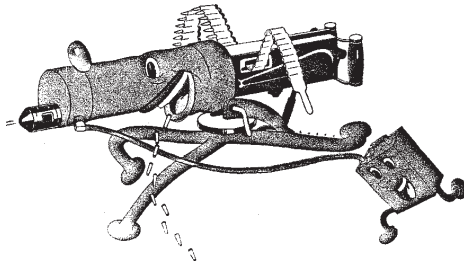




THE 2/2ND AUSTRALIAN
MACHINE GUN BATTALION
ASSOCIATION

MUZZLE BLAST



AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2008

2/2ND AUST MG BN ASSOCIATION

- President:** Adrian Simpson Ph: 9878 0525
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- Vice President / Welfare:** Ron Myers Ph: 9983 1919
38a Station Street, Pymble 2073
- Vice President:** Mick Riley Ph: (02) 4421 8382
1 Wasdale Place, Bomaderry 2541
- Treasurer:** Denis Riley Ph: 9659 6863
17 Lisa Crescent, Castle Hill 2154
- Joint Secretaries:** Sally Butcher Ph: 9416 7944
4 Bromborough Road, Roseville 2069
- Dianne Symon Ph: 9488 9778
12 Spurwood Road, Turramurra 2074
- Minute Secretaries:** Sally Butcher
Denise Herman
- Editor / Delegate**
9 Division Council: Adrian Simpson
- Committee:** Neville Bargwanna, Michele Campbell, Bob Fitzsimmons,
Ron Bruncker, Bill Harley, Frank Lade, Julie Owens
- Hon. Life Members:** Ron Bruncker, David Martin, Ron Myers, Mick Riley,
Adrian Simpson
- Hon. Padre:** Canon Ray J. Bomford Ph: (02) 4751 6465
19 Coomassie Avenue, Faulconbridge 2776
- Hon. Member:** Ralph Short
- Deceased Hon. Life Members** Charles Armitage, John Boughton, Hugh Brown,
John Cockram, Jim Cuddihy, Clyde Davy, Jim Dods,
Gerry Ferguson, Charles Gould, Nev Green, Norm Ihlein,
John Kenyon, Frank Lavan, Ian Mills, Les Reid, Bok Rowe,
Keith Sloss, Reg Somerville, Lon Villiers, Wes Ward.

VALE
WALTER THOMAS (TERRY) GEANY

1918-2008



I am Neville Bargwanna and for 70 years Terry and I have been best mates. I would like to share with you some of those 70 years today.

In 1936 my family came from the bush to live in the city and settled in Parramatta, next door to Bruce Griffiths and about 100 metres from where Terry lived.

In 1938 I joined the Militia Unit which met each week at the Lancer Barracks, Parramatta. It was here that Terry and Bruce Griffiths introduced me to the mysteries of the Vickers machine gun.

It was while we were in camp at Wallgrove in 1940 that we began to realise the seriousness of Britain's position, and when we heard that the 2/2nd Machine Gun Battalion was being formed, four of us (Bruce Griffiths, Tom Lawrie, Terry and I) decided to enlist and join the Machine Gun Battalion. Terry and I signed on at the same table and our regimental numbers were NX57085 and NX57086.

At Ingleburn we were posted to B2 Platoon where we served the whole time we were with the battalion. We continued together when the battalion moved to Cowra and when we sailed in the troopship to the Middle East.

We shared a tent in the camp in Palestine, went on leave together to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, and found a quiet spot in the camp to celebrate the news received by cable that Thelma had been delivered of a beautiful baby girl and that both mother and baby were in good health. Terry had carried a bottle of rum all the way from home and we used it to wet Fay's head.

In 1941 we had our first taste of the Western Desert. We arrived in Mersa Matruh in Egypt on Anzac Day in a blinding sand storm. By now we each led a section in the platoon and spent the next five months preparing defensive positions against the chance of defeat at Tobruk.

We travelled together back to Palestine, then on to Lebanon and Syria until with the whole Division we were urgently moved back to the desert to El Alamein to strengthen the line and fight Germans and Italians.

