Bay,

proved invaluable, and were adopted without change later during the battle of Milne Bay - 'A' and 'C' Coys 55th plus our Vickers section being involved.

### **Slang of the Past Years compared with today**

During the 30's and 40's, we had a collection of rhyming slang terms such as: china plate - mate, mince pies - eyes, captain cook • look. Most members are 70 and upward in age, assessed as likely victims of amnesia (at varying levels). Try this list of 20 past slang terms: -

Bag of fruit, David Gower, Steak & Kidney, Plates of Meat, Snakes Hiss, Tea Leaf, Grey Nurse, Cucumber Dead Horse, Kerb & Gutter, Threepenny Bits, Irish Jig, Trams & Trains, Jatz Crackers, Paul Roos Greasy Mop, Frog ' n' Toad, Coca Cola, China plates, **Bees & Honey**.

If you score 15 - you ' re good

If you score 18 - you ' re very good

If you score 20 - you cheat - you have the book!

Things are different today. The new lingo is Strine' - technology has inspired the inclusion of things Cyber; i.e. Cyberbabe, Cyberchick, Cybercrime, Cybermall, Cybersex, Cyberspace, Cyberpunk, Cyberscore.

Surfing and music and sport and health all have similar slang terms. I suggest this should be a topic to share with grandchildren. - Get With It!!

### **Correction of a Past Error**

On proper authority, I am told that 'Z' force should read 'Z' Special Unit. ' Z' Special Unit was an administrative unit set up to provide all special operational equipment for activities of Allied Intelligence Bureau (A. I. B.) which operated strictly under general Headquarters orders.

I have apologised to my informant!

## **The Heroes of Ramau (Z' Special Unit)**

On September 11th 1944 the British Submarine Porpoise slipped quietly from Fremantle Harbour bound for Indonesia. It was carrying 23 Australian and British members of operation Ramau intending to repeat the Jaywick raid of 1943 by blowing up sixty ships in Japanese occupied Singapore Harbour. Having reached Padjantan Island the raiding party had shanghaied a 'junk' to continue undetected on the next stage of the journey. The preliminary part of their operation having been successfully completed in nineteen days the submarine commander farewelled the party promising to pick them up in thirty-eight days' time.

A handful of Chinese and Malays and the conquering Japanese were the only people ever to see the twenty-three men again.

History in later years revealed that much shipping was sunk before the raiders attempted escape to rendezvous with the Submarine Porpoise. A small party of one of the escape groups included NX140477 J. (Jack) Hardy who was later captured by the Japanese when heading for Java.

At their trial which rested on incorrect evidence to disguise it: -

- a) That they were guilty of sailing a vessel flying the Japanese flag and: -
- b) that their dress did not readily identify them as Australians,

and on the basis that under terms of The Hague Convention they were to be punished as spies. They were sentenced to death by execution. Such sentence took place at Bukit Tirnah, Singapore on 7th July 1945. Jack Hardy was then aged 23

The sentencing remarks uttered at the time of the trial being: -

"It has been proven by the court, beyond any doubt that the accused are guilty of the charges. Where the guilt is so clear it would be degrading the fine spirit of those heroes if we tried or thought of saving their lives. When they left their homes, they put aside the matter of their lives. All they cared about was the success of their mission and lives were nothing in the face of heated patriotism. When their action deserved death, I am sure that they would rather die than save their lives at the mercy of their captors because dying gloriously is the way to immortalise their names on

history. Let us not disgrace their spirit by supposing that they may want to live. Sending them to death is the only way to send them to an eternal glory. Let us do this."

The heroes of Ramau Story is not a story of failure but of extraordinary daring in the face of overwhelming odds - a gripping story of inspired courage, self-sacrifice and eventually of tragedy,

Editor - The one name of twenty three highlighted in brief relating to the Ramau Operation is Jack Hardy, because members would be interested to know that Jack was the older brother of Graham Hardy (engraver) who has always done our work with great accuracy and consideration. - Another good friend of the Association.

### **Greta Camp Site**

Members will remember the story of "Mount Molly Morgan' (O.R. Gossip 2/96). A new book "Greta" written by Christopher Keating is focused on the dual use of the site first as a military camp 1939-45 and then as migrant centre 1946-56. After the closure of Greta, a number of migrant reunions were held and the campsite was finally sold at auction in 1980 to Otti Windt who had migrated to Australia in 1959. Otti died in 1993 and hopefully his vision for a project that represents the heritage of the camp. A prime vineyard of 80-100 hectares and a tourist facility of some 350 beds will soon be brought fruition.

(Copies of the book are available from Greta Garage Sales, High St Greta for \$15. Add \$3 for packing, handling and postage - good reading indeed.)

