

26 Battalion Association
Victorian Branch

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

NEWSLETTER

October 2008

ISSUE 13



26th Battalion Memorial Plaque in Perth is relocated to a rock under a tree in Kings Park

WELCOME TO NEWSLETTER No. 13

WELCOME to the latest issue of 26 Battalion Reunion Association, Victorian Branch newsletter.

This newsletter is written, edited, and mailed by Norman Turrell and the graphic design is by Colin Block.

Your contribution to it would be most appreciated.

KINGS PARK, PERTH

By NORMAN TURRELL

BOB FROOME reports that the 26th Battalion Plaque was removed during alterations in Kings Park, Perth.

Due to his persistence, our Plaque is now back in the Park in a prominent position attached to a large rock at the base of a tree which borders the main pathway to the Memorial.

We owe Bob a big thank you for his effort to ensure that the Plaque was not put in some obscure location.

Well done Bob.



Bob Froome

RABAU IN 2008

By LAURIE HILL

SHORTLY after WW2 ended the 26th Battalion was shipped to Rabaul to assist in rounding up Japanese soldiers for repatriation to their homeland. As there were many more than anticipated and very little shipping available, this was to take a long time. The Battalion chose a campsite close to the beach at Talili Bay and after the tension of Bougainville, being able to swim and play sports was reasonably enjoyable.

There was only one little problem, about six volcanoes surround the area of Rabaul and wisps of smoke were being emitted from a couple of them. We had been told how the town of Rabaul had been ruined by the volcano "Vulcan" in 1937, and with tremors every few days, I for one wanted to get off the island before another volcano erupted.

This did happen 50 years later in 1994 and destroyed the township again, which resulted in five people being killed and the population being relocated to Kokopo on the other side of the bay.

April 2008, my wife Jean, and I were on a cruise and the last foreign port of call was Rabaul.

The ship was scheduled to arrive at 6 am. but as a sick person was to be flown home, the ship berthed at



Laurie Hill in Rabaul, 2008

2 am. When we went up to the top deck at 6 am, we were amazed at all the black ash that had covered the ship, we then noticed a black cloud of ash billowing hundreds of feet into the air from the volcano "Tavurvur."

Heavy rain started falling, this had the crew scrambling to cover the carpet areas with plastic film. On disembarking I arranged a private tour of the area with a friend David who took us to all the sights including the Japanese tunnels and the area close to "Tavurvur".

David a native was born in Bougainville and now lives in Kokopo with his wife and three little children. He was educated at Scotch College in Warwick Queensland and when I told him two of my 26th Batt. Platoon mates Dave Watts and Keith Locke still live in Warwick, he said he

remembered a street called Locke (this street is named after the Locke family).

David took us in his own four wheel drive, me in the front with him and Jean in the back seat with his three lovely little girls one holding Jean's hand.

David drove us to the Airport and the golf course, which were both covered in over two metres of black ash, and the site of the 1994 ruined town of Rabaul. He also took us to the exact spot at Talili Bay where I was camped in 1945.

The ship sailed for Brisbane that night and I think the Captain was very glad to leave Rabaul and had his crew working all night to clean up the mess made by the black ash. Although we enjoyed the day in Rabaul, Jean and I were happy to leave the volcanoes behind.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- \$5 SUBSCRIPTION -

By BOB GAUDION

WELCOME to the latest edition of 26 Battalion, Victorian Branch Newsletter.

Once again we have to thank Norman Turrell for writing, printing and posting this Newsletter and Colin Block for his expertise in producing the copy. We also have to thank Jeff Collings for his efforts in organizing this year's Anzac Day activities for the March and luncheon.

On behalf of all the members - thanks very much, gentlemen, for your efforts - well done indeed.

We have continuing feedback of the welcome acceptance of our Newsletters and we will endeavour to continue to provide two editions each year.

It would be very much appreciated if members could contribute photographs and stories of themselves or other items of general interest, even in recent times, for inclusion in the Newsletters. Please forward to Norman Turrell who will judge whether they are suitable for inclusion.

After a review of the Association financial situation and considerations of producing, printing and posting of Newsletters it has been decided that, for members to receive paper copies of all Newsletters, there will be a subscription levy of \$5.00 per year

payable by each receiver. Those who have been made Life Members of the Association will not have to contribute this levy until 9 years after being made Life Members. Likewise, those who have made donations to the Association will be credited with 1 year of newsletter subscription for each \$5.00 of donation. Those whose good work for the Association is mentioned above will be exempt of any levy. Records have been maintained and all members will be advised when their Newsletter subscription become due and payable.

Finally, to all those who have not been in the best of health lately, remember, you are always in our thoughts, and we wish for your speedy recovery in the near future

*Kindest regards
Bob Gaudion*

Cartoons: Ron Davies
I Section 26 Battalion



Norm Snell and "Nobby" Clark, 1945



Bob Froome, Loudon Cochrane



Norm Turrell, Brig. Keith Colwill, Bernies Bar MCC July 2008

KINGSLEY LOCKE

WHEN Kingsley Locke was called up to serve in the Second World War, he was lucky enough to be called up with a group of 14 friends. "We were friends since schooldays and we were called up together."

