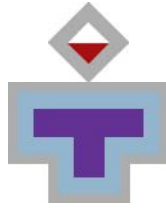


The Furphy Flyer in Mufti.



I HOLD FAST

Official Organ of the 2/24 Australian Infantry Battalion Association Inc.

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Vol 3, No. 44

Melbourne

February 2011

COMING EVENTS FOR 2011

Rats of Tobruk Commemorative Service at the Shrine, Sunday 3rd April, 10.00 am
(see inside for details)

ANZAC Day Church Service, St Paul's Cathedral, Sunday 10th April, 10.00 am

ANZAC Day March, Monday 25th April

ANZAC Day Reunion Luncheon, Pascoe Vale RSL

(see inside for details)

Battalion Birthday Lunch, Friday 1st July at Pascoe Vale RSL

(the May 'Furphy' will provide further details)

9th Division's Shrine Service, Friday 21st October

(the August 'Furphy' will provide further details)

2/24th's Shrine Pilgrimage – Sunday 23rd October, 2.00pm

(Assemble 1.30pm)

(the August 'Furphy' will provide further details)

Wangaratta Weekend Reunion, 4th, 5th and 6th November

(the May and August 'Furphy' will provide further details)

Vale

Ralph I Davies

VX50848

December 2010

Arthur D Fitzpatrick

VX32680

7 January 2011

All members of the 2/24th Battalion Association offer their deepest sympathy and understanding to those bereaved by the passing of members of the association.

Anzac Day March

The 2/24th's meeting point for this year's Melbourne ANZAC Day March is again in Flinders Street, on the North side, (Saint Paul's Side) between Swanston and Russell Streets.

Time of assembly is 9.30 am for an approximate 10.00 am start.

As you may be aware, the ANZAC March arrangements have been changed.

This year all the battalions in the 9th Division will NOT be marching in separate battalion groups. All the Division's banners will be paraded together at the front of the March, followed by the Veterans in vehicles, then any veterans on foot. This is a Victoria Police requirement as a consequence of the accident last year when a truck ran into a group of marchers. [There will be a set space in front of the marchers to avoid fume inhalation.]

Veterans with a carer or who are using any walking assistance will be placed in a vehicle and carer sent to the rear to march with the divisional group. Only one carer per veteran will be permitted.

WW2 Veterans are encouraged to travel in a vehicle, although if they do not wish to do so they may march.

All descendants of 9th Divisional members will march as a body at the rear of the Division. That is, the descendants of 2/24th Battalion members will be grouped together with all other 9th Division marchers.

Other issues that they say will be enforced

- a. Standard of dress
- b. No prams or pushers
- c. No photographs
- d. Descendants to wear medals on right.
- e. **One** marcher per descendant. It must be remembered that a descendant marches in place of a veteran.

March Protocol Cards for veterans are to be utilised. If you need a copy please contact the Secretary.

Please be patient and assist the march Marshals at the assembly area.

Anzac Day Reunion Lunch

All members of the Association are cordially invited to join in the Reunion Luncheon on Monday, 25 April. This is held at the Pascoe Vale RSL - 40 Cumberland Road, Pascoe Vale. [Melways Map 17 B10; cnr O'Hea Street]

This is a good opportunity to meet new people in the Association and to enjoy a two course meal for about \$20 plus tea/coffee. Drinks are available at bar prices.

Please do not send money – pay on Anzac Day at Pascoe Vale RSL.

VERY IMPORTANT

Last year approximately 45 people notified us that they would be attending the Anzac Day Reunion – and nearly 90 turned up. The Reunion is catered by the Pascoe Vale RSL along with their normal luncheons; and it is a public holiday. So, PLEASE, let Janice Young know how many of you will be attending the Anzac Day Reunion Luncheon.

Janice can be contacted on 0414 782 557, and leave a message if no answer.

Marion Weir Turns 100

At the Reunion we announced that Marion Weir was approaching her 100th birthday. She celebrated her birthday on 8 January this year. Faye and Alan Macfarlane were thrilled to be guests at the celebrations, and the Battalion Association sent a congratulatory bouquet of flowers with different blooms displaying the Battalion's colours. Marion was thrilled to receive them and they gave her much pleasure, especially the Battalion colours. A card, wishing her well, accompanied the flowers.

The celebration was held at the Mornington Golf Club with about 80 friends and family from over the years, from many facets of life and from around the country. Alan said that the occasion brought back a lot of memories of Charles and the family; and he would like his 100th to be handled the same way!

Marion, says Alan, was amazing – she looked well and was very happy. She spoke to everyone and made a delightful speech. Congratulations, Marion!

We received the following note from Marion

To the Committee and members of the 2 /24th Battalion Association.

It was a lovely surprise to receive the beautiful flowers you sent on behalf of my birthday; all capturing the colours of the battalion. Thank you very much, I feel very privileged to reach my age and still have close association with the battalion.

With much gratitude, Marion Weir.

It was our pleasure Marion. Mind you, it looks like we've set a precedent and will have to send flowers every time a member reaches 100.

The Story of *The Bugle*

The Association's bugle is played by Norm Gray at our services and ceremonial occasions, following the tradition of his father, Doug 'Dolly' Gray. If you were at the Memorial Service on Saturday, 4 November last year, you may have seen the bugle change colour. In fact, our historic bugle developed some sort of laryngitis and a supplementary intake of air was making the sound decidedly 'squawky'. The change of colour? Well, Norm stood with the silver bugle and then swapped it for his bronze coloured flugelhorn when he had to play the Last Post and Rouse.

