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**THE 2/2ND AUSTRALIAN
MACHINE GUN BATTALION
ASSOCIATION**

MUZZLE BLAST

September 2012



www.2nd2ndmachinegunbn.com

2/2nd AUST MG BN ASSOCIATION

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Helen Callaghan, Di Symon, Jason Symon, Lindy Gyles

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Denis Riley, Di Symon

Hon. Member: Ralph Short

Deceased Hon. Life Members:

Charles Armitage, John Boughton, Hugh Brown, Ron Bruncker,
John Cockram, Jim Cuddihy, Clyde Davy, Jim Dods,
Gerry Ferguson, Charles Gold, Nev Green, Norm Ihlein,
John Kenyon, Frank Lavan, Ian Mills, Les Reid, Mick Riley,
Bok Rowe, Keith Sloss, Reg Somerville, Lon Villiers, Wes Ward

FROM THE COMMITTEE

MONTHLY MEETINGS, Members and Associates

are held on the *fourth Saturday of the month*.

at 11.30am, Roseville Memorial Club, 64 Pacific Highway, Roseville, conveniently opposite Roseville Station.

After the meetings we often enjoy lunch within the club or locally. You would be made very welcome.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 24th November meeting will be the AGM, commencing

at 11.30am, Roseville Memorial Club, 64 Pacific Highway, Roseville, conveniently opposite Roseville Station.

Any and all financial members are most welcome to attend

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Of \$20 annually , due in April .

ANZAC Day

was again a momentous event. The veterans were joined by families and associates, who wished to 'remember them'. The veterans' ranks are thinning but the noise and camaraderie has not diminished. The room was full of those people willing and able to reflect, rejoice and share wonderful company and great food.

Bob Fitzsimmons

His recent death has left a big hole in the committee. He was a regular attendee, always with a big heart, big smile and few but sage words.

Contributions and Comments

to the Muzzle Blast are welcome, using the addresses as listed for the committee members

ANZAC DAY 2012



Battalion formation point
Castlereagh Street, between King St and Martin Place
Sydney

Photos donated by: Malcolm Muir (Charlie Stewart), Sharon Summers (Harry Summers), Di Symon (Ron Myers)

The President's Address

Ron Myers

The Menzies Hotel, Carrington Street, Sydney



Once again your Committee extends a very warm welcome to the Members of the Battalion, families and visitors.

The Committee met 11 times this year and our discussions were mainly to do with keeping this Association alive and active and by your attendance here today it has shown that we have been successful.

This can also be attributed to the publication of Muzzle Blast, which, thanks to Lindy Gyles and some words of encouragement and advice from Adrian Simpson, has continued to be published and distributed to our Members.

Your Committee Members are: Denis Riley, Barry Izzard, Denise Herman, Helen Callaghan, Lindy Gyles, Bill Harley, Bob Fitzsimmons, Di Symon, Michele Lavan, Brendan Jack, Jason Symon.

Financially we are still in a sound position due to the subs and donations from our many members.

Last Anzac Day I spoke to you on my thoughts of bravery and what I thought it meant, and I gave you my reasons why young men and women joined the Navy, Army or Air Force. I also mentioned the future of the memory of the men who were the 2/2nd Australian Machine Gun Battalion.

It appeared to me that there was more to say about those men and I will begin by quoting from a paper written by Mark Halpin, a soldier of the Great War, WW1.

The war was still in him, and it would be in him for a long time to come. For soldiers who have been blooded are soldiers forever, that they will never allow themselves to heal completely, is their way of expressing their love for friends who have perished, and they will not change because they have become what they have become to keep the fallen alive.

This sums up what many of the WW1 service men and women, who saw action and were blooded, felt and thought throughout their lives. That is why there is a strong contingent of ex Service and War personnel marching on Anzac Day. That is why reunions came about are still held by those unit still active.

We of the 2/2nd AMGBn, some years ago, adopted the last ten men alive from the 2nd Machine Gun Battalion formed during the great war 1914-1918. They were introduced by the then Secretary, Adrian Simpson in the year 1994. They represented the enduring mateship of blooded soldiers. We originally met them in the early 1970's at the Port Macquarie reunions when the NSW branch Association met with the Queensland branch Association each year. They started attending our Anzac Day reunion at the Menzies Hotel in 1976 until the last survivor, George Walker passed away.