### **Fred Kelly WWI 53 Bn (98 year of age in 1995)**

Fred is featured in the book "The last Anzacs". Having served at Gallipoli, Fred joined the Somme Offensive with the 5th Division. He was the main gunner with a machine gun team and took part in the planned diversion at Fromelles when 5,533 men of the Division were casualties in 27 hours of destruction. he returned to the U.K. in 1917 to train machine-gunners. Re-joining his unit, he was wounded

(hit three times) at Villers -Bretonneau. He returned to Australia, married in 1919 and was employed for 38 years as an accountant with ' Nestles'. His wife died in 1977.

I had the pleasure to meet Fred in 1996, then living with his two unmarried daughters, Doris and Daphne who had been on missionary duties in Japan.

It was after this ' 96 meeting that Fred opened' up with reminiscences of his war service. Cricket and caring for ' Scruffy' his dog claims most of his attention today.

### **Reveille**

' Rusty' Priest A.M. is undoubtedly a most worthy representative of war veterans. Two recent issues of speeches made are worth repeating in full or part thereof - Reveille issue September-October 1997, quotes

#### **At Martin Place Memorial**

"In recent years in U.S.A. and Australia it has become fashionable to attempt or wish to rewrite history, to interpret events with hindsight that follows after 52 years, to be armchair strategists and not have to take into account all the valuable circumstances which prevailed at the time and which dictated the military commanders ' decision.

To avoid repeating the mistakes of the past we must always be aware of events as they really happened, no to sanitise them to comply with what is perceived by a vocal majority today as being "politically correct or socially acceptable". Like all Australians, members of the R.S.L. hope and pray that atomic weapons will never be used again. Perhaps it is futile to expect that political, religious, racial or territorial differences will never again lead to war. Sadly, we need only look at what's happening in the former Yugoslavia today to realise that futility. But it is not futile to argue that future generations of Australian men and women should never know the tragedy that was ours 52 years ago. Their service is our heritage. Let us recall with pride that more than half a million servicemen and women defended their nation, and its way of life, overseas.

27,000 left these shores and did not return. We owe it to them and to their

families that Australia always remembers them. That we acknowledge those grateful words of former war-time Prime Minister, John Curtin, when in 1944 he said,

' I hope for the countless generations to come, people will honour the deeds of these men and remember that freedom is a condition that has to be fought and paid for and that we keep our freedom at huge costs, and so it is that we salute those who made possible Victory in the Pacific on August 15th 1945"<sup>1</sup> •

### **Reveille Issue November '97**

#### **State Presidents passionate plea on handover of Lady Davidson Hospital, Turramurra to Australian Hospital care during October 1997**

Part of Rusty's address to an audience of some 200 D.V.A.-R.S.L. and kindred organisations.

"On behalf of the Ex-Services community let me put you on notice that over 100 000 veterans and war widows will watch your progress and judge you by the standards that you set. If you stumble and fall in trying too hard to help us maintain that high standard of care which is the right of the veterans because of his or her service to Australia in times of war or conflict - we will help you we will understand.

If you fail in our expectations because of a pursuit of corporate profit at the expense of veteran care then be warned the ex-service community will never forgive you for betraying the trust that we have now placed in your hands.

Do not let us down, make us proud of your commitment to the ongoing care of veterans and war widows. Do that and you will be Our mate' forever!"

**WORTHILY SPOKEN - STRAIGHT FROM THE SHOULDER!**

### **Other Associations**

## **36th Bn Association**

Once again it was a pleasure for me to represent 55/53 as a guest on the 19th December Wreath Laying ceremony at Martin Place followed by a luncheon at the Ryde-Eastwood leagues Club spending a most enjoyable time in good company, particularly having the chance to chat with Gwen Powers (war widow) a young 90 years of age - a highly intelligent and lovely lady. Keith Irwin in his December '97 issue of 'Marching On' mentions as he puts it - 'To take a break from the affairs of state - the state of the 36th Battalion' to head for a break period with Beryl to Broome W.A. This report reminded me of my recent trip with a party of friends to that wonderful

N.S.W. (Scottish) town MacLean - whilst on a day trip to Ballina I visited the Naval and Maritime Museum and mention two things worth relating.

### 1. A definition of ' Why is a ship is called She?'"

A ship is called a 'she' because there is always a great deal of bustle around her; there is usually a gang of men about, she has a waist and stays, it takes a lot of paint to keep her good looking; it is not the initial expense that breaks you it is the upkeep;she can be all decked out; it takes an experienced man to handle her correctly and without a man at the helm, she is absolutely uncontrollable. She show(s) her topsides, hides her bottom and, when coming into port, always heads for the buoys.