Concerned for the state of the bugle, Norm took the instrument to Martin Lukas at Wombat Woodwind and Brass in Collingwood. There are showrooms in Kyneton and Castlemaine – and they are worth a 'plug' so read on. In fact, I'll let Norm Gray tell the story:

Regarding the silver bugle – Martin Lukas (Wombat Woodwind & Brass), has completed maintenance work on the bugle for us. He had only just finished listening to a series on the Rats Of Tobruk, and he was explaining to me, on the day of the instrument repair in-service, just how incredible the whole campaign must have been. He was in awe of the courage and sacrifices made by our diggers. Then I reached into the bag and showed him the silver bugle and he was gob-smacked! He studied the inscriptions on the bugle and he just shook his head in amazement. He told me that he had seen and repaired many very old instruments, but never, ever anything as historical as this. He said he blew a few bars of "The Last Post" on it, and he said that he felt "cold"- meaning that he realized the sound of that instrument had been heard by many others in very sad and trying circumstances. He was really quite touched by it all. He has done the repairs gratis, and insisted that he would not take a penny for helping to preserve something as historical as our bugle.

The Secretary picked up the bugle from Martin and was told again that there was no charge. So a souvenir Anniversary mug and a bottle of Anniversary port was handed over in appreciation.

For those who have not looked at it closely, it is a silver bugle modeled on the M1855 Duty Bugle that was the standard British instrument in the Crimea and Boer Wars. It does not have an embossed M↑D which would indicate that it was military issue. An estimate of its age is that it was purchased around the time of the First World War; so it is about hundred years old – or close. On the flare is the

name of the maker – Henry Potter & Co | Makers | 36.38 West St | Charing $\frac{1}{2}$ Road | London. Atop these details is a unicorn head.

Henry Potter (1810-1876) followed in his father's footsteps making band instruments. The company was still active into the 1950s. Henry's son George Potter set up his own company and they traded separately until they merged to become Potter Music Direct in 1971 and are still operating.

A large badge is soldered onto the bugle. The badge is a seven-pointed star with the Tudor Crown on the top point and superimposed with a ring on which is inscribed 'Kooyong 24 Regiment • I Hold Fast' encircling a koala perched in a branch. This was probably the collar badge of the 24th Regiment. The Kooyong Regiment was formed after World War I so this suggests that the bugle was in the possession of the 24th Militia.

Above the badge are engraved the Battle Honours of World War I – Somme 1916-18, Poziers, Bullecourt, Ypres 1917, Menin Road, Broodseinde, Amiens, Mont St Quentin, Hindenburg Line, Gallipoli 1915.

To the left of the badge are engraved the Battle Honours of the 2/24th Battalion A.I.F. – Defence of Tobruk, Salient 1941, Tel El Eisa, El Alamein, Lae-Nadzab, Wareo, Tarakan.

To the right of the badge are the Battle Honours of the 24th Battalion - Finisterres, Egan's Ridge, Hongorai Ford, Mivo Ford.

Below the Maker's inscription are the words 'Presented to | 2/24 Bn A I F 2.11.40 | Presented by T. B. Davison.

Can anyone fill in any more details? – particularly of the presentation and the people involved.



A man goes to see his doctor with a problem.

"When I make love to my wife, I feel cold afterwards. Then, the next time I make love to her, I feel hot afterwards".

The doctor is baffled and unable to help the man.

Later that week the man's wife comes in for an appointment so he asks her if she might have any ideas what may be the problem with her husband.

"Silly old fool" she says, "that's because we only make love twice a year. Once in summer and once in winter."

This next item is taken from our book, *2/24, A history of the 2/24 Australian Infantry Battalion*. If you would like to purchase a copy please contact our Secretary at PO Box 337 Warrandyte, 3113.

Cost, which includes postage, is \$60.00.

Morotai 1st April – 26th April 1945

The 1st April 1945 was our last day at Ravenshoe. Transport took us in two parties to entrain at Innisfail for the trip down the coast to the staging camp at Julago, near Townsville. As usual, when moving to an operational area, we had no knowledge of where we were heading but waited for orders from Movement Control.

At Julago we completed the last items of equipment on the war establishment, the quartermaster, Captain Jones, this time ensuring that we packed everything which would be of use in a forward area, remembering our New Guinea experiences when we had lived like a collection of aborigines at the end of that campaign.

The medical officer, Captain Heymanson, was busy with anti-cholera injections and other inoculations, whilst the orderly-room staff struggled with the compiling of the extraordinary number of copies of embarkation rolls demanded on these occasions.

By now we knew we would be embarking very soon and on the 8th were warned for movement by train that evening to Townsville wharf. The move was carried out in very orderly fashion to find the huge American trooper *General Buttner* waiting for us, together with many other units who were to make up her complement of more than five thousand troops.

Some trouble was occurring with the wharf labourers at this time and the army had taken over the loading of stores on to the ships. "C" Company was sent down to the wharf during the morning as a security measure. About 4 p.m. the wharfies assembled in threatening fashion but the sight of "C" Company, standing to in full equipment and with their weapons in view, was enough to cause second thoughts, and no incidents developed.

There was little excitement in leaving Australia again—for some, it was the third time—for there was nobody to see us off except military types on the wharf. At 7 a.m. on the 9th we sailed for an unknown destination, escorted by the United States destroyer *Drayton*, but, as we sailed north and then rounded the eastern end of New Guinea, those of us who had been that way before recognised various landmarks along the north coast. We continued west by north towards Halmahera Island off the north-western tip of Dutch New Guinea.