Some years later, the then committee, decided that the memory of our mate should be passed on to the children and grandchildren of those mates and so the 2/2nd AMGBn invited you, our families and friends, to join Committee and reunions.



Contributors to proceedings



Bill Harley



Barry Izzard (Associate of Tip Izzard)



Bill Harley and Denis Riley (Vice President and Treasurer, Associate of Mick Riley)



Ron Myers (President) and Norman Short (our pitch perfect bugler)

A Few Snapshots of the Day



THE MEN

Ron Myers, Bill Harley, Bob Fitzsimmons, Adrian Simpson
Lyle Brown, Bruce Robinson, David Martin



Bob Fitzsimmons (Sadly, Bob passed away very recently)
Like so many 'We Will Remember (Him) Them'



Bruce Robinson and his son, Ian



Bill and Phyllis with The Harley Clan

Malcolm Harley, Sharon Harley, Sophie Harley, Rachael Harley,
Johnathon Harley, Anne Harley, Emily Monnox, Mike Falzom,
Kim Harley, Rachael Bell, John Harley, Jimmi Biasetto, Peter Harley,
Penny McCorquodale, Rosalind Carter, Iven Carter



Ron Myers and his Family

Adam Symon, Heidi Symon, Jason Symon, Jet Symon, Denise Herman,
Ben Herman, David Herman, Di Symon, John Symon, Shelli Frankel, Michael Herman



Lisa Breeze & Ian Riley (Mick Riley), Myra Smith & Peter Anley (Gerry Anley),
Michelle Lavan (Frank Lavan), Helen Wallace (Geoff Boucher)



Kristie Hague (Bob Fitzsimmons), Bruce McVey (Gordon McVey), Bob Fitzsimmons,
Barry & Rachel Izzard (Tip Izzard), Fay & Rex Bayley (Tip Izzard)



Bill Harley, Ron Myers, Bob Fitzsimmons, Adrian Simpson
Lyle Brown, Bruce Robinson, David Martin

ATHERTON TABLELANDS 1943



Rocky Creek Memorial Park

Kim and Alison Lees (assoc. 'Curly' Lees) were surprised as they drove along the Kennedy Highway between Mareeba and Atherton, just north west of Tolga, when they spotted the Rocky Creek War Memorial Park. They sent us these photos and invited comment.

The Atherton Tableland was developed as an area to recuperate troops returning from the Middle East, and provide an appropriate training ground for jungle warfare, in the rainforest areas around Tully and Kuranda. In January 1943, the 6th and 7th Divisions were established in camps in Wongabel, Wondecia, and Ravenshoe. The 9th Division started arriving in February 1943, and established their camps in Kairi, Tinaroo and Dinbulla. The 2/2nd Machine Gun Battalion as part of that division arrived in April and set up camp near Kairi.

Good medical facilities were required and the area of Rocky Creek Park, as it is now known and pictured, is where there existed the largest military hospital the southern hemisphere. In that 3,000 bed hospital, they treated 60,000 patients between 1943 and 1945. Many of the patients treated there were suffering from tropical diseases .

Rocky Creek Memorial Park, set on two hectares of land, was established in 1995. Within it there are at least 95 unit plaques commemorating associations with the hospital and those units that trained in the Tableland region during WWII, including the 2/2nd Machine Gun Battalion.

On August 15th, for Victory in the Pacific Day (VP Day, previously VJ day) there is a memorial service held in the Park. At other times during the year it is possible to picnic under shelter with toilet facilities nearby and it seems for the cost of a gold coin it is also possible to camp within the site



http://www.nashoqld.org.au/rocky_memorial/rocky_war_memorial.html

<http://www.trc.qld.gov.au/discover/history-heritage/rocky-creek-memorial-park>

The stones and their plaques commemorate the existence of the divisions, units within the Tableland area. This stone and its plaque commemorate the existence of the 2/2nd Machine Gun Battalion in the general area and a site where some of its members would have received medical treatment.

