



THE 2/2ND AUSTRALIAN
MACHINE GUN BATTALION
ASSOCIATION

MUZZLE BLAST



NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2010

2/2ND AUST MG BN ASSOCIATION

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COMMITTEE'S REPORT

One more year has almost signed off (1945-2010) — quite an achievement which, of course, is the wonderful support of all our members.

Your committee takes this opportunity to wish you and yours a happy and Holy Christmas. Our thoughts are with those who are having health problems.

At this time of the year we stand back and consider the result of the year's activities. The main was the Anzac Day march and the luncheon at Menzies Hotel. The support was wonderful, as for our many reunions in the past. Attendance over the past few years has been:

2007 — 116
2008 — 113
2009 — 121
2010 — 117

We are already planning for Anzac Day 2011. A booking at Menzies has been secured. Once again we are hoping to have a good attendance.

Our Associate Members have proved to be a very important part in the continued success of our Family of Machine Gunners. Anzac Day is a day of remembrance and celebration. We thank the Associates who help us with the banner and other tasks.

The next important event is the Annual General Meeting. The election of Office Bearers is bi-annual and this is the year that all positions are declared vacant pending an election.

We would welcome any suggestion that members would like to submit for consideration at the meeting.

With best wishes to all.

The Committee.

* * *

Subscriptions and donations received from 1.7.2010 to 1.11.2010:

Thelma Geany	Margaret Johnson
Lindy Gyles	Paul Lemar
Andrew Gyles	Dave Thomas
Sophie Gyles	

Reminder: Members are reminded that subscriptions are due annually as from 1st July. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

27 November, 2010

The meeting will be held at the Roseville RSL, to commence at 11.30am.

Following the meeting it is proposed to enjoy lunch at a restaurant not far from the RSL.

This is an important event in our programme for the year and it is hoped that as many as possible of our members and friends are able to join us. We refer particularly to our Associate Members.

If you intend to attend, please advise either of the secretaries or any member of the committee. We need to know numbers as soon as possible for catering purposes.

If you cannot make it, let us know so your apology can be recorded. We will then know that you support your committee.

Note: Please don't shove this into a drawer for future attention. A lot of work goes into the organisation of this event by our hardworking Associates Di Symon, Denise Herman, Denis Riley and others.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER

We are pleased to welcome to “The Family of Machine Gunners” **Paul Lemar** who hails from South Australia.

His late father was Oswald George Lemar, who was posted to our Battalion and took part in the landings in Borneo. Prior to this posting he served with the 2/48th Battalion. Before joining the AIF at the age of 21 he served with the 19th Machine Gun Battalion in Darwin.

Paul, you will receive a very warm welcome on Anzac Day 2011 should you be able to make the journey.

* * *

This is a poignant poem. The poem was published in the September 2010 issue of The Bulletin of Sydney Legacy.

STILL THEY FIGHT THE FIGHT

They walk the shifting sand like
those who went before,
now in that ancient land still
fighting in a war.
They once again defend,
the young answer the call,
joined by their Kiwi friends,
they're ANZACs proud and tall.
While now the Hum-vee's rule
where once were camel train,
and desert life is cruel,
support we must sustain.

They fly the open skies
like those who went before,
though fear is in their eyes,
they hope to end this war.
Insurgents hidden well,
with missiles in their hands.
At times it must be hell to fly
those hostile lands.
Now in their super jets,
not like those planes of old.
I hope no-one forgets,
the sacrifices told.

They sail the oceans wide
like those who went before,
with allies by their side,
protecting ports and shores.
They're boarding suspect ships
that could have contraband,
then, guiding battleships
they fight the Taliban.
They glide on 'Omans' waves,
or ghosts in submarines,
while many lives they save,
on daily scout routines.

The young now fight the fight,
like those so long ago.
Believing this is right
to beat the hidden foe.
When home they do return
and nightmares are now told,
these visions will confirm,
they'll need someone to hold.
So with each morning light,
respect for ever more,
they all have earned this right —
like those who went before.

DAYLIGHT SAVING

This was also in The Bulletin:

Daylight Saving Time was introduced in the UK in 1917 and then spread around the world. It was first introduced here during World War I and was used in all States and Territories.

* * *

HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED!

As reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on June 11, 1928, on the trip from San Francisco to Sydney the aviators were in the air for about 90 hours, encountering storms and battling through immense difficulties over 8,000 miles of sea and land.

The hop from San Francisco to Suva, 3,290 miles, was the longest sea flight yet attempted.

This was the famous flight made by Kingsford Smith in the Southern Cross. (The old plane is now in a special pavilion at the Brisbane Airport and is on view to the public.)