This was our first taste of sea travel on an American troop transport, built especially for the purpose, and the difference from the converted freighters, to which we had been accustomed, was very marked. The meals were remarkably good, with great variety, and ice cream appeared on the menu every day. Fresh water was on at all times and showers were available each day on roster—something absolutely unheard of on our previous sea trips. Laundry facilities, a picture theatre operating each afternoon and evening, band concerts and community singing, made daytime travelling really pleasant, but the nights were terrible. The Yanks had queer ideas about darkening ship at some unholy and unreasonable hour before darkness set in, and would not trust any of our men to be on deck after dark for fear they might show a light. Yankee military police, armed with batons, were part of the ship's staff to see that the ship's routine was carried through without question, and, under their system, officers were removed from the command of their own troops.

Down in the troop decks, where thousands of men were reclining near naked, and sweating in tiers of wire bunks, it was little short of hell. The heat was terrific, the stench nauseating, and no lights were allowed except battle lights covered with red glass which the Yankee military police would not allow to be removed so that there could be enough light for reading. It was with vast relief that we reached Morotai on 16 April.

We were the first brigade to come into the staging camp at Morotai which, like most staging camps, was shocking. Water and mud were everywhere, cooking and all other facilities were terrible and, had it not been for Captain Laurie Jones and his ability to trade with all and sundry, things would have been a great deal worse.

The battalion was now at full strength and in great heart. On the 17th Colonel Warfe resumed command, having spent some days with the planning staff of brigade headquarters on Morotai. It was now revealed that our next task would be the amphibious operation code named "Oboe One" against Tarakan Island off the east coast of Borneo—and our landing ship would be the *Westralia*.

Detailed planning now commenced at the battalion level, the commanding officer using a sand table model to outline the operation to all officers. Battalion headquarters officers settled down to the long and wearying task of producing the operation orders, which would show in detail how every man, and every piece of equipment, was to be first loaded on the L.S.I., and then unloaded by barge loads in the right sequence on the far shore, so that the battalion could commence its fighting role from the moment the leading troops touched down on hostile shore. Here we had good cause to bless the foresight which had secured us the portable electric light plant which enabled us to light the tents where the planning work continued day and night. Amphibious operations, which combine the three services working as a team, are complex and detailed in the extreme.

Brigadier D. A. Whitehead's brigade group was far stronger than the term suggests, since it included forty units and sub-units. The strengths of the main components were:

9th Division units	5,240
2nd Beach Group	2,605
Corps units	2,772
Base sub-area units	213
U.S. and N.E.I. troops	974
Total	11,804

The island of Tarakan is fifteen miles long and eleven miles wide at its maximum. The shores are muddy and often covered with mangroves, and inland, rising steeply from a swampy coastal plain, lies a tangle of hills and small steep gullies covered with dense rain forest and secondary growth. Only one beach, that at Lingkas, the port of Tarakan town (which lies two miles inland), was considered feasible for the landing of so large a force; this beach was very flat and soft and, inevitably, was commanded by strong defences.

The two oilfields on Tarakan were producing between them in 1940 some 500,000 tons a year. The Dutch had damaged the oilfield equipment before the Japanese arrived in 1942, but by 1944 the Japanese were reported to be producing oil at almost pre-war rate. More recently, however, air attacks had greatly reduced the output.

Early in April the strength of the Japanese force on Tarakan was estimated at about 4000 of whom 2500 were base troops. On the eve of the attack, however, largely because of information indicating that a battalion had been moved from Tarakan to Balikpapan, it was estimated that only 1500 to 2000 troops remained on the island. It was discovered later that the total was 2350, including some 500 to 600 civilian workers who were later incorporated in the army.

Aerial photographs showed five gun positions on the south-eastern tip of the island covering the channel along which ships normally entered Tarakan. The whole of Lingkas beach was protected by parallel rows of posts, rails and pipes driven into the mud and extending into the sea to a distance of 125 yards from the high water mark; and between the beach and the road was an antitank ditch about 25 feet wide. A group of oil tanks was near the beach and, as it was possible that the Japanese might try to impede an attacker by flooding the oil over the sea and the swamp near the Pamusian River and setting it alight, the air force had taken pains to destroy these tanks. Field works could be seen, these were concrete pill-boxes built by the Dutch, and it was suspected that, here as elsewhere, tunnels had been dug into the hills.

The initial tasks of the 26th Brigade Group were to establish a beach position within which a beach maintenance area could be established, and to seize enough ground for the repair and defence of the airfield. The intention was to move two airfield construction squadrons to the airfield and later to establish there seven squadrons and other air force detachments.

The air force was to attack Tarakan from 11 to 29 April, and destroy the oil storage tanks, gun positions, radar stations, defences and buildings. Taivao, on the east coast of British Borneo, was to be attacked in the same period to disguise the real intention, and all airfields within range were to be bombed.

Naval support was to be given by the cruiser force commanded by Rear-Admiral Barber, which included the Australian cruiser *Hobart*, the destroyer *Warramunga*, and frigates *Hawkesbury*, *Barcoo* and *Burdekin*, air support by R.A.A.F. command and 13th American Air Force. The transport and landing-craft unit of the naval force was to include: two infantry landing ships (*Manoora* and

Westralia), one attack cargo ship, one dock landing ship, 22 tank landing ships, 13 infantry landing craft, 5 medium landing ships and 12 tank landing craft.

Before the main landings a party, led by Captain V. D. Prentice, was stealthily put ashore on Tarakan on 24 April to gain information; it observed enemy movements until 3 May when it joined the invasion force and gave useful information to Brigadier Whitehead.

Two preliminary operations would be carried out on 30 April, the day before the main landing. The 2/4th Commando Squadron and a battery of the 2/7th Field Regiment would land at 8 a.m. on Sadau Island and thence the artillery would support engineers as they made eight gaps in the beach obstacles. The main landing was to begin at 8.15 a.m. on 1 May on a two-battalion front—the 2/23rd Battalion on Green Beach and the 2/48th on Red Beach Two; the 2/24th Battalion, in reserve, would land on Green Beach. The naval force would give covering fire until the landing craft were 400 yards off shore and the air squadrons would attack the beach-head until fifteen minutes before the landing. Four B-25's and four fighters were to be over the area continuously from 7.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. for the first seven days.