Kairi, where the 2/2nd Machine Gun Battalion camped between April and August, was 10.6 kms away. Bill Oakes, in 'Muzzle Blast, Six Years of War With The 2/2 Australian Machine Gun Battalion', the unit history, describes the camp for the Battalion as naturally very beautiful with very large rain forest trees. The Barron River and Lake Euramoo were within the immediate area. Dense jungle surrounded the camp. The camp was situated on the slopes of as "Python Hill", suggesting the reality of the fauna. Apart from an entry road and four galvanised sheds, the camp site was primitive. Land clearing was done by hand, mostly with machetes.

Within the locality there were farms and plantations. A few of 'the Gunners' were local men. Valuable and profitable relationships developed between them, which provided access to tools, machines, timber cutting, and produce. Huts were constructed of local timber. The roofs were thatched Kunai grass, abundantly in supply. They were supported by Silky oak timbers which later became indestructible packing crates when they moved on to New Guinea.

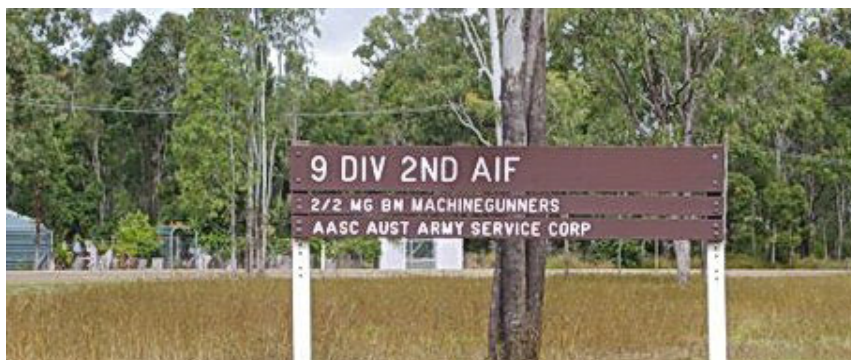
.In camp they prepared a Parade ground, and a sports field. Morale building sports competitions such as baseball and rugby games were popular. A system was devised to pipe and pump in water. A generator was sourced and the lighting it provided, directly resulted in a flood of mail sent off to the post. The snack bar replete with stools and tables was stocked it with local eggs, milk, cream, beef and pork. There was a hobby hut for creative pursuits. Very beautiful timber furniture was made, some of which is still in existence. Sand paper was ingeniously ground from glass bottles.

The training was tough and very challenging. Advancing through the dense scrub made progress slow, laborious with visual no depth of field. for assistance

The time spent there in reality was just a few months, but what they achieved and how they did it seems remarkable, a testimony to mateship, strength, determination and ingenuity. Each man knowing and relying on the other's strengths, a consistent theme in the Battalion.

"Muzzle Blast, By Bill Oakes", the unit history, is very descriptive of this time spent in Far North Queensland and is great reading.

Unfortunately for any visitors to the area expecting to see where the Battalion camped, there is disappointment. The Tinaroo Falls Dam was built in 1959. The camp, the road into the camp, Kairi and lake Euramoo were submerged in the dam. The only remaining structure in existence from the whole of 9th division camp is a stone fireplace. Rocky Creek Memorial Park seeks to address this loss to expectant visitors



Lindy Gyles (Jim Stewart)

Ho Ho Ho

It is unclear as to where lie the origins of the call Ho Ho Ho , lie. In April, 1943, as the Ninth Division travelled by train journey between Sydney and Far North QLD it is remembered by many of the men who heard it and joined in. It was passed between battalions of the 9th division and during the fighting in New Guinea it was used by spotters sometimes as a warning of enemy aircraft

There were unsuccessful hierarchical attempts to stamp it out by order and threat of punishment

In the unit history, Bill Oakes describes, for the first time the traditions of the 'barking' , now greeting, of Ho! Ho! Ho! on page 183

The following story related ,by Peter Fitzsimons describes an event he witnessed in 2006

Ho into this tradition (The Fitz Files, Peter Fitzsimons, SMH 17/12/2006 p95)

'TFF was very pleased to be invited to attend the Rats of Tobruk Christmas Lunch on Wednesday at the Five Dock RSL where they celebrated the 65th Anniversary of Tobruk's relief. To mark the occasion the NSW Governor, Marie Bashir, gave a wonderful address to the diggers and their wives and families, but it was something that happened as she was introduced that grabbed my attention. That is, mixed with the warm applause to welcome Her Excellency to the podium, a lot of the diggers gleefully called out "ho! ho! ho! ho!".