It was in September that we took part in an attack on enemy positions. Terry's truck took a direct hit from an artillery shell and he was evacuated to hospital. His wound was not serious and he was able to rejoin his section to prepare them for the battle which was to commence on 23rd October. Of the four of us who enlisted on 10th July, 1940, Bruce Griffiths returned home and joined the newly formed 5th Machine Gun Battalion; Tom Lawrie was badly

wounded during the battle and died of those wounds; I was wounded and evacuated to hospital, first in Alexandria and then Gaza; Terry led his section throughout the whole of the battle and returned to Australia to be reunited with Thelma and their new baby.

It was after our return home in 1943 that our paths diverged and we saw out the war in different units. Anzac Day 1946 brought us together again, as did all subsequent Anzac Day reunions until he felt he could no longer participate in the reminiscences that were so much part of our reunions.

Apart from all those war experiences there was one single event that was designed to cement a friendship that had stood the tests of time — on 23rd April, 1947, Terry's birthday, my first son was born.

It was a joy to all of us who joined him on his 90th birthday celebration, to see how well he looked and how much pleasure he derived from the gathering of happy family and friends.

Of those proud original members of B2 Platoon who served with Terry, we three survivors are here today to say our farewells. Together with Bob Fitzsimmons we join in saying thank you to Thel, Fay and Rob for inviting us to participate in this ceremony.

Ed: This eulogy was delivered by Neville Bargwanna at the funeral service for Terry. Bob Fitzsimmons, Ron Myers and Adrian Simpson also represented our Battalion. "He was devoted to his family and with Thelma are grandparents of seven and great-grandparents of sixteen." (As reported in the Central Coast Express of 4th June, 2008 — provided by Frank Lade.)

There was a large gathering of friends and Terry's family.

VALE

JOE LYNCH NX 178055

Joe passed away recently and we extend to Pat and her family deepest sympathy in their loss.

On Anzac Day at the reunion the following was announced as a special welcome:

"For the first time, Joe Lynch and his family are with us today. It is interesting that Joe's father, James, served in WWI with the 1st Infantry Battalion and in WWII joined our Battalion with his other son, and all three served in A2 Platoon."

Mick Riley researched Army Archives and as a result comments:

"Joe would have joined us on our return to Australia in March 1944 and served only in Borneo. His brother, James, and father, James, served with us in the Middle East."

ANZAC DAY 2008

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Thank you, Neville, for your introduction.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Committee I repeat the warm welcome already given by Neville. We are very pleased with the attendance today and we thank you for your support. Anzac Day is the most important day of commemoration for Australia.

We are here to remember and honour the men who landed at Anzac Cove on 25th April, 1915 — 93 years ago. The casualties were horrific with about 10,000 Anzacs killed and 20,000 wounded. The National Memorial records over 600 were killed on the first day. Also, in particular we honour our own friends and comrades who did not return with us from distant battlefields.

It is appropriate that at this time we pay tribute to the 645 crew of HMAS Sydney who perished when their ship was sunk in November 1941 in the Indian Ocean and was recently discovered.

It would be of remiss of me not to mention and congratulate our Associate Members on the wonderful job they have done to organise this reunion. There is a lot of work involved, I can assure you. Also I would like to thank the younger members who today assisted with the banner and other duties.

Your committee appreciates the loyalty of our members generally and their active interest. This is how the Association has prospered since its formation 63 years ago.

We are proud to have served with the 9th Australian Division which won acclaim from world political and military leaders. There could be no greater praise than that from General Sir Harold Alexander, Commander in Chief, the Middle East Forces, in December 1942 on our return from the Western Desert. He said in his farewell speech: "There is one thought I shall cherish above all others — under my command fought the 9th Australian Division".

On a personal matter I would like to say that after 38 years on the list of office bearers and the last 17 years as President, I feel my 'use by date' has arrived. Therefore, at the Annual General Meeting in November I intend to stand aside and a new President will be elected. I will continue to support the Association and edit our journal, *Muzzle Blast*, if the committee so wishes.

Ladies and gentlemen, I now ask you to charge your glasses, be upstanding and join me in a toast to our famous Battalion, the 2/2nd Australian Machine Gun Battalion.

Please be seated. I trust you now enjoy this reunion.