The feature in the planning for this operation was the detailed briefing which was given to all troops. The days on Morotai were almost totally occupied in explaining the operation in all its phases and following through on the most comprehensive sand table model. Close liaison with supporting arms was emphasised and visits to their camp areas were organized. Getting to know the tank crews with whom we were to operate was a feature of this period, and a very welcome sight for all troops was the familiar figure of the Corps Commander, General Morshead, who was moving about with the men, chatting to old friends and making many new ones.

We finally embarked on the *Westralia* for the Tarakan campaign on 22 April 1945. Having embarked, we sat out in the harbour for a further five days awaiting the forming of the convoy. Scrambling-net drill, wave and craft tables, and a full-dress rehearsal for the landing, kept us busy. No one was put ashore, but the craft were filled, formed up, advanced to the beach in proper order and then returned to the ships. Everything went smoothly and at good speed, and consequently we were surprised to hear that a signal had been received from Rear Admiral Royal, U.S.N. Task Force Commander, registering his displeasure with the light hearted attitude of the troops. It was discovered that the Admiral was cross because the men were in felt hats instead of steel helmets. He was somewhat mollified when it was explained to him that very few helmets were in the brigade and they were seldom worn by the Australians in the south-west Pacific. There certainly weren't any in the 2/24th.

On 26 we loaded and unloaded the landing craft and things were beginning to be just a little bit binding when a beer ration of two bottles per man eventuated and the situation was immediately enhanced with a decidedly rosy glow. Whilst still somewhat shaken with this benevolence, we were further rocked with two more bottles the next day. Everybody was our friend. At 4 p.m. on 27 April 1945 we weighed anchors and sailed away towards Tarakan.

The convoy was a formidable force totalling 94 ships, 31 of these being our protective screen and comprising 3 cruisers, 12 destroyers, 2 destroyer escorts, 3 frigates and 11 minesweepers.

The weather was fine and warm since we were sailing due west very little to the south of the Equator. The navy types in *Westralia* were pleased to have Australians on board but, strangely, seemed at first a little doubtful of our ability and experience. They had landed Americans in the Philippines successfully and had forgotten that they had taken us up to Milne Bay on their first trip after conversion to an L.S.I.. Major Serle was invited to address the ship's officers one evening on the past experiences of the battalion and, as we became better acquainted, mutual trust developed. Perhaps the Navy was not accustomed to the informal methods of discipline habitual to an Australian battalion preparing for action!

We had taken a count while on board *Westralia*, which showed that we had now with us 70 originals, 150 who had been to the Middle East and 350 who had fought in New Guinea. It will be understood from these figures how much reliance we were placing on the young soldiers who mainly comprised the rifle companies and were now about to enter one of the nastiest periods of bitter fighting in our story.

2/24th Battalion in the Pacific

New Guinea - Lae 1943

The Lae expedition was frustrated by near-continuous torrential rain, swamps, raging rivers and enemy encounters.

- 1 Aug Advance party of 2/24 left Trinity Beach (Qld) on HMAS Westralia
- 3 Aug Landed at Milne Bay in tropical downpour and set up camp
- 19-20 Aug Embarked for practice of assault-landing at Normanby Island. Khaki slacks and shirts were dyed green.
- 4 Sept Landed at Red Beach east of Lae on north coast of New Guinea.

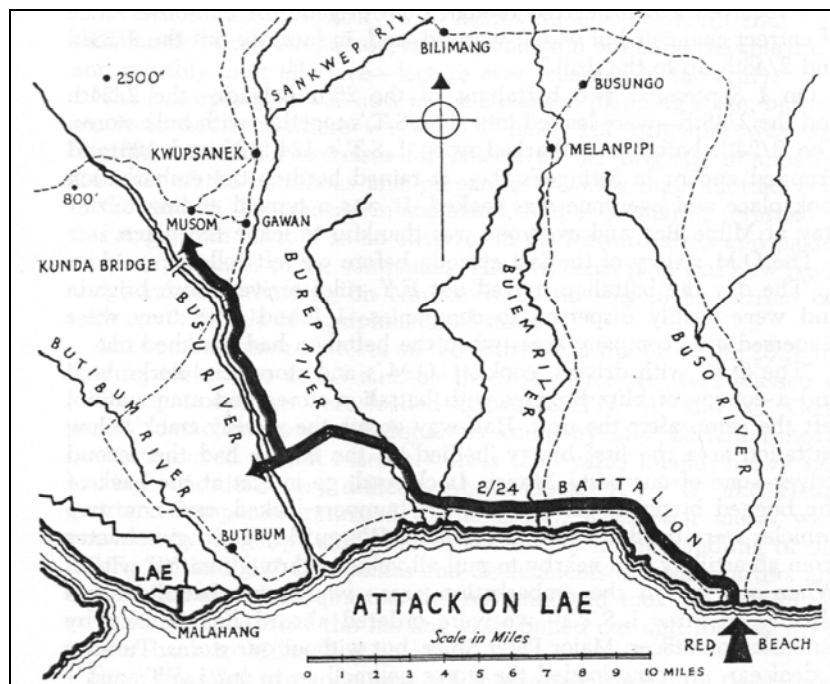
Bombed and strafed by Japanese aircraft – brigade suffered 7 killed, 28 wounded. Moved out to cross the Busu River.

