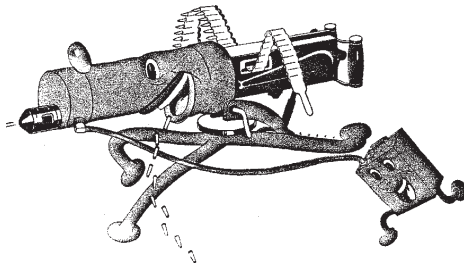




THE 2/2ND AUSTRALIAN
MACHINE GUN BATTALION
ASSOCIATION

MUZZLE BLAST



MARCH-APRIL 2010

2/2ND AUST MG BN ASSOCIATION

President:	Ron Myers 52/28 Curagul Road, North Turramurra 2074	Ph: 9983 1919
Immediate Past President:	Adrian Simpson 201/153 Epping Road, Marsfield 2122	Ph: 9878 0525
Vice Presidents:	Denis Riley 17 Lisa Crescent, Castle Hill 2154	Ph: 9659 6863
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Joint Secretaries:	Sally Butcher 4 Bromborough Road, Roseville 2069	Ph: 9416 7944
	Denise Herman 74 Roland Avenue, Wahroonga 2076	Ph: 9489 9707
Minute Secretaries:	Sally Butcher, Denise Herman	
Muzzle Blast Editor:	Adrian Simpson	
Committee:	Neville Bargwanna, Michelle Lavan, Bob Fitzsimmons, Bill Harley, Barry Izzard, Julie Owens	
Hon. Life Members:	Ron Bruncker, David Martin, Ron Myers, Mick Riley, Adrian Simpson	
Hon. Chaplain:	Canon Ray J. Bomford 19 Coomassie Avenue, Faulconbridge 2776	Ph: 4751 6465
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.	

COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Another year has rolled by and once again we are preparing for the Anzac Day march and luncheon. There is a lot of work involved and we thank our Associates Di Symon, Denise Herman, Sally Butcher and others for the great effort they put into its organisation. Denis Riley also does a great job looking after our finances.

As in the past, we have included in this issue the nomination form — the last page. Your committee will be most appreciative if those who intend to attend will complete and detach the form and send to **Denis Riley** with the fee of \$45 per person. It is the aim to have all fees, etc., received by **17th April, 2010**. Please note the reference to family groups on the nomination form.

Again we have secured the booking for the luncheon at Menzies Hotel where the event has been held since 1973. Always we negotiate with the hotel for the best possible deal. Supported by a subsidy from Association funds we are able to keep the cost down to \$45 per person as applied for the past 2/4 years.

Our Association is very fortunate to have a group of Associate Members who are enthusiastic in support of all our activities. It is mainly due to them that Anzac Day is always so successful.

We thank all those members who settle their membership fee of \$20 p.a. This is due on 1st July each year. This has enabled our Association to function so well over a period of many years. Our main cost is the printing and mailing of *Muzzle Blast* — this is approximately \$800 each year. You will all agree that this is the media that keeps us all informed of our comrades and their families.

We trust that you and yours enjoy a fair measure of good health, happiness and prosperity for the rest of the year and beyond. At the same time, we must all remember all those fine young members of our Battalion who did not make it back to their homes.

The Committee.

A Reminder: Do not forget to complete the nomination form and return to Denis Riley **NOW**. Thank you.

ANZAC DAY

Sunday, 25 April, 2010

- Wreath Laying** Form up in Barrack Street, outside the Combined Services Club.
- Time** **7.15am.** We will march to the Cenotaph with the 9th Division group at 7.30am sharp. Wreaths must be laid by 7.42am to fit in with all the other units.
- The Parade** Assemble in O'Connell Street. Look for our banner.
- The Luncheon** At Menzies. It is important that all should be seated by 12.30pm.
- Cost** \$45 per person.
- Payment** It will be of great assistance to our Treasurer, Denis Riley, if payment is made by cheque or money order in favour of the Association and forwarded direct to him.
- Accommodation** For those who intend to stay at Menzies it is suggested that a booking is made early as the AWA also have their reunion at Menzies and many stay at the Hotel.
- Parking** Available at the Hotel. Entry via the lane at rear. Access from Margaret Street.
- Contact at Menzies** Reservations —Phone (02) 9299 1000.
Quote event name — 2/2 MG Bn Luncheon.
In need, contact the Conference & Catering Co-ordinator
Phone: (02) 8235 1751

This year meals will be by table service.