It is now possible to fly from Sydney to the USA in one hop, in the lap of luxury.

AIRMEN HAPPY AFTER CONQUERING THE PACIFIC



*L to R: Mr. J. Warner (radio operator), Mr. C.T.P. Ulm (alternate pilot),
Captain Kingsford Smith (pilot), and Mr. H. Lyon (navigator)*

ON THIS DAY

29 April 1942 — Five Eggs a Day for April

This announcement was published in the press and indicates how it was during the dark days of World War II.

“It has now been decided that the egg ration for April is to be increased to five for each person, though in some areas the fifth egg may not be obtainable until early in May. The bulk of the eggs will be home produced. Last week approximately 48,000,000 home produced eggs passed through the stations of the Ministry. An increase of 15% and 71,300,000 were distributed.”

Rationing at this time was quite severe. Food items, petrol, clothing and many more items were rationed.

The ‘oldies’ will remember this time very well.

* * *

Something to ponder:

It is the soldier, not the reporter,
who has given us the freedom of the press.
It is the soldier, not the campus organiser
who has given us the freedom to demonstrate.
It is the soldier who salutes the flag,
and whose coffin is draped by the flag,
who allows the protester to burn the flag.

* * *

A SNIPPET OF HISTORY

In 1915, pretty Broken Hill teenager, Alma Priscilla Cowie, became the only girl to be killed during an enemy attack on Australian soil during World War I.

A train filled with 1,200 men, women and children on a day’s picnic to Silverton was ambushed by two men waving the Turkish flag. At the time, Australia was at war with Turkey and Germany.

After a three hour battle in which the men killed Cowie, three women and a fourteen year old boy, the attackers were shot and found to be from Pakistan or Afghanistan.

This event is recorded in the Broken Hill Historical Society’s Museum.

SATTELBERG, NEW GUINEA, 1943

The following is of great interest to those who, particularly, participated in this part of the action in which our Battalion was involved. 'B' Company supported the 2/48th Battalion when Sattelberg was captured from the Japanese. (It was in this action that 'Diver' Derrick, 2/48th Bn, won the Victoria Cross.) It is good to read that the Japs also suffered hard and difficult times, as did we, on that mountain on which Sattelberg was on the summit. All 12 guns of the company were in action and 26,000 rounds were expended to neutralise the Japanese machine guns.

The Japanese responded with artillery fire with their 75mm guns and we suffered some casualties. Alf Mooney and Bert Steen were killed, and the wounded were Jack Donohoe, Frank Jordan, Morrie Thompson and John Fairfax. The gun position of Ron Myers was hit and his gun put out of action. Neither Ron nor his No. 2 were injured — their 'Guardian Angel' was looking after them on that day.

The photo is of the gun position of Adrian Simpson with Taffy Lewis his No. 2. It was shortly after this photo was taken that the shelling took place. Of course, the bloke on the skyline could well have 'drawn the crabs'. This gives some idea of the kind of country in which we were fighting.



A JAP'S LAMENT

Taken from Andy Dowd, R.S.L. Broken Hill newsletter, it is a translation of a Japanese officer's diary taken from his body on 17th December, 1943, by the 2/48 Bn.

- 10 Oct. 1943. At Sattleburg "S.A. Heights".
- 20 Oct. Left mountain early this morning to attack American army, on the way we were joined by "G" Coy, who are in action.
- 30 Oct. Consolidating position 400 metres from enemy. Spent night at alert.
- 4 Nov. Because of change in enemy position, we climbed the hills again. They are all round us and shells are dropping everywhere.
- 5 Nov. Dug a L.M.G. post this morning.
- 6 Nov. An officer, platoon leader and a few men on patrol went to Kumawa. First time enemy sighted at 30 to 40 metres. Enemy were Australians, green clothing. Patrol returned to Jai, by detouring S.A. Heights in afternoon, guarded positions at night. 79th HAD and No. 3 Platoon went to attack Kumawa. Platoon leader and two men wounded, retreated at night.
- 8 Nov. Due to rains last night became ill with fever.
- 9 Nov. Position in front of 3 HAD Battalion was captured, our company went to recapture. I could not go.
- 10 Nov. Many casualties come in from front line.
- 13 Nov. After departing from Deamana had to sleep in mountains and field and rations were potatoes. There were bananas and pineapples. Only a taste of them, as they are hard to get. In front of us is shelling and LMG FI bombed by American planes. My one wish is to defeat the Americans and get their good food, however, with all the shelling how can I survive through this? Many men are falling by the track with malaria. The news we heard in Korea, that we would be riding in automobiles and bicycles here, was just a dream. With their bad roads and hills, we are a sad plight. Even if I am killed, my spirit will fight on against these Australians. There is going to be a general offensive on the 15th and I will certainly be in that.
- 14 Nov. We went to the front line with GKE. It was certainly terrific enemy shell dropping continually. The sight of seeing our men blown to pieces was horrible.
- 15 Nov. 79th Regiment arrived. They brought rice to our 80th. 1/4 pint to each, also hand grenades. Shelled by light mortars.
- 16 Nov. Heard W6 Coy is penetrating enemy positions.
- 17 Nov. Potatoes have gone now and so is the rice. Battle results show nothing spectacular accomplished.

