



Issue 1-2008

(selected articles only have been transcribed)

DAWN at Gallipoli 25 April 2007 – by Kevin & Beverley Dawson

After a long day of anticipation, the time had come. We fully gear up with full back-packs: containing enough food and fluids to last 12 hours, breakfast, snacks and lunch, beanie, gloves, scarf, jacket, blanket, good strong walking shoes and warm socks.

All these pack away in our kit we headed for the last ferry 2400 on 24th counted and recounted and placed on the bus for the short trip up to the peninsula. We arrived a fair distance from the dawn service suite where we were off loaded at the check point area as security had been set up before entry. Here we were checked and counted and tagged and any contraband confiscated (small flask of something to keep the chills away purely for medicinal purposes).

Along with 10,000 others we then proceeded to walk to the dawn service site about 20 minutes. Seating was filling fast and the back packers had already been there for two days squatting. As we waited the chill of the night set in and it although we had been warned of the chill it was underestimated for no matter how much clothing we had on you could still feel the chill reaching your bones. Our feet began to cramp so walking around became necessary (but as I earlier started with no fear in our minds of been shot). Several documentaries and interviews were shown to keep us awake while we waited for the service to commence.

25th: The time arrived, first light brought forward the waking of the local birds, the silhouette of the dawn approaching rising over the Sphinx renewed the feeling in us of what the ANZACs must have anticipated with the dawning of a new day.

Full dawn approached as the sun reached the peak the catafalque party is mounted the triple ceremony was then to begin, lasting about 50 minutes the service ended. It is then that we laid the wreath on behalf of the 55/53rd Infantry Battalion. The Mice Of Moresby on the altar of remembrance at North Beach ANZAC Cove with the immense feeling that you were all there with me as it was then about the same time as you all marched off in Sydney (due to time differences).

The portable loo was something else so I will leave that to your imagination with 10,000 people using the same portable loo over the same time.

Following the dawn service, the arduous part of the ordeal began. We were instructed to walk 4 ½ kilometres back to the turnover and up Shrapnel Valley with full pack. This was not an experience

that I was prepared for (or previously told to my horror), especially after no sleep as it was now 24 hours since I awoke on the 24th. The walk they told would take about 1 ½ hours.

The walk up was rocky, uneven, steep and winging dirt track but we were not going to let it beat us so we just applied the aged old Aussie tenacity and pulled our shoulders back, hitched up our kits head down and off we went. Halfway up disrobing of clothing occurred as the day was warming up and the exercise was warming our bodies. All sizes and ages were beginning to feel the pull on our bodies thinking is this track ever going to end but around every turn came another rise and another bend to conquer.

On the last turn there was a joyous fellow congratulating us for the enduring effort of completing the track with the comment of you have made this is the last hill but believe me it was the sheerest of them all. Here we are at Lone Pine for the Australian Service that was due to commence at 1130. Here we again laid a wreath on behalf of the 55/53 Infantry Battalion – The Mice of Moresby. After this service we had to walk back down that strenuous track to the bus. So off we trekked. We truly believe that this was nothing compared to the tumultuous and life-threatening ordeal that our boys endured during their visit to Gallipoli. But what an experience!

Thank you, all Kevin/Beverley Dawson, – Bulla Hayes NX46644

Trekking on the Kokoda Trail – there is no age limit

A week before Victorian Harold Young turned 82 he completed a 96km trek over the notorious Kokoda Train in Papua New Guinea with his 32-year-old grandson, Matthew Makin, and 12 other Australians. And he did it with emphysema.

The former Royal Australian Navy seaman and retired carpenter trained by carrying a backpack containing 22kg of paving stones up and down St Leonards Hill nearly every day for six months. For seven-and-a-half days, they struggled through some of the toughest jungle terrain in the world, with locals to carry their tents and water supplies. It probably helped that Harold was a keen jogger who had run in the 19 km Melbourne Super Run four times. He had wanted to trek the Kokoda Trail for years, but never had the money to go until recently. “I just wanted to know what it must have been like for the fellows who fought on that trail. I’d heard so much about it” said Young.

Rising more than 2000 metres above sea level, the Kokoda Trail encompasses dense rainforest steep valleys and high mountain passes. In 1942 more than 3000 Australian soldiers died while defending it from Japanese forces intent on capturing Port Moresby in some of the most ferocious fighting of the Pacific theatre during World War II. Outnumbered and outgunned, they fought tenaciously in torrential rain, many suffered from malaria and dysentery. What finally turned the battle in the Australians favour was the introduction of 25 pounder guns, without these it was likely that Port Moresby would have fallen to the Japanese invasion.

Harold said one of the trek highlights was a visit to the well-kept war cemetery at Bomana, where thousands of Australians and hundreds of English soldiers were laid to rest.

"Its an emotional experience to see that," he said. "A lot of them were only kids more or less, 18 or 19." Harold conceded "it was a hard trek, but not as hard as it was for the soldiers during the war".

FINISH WITH A SMILE

An Irish man was waiting in the airport terminal when a stranger sat beside him and began to talk. "Waiting for someone?" he said. The Irish man replied "yes, I'm waiting for my brother, he's been away in America for 30 years and he's coming home." The stranger said "do you think you'll recognise him after all this time?" The reply was "I'm not sure after 30 years, it's a long time." The stranger said "do you think he'll recognise you?" The Irish man said, of course he will, I'm not the one who has been away,"

This issue of the orderly gossip and secretary's newsletter has been prepared with the very able assistance of my grandson Michael and his wife Rebecca, and also the addressing of 230 envelopes.

I am very thankful for their help and hope you enjoy the effort they have put into these projects.

Tanks Michael and Rebecca from your loving pa.

Trevor Harper

Editor

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