Note: To facilitate the dispatch of *Muzzle Blast*, the last page includes the nomination of attendance. Please use this page to send your payment. Needless to say, it is very important that we receive as early as possible the nomination form. Also, to help our hardworking Treasurer, it will be appreciated if the nomination and fee is received no later than **17 April, 2010.**

There is a tremendous amount of work (mainly by our Associate Members) in organising this important event, so to conform with the above will help them a lot.

**DON'T FORGET THE DEADLINE FOR YOUR NOMINATION AND FEE
IS 17TH APRIL**

ANZAC DAY

On this day we remember those who served in the Services who did not return to their homes.

In particular, we remember our own blokes who paid the supreme sacrifice and also our comrades who have passed on since.

Our casualties were as follows:

Battle of El Alamein	25
South-West Pacific	15
Those who were transferred to other units	9
Other causes	16
(whilst serving in Palestine, Mersa Matruh, Alamein, New Guinea, Borneo)	

In addition there were 178 wounded in action and 24 prisoners of war.

At a parade of the A.I.F. in Palestine on 22nd December, 1942, the Commander in Chief of the Middle East Forces, General Hon. Sir H.R.L. Alexander, K.C.B., C.S.I., D.S.O., M.C., said in his speech in commemoration of fallen comrades:

“There is one thought I shall cherish above all others — under my command fought the 9th Australian Division.”

We can be proud that our Battalion was a part of this famous Division.

* * *

OUR WEBSITE: www.2-2ndmachinegunbn.com

Our Associate Member Jason Symon (grandson of Ron Myers and son of our Secretary Di Symon) is working to get our website up and running. Already there is quite a lot of information on the site, including a complete list of all who served in the Battalion.

It is proposed on Anzac Day to display the website which should by then contain numerous interesting photos, etc., of our service. In particular, this information will be available to our future generations.

Already we receive numerous telephone calls from relatives of our comrades, and on many occasions they say that they gained the address of one of our executives from the website.

It is recommended that anyone with the facility should tune in from time to time to follow the website's progress.



VALE

BENJAMIN (BEN) BEITZ QX6890

12.04.1920 – 11.08.2009

Ben was well known in the Battalion as a Don R. He was a good soldier and comrade. He and his wife, Billie, attended many of the reunions at Sawtell and Port Macquarie at which the New South Wales members got to know them very well.

We have taken the liberty to repeat in this issue the eulogy prepared by their granddaughter, Belinda (who is an active member of the Queensland Association), and which was included in the last issue of *The Queenslander*. Those who have the *Battalion History* should refer to pages 122-123 which is the account of the fate of Ben and Eddie Beattie when taken prisoner at Ruin Ridge Battle. (B Company was also involved in this battle supporting the 2/28 Battalion which was captured almost to a man.)

“Ben enlisted in the A.I.F. in June 1940 at Kelvin Grove and became a member of the 2/2nd Machine Gun Battalion, D Company No. 1 Platoon. Shipped to the Middle East, the Battalion became part of the 9th Division. When the Battalion was sent to Syria, Ben became a Despatch Rider for D Company, but when the Battalion moved back to the Desert he rejoined his gun crew.

It was during the battle for El Alamein at Miteirya Ridge, Egypt (known as Ruin Ridge to the boys) on 27th July, 1942 that Ben was taken P.O.W. and sent to the coal mines in Poland. Ben spoke little of the hardships of his three years as a P.O.W. and the forced march by the Russians through Europe before he was eventually handed to the International Red Cross. Ben came home to Australia at the end of 1945 and was discharged from the army.

When the 2/2nd Machine Gun Association was formed, Ben was an active member — marching on Anzac Day Parade and attending the monthly meetings until ill health slowed him down. His granddaughter, Belinda, joined the Association on Ben’s behalf and is an active member.

Ben and Billie married in 1946 and lived at Coorparoo until seven years ago when they moved to a retirement village at Victoria Point. It was here that Ben took up art and proved to be quite a talented and prolific painter.

Ben is survived by his wife Billie, children Dennis and Jennifer, five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Lionel Bottomley, Obi O’Brien, Christine Quinn and Harry Bolton represented the Association at Ben’s funeral which was held at the Great Southern Garden of Remembrance, Mount Cotton.”