- 18 Nov. What I eat to live? What has happened to the general attack? Received orders to attack tomorrow morning.
- 19 Nov. Waited for left flank force to attack. After leaving at 0330 hrs they were unsuccessful. Retreated to original position 100 hrs. Saw the horrible sight of our dead in trenches. Rotten Aussies smoked the tobacco, a gift from the Emperor. Upon awakening, one is greeted with shells and pangs of hunger. Cooked potatoes with candle. Two years and four months since I was home.
- 21 Nov. No food for noon. Heavy bombing.
- 22 Nov. Surviving in holes is life of rat.
- 23 Nov. Enemy patrols day and night.
- 25 Nov. Men went to get potatoes, but got two cows. We ate with relish, but no salt. (*No doubt raw.*)
- 26 Nov. More shell fire. Only grisly parts of cow remains. Cooked potatoes and grass.
- 28 Nov. Ate up remains of cows. Bean paste for troop leader.
- 29 Nov. Fighting Aussies for twenty days. Never left holes, only to cook potatoes. Heard 78th annihilated in Ramu area. 80th strength less than 1/3.
- 30 Nov. Enemy in north are Australians, who fought the Germans and Italians and are 30,000 strong.
- 1 Dec. News Cabinet changed under Matsuoko, now. Heard news, carrier with 1000 planes sunk. Heard KVO 10 Div. is on way to reinforce New Guinea. Plans to attack enemy in front changed.
- 8 Dec. Base H.Q. S.A. Heights attacked. Nakoto with 12 Platoon withdrew to Ota Heights. Must hold Sam Heights all this year. 16 Division have landed and may replace 20 Division. Take at least six months.
- 11 Dec. Orders to reinforce Ota at 700 hrs. #192 Section will co-operate with Nakoto Platoon. Received 2/3 pint of rice per man today. I am a big eater and think it better to get plenty of potatoes than a meagre bit of rice. We are always hungry and find it hard to get along. Our planes bombed enemy positions, but in return we got terrific shell fire.
- 15 Dec. Received 1/3 pint of rice, and some compressed food.
- 16 Dec. Last night ate up all my rations, so today have none. Ota Heights was captured so we had to retreat. Oka was killed. I took his place.

George Beaumont was an entertainer with talent who came from a circus environment. He wrote the music and lyrics of this song which he often sang, much to the delight to the troops. He was a cook who specialised in making 'Jungle Juice' with a very large alcoholic content. He used raisins, fruit, spuds or all sorts of odd materials.

MY DUGOUT IN MATRUH

I'm a lousy greasy gunner and I'm stationed in Matruh,
I've got a little dugout in the sand
Where the flies play around me as I settle down to rest,
In my flea-bound, bug-bound dugout in Matruh.

Where the windows are of hessian, and the doors are four by two,
The sand-bags let the howling blizzards in;
I can hear those blasted Eyties as they circle round above,
In my flea-bound, louse-bound dugout in Matruh.

Where the ground is covered over with bully and meat loaf,
Of marmalade and jam we see but few.
We're a happy little band in this blasted land of sand,
In my flea-bound, bug-bound dugout in Matruh.

Oh! I sometimes wish I had a girl to sit upon my knee,
To relieve me of this pain that I am in.
Oh! the darling, how I'd love her, if this her home she'd make,
In my flea-bound, louse-bound dugout in Matruh.

* * *

A little humour to provide a laugh:

“One of life's great mysteries is how the boy who wasn't good enough to marry your daughter can be the father of the smartest grandchild in the world.”

* * *

**ADDRESS by LIEUT. COL. J.F. LAVAN CMB MC ED
at the Garrison Church, Millers Point, Sydney, on 11 May, 1997,
on the occasion of the Unveiling and Dedication of the
Memorial Plaque in honour of 2/2 Australian Machine Gun Battalion**

It is my great privilege and pleasure to welcome you all here this morning on behalf of the 2/2 Machine Gun Battalion Association and to thank you for helping us to celebrate this important and historic occasion.

