

26 Battalion Association
Victorian Branch

26 AUST. INF. BN. (AIF) "NEVER UNPREPARED"

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2007

ISSUE 10



FAMILY SUPPORT

ANZAC DAY 2006

Melbourne

Following an exhausting march, Steve Dawson supports his father, Len, on the lawns of the Shrine of Remembrance.

WELCOME TO NEWSLETTER No. 10

I would like to thank **Colin Block** for his outstanding effort with the production of our last newsletter.

Absolutely first class and we acknowledge his contribution.

Thank you once again Colin for your time and the

splendid reproduction of old photos.

According to feedback we have received these photos are very popular, so much so we have included more pictures with this issue.

THE EDITOR

PREMIER'S LUNCHEON

THE ANNUAL Premier's Luncheon is on Monday 23rd April and we have nominated three of our members, namely **Len Dawson, Bert Barker** and **Dennis Ryan** to attend this event.

We should receive confirmation soon and the above named will receive full details of the event.

It is a great occasion, but unfortunately once you have been, you are not eligible to go again.

THE 26 BATTALION TREE AND PLAQUE at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne

By NORMAN TURRELL

ON 7 MARCH 1993 a Memorial Plaque was unveiled by **Lady Naomi Callinan**. The Plaque is situated at the base of a Bhutan Cypress tree which was planted there in 1934 and so far has weathered the drought.

We were fortunate to have our former Commanding Officer **Sir Bernard Callinan** with us on that day. Sadly Sir Bernard passed away some two years later after a long illness.

On the day of the unveiling we were able to muster 18 former members of the unit together with their families. Today nine of those members are no longer with us and sadly due to the passage of time we must accept their loss.

It is estimated that of the 3300 men who served in the unit less than 10% remain today. Those who are still with us live in far away places and probably will never meet up again.

It was on 30 April 1995 that a Pilgrimage

was made to the Shrine of Remembrance to honour fallen comrades. Again Lady Callinan assisted by **Colonel Bill Swaney** honoured the occasion by laying a wreath in the Shrine due to inclement weather.

Again it was pleasing to see a good roll up of some twelve members and their families with our special guest that old signaller **Bob Froome** who travelled from Perth to give his account of his visit to the War Cemetery where 35 of our former comrades lay in peace.

We must all realize that time is marching on and with our decline in membership our goal is to keep the Banner flying. The situation is the same in Brisbane where falling numbers has caused the cancellation of future reunions in Rockhampton.

Here in Melbourne we are very fortunate to have sons and grandsons who have taken over various roles which will

mean that our Banner will appear at the Anzac Day Parade for some time to come.

It is most unfortunate that it was 1991 before our Association was formed which meant so many years were lost and former comrades passed away unknown to us. Since then our records show that about 450 members have passed away but at least it is recorded and we ask that when a member passes on we are duly notified.

In conclusion we owe a great deal of thanks to Bob Froome in Perth who arranged the installation of a 26 Battalion Plaque in the new rotunda in Kings Park.

If you are visiting the Shrine in Melbourne or Kings Park in Perth please stop and pay a tribute to those men who did not come home.

Right:

The unveiling of the memorial plaque in March 1993



The Melbourne Plaque states:

*“This Bhutan Cypress is dedicated to the gallant men of 26 Aust. Inf. Bn. (AIF) who under inspired leadership served with distinction in Dutch New Guinea, Torres Strait, Bougainville and Rabaul, 1939–45 and to members who made the supreme sacrifice.
LEST WE FORGET”*

THE 26 BATTALION TREE AND PLAQUE



Former 26 Bn Members at the Shrine of Remembrance 7 March 1993

Bob Gaudion, Keith Miles, Bill Oliver, John Burgess, Norm Turrell, Alan Lea, Laurie Hill, Ray Block, Arthur Ennis, Roy Smith, Bill Baird, Ken Laversha, Vin Frawley, Norm Donaldson, Sam Johnson, Ron Bishop, Don Wilson and Jim Phillips

1995 PILGRIMAGE TO SHRINE

Below:

Lady Callinan and Colonel Bill Swaney lay the 26 Battalion wreath at the Shrine 30 April 1995



Right:

Col. Sir Bernard Callinan AC CBE DSO MC Mid Shrine of Remembrance Melbourne 7 March 1993



V LE

Keith Rowe Wally Plumb
Tom Bowes Colin Wilkinson
Bill Baird

A MESSAGE FROM THE JUNIOR VICE PRESIDENT

By BOB GAUDION

WITHIN the next few weeks it will again be April 25th, Anzac Day and I would like to take this opportunity to invite you all to join some of your ex-Army mates and take part in the Melbourne Anzac Day parade and/or to attend the reunion dinner held after the parade, at **12 noon**, at **Bells Hotel**, South Melbourne.

As we all become a little older it means there will be less future opportunities for us to attend Anzac Day activities so, I would suggest, we should all make the effort

to be present whilst we are still able to do so.

Anzac House, the organizers of the march, have issued a few guidelines which they would like to have adhered to during the parade. They are :—

1. Limit the number of relatives partaking in the march.

2. Minimum dress standard to be smart casual.

3. No carrying photographs, in the march, of deceased service personnel.

By attending Anzac Day activities you are

showing your respect for the efforts of those who did their duty for this great country, Australia, and especially for those who made the supreme sacrifice.

I look forward to seeing you all on Anzac Day, 25th April 2007, when **Len Dawson** will be the leader of our group, in the march.

Len enlisted on 28 December 1941, was promoted to Sergeant on 30 September 1945 and discharged on 28 June 1946.



John Collins



*Vin Frawley
at Bells Hotel, Anzac Day 2006*



Ken MacKellin



Bob Gaudion



*Dennis Ryan at home
Christmas 2005*



*Left:
Wally Rogers
and
Jack Vicary,
Tanah Merah
1943*



Herb Gist, Bill Baird, Keith Rowe in Rabaul