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

30th November, 2009

Attended by:

Neville Bargwanna	Barry & Rachael Izzard	Denis Riley
Bob Fitzsimmons	Kim Lees	Adrian Simpson
Bill & Phyllis Harley	Ron Myers	Jason Symon
Denise Herman	Julie Owens	

Office Bearers: There was no change in Office Bearers. This election is bi-annual and will take place at the next meeting in 2010.

Despite several changes made at the last AGM, the Association has continued to operate very successfully with wonderful support from all members.

The meeting was well attended in view of the present circumstances. It was a great pleasure to welcome Associate Member Kim Lees to his first AGM. Kim is the son of the late 'Curley' Lees who was a highly regarded member of B2 Platoon. He was an original member of the Battalion and participated in all our campaigns.

As is usual, following the meeting members retired to the Occidental Hotel for a first-class luncheon.

We thank our Associates, Diane Symon, Denise Herman and Sally Butcher for doing the 'spade work' and Denis Riley for looking after the money side of things.

* * *

“He who knows not and knows not that he knows not,
is a fool — avoid him.

He who knows not and knows that he knows not,
is a child — instruct him.

He who knows and knows not he knows,
is asleep — awaken him.

He who knows and knows that he knows,
is a leader — follow him.”

An Arabian proverb

IN FLANDERS' FIELDS

In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders' fields.

Colonel John McCrae

“I wish I could embody on paper some of the varied sensations of that seventeen days ... seventeen days of Hades! At the end of the first day if anyone had told us we had to spend seventeen days there, we would have folded our hands and said it could not have been done.”

One death particularly affected McCrae. A young friend and former student, Lieutenant Alexis Helmer of Ottawa, had been killed by a shell burst on 2 May, 1915. Lieutenant Helmer was buried later that day in the little cemetery outside McCrae's dressing station, and McCrae had performed the funeral ceremony in the absence of the chaplain.

The next day, sitting on the back of an ambulance parked near the dressing station beside the Canal de l'Yser, just a few hundred yards north of Ypres, McCrae vented his anguish by composing a poem. The major was no stranger to writing, having authored several medical texts besides dabbling in poetry.

In the nearby cemetery, McCrae could see the wild poppies that sprang up in the ditches in that part of Europe, and he spent twenty minutes of precious rest time scribbling fifteen lines of verse in a notebook.

A young soldier watched him write it. Cyril Allinson, a twenty-two year old sergeant-major, was delivering mail that day when he spotted McCrae. The major looked up as Allinson approached, then went on writing while the sergeant-major stood there quietly. "His face was very tired but calm as he wrote," Allinson recalled. "He looked around from time to time, his eyes straying to Helmer's grave."

When McCrae finished five minutes later, he took his mail from Allinson and, without saying a word, handed his pad to the young NCO. Allinson was moved by what he read:

"The poem was exactly an exact description of the scene in front of us both. He used the word blow in that line because the poppies actually were being blown that morning by a gentle east wind. It never occurred to me at that time that it would ever be published. It seemed to me just an exact description of the scene."

In fact, it was very nearly not published. Dissatisfied with it, McCrae tossed the poem away, but a fellow officer retrieved it and sent it to newspapers in England. *The Spectator* in London rejected it, but *Punch* published it on 8 December, 1915.

* * *

A little Irish humour: "Get on your knees and thank God you're still on your feet."

* * *

2/2 AUSTRALIAN MACHINE GUN BATTALION ASSOCIATION

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions and/or donations were received from the following members between 1/6/09 and 28/2/10

D.W. Boydell
Sue Crompton
Bill Crompton
Ben Crompton
Edna Faint
Sandra Gillett
Margaret Johnson

Harry May
Midge Oliver
Les Poole
Jack Rinaldi
Dorothy Smith
David Trigger
David Wells

PROCLAMATION OF UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER BY
HIROHITO, EMPEROR OF JAPAN (1926-1989)

IMPERIAL RESCRIPT

TO OUR GOOD AND LOYAL SUBJECTS

After pondering deeply the general conditions of the world and the actual conditions in Our Empire today, we have decided to effect a settlement of the present situation by resorting to an extraordinary measure.

We declared war on America and Britain out of Our sincere desire to assure Japan's self-preservation and the stabilization of East Asia, it being far from Our thought either to infringe on the sovereignty of other nations or to embark on territorial aggrandizement. But now the war has lasted for nearly four years. Despite the best that has been done by everyone — the gallant fighting of military and naval forces, the diligence and assiduity of Our servants of the State and the devoted service of our 100 million people, the war situation has developed not necessarily to Japan's advantage, while the general trends of the world have all turned against her interest.