ANZAC DAY 2008

Apologies Received

Betty Ballard, Joan Boughton, Ron & Ken Brunker, Charles & Jamie Butcher, John Butcher, Olivia Butcher, Sallyanne Butcher, Thomas Butcher, Rowley Cann, Margaret Christie, Roy & Betty Crossley, Kevin Culph, Eric George, Terry & Thelma Geany, Lyndy Gyles, Ross Hutchison, Bridget Lane, Meredith Lane, Phillip Lane, Tony & Angela Lavan, Josie Lord, Mavis McCallum, George Mehieloff, Eric Nunn, Ruby Purdon, Bert & Ina Ridyard, Jack & Pat Rinaldi, Ben Simpson, Ralph Short, Rona Street, Russ Sutherland, John Wagland, Norman Whiteman, Bruce Williams, Bruce Wiley.

* * *

A very welcome message from the Queensland Association wishing us all the best for our reunion. We responded in kind.

* * *

Associate Members

It was a pleasant task to welcome two new Associate Members. Our Battalion brooch was presented to **Kristie Hague** (Bob Fitzsimmons) and to **Michael Herman** (Ron Myers). Our Association is fortunate to have an enthusiastic group of Associate Members who perform a wonderful job in our various activities and keep the Association ticking.

A list of those who attended the march/luncheon is enclosed.

* * *

Attendance considered very satisfactory. It consisted of:

Battalion members	13
Members' wives	6
Widows	4
Guests	4
Associate Members	54
Visitors	32
Total:	113

* * *

We were pleased to welcome His Excellency Dr. Sayed Fazil Rabbini who was introduced by Associate Member Robert Lamb. They arranged their journey from Afghanistan to coincide with our Anzac Day reunion.

Robert works closely with Dr. Rabbini (Surgeon) in his profession as a Paramedic in that country. They went to Broken Hill to inspect the Flying Doctor Service before their return to Afghanistan.

To mark the occasion a copy of the Battalion History was presented to Dr. Rabbini to which he responded with appreciation.

The tribute as shown was designed and printed by Denise Herman and Dianne Symon, for which we congratulate them.



**This history of the 2/2nd Australian Machine Gun Battalion
1940 – 1946**

is presented to:

His Excellency – Dr. Sayed Fazil Rabbani

**in appreciation of his visit to the Battalion Association
ANZAC DAY reunion
held in Sydney Australia
25th April 2008**

* * *

‘The Old and Bold’



L-R: Bill Harley, Adrian Simpson, Curley' Kirton, Ron White, Neville Bargwanna, Lyall Brown, Mick Riley, David Martin, Ron Myers, Frank Lade. Seated: Bruce Robinson, Basil Staniland.

Bob Fitzsimmons was busy at the time attending to the collection of donations for Legacy so was not in this photo.

The ‘Vickers’ on display created much interest. Ron Myers arranged for this display. It was necessary to give Menzies a guarantee that the gun was inoperable.

The Basil Staniland family group



L-R: Andrew Mason-Jones, Alexandra Mason-Jones, David Mason-Jones, Joanna Mason-Jones, Basil Staniland, Jane Price, Jill Mason-Jones.



It was a pleasure to have Basil with us. He could be described as 'an original original'. When 'Torp' Whitehead formed the Battalion in 1940 he was C.O. of the New South Wales Lancers and he brought with him a contingent from that regiment. Basil was one of that contingent.

9TH AUSTRALIAN DIVISION CHURCH PARADE

Sunday, 28th September, 2008

The Garrison Church, The Rocks

The service will commence at 10.30am.

It is suggested that you be seated in the church by 10.00am to make sure the Machine Gunners sit together, near our Battalion plaque.

This is a significant event and gives us the opportunity to remember those of the Division who paid the supreme sacrifice, and in particular our own comrades.

The following have indicated their intention to attend if at all possible:

Bob Fitzsimmons and family
Paul Graham & John Graham
John Kirton & Heather Nelson
Frank Lade

Adrian Simpson
Robin & Kylie Spedding
Rona Street

Gongs will be worn.

9TH AUSTRALIAN DIVISION REUNION

Friday, 24th October, 2008

Assemble on the corner of Pitt Street and Martin Place at 11.00am.

Parade at the Cenotaph at 11.30am.

Following the wreath laying we will attend the Combined Services Club in Barrack Street for lunch. Cost will be \$20 p.p. which includes liquid refreshments.

Gongs will be worn.

For catering purposes, your committee would appreciate confirmation from those who will be attending.

We are aware that it is becoming increasingly difficult for members to attend all the events on our programme. However, this reunion allows us to pay homage to the exploits of a great fighting division of which we are proud to have been a part.