### 2. I also came across memorabilia of Eric Walter Bell 55 Bn WWI (no relation). Briefly his history: -

Born Grenfell N.S.W. - enlisted Katoomba 29th August 1914 at age 18. Service - Gallipoli Landing 25th April 1915 and after withdrawal transferred to 55<sup>th</sup> Bn in France. Wounded in action at Fleur Bay and taken P.O.W. Discharged 25th August 1919. Killed in road accident, Brisbane 1944. A photo donated by his daughter Beryl White of Ballina shows him to be a handsome young fellow. (Again I

mention no relation.)

Another day trip took me to Grafton and imagine my surprise to find a park named AlexBell Park. How I achieved this fame or who was the worthy imposter? I'll be pleased to know! (Can any member run a check on this information?).

### **"Gunners Gossip (7th Machine-Gun Bn) newsletter 78/97**

This unit, as most associations do, reflects the heartbeat, if not the very soul of 'a great team of fellows'.

They hold an annual church service at the Garrison Church Milsons Point, and a reunion luncheon, the last one for which I regret having to apologise on behalf of 55/53 Bn. The committee goes to a great deal of trouble to decorate the R.S.L. venue at Ashfield on such occasions and of course they remain alert to 'member value' of such visitations.

This newsletter drew attention to those who were eligible to the Australian Service Medal 1945-75. (Our members were advised of same in the Secretary's newsletter last year. If any are still in doubt a call to 9642-6903 or 043-325-345 will put you right.). Of course, an article which is a flashback on service days always attempts to strengthen the spirit of understanding humour. - Their story this issue was "Fair Cow" - Always good reading and thank you editor Dick Chinn.

Looking through Gunners Gossip (March '98), I noted with regret the passing of Des O'Dell of 'A' Coy and would like the 'Gunners' to pass on the commiserations of old 53rd members to the family if this is at all possible. (Des was fiercely proud of his 53rd identity as he was with 7th MG Bn.)

The next item which took my attention is worth passing on to members reads:  
" • **Remember your Civvy Suit?** In March 1945 War Cabinet was reported to have decided that civilian clothing for discharged members of the forces would be supplied through normal trade channels. Vouchers for £6/10/- would be issued for the purchase of a civilian suit. They could be used as part payment for a suit dearer than £6/10/- if so desired. If a suit cost less than £6/10/- the serviceman could purchase, at same place, other items of clothing to the value of the difference between the price of the

suit and the full value of the voucher. The Army Inspection Branch would check on the standard of suits periodically. Entitled personnel would also receive a voucher for £2/10/- for 2 shirts, 4 collars, 2 pairs of socks and 1 tie.

Service stores, through the Disposals Commission, were to provide the retail market with some 40,000 'good quality suits made to Army specifications'. Reckon they'd be bobby-dazzlers?

### **14th Field Ambulance**

Always anxious to get the history of 14th Brigade units I was put in touch with Percy Anderson who was Captain Quartermaster of the 14th Field Ambulance unit. Over 90 years of age, and even when a little stooped he stands six feet tall, and his memory is quite reliable. He was stationed at Popondetta when we were engaged in the Sanananda area and he had some of his boys at the Soputa dressing station. This station was where two medical officers passed judgement if a soldier out from the forward area with a temperature of 106 was nursed to a point where he was 100 and was okayed to go back to the unit. Whilst Percy was Quartermaster and he was able to bear all things said about Quartermasters he spoke in highest terms of the medical officers who did major surgery in the forward areas. Someday we will try to get him along to a reunion luncheon - really good company - doesn't eat big meals NOR will he give you very much! (That's normal, isn't it?)

### **The Good Guts issue November 1997 (39th Bn).**

The highlight of this newsletter being the official opening of the Kokoda Walking Track, National Park, Upper Ferntree Gully, Sunday morning, 17th August 1997. A shared memorial project between 39th Bn and 2/14 Battalion.

Television coverage, a strong V.I.P. list of names including **State President**, Bruce Ruxton AM OBE added colour to the occasion. The walkway is 21/2 km, including stations and 1000 steps.

Our congratulations to all involved!

**'War Widows Pension'**

A widow on application can be entitled to a "War Widow's" pension if the Veteran dies from a disability already accepted as war-caused.

(Editor: -Good Guts Thank you for the concise explanation for above.)

### **7th Div Cav. Bulletin No 84 November 1997**

Clive Bull reports on his visit to the Kokoda Track Walkway at Concord Sydney represented President Ray Birks. he remarked that the memorial itself was most impressive, the afternoon tea enjoyable, and the good luck of having speeches cut to a minimum due to 'rain periods' interrupting the official proceedings of the day.

Like ourselves, the members of the unit are celebrating the many OBE's being awarded through the ranks. It's a great award to earn (Over Bloody Eighty) and many are looking for the time they earn a Bar or two for this highly valued award.

Thank You 7th Div. Cavalry Regiment.