Moreover the enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is indeed incalculable, taking the toll of many innocent lives. Should We continue to fight it would not only result in the ultimate collapse and obliteration of human civilization. Such being the case how are We to save millions of Our subjects or to atone ourselves before the hallowed spirits of Our Imperial Ancestors? This is the reason why We have ordered the acceptance of the Joint Declaration of the Powers. We are keenly aware on the inmost feelings of ye all, Our subjects. However, it is according to the dictate of time and fate that We have resolved to pave the way for a grand peace for all generations to come by enduring the unendurable and suffering what is insufferable.

The 14th day of the 8th month of the 20th year of Showa

(14 August, 1945)

Bibliography: Nippon Times – 14 August 1945

Those members who were on Labuan at that time will possibly remember the rumour that floated around that a bomb had been dropped on Japan and that it would end the war. Of course the troops said what a lot of rot — no single bomb would be of much effect. (We had no knowledge of the atom bomb.) We all know that that is what happened, and when this was announced officially every gun and flare from every ship and army post opened up with a most spectacular display of relief that the rumour was correct.

HISTORY

The following are extracts from records held in our archives:

Annual General Meeting held on 24 October, 1945

“On 23 March, 1945 a meeting of ex-members of the Battalion was called at the YMCA Pitt Street and our Association was formed. There were approx. 70 present some of whom were still serving.”

Membership

At present there are 80 names on our books.

Up to the present juncture, membership fee has only been 2/- per head for 12 months, but it is proposed to amend the Constitution at this meeting to alter the fee to 10/- for the first year and 2/- thereafter in order to establish a reserve for correspondence, etc., and to come into line with those chaps who have paid their fee at the unit.”

“Statement of Receipts and Payments to 24/10/45

Shows Income of 21.1 (twenty-one pounds one shilling) with a bank balance of 1.9 (one pound nine shillings). The cost of refreshments on Anzac Day 1945 was 7.8.6 (seven pounds, eight shillings and six pence).”

“Committee Meeting No. 1 was held on the 6th April 1945 at Park Lane Mansions, Rushcutters Bay.

After various amendments to the Constitution it was moved by Mr. Williams and seconded by Mr. Foster:

‘That the Hon. Secretary should take appropriate initial action with a view to preparing a Battalion History.’ *(35 years later our History was published in 1980.)*

‘That any Committee man failing to attend 3 consecutive committee meetings without obtaining leave of absence shall forfeit his position.’ ”

“Committee Meeting No. 7, 17 July 1946

It was moved by Mr. Ferguson that Mr. Mitchell make enquiries at Sergeants regarding a permanent booking of a hall for Alamein Day and Anzac Day, also cost of catering. If total cost of function is not more than 10/- (one dollar), booking to be made.”

(This meeting was chaired by E. Macarthur-Onslow as President.)

Ed: As a matter of interest, all minute books from the first meetings are held in our archives. They make very interesting reading.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER ROBERT LAMB

This is a copy of an article re a conference of Waypoint Airmed & Rescue 2009. Robert was one of the Conference Speakers with the subject “War Zones — Should others than military be allowed to fly into problem areas?”. He leads an adventurous life in a very dangerous part of the world.

“Robert Lamb has extensive experience in the pre-hospital medical environment with many years spent in Iraq and Afghanistan. He holds a Master of Health Science degree and various post-graduate qualifications in Intensive Care Flight Para-medicine.

After spending the bulk of his career as a Helicopter Rescue Flight Paramedic in Australia, he started his own Medical Evacuation and Emergency Response Services company in the two major conflict zones after experiencing shortfalls in medical services as a contractor himself in the early days of the Iraq conflict.

Robert’s company (RMSI) now provides emergency road and air ambulance response services to contractors, NGOs and the UN in Afghanistan, and provides directly contracted EMS support to the US Marine Corp in Iraq.”



To Members: Following receipt of this very interesting article from Associate Member Robert Lamb, it has been suggested that perhaps there are achievements of family members which would be most suitable for inclusion in *Muzzle Blast*. If so, you are invited to submit the details for consideration by the committee.

REFLECTION — THE WAY IT WAS

In those far-off grim days when the Japanese were knocking at our door, it became increasingly necessary that our nation become independent, as far as possible, in the production of arms, etc.