Smiling broadly the Governor said she was aware of this tradition "and then got on with her speech. But what tradition was that exactly? As explained to me by several of the merry diggers afterwards, it started mid-World War II, when the Ninth Division was on a brief sojourn in the Atherton Tableland, in the time between facing the rigours of the desert sands of North Africa, and the pressing madness of the jungles of New Guinea. Both battlefields were preferable, however to their treatment in this particular camp - terrible food shocking quarters, etc - so when at one point they were addressed by a high-powered general, they took matters into their own hands. Feeling that they had been treated like dogs many of them started barking like dogs. Predictably there was hell to pay but a great tradition had begun. At reunions after the war the barking was softened to become "ho!", Saved for occasions when they were addressed by someone of great authority and harking back to an extraordinary time in their lives'

VALE



Robert John Fitzsimmons

NX 19839

Sept 1918—August 2012



Bob joined the Battalion in 1940 at the first camp in Ingleburn, NSW.

He was posted to the Transport section as a driver. When the Battalion moved to Cowra, he was an early volunteer to the band.

Serving as a driver he was involved in various campaigns with the Battalion, including the Battle of El Alamein, and the amphibious landings in New Guinea and Borneo.

Participating as a band member during the large and impressive 'march past' at Gaza airport, Dec 1942, Bob claimed to have "the best view".

After the War he married Elizabeth and had two children, Robyn and Chris.

His driving skills put him in the seat of a large BP tanker; his post war occupation

Bob is remembered also as a first class soldier, comrade, and a gentleman. He was a great supporter of the Battalion Association for many years. We enjoyed Bob's company and he always enjoyed seeing and speaking with his old friends from the army days, especially on ANZAC Day

Bob will be missed by all who knew him. A gentle man.

Members of the Association extend to his family our sincere sympathy

Thank you to John Robb (Probus) and Adrian Simpson for their contributions to Bob's Memorial



VALE

John (Jack) Rinaldi

QX 9413

Oct 1920—June 2012



Adrian Simpson wrote: "It is a sad loss to record the passing of Jack."

At the commencement of WW11 Jack joined the Militia and served in the 9th and 49th Infantry Battalions. In 1940, he joined the 2/2 Machine Gun Battalion, to serve in every campaign in which the unit was involved.

He was held in high regard by all who knew him, especially the members of B2 Platoon

His posting as a range taker was a very important task , particularly in the Battle of El Alamein when our guns depended on accurate range. He was meticulous with his calculations.

His Memorial service was conducted by the R.S.L. with the opening introduction as follows:

" we are assembled here to pay a last tribute to a beloved Comrade John Rinaldi, who served in defence of his nation" A recitation followed: "This poppy, an emblem of sacrifice, the symbol of life, given in the service of one's country, is a link between our comrade, and us who remain. We place it here in remembrance"

He was also, a first class soldier, comrade, friend and gentleman.

He is survived by his wife, Patricia.

Our members extend to her our sincere sympathy in her sad loss and that of a very fine man

Thank you to Jim & Willy Silk (Jack's nephew), and Adrian Simpson for their contributions to Jack's memorial

LAST POST

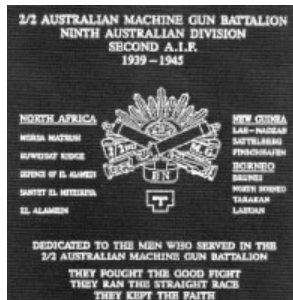
It is with sincere regret that we report the passing of

Bob Fitzsimmons

Jack Rinaldi

*To their families and friends,
members of the Association extend deepest sympathy*

*'They fought the good fight,
They ran the straight race,
They kept the Faith'*



LEST WE FORGET

ODE

(For The Fallen By Laurance Binyon)

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow,
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them