- 6 Sept First contact with the Japanese. Crossed Buiem River. Swampy terrain.
- 7 Sept Reached Burep River. Each company cut a separate track in the jungle to speed up advance.
- 8 Sept Conditions of track better – reached Busu River. Crossing of raging Busu took five days. River ran in three channels covered by enemy fire.
- 10-12 Sept Protracted engagement with enemy while trying to cross the Busu River.

Captured enemy note indicated that the Japanese were moving north out of Lae.

- 16 Sept The 2/24 with other 9th Division units capture Lae – very few Japanese in the area.
- 17 Sept 2/24 moved north to junction of Sankwep and Busu Rivers. Supply line stretched. Men on meagre rations.

Over the next three weeks the battalion was engaged in 'mopping up' retreating Japanese, who were hindered by dysentery and lack of food. The 2/24th were assisted by the Papuan Infantry Battalion.



New Guinea – Finschhafen, Sattelberg, Wareo 1943 - 44

In early October the 20th Brigade has landed near Finschhafen and met strong opposition.

17 October

2/24 left the mouth of the Busu River for Langemak Bay, south of Finschhafen. The main military targets were Sattelberg and Wareo, both of which provided observation points for large areas of coastline and plateau respectively.

5 Nov

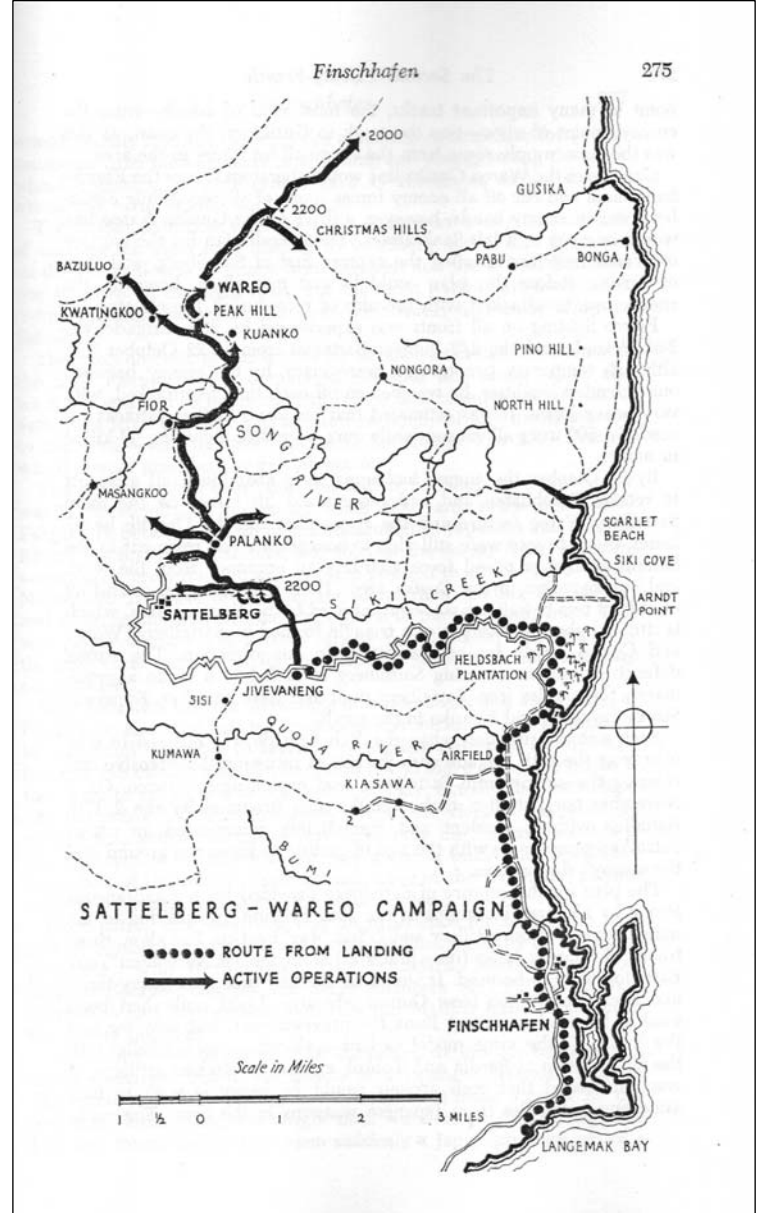
The 2/24 is right flank of the road to Sattelberg with objective of taking the 2200 feature. Defenders were concealed and knew the terrain. 2/24 patrols were frequently ambushed.

16 Nov

Ready to attack 2200 Feature. Because of the terrain most enemy positions could only be taken by a frontal attack.

25 Nov

Assault on '2200' with tank support was anti-climax as enemy had withdrawn. Sattelberg falls to other Divisions of 26th Brigade.



The 2/24 pursued the retreating Japanese through Palanko to Fior, down 1100 feet to a ravine of the Song River.

1-3 Dec

2/24 provided carrying parties to take supplies to 2/23 – a task never forgotten by those who took part. The 2/24 back on front-line duty.

7 Dec

The enemy in flight to Wareo from Peak Hill and Kuanko pursued by 2/24 and 2/23.

The bamboo and jungle was so thick that it made making any flanking moves nearly impossible. Patrols had to use the tracks which left them open to ambush. Many patrols were cut to ribbons.

8 Nov

Wareo falls.

13-14 Dec

C and D companies tasked to take the Razorback – the last high position facing the battalion. Some opposition but artillery had been effective in destroying cover.

15 Dec

Pursuit patrols met only delaying tactics from Japanese rearguard parties.

Honour is paid to the forward scouts who made themselves an 'Aunt Sally', always hoping they would see the enemy before they saw him.

22 Dec

The Battalion was relieved by the 2/28. Casualties were 19 killed in action, ten died of wounds and 41 wounded in action.