I would particularly like to welcome the children and grandchildren of our members, in the hope that through them the memory of the Battalion and its service to God, King and Country will be kept alive for generations to come.

Also, I would like to extend a special welcome to those members and friends who have come from South Australia, Victoria and Queensland and from far distant parts of New South Wales to be with us today. We deeply appreciate their loyalty and support.

The main purpose of our being here today is, as you know, to dedicate a memorial in perpetuity to our Battalion and to the almost 2000 men who served in it during World War II. The service is, therefore, essentially one of remembrance and thanksgiving.

And, what more appropriate location for our celebration could we ask for than this beautiful and historic Church of the Holy Trinity which has been traditionally known as the Garrison Church since its foundation in June 1840 — more than 150 years ago. Many of the British Regiments which were posted to New South Wales in the early days of the Settlement and many of the early settlers worshipped in this hallowed place. Its walls, as you can see, are adorned with memorials to a number of the original Regiments as well as to World War I and World War II Units. We are proud indeed to be counted among them. For that privilege, we are greatly indebted to the Rector of the church, the Reverend Brian Seers, and his Parish Council.

Many of you would know very little of this history of our Battalion and in the few minutes I have been allotted I think it might be helpful if I told you something of it.

The Battalion was commissioned in Sydney in May 1940, not very long after the start of World War II. Two of its Machine Gun companies were raised in Sydney and, for political reasons, two in Queensland. The first Commanding Officer was Lieut. Col. D.A. Whitehead, one of the outstanding civilian soldiers appointed to command an AIF Battalion in the Second World War. He would have been extremely proud to have been here today.

After initial training at Ingleburn and Cowra in New South Wales and at Redbank in Queensland, the Battalion was posted to the Middle East where the 6th and 7th Australian Divisions were already in action. The Battalion had the great good fortune to become a unit of the 9th Division which was then being formed and was soon to become famous.

The Battalion played a significant role in the Division, particularly at the Battle of El Alamein in Egypt in 1942. That battle, which lasted for eleven days and eleven nights and in which

more than 2600 AIF officers and men were killed or wounded, has long been regarded as the turning point of the entire Second World War, so much so that that great British war-time Prime Minister and historian, Sir Winston Churchill, in his later memoirs, wrote of it *“Before the battle of El Alamein the Allied Forces had never had a victory — after it they never suffered a defeat”*.

After Alamein, the Australian Government was under enormous pressure from the British Government and its military chiefs to leave the 9th Division in the Middle East as part of the British 8th Army, but Australia was at that time under serious threat of invasion by the Japanese forces who occupied most of New Guinea and the Australian Government insisted on the Division’s immediate return to Australia.

Prior to its departure for home, the Division held a formal farewell parade on the Gaza airstrip in Palestine, in which more than 12,000 officers and men took part. The parade was inspected by the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East Forces, General Sir Harold Alexander, one of the greatest Generals of the war. He concluded his very moving address to the parade: *“There is one thought that I shall cherish above all others — under my command fought the Australian 9th Division”*. No greater compliment could have been paid us than that.

After our return home and a very short period of retraining for amphibious operations and for jungle warfare, the Division was ordered to New Guinea to destroy the Japanese forces and eliminate any future threat of invasion of the Australian mainland. The Battalion took part in the amphibious landings and subsequent fighting at Lae and Finschhafen and in the pursuit of the Japanese forces on the Huon Peninsula. These actions were all highly successful and broke the back of the Japanese occupation of New Guinea. The campaign, however, was not without cost — casualties in killed and wounded were almost 2000.

The final campaign of the war involved amphibious landings and some heavy fighting on the Island of Tarakan and the mainland of Borneo in mid-1945, and the Battalion was still in action in both places when the American Air Force dropped the two nuclear bombs on the Japanese mainland which brought the Second World War to an end. Casualties in this brief but bitter campaign cost the 9th Division over 1000 men in killed and wounded.

When you inspect the Plaque at the conclusion of the Service, as I hope you will, you will see embossed on it the twelve Battle Honours awarded to the Battalion during its 5½ years active service. I think you will agree it is an enviable record and one which fully justifies the short hymn of praise at the foot of the plaque:

*“They fought the good fight
They ran the straight race
They kept the faith.”*

Thank you again, one and all, for honouring us with your presence on this historic occasion.

It was this speech that triggered the concept of Associate Membership which has proved to be so successful for many years. It is suggested that should you be in The Rocks area, visit the Garrison Church to view our memorial plaque.