The 14 men enlisted on May 29, 1942 and embarked to Goondiwindi for eight months of solid training before heading to jungle warfare training in Canungra, which Kingsley believed to be "one of the worst places on earth"

He was stationed in the 29th Battalion when volunteers were called to join the AIF and go overseas, Kingsley and his best friend David Watt were quick to sign up where they were transferred the 26th Battalion and posted to Bougainville and later Rabaul in 1944.

"When we first went in there was a fellow called Sergeant White and he used to say 'the two boys from Warwick, David and Kingsley, with their peaches and cream complexion,' he used to call us peaches and cream."

By the time the 21 year old signaller arrived overseas the Japanese defeat seemed inevitable, yet they still offered resistance. "I remember going out with the other fellows and laying communication cable. The Japs would cut it and take it in another direction and often into ambush."

"Some of our men were wounded or killed like that." There is only one close call that Kingsley can recall and that was close enough for him, when a Japanese shell landed just one metre from his dug-out. "I was in a bit of dug-out on the switchboard that night and there was shells going everywhere, you could hear the whistling and all that type of thing and when I woke up in the morning there was one just beside me sitting in the dirt and it didn't explode. I said to David, someone up there is looking after me."

A true performer, Kingsley was fortunate enough not to have to leave behind the great love of his life, music, while overseas, having plenty of opportunities to perform.

"I used to play the music for the ones who sang over there." We had good times and bad times." "It all is a great memory, there is nothing in particular, not one thing you can pick out out of all that, I couldn't just pick one memory." Kingsley was discharged after serving 1471 days in the Armed Forces on June 5, 1946.

While he tries not to remember too much from overseas, he is reminded by the few souvenirs he collected from his campaign such as a Japanese surrender document, various concert programs and a small record of Japanese wartime music which he found in an old abandoned dug out. "All these things bring back all these memories and although a lot of them are really sad, but I wouldn't part with them all the same."

Top Right: Kingley (Keith) Locke

Right: Keith Locke, John Maschmendt and Con Bogiatzis

Left: Recent photo of Con Bogiatzis, former Signaller from 26 Bn.

Right: Sign reads "SUMMERTIME THEATRE 26 Aust Inf Bn AIF"



Reprint. Source unknown



NEW WEB ADDRESS

Due to reduced service levels from our previous web host provider we have moved to:

www.26bn.org

26 Bn Association website:
<http://26bn.org>



KINGSLEY (KEITH) LOCKE

Keith Locke from Warwick and his Band. During the past six months Keith has been out of action due to several visits to hospital. Everyone wishes him a speedy recovery and is looking forward to seeing him back at his piano.



Happy Wanderers: (from left) Glenda Shapland, Josie Roser, Kingsley Locke, Agnes Mullens, Colin Bischoff, Jack Harrison, Ken Pinington and Don Mathison enjoy entertaining at the Senior Citizens' Club

Cutting a rug to Happy Wanderers

By **JOSEPHINE SARGENT**

THE Happy Wanderers have had people tapping their feet and heating up the dance floor at the old time and new vogue dances at the Senior Citizens' Club for about 25 years.

Senior citizens' president Josie Roser said the Happy Wanderers had played since the dances started but the band had been together for longer.

"Kingsley Locke, Ken Pinington, Jack Harrison and the late Merv Jensen were the original members," Mrs Roser said.

"Col Bishop, Glenda Shapland, Don Mathison, Gene McMillan and the late John Cooke became members of the band as it grew."

Mrs Roser said some original band members had passed away and some played in Toowoomba at concerts.

"We have dancing groups who come from places like Swan Creek, Stanthorpe and Inglewood and they all say the music is great to dance to," she said.

"Agnes, the vice-president, and I are happy with the attendance and we provide a delicious supper."

Mrs Roser said the dances were started by Jean Madden.

"Jean was active in the dances until a few years ago," she said. "Agnes and I organise the dances now."

Mrs Roser said as well as dancing, people could also enjoy raffles and other games.

"We also have young dancers from Swan Creek, who have won medals for their dancing, and they attend our dances when possible," she said.

The first dance for 2007 will be on Friday, from 8pm, and admission is \$6.

1945



Above: Three young signallers, Norm Snell, Jack "Robb" Robinson and John Maschmedt, Bougainville 1945

DICK SHIPWAY, RESCUED IN 1943, DIES AT 88



*Dick Shipway and his wife Beth. **

22/8/1919 - 24/2/2008

SSOME of our members will recall the rescue of Lt Dick Shipway. He was a former US pilot who baled out in the Cape York region in December 1943. He was rescued by patrol from 26 Battalion who found him wandering along the beach. Sadly Dick passed away suddenly at his home in America on 24th February 2008.

Born to parents Richard and Edith, he was preceded in death by his first wife Svea and survived by his son, his daughter and his wife of 24 years Beth.

Dick was an Eagle Scout, a graduate

** Photograph used with permission from Peter Dunn's "Australia @ War" web site at www.ozatwar.com*

of Ipwa State University and he was proud to serve as the a CO of the 8th Photo Recon Squadron and was General Manager of NSP Gas Utility.

Does anyone know what happened to Dick Shipway's P-39 Airacobra?

Was it recovered and restored?



P-39 Airacobra similar to the one that pilot Lt. Dick Shipway flew.

Photograph: Public Domain from United States Federal Government http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Bell_P-39Q_Airacobra_USAF.jpg

VALE

Cy Russell