23-24 Dec The battalion was moved up to the Maseweng River for patrol and pursuit duties. Transport by the '9th Division Navy' – a US Boat and Shore Regiment that wore the 9th divisional patch on their caps

1944

18-19 Jan Battalion moved down to the Song River near Finschhafen, ready for return to Australia.

Ravenshoe

16-30 Mar The battalion was reinforced, retrained and undertook jungle-training exercises. In August the battalion moved to Trinity Beach for amphibious training - scramble-net training, equipment lowering, embarkation and disembarkation. Back at Ravenshoe they had an advanced programme in supporting arms, working with tanks and demonstrations of heavy artillery. Further amphibious training and then Colonel G Warfe took command of the battalion. On 11 March 1945 the battalion was warned to be ready for overseas duty.

Borneo - Moratai, Tarakan 1945

1 April 1945 Battalion moved to Julago near Townsville
 9 April 1945 Sailed on the US troop ship *General Buttner* for Moratai, arriving on 16 April.
 22 April Embarked on *Westralia* for Tarakan Island, Borneo, landing on 1 May 1945.
 1 May 1945 After a naval bombardment the 2/24, which had been waiting in reserve, landed at Red Beach. Its role was to pass through 2/48 and capture the airfield after C and D companies had taken the features named Frank and Essex. Then B Company was to take Ripon and A Company was to take Airstrip Ridge. Japanese opposition came from the low timbered hills.
 2 May 1945 D Company reached the summit of the feature Wills having taken several casualties from the enemy in well-constructed bunkers. Sturt and Frank were captured. As troops moved towards the airfield, sea mines strewn on the road and environs were detonated electrically by the enemy; while pouring down lethal machine gun fire.
 3 May 1945 Attack on the airfield made difficult by heavy fire from a ridge, which had a defensive bunker system 200 yards long linked by inter-connecting communication trenches. A C company platoon was decimated by an under-road depth charge as they crossed a road. In a day of bitter fighting three company commanders were wounded and one company lost its second commander in a day.

2/24 engaged in heavy patrolling.

8-16 May 1945 Bitter fighting on all fronts, with casualties rising. The struggle for Crazy Ridge was an eleven-day battle in which the battalion had to fight for every yard.

Shortage of ammunition was becoming a problem for the 9th Division as it had not been anticipated that the Japanese would hold out so long. As a consequence the use of ammunition for artillery and mortars was restricted. This was a classic example of rigid planning being undone when events do not follow the predictions.

19 May 1945 A Company moved in on Beech 1

23 May 1945 Two platoons went out to cut the Dutch track (not on the original maps) as it was the main line of Japanese communication. At the same time A Company was to take Beech 2 but was decimated by an electrically-fired minefield. Air strikes were used with varying effectiveness.

4 June 1945

A message was dropped to the Japanese admiring their courage and suggesting a meeting so that their wounded could be treated. It was ignored.

12-14 June 1945

The Japanese were holding out on Beech 2 and Sandy but a co-ordinated attack found the enemy had retreated leaving booby-trapped equipment and mines. Later discovered that all Japanese soldiers had been given a month's supply of rice and a share of the available ammunition.

15- 20 June 1945

Continued patrolling and elimination of the remaining bunker strongholds saw an end to the active phase in Tarakan.

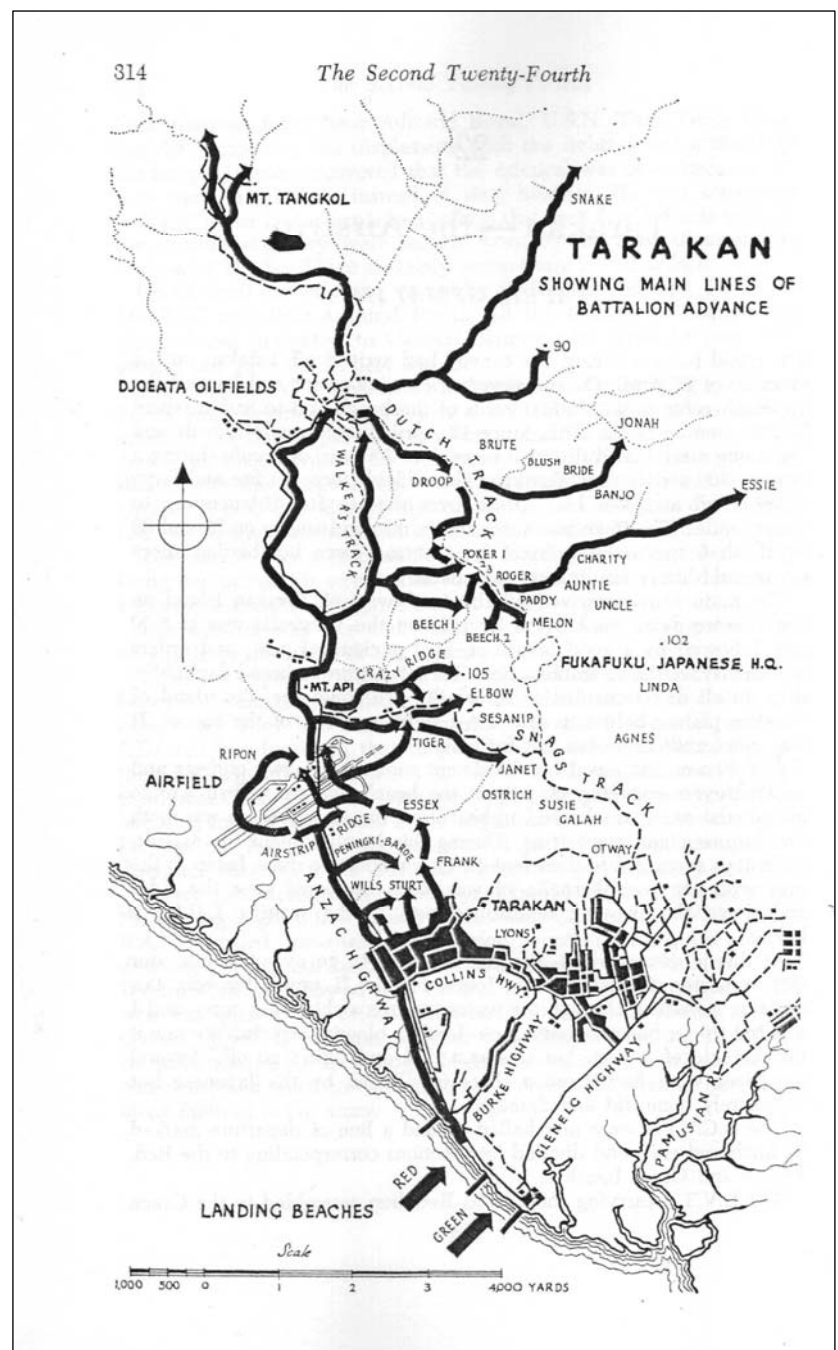
For 51 days the enemy had contested every yard of his defensive positions.