### **49th Infantry Battalion**

No formal newsletter published but Fred Cranston is always obliging in supplying us with news.

Represented at 39th Kokoda Walking track. Sharing the same deep feelings as we do regarding 7th December. Members attended a parade at Ennogera barracks in company with the serving unit 25/49 R.Q.R. This occasion included unveiling plaque with the appropriate memorial service followed by a barbecue lunch. Note The new 25/49 R.Q.R. lines are named Sanananda Barracks. Thank You indeed Fred for your support.

### **55/53 Association Jottings**

**Harry Mathews** (Mathew)- A unit member who wears an alternate hat as chairman of the Anny Re-enactment Group received a mention in the

September 1989 issue of Military Marksman.

After mentioning Harry's enlistment as a call up - at age 18 (Riverina) and his early service with 55/53 it then touched on battle drill practised prior to units departure on further overseas service in Bougainville. The essence of the drill being to improve 'Sneaker Courses'.

Training in the new (platoon) battle drill was initiated and all ranks practised the drill until it became instinctive. To a degree the drill was based on Japanese tactics. Once fired on from a firm base, move to the flanks to attack, said the unit history.

The article then included in 1989: -

"readers familiar with current practices will recognise the similarity with the Sgt Greenshield practices which was in later service devised by W.O. Harry Mathews, to the now current ' Transitional Application Practice' and 'Applied Marksmanship Practice' manual.

**Keith MacDonald (53rd)** put his heart into many pages sent to me. from the time of boarding the 'Sarpedon' through to Murray Barracks when he was transferred to Ordinance. There were two MacDonalds and hence he was required to answer to 'Macka'. Early duties were digging trenches and getting a stint driving a **water** truck, handling ammunition supplies of all types. Along with general clothing he got to know members of 75 Fighter Squadron for all their good work, particularly their sorties over Rabaul.

Like many others he recalls the sinking of Macdhui and yearning for a leave period which brought sickness when it did come along. - Remembers a card game when he held a Royal Flush. pushing his bankroll to £40. - Found great comfort and reassurance with his time of becoming more familiar with the Bible. - Stayed away from the 'grog' when there was a time that it was easily available. Really with his revelations there was much that any reader could readily relate. Macka' s constant concern was to get all the supplies to where they were urgently required values his many friends in the Association, particularly old 'B' Coy boys.

Thanks, Macka for putting your thoughts on paper. I think it brought with it a measure of relief to 'let it all out'.

**Len Brown** suggests we should ask Bill McLeod, who was caught out on the toilet in one of the first air raids after arriving at Port Moresby. - I think it's a bit of an embarrassment and something to which we might all relate to. Thanks for the letter Len!

The attached was passed on by ex-Signaller Ray Mackellar of Binnaway (we have him on the nominal roll as McKellar)

### **Song of 53rd**

(Ed. No trouble to substitute 55/53 - give it a go!)

The 55/53 are happy  
The 55 /53 are free  
The 55/53 are happy when  
they go on a spree  
They never never worry  
They never disagree  
The motto of 'The Mob'  
Is come and have a drink with me

(Ed. Need suggestions for the best tune for those words!)

### **Sick Parade Call, etc.**

Bill Tomlin (**Nambucca Heads**) not well and local **Alan Francis** has moved to 159 Balaclava Rd Marsfield (Dorothy Henderson Lodge) in order that both he and his wife can receive better health care.

A sympathy card has been sent to Molly **Bertinshaw** Alf passed away 23rd February.

A Return Thanks card from Mrs Perry (Homebush) and Lovett family.

Warwick Davis is recovering from a recent visit to hospital - an operation for appendicitis and with rather severe complications. Doing well at this time. - Can't keep him down! - It's that fighting spirit' keeping him on his toes!

A circular 'Get Well' message goes out to all members who are suffering 'Pain & Strain' and hope you get back on track very soon, including Harold Jacobs so that he can put in his usual appearance for the young school children during the ANZAC period.

On a brighter note Harvey Blundell recently received a certificate of appreciation for his 9 years as Treasurer of 11th Bn Association. - Congratulations Harvey.

Vi Hall previously of Fiona Crescent Lake Cathie has now settled in at the Retreat Village, 3 Lincoln Rd Port MacQuarie. Vi sends her regards to all and her \$50 donation has been acknowledged with sincere appreciation.

### Editor's Comments

News from members has been rather scarce in filtering through to Orderly Room Gossip. - Can we assume that generally all are well and healthy candidates for OBE awards. - We would like to hear your views!

### Editor

Another ex-digger Bill Bloodworth of Glebe - President of 2/12 field Regiment Association and a Westpac Bank Manager prior to his retirement - was introduced to me and is keen about our luck with the memorabilia cabinet in Glebe Library. We share a lot of ideas in common and I expect we will hear more of his ideas to come.