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

By Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, MD (1872-1918), Canadian Army

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.

McCrae's *In Flanders Fields* remains to this day one of the most memorable war poems ever written. It is a lasting legacy of the terrible battle in the Ypres salient in the spring of 1915. Here is the story of the making of that poem:

Although he had been a doctor for years and had served in the South African War, it was impossible to get used to the suffering, the screams, and the blood here, and Major John McCrae had seen and heard enough in his dressing station to last him a lifetime.

As a surgeon attached to the 1st Field Artillery Brigade, Major McCrae, who had joined the McGill faculty in 1900 after graduating from the University of Toronto, had spent 17 days treating injured men — Canadians, British, Indians, French and Germans — in the Ypres salient.

It had been an ordeal that he had hardly thought possible. McCrae later wrote of it.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

At 9.40pm on 23rd October, 1942, a bombardment by 900 artillery guns commenced to open the main Battle of El Alamein in which the 9th Australian Division played a prominent role. (The Division took up its position at Alamein in July 1942 and was involved in much fighting prior to the October battle.) Those who were there will never forget the opening barrage. Words cannot describe the ferocity of it.

On the 68th anniversary, it is appropriate that we remember our men who did not return home from the Middle East, New Guinea, Tarakan and Borneo.

Anderson, A.L.	Deem, R.V.	Kelaher, J.A.	Rudd, B.R.
Archibald, W.G.	Downing, P.E.	Kerin, B.D.	Schluter, L.R.
Ashley, L.N.	Duckworth, A.S.	King, W.R.	Sirl, J.W.
Ball, C.A.	Ewing, T.McD.	Lasker, J.L.	Smith, D.C.
Bannister, M.G.	Forrest, N.E.	Lavercombe, A.	Sparke, J.
Bastrup, N.J.	Foster, H.A.	Lawrie, T.	Steen, H.A.
Beard, E.J.	Garrett, R.L.	Lee, L.	Street, D.L.
Beissel, C.P.	George, L.M.	Longhurst, A.W.	Sullivan, J.P.
Benson, G.P.	Gibson, J.F.M.	Luxmore, H.	Tancred, J.F.
Blake, W.W.	Gillard, W.H.	McBeath, L.N.	Thompson, S.F.
Bonwick, V.J.	Goldsmith, H.S.	McHenry, W.	Twibble, J.F.
Boyd, E.R.	Gorlick, A.H.	Mitchell, R.G.	Wallinger, F.
Bromhead, J.S.	Hayes, I.W.	Monaghan, J.L.	Walker, M.B.J.
Burr, J.E.	Hobday, T.	Montgomery, R.J.	Ward, N.E.
Burrows, E.A.	Hogan, J.L.	Mooney, A.H.	Weathered, J.F.
Challands, P.	Hughes, D.C.	Morgan, K.	Webb, W.
Chandler, R.S.	Hume, E.A.	Naughton, D.P.	Weinstein, A.
Clements, S.M.	Izzard, W.G.	Pardey, F.	Weston, C.J.
Cockrane, W.A.	Johnston, A.	Ramsey, E.W.	Wilson, A.W.
Coles, L.W.	Jones, D.V.	Riddell, R.F.	Wyatt, L.
Deane, E.A.	Kelaher, E.A.	Roberts, L.C.	

In addition, about 180 of our Battalion troops were wounded in action.

In the various campaigns the 9th Division suffered 2,732 killed in action, 7,501 wounded and 1,836 taken prisoner. It was the most highly decorated of all the 2nd A.I.F. Divisions, receiving 393 awards for bravery, which included seven Victoria Cross Medals. The Division also received a total of 681 Mentioned in Despatches.

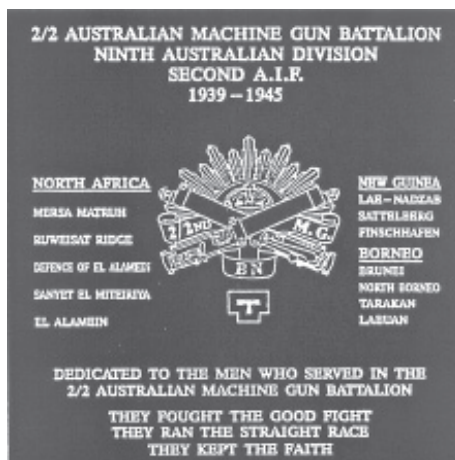
LAST POST

It is with sincere regret that we report the passing of

MRS. BETTY DAVY

To her family 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.