21-30 June 1945

A relentless hunt to prevent the Japanese from regrouping.

24 Jun – 17 Jul

'Mopping up' stage where the island was divided into six areas of responsibility. The 2/24 found one Japanese soldier.



Casualties of 2/24 were 15 officers and 283 other ranks, including 72 killed in action – the highest casualty list of any battalion in Tarakan.

The majority of casualties were in rifle companies; and no reinforcements were available so by mid June C company was down to 38 fighting men.

The end of war in the Pacific

6 Aug 1945

U.S. B-29 "Enola Gay" drops a 3 metre long atomic bomb "Little Boy" on Hiroshima, Japan, killing an estimated 140,000 people in the first use of a nuclear weapon in warfare and wiping out 10 square kms.

9 Aug 1945

U.S. B-29 "Bocks Car" drops atomic bomb "Fat Man" on Nagasaki, Japan. Two-thirds of the city of 250,000 inhabitants is destroyed and 113,000 people die.

13 Aug 1945

Truman announces the 'Unconditional Surrender' of Japan.

2 Sept 1945

Formal Japanese surrender takes place aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

6 Sept 1945

Japanese forces in Southwest Pacific surrender aboard HMS Glory.

12 Sept 1945

Mountbatten accepts the surrender of all Japanese troops in Southeast Asia.

Committee Considerations

The long wind-down from the November Reunion meant that we did not have time for a December 2010 meeting, but we met on 4 February 2011. The main issues were

1. The Treasurer reported that the finances were in a healthy state, and he highlighted the fact that we have subsidised the Canberra Memorial Service (2009) and the 2010 Anniversary Reunion.
2. Review of the Reunion. The diggers were pleased at having the shelters at each of the services. It not only protected them from the sun but also gave them identity. Everyone agreed that the Reunion was a very special event, and that we shall never again have one that would have such special meaning and memories.
3. Plans for the 2011 Reunion. The meeting received written and verbal reports on the future of the November Reunion. There was considerable discussion on the future of the Reunion in Wangaratta and all views and options were considered. The consensus was that we continue the Reunion with some minor modifications, and maybe a change in the dinner venue. Numbers attending will probably fall back to the size of the previous few years. More detail will be in the next Furphy Flyer in Mufti – but the Reunion will be running on from Friday, 4 November to Sunday 6 November. Put the dates in your diary now.
4. Meeting gave its endorsement for a Tour of Libya and Egypt in March 2012. See the notice below.

Tour to track the 2/24th in the Middle East - March 2012 **Programme pending political propriety!**

This tour is being operated by Mission Travel in Surrey Hills, the company that conducted the tour that I went on in 2008. The itinerary will be available soon, but finalisation was held up by the loss of internet connection with Egypt.

The full details will be in the May Furphy Flyer, but if you would like details as soon as they are available then please contact the Secretary, Alastair, with postal address and Mission Travel will send out a brochure as soon as it is finalised. An information night will be held a little later in the year.

However, the broad plan is to fly to Tripoli, visit the ancient city of Leptis Magna and then fly on to Benghazi to follow the 2/24 from Tobra to Tobruk, stopping at Wadi Cuf, seeing the ancient mosaics at Qasr Libya and visiting the ancient city of Cyrene and on the way. In Tobruk we'll visit the four war cemeteries, the Fig tree, the Salient, the Harbour, the El Edem road where the Easter breakthrough occurred and the Museum. Then on to El Alamein, stopping briefly at Bardia to view the murals painted by Bell. Visit the Commonwealth War Cemetery at El Alamein, the museum, Trig 33 and the Italian and German War Memorials. On to Alexandria to visit some historic sites and the War Cemeteries, then down to Cairo to see the pyramids and the museum. The tour will finish here with connections back to an Australian flight – unless you wish to add another tour. You can do this before or after our tour. You may plan your own, or Mission Travel will be happy to arrange one for you.

The tour is being limited to about 16 - 20 people and this has increased the cost slightly over earlier estimates. At this point the tour will be about 12 days and cost (including air fares) about \$5000; depending on numbers. Most meals and all gratuities and entrances will be included. The tour is primarily for 2/24 Association members and families, but could be for anyone with an interest in the Western Desert campaigns.

If you have any queries, or would just like to check some details, please do not hesitate to call or email me. Alastair [contact details on page 1]

- *Behind every successful man is his woman. Behind the fall of a successful man is usually another woman.*
- *I asked God for a bike, but I know God doesn't work that way. So I stole a bike and asked for forgiveness.*

Membership Subscriptions for 2011 are now due.