By December 1942 production of the following weapons stood at:

	Per Week	Total
Austen sub-machine gun	217	2283
Owen sub-machine gun	570	15198
Bren machine gun	135	6693
Vickers machine gun	72	6497

In addition, by December 1942, 25-pounders were produced at the rate of 19 per week, with a total of 1070 guns.

Tanks, Bofors and anti tank guns were also being manufactured.

At the same time, eleven merchant ships were being built, but only slow progress could be made because of the demand for repairs to ships and the needs of the services for small craft.

It is interesting to note that from February 1942 private users' and business cars' petrol ration was reduced by about 20 per cent, and that for commercial vehicles by 10 per cent.

The result was: 8 h.p. cars came down to a two-monthly ration of 3 gallons (13.65L);
30 h.p. cars to a two-monthly ration of 8 gallons (36.40L).

The estimated mileage allowed to private users was 16 miles (27.75km) a week.

Rail travel was strictly curtailed with carrying capacity reserved for essential use. Interstate travel was forbidden except for people holding a permit. It was also very difficult to travel within the state — this affected some of our members who were married in the country, on our return from the Middle East, and relatives and friends were unable to travel from other towns/cities to attend the weddings.

* * *

Thanks to Ray Bomford for the paper which contained the above information and which will bring back memories to the 'oldies' and give the younger generations some idea of what the times were like in those days.

MATES

I've travelled down some lonely roads,
Both crooked tracks and straight,
An' I've learned life's noblest creed,
Summed up in one word ... 'Mate'.

I'm thinking back across the years,
(A thing I do of late),
An' this word sticks between me ears,
You've got to have a 'Mate'.

Me mind goes back to '43,
To slavery an' 'ate,
When man's one chance to stay alive
Depended on 'is 'Mate'.

With bamboo for a billy-can,
An' bamboo for a plate,
A bamboo paradise for bugs,
Was bed for me and me 'Mate'.

You'd slip and slither through the mud,
An' curse your rotten fate,
But then you'd 'ear a quiet word,
Don't drop your bundle 'Mate'.

An' though it's all so long ago,
This truth I 'ave to state,
A man don't know what lonely means,
'Til 'e 'as lost his 'Mate'.

If there's a 'Golden Gate',
The welcome that I want to 'ear,
Is just 'Good on ya, 'Mate'.

An' so to all who ask us
Why we keep these special dates
Like Anzac Day; I answer 'Why?
We're thinkin' of our 'Mates'.

An' when I've left the driver's seat,
An' handed in me plates,
I'll tell ol' Peter at the door,
I've come to join me 'Mates'.

LAST POST

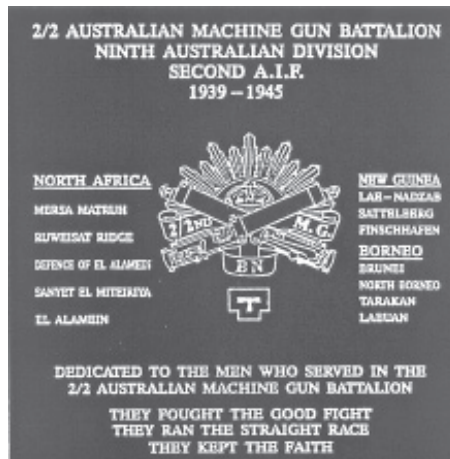
It is with sincere regret that we report the passing of former comrades:

BEN BEITZ (QX6890) REGINALD JAMES HILL (QX1459) HARRY MAY

Also MRS JOSIE LORD

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.

Help us to help you!

It is important that we know as soon as possible the names of those who intend to attend.

Please detach the nomination form and return to Denis Riley at 17 Lisa Crescent, Castle Hill NSW 2154.



ANZAC DAY LUNCHEON Sunday, 25th April, 2010

I/We intend to attend this reunion.

PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME(S)

Cost is \$45 per person.

Please send your payment to Denis Riley by cheque or money order in favour of the Association.

If convenient, members might like to include the annual subscription (\$20) normally due on 1st July.

With Family Groups: we suggest that fees for the group be collected prior to the reunion and sent to Denis Riley with a list of the attendees. This will be a great help to those who attend to the finances. thank you.

Reminder: We wish to receive all nominations and fees by **17 April, 2010**. Thank you.