A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE FOR ERIC NUNN (B3)

He joined a group in April 2008, which included returned servicemen and serving members of the 4/19 Prince of Wales Light Horse and the 12/16 Hunter River Lancers, to attend the dedication of the 'Park of the Australian Soldier' in Be'ersheba, Israel, and the unveiling of the Australian Light Horse Memorial. Also to commemorate the famous Charge of the Light Horse in October 1917.

Eric writes:

“The group consisted of seven Light Horsemen, seven minders, a doctor and a Brigadier, and Jane, our nurse. The Brigadier had served in Korea and had two artificial legs. Everybody was on first names — you called the ‘Brig’ Bill, the doctor Graham. Really a bunch of top quality blokes. Bronwyn Bishop was in our party.

Our first port of call was Singapore. We stayed at the most beautiful hotel. We visited Kranji War Cemetery. We had lunch at Raffles, which was fabulous, followed by a BBQ at the Ambassador’s residence. His Chinese cook did the honours.

Then on to Frankfurt and the Middle East. Qantas and Lufthansa really looked after us.

Our first turnout was the opening of a park where the old Lighhorse made the charge. Beersheba is a population of over 200,000. Where the charge was it is barren desert. We had lunch at a top-class restaurant and visited the War Cemetery. Met the Mayor who was a fighter pilot from the Six Day War.

Then back to Jerusalem — a double highway bypasses Tel Aviv (all high rise now). There are no vacant paddocks or hills about. Each morning we had to be down for breakfast at 7.00am and a briefing. We had the same bus with a Palestinian driver. I spoke to him the first morning. I thought they were a very sad lot. I asked a soldier girl from the army barracks — she said most of the people had lost someone close over the years of war.

We went down to the Dead Sea and visited Herod’s old palace ruins, with access in a big sky lift which holds about 20, plus a driver with a gun strapped on his hip and a bloke with a machine pistol standing in the corner. We visited every Holy place. There were only two of us that had been to the Middle East. I enjoyed every moment except for Holocaust Museum, which was awful. At a visit to the Army barracks had a look at one of their 60 ton tanks. I don’t think Johnny Cockram would survive it rumbling over him. Saw the casualty names of 8,500 killed during the troubles with the Arabs.

Each one of the party laid a wreath or did something. I was kept until last — I had to make a presentation to the Governor-General and the Ambassador to Israel. The Brig wrote it out for me and we went over it a couple of times — I was told I did it well. Shaking hands with the Queen’s representative was a very big thing to me, and I was at a reception at the King David Hotel.

We had quite a busy time at the unveiling of the Statue of the Light Horse in Jerusalem Children's Park. Everybody was there, even Israel's Prime Minister. The Pratt Foundation supplied the monument — very life-like. I met Mrs. Pratt, who as a young girl survived at concentration camp — a real lady. I was leaving with the nurse and there were five or six Palestinian kids asking for baksheesh(?). She asked what they wanted — I said "Money, but don't get your purse out". I pulled out what coins I had in my pocket and they nearly tore my arms off!!

When I told Bill Webb (he was very ill at the time) he had a laugh and said 'Go for it'. My eldest son said, "Dad, I don't think they will give you a Passport — I still have five years to go on it".

Eric served with the Orange Light Horse and was one of the riders in a contingent in uniform at an Anzac Day march a few years ago.

* * *

A NEW MEMBER OF THE MACHINE GUNNERS' FAMILY

Congratulations to Kristy Hague and her husband, Aaron, on the recent birth of their son, Hunter. Kristy is an Associate Member and attends Anzac Day each year with her grandfather, Bob Fitzsimmons. It is pleasing to report that mother, father, baby and great-grandfather Bob are all doing well.

On 25th September Bob will be 90 years young. All Machine Gunners extend best wishes and congratulations with many more birthdays to come.

* * *

ANOTHER BIRTHDAY

A well known member of the Machine Gunners' Family, Bert Ridyard, is 92 years young in August. We all send hearty congratulations to you, Bert, and be like Johnnie Walker — 'Keep on keeping on'.

It is interesting to note that Bert was a member of the group that trained with the 9 Division Ski Company in the mountains of Syria. The description of this event is on page 80 of the Battalion History.