The Membership subscription has been set at \$15 per annum. Subscriptions cover the calendar year from January to December, and should be paid no later than 30 April each year.

Widows are not required to pay subscriptions

Subscriptions in advance. Membership fees paid in advance create a considerable amount of extra work for the committee membership responsible for accounts and rolls. So that accurate records can be maintained the Association is limiting advance payments to two (2) years. Any monies received above this will be treated as a donation.

Subscriptions in arrears. Members who are one year in arrears of their subscription will be notified that their membership may lapse. Membership that is two years in arrears may have the subscription to the 'Furphy Flyer in Mufti' discontinued.

Please note that receipts will not be sent unless a reply paid envelope is enclosed with your subscription. All subscriptions and donations will be acknowledged in the Furphy Flyer in Mufti. Thank you for your generous support.

Subscriptions :

R Piconi, N Whybrow, Nola Adams, Les Adams, A Mezger, F Seymour, Ken Dobson, Barb Peters.

Donations

R Piconi, A Rooke, M Gleghorn, F Seymour, D Wymond.

Sick Parade

A big cheerio to **Bill Northausen** plus any other members out there with niggling aches and pains, and other conditions much worse. Please remember that we are thinking of you and our best wishes go out to everyone who is not feeling 100%.

Alan and Faye Macfarlane received a very nice Christmas card last year and unfortunately, it was not signed. They would like to contact and thank the sender, so if you sent them a card and the postal stamp is Northgate 4013, could you please call Alan on 03 9884 9378. Thanks.

Newsletters were received from the following

Dial Sight -- 2/7 Aust Field Regiment; Tobruk Truth -- ROTA Queensland;

Mud and Blood -- 2/23rd Battalion Association.

Congratulations to the 2/23rd for their 70th anniversary edition. It looked like a great weekend was had by all who attended their reunion in Albury

A man was riding his Harley beside a Sydney beach when suddenly the sky clouded above his head and in a booming voice the Lord said.

'Because you have TRIED to be faithful to me in all ways, I will grant you one wish.'

The biker pulled over and said, 'Build a bridge to New Zealand so I can ride over anytime I want.'

The Lord said; 'Your request is materialistic, think of the enormous challenges for that kind of undertaking, the supports required reaching the bottom of the Pacific and the concrete and steel it would take! It will nearly exhaust several natural resources. I can do it, but it is hard for me to justify your desire for worldly things. Take a little more time and think of something that could possibly help mankind.'

The biker thought hard about it for a long time. Finally, he said,

'Lord, I wish that I and all men could understand our wives. I want to know how she feels inside, what she's thinking when she gives me the silent treatment, why she cries, what she means when she says nothing's wrong, and how I can make a woman truly happy'.

The Lord replied; 'You want two lanes or four on that bridge?

Rats of Tobruk Commemorative Service at the Shrine, Sunday 3rd April, 10.00 am

This Service is to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of Tobruk.

The Service will be followed by a light luncheon at the Shrine which will be provided by the Rats of Tobruk Association. If you intend to go to the service and luncheon you must contact our Secretary, Alastair Davison, before the 20th March.

Alastair can be contacted on (03) 9844 3036 or email secretary@2-24.battalion.org.au

Our President is hoping for a good turn out.

New Members

It is with much pleasure that we welcome new Associate members to the Association. One from Tasmania and two from Queensland.

Steven Elsdon, son of 'Happy' Elsdon; **Ken Dobson**, son of Doug Dobson and **Barbara Peters**, descendant of Raymond Markham.

Letters

*From **Bob Piconi** of Strathfield NSW*

I am enclosing a cheque for my subscriptions and a donation. I regret I was unable to attend the October 2010 Reunion and after reading the report of the event in the Christmas issue of the Furphy, I certainly missed out on something very special. Hope I can make the journey next year.

Thanks for your support Bob.

*From **F Seymour** of Blackburn*

Please find enclosed cheque for my subs and a donation. Sorry I could not make it for Wangaratta. Again, thanks for your support.

*From **Mrs Bobby Fenwick** of Brighton East* Dear Alastair, what a wonderful 70th reunion we enjoyed. You are to be complemented on your organizational qualities and the support you gave to all. I am sure the remaining old diggers who made the effort to attend would be left with many reflective memories. I found the historical memoirs especially moving. In relation to your father I thought that the words (below) would have been of some comfort to your mother. My daughter, Lis, had them framed for me some time ago.

"Never forget how much I loved you, nor when my last breath escapes me on the battlefield it will whisper your name. I shall always be with you, in the brightest day and the darkest night; always – always."

My thanks to all the staff who do such a wonderful job in keeping the battalion functioning smoothly.

Thanks for passing on those lovely words, our best wishes to you Bobby.

*From **Patricia Theoharris** of Albany WA* It is with great sorrow that I inform you that my husband, Roy Theoharris, passed away 12th October 2010. He was a member of the 2/24th Battalion, not a 'Rat' but a reinforcement that joined them to go to Morotai and Tarakan. When the war finished he volunteered to go to Japan with the B.C.O.F. force. He was 86 years.

Thank you for your note Patricia. Our thoughts are with you.

*From **Vivien Williams** of Caloundra QLD* Dear Alastair, enclosed are some photos of the Wang weekend that you might find of interest. Imagine, another new year already. Best wishes to you and your team. Special wishes to Alan please. We were so glad to have been able to share the special November celebrations. They opened more doors for us – very poignantly. It was indeed a privilege to recall the leaving of Wangaratta 70 years ago. Greetings and every happiness for 2011.

It was great weekend indeed. Your presence, plus the many who attended, helped make it a great weekend. Thank you