* * *

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

We acknowledge, with many thanks, receipt of subscriptions and donations received from members from 01.11.2007 to 30.06.2008.

* Omitted from last list published in December 2007.

Steve Atkins	Kim Graham	Diana Maloney	Tony Simpson
Clarrie Aldrick	Pauline Graham	Dave Martin	Ben Sommerville *
Peter Anley	Andrew Gyles	Harry May	Bill Sommerville *
Betty Ballard	Lindy Gyles	Mavis McCallum	Audrey Sommerville
Bruce Ballard	Sophie Gyles	Darcy McInnes	Paul Spedding
Robert Ballard	Kristie Hague	Angus McVey	Robyn Spedding
Louise Bargawanna	John Harrison	Bruce McVey	Basil Staniland
Nev Bargawanna	David Herman	Peg McVey	Barbara Starkey
B. Beitz	Denise Herman	Robert McVey	Richard Stewart
Ray Bomford	Michael Herman	Malcolm Muir	Rona Street
Lyle Brown	James Hudson	Mary Murray	Russ Sutherland
Peter Brown	Julienne Hudson	Ron Myers	Adam Symon
Robert Brown	Ross Hutchinson	Julie Owens	Dianne Symon
Helen Callaghan	Barry Izzard	Les Poole	Heidi Symon
Michele Campbell	Margaret Johnston	Bert Ridyard *	Audrey Temple
Kevin Culph	Frank Jordan	David Riley	Roy Thorburn *
Betty Davy	Curly Kirton	Denise Riley	Mary Townsend
Ian Dawson	Frank Lade	Ian Riley	Maurie Trigger
Bev Drady	Anthony Lamb	Mick Riley	Rob Trigger
Beryl Duffey	Matthew Lamb	Bruce Robinson	John Wagland
Bob Fitzsimmons	Robert Lamb	Ian Robinson	David Wells
Stuart Garland *	Robyn Lamb	Tom Rostron	Nell Welsh
Terry Geany	Lenore Larson	Anthony Selmes	John White
Eric George	Kerry Lason	Kevin Selmes	Ron White
Adrian Graff	Tony Lavan	Muriel Selmes	Bruce Wiley
Dawn Graff	Josie Lord	Adrian Simpson	Geoff Wynn
John Graham			

DESIDERATA

Found in Old St. Paul's Church, Baltimore, dated 1692:

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence, as far as possible without surrender.

Be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at Peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labours and aspirations, in the confusion of life keep peace with your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy.

INFAMOUS FIVES

Famous last words: Five predictions they wish they'd never made:

1. *"Heavier than air flying machines are impossible."*
Lord Kelvin, President of the Royal Society, 1895
2. *"Everything that can be invented has been invented."*
Charles H. Duell, Director of the US Patents Office, 1899
3. *"Sensible and responsible women do not want to vote."*
Grover Cleveland, US President, 1905
4. *"Man can never tap the power of the atom."*
Robert Millikan, Nobel Prize Winner in Physics, 1923
5. *"Who the hell wants to hear actors talk?"*
Harry M. Warner, Warner Bros. Pictures, 1927

Just goes to show!

* * *

"After you have heard two eyewitness accounts of an accident, it makes one wonder about history."

"Eyewitnesses were on the scene in minutes."

* * *

LAST POST

It is with sincere regret that we report the passing of former comrade:

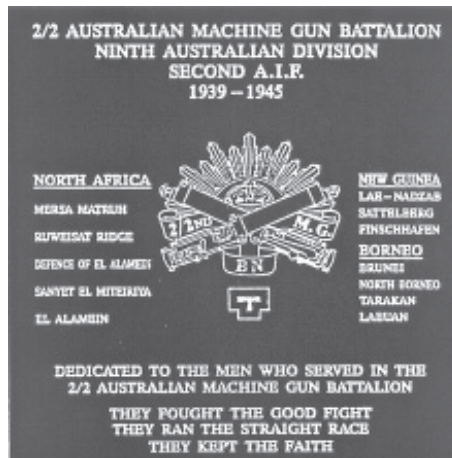
TERRY GEANY JOE LYNCH

Also:

MRS. CYNTHIA PEARCE MRS. HELEN NICHOLAS

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

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.

The Ode is part of a very famous poem, *For the Fallen*, written by Laurance Binyon who served in France in WWI. He was born in England in 1869 and died in 1943.