

# 26 Battalion Association Victorian Branch

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

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Mr Jeff Collings

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# NEWSLETTER

November 2012

ISSUE 21



*Above: Did the rain mar ANZAC Day? Far from it said Vin Frawley who commented, "it is fine if you are rugged up." Later Vin said, "It was all pretty good. A couple of friends rang up and said they saw me on TV"*

## Welcome to Newsletter No. 21

WELCOME to the latest issue of 26 Battalion Association, Newsletter.

This month we report on the 2012 Anzac Day march and provide a list of members who we have sadly been made aware of their passing.

As we go to press, we have been informed that due to failing health, Norm Turrell is in hospital. We wish him all the best for a good outcome.

- Colin Block, Editor

## Rain drops

RAIN and cold southerly winds were a feature in the 2012 ANZAC Day March in Melbourne, but did it mar the Parade? Far from it! An impressive turnout of tens of thousands of people lined St Kilda Rd braving the bad weather.

The general consensus amongst marchers and spectators alike was that our diggers faced far

worse and more formidable conditions for much, much longer.

Twelve people representing their relatives marched under the 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion banner and not far behind was veteran Private Vin Frawley riding in a vintage vehicle.

Prior to the March, **Jeff Collings** and **David Stevens** joined the reported 35,000 rain-

Continued page 2 ...

## Rain drops ... from page 1

soaked Melbournians paying their respects at the Dawn Service. The stirring Last Post was bugled as the temperature plummeted.

President Jeff Collings invited anyone who is interested, to join him in attending next year's the Dawn Service. He said "I always attend the dawn service, followed by breakfast in town. If you like to meet at the Dawn Service, I am there 4.30am – 5.00am city side of the WW2 monument."

Sixteen people, mostly from the Frawley family attended the re-

union lunch at *The George Hotel* in South Melbourne. Some commented that it was more peaceful and quieter than the previous hotel.

Later Beryl Frawley and her daughter went to see that other ANZAC Day tradition, the football match between Collingwood and Essendon. Their beloved team Collingwood won in a cliffhanger, holding on by only one point.

## Watta Masta

David Watt says in his letter to the Editor, "Just a little reminiscence which you might like to include in a newsletter:

“As you know hostilities ceased, we were sent to Rabaul to assist with the repatriation of the thousands of Japanese which took about ten months to complete.

Each day I would pick three fellows from the platoon, including Laurie Hill, to act as guards for a Jap working party of six and proceed to the compound. One day I picked three and noticed a slightly larger and stronger looking guy, so I motioned him to join the party. He resisted. The second time I nodded and I thought "There may be trouble here!", but he mumbled something to the fellow next to him, who slipped into a nearby tent and promptly returned with a

stethoscope and draped it around the big boy's neck. I got the message! I picked again and away we went for a day of log carrying.

Another thing I can remember so vividly, when a thirsty "prisoner" would approach a guard, snap to attention, bow, and say in broken English "Watta Masta" ”



*New Guinea, 1942. An Australian soldier gives a Japanese prisoner a drink of water. AWM 013456*

## President's Message



Hi to all our loyal 26th Battalion Association members.

I was just reflecting on the last ANZAC Day's march

in Melbourne and the shortened version apparently coincided with road works taking place around where the march used to start from. Although I did not investigate this at the time, it struck me the lack of foresight required to know that the ANZAC parade would clash with the works. But I guess there is never a good time to do road works. Anyway, there was much confusion about where people were to form up. I personally had four different destinations pointed out to me, of which thankfully only one was correct.

Fortunately, the rain held off literally until we got into the hotel and began our lunch.

I am unaware at this stage where the next year's march will begin...at least we will know where it will end..!

I hope you are all in good health and look forward to catching up at the next march.



Scan to link to 26bn.org. Don't know what this is? Ask a young person!

## ACKNOWLEDMENT OF FORMER MEMBERS

SINCE 1991 the 26 Battalion Association has been notified by relatives of those who passed away, who were either members the Association or gave valuable service to the 26th Battalion unit during WWII.

We remember them and thank them for their contribution.

John Abbott  
Arthur Abdy  
R. Abkinson  
Colin Adeville  
F.T. Alderton  
Nelson Allen  
C.E. Anderson  
L. Aplitt  
Fred Appleby  
Ray Asmuss  
Dudley Avery  
Ron Axer

A. Babore  
Norm Babore  
Cedric Bailey  
D.E. Bailey  
Bill Baird  
Bob Bakhash  
K.L. Barber  
E.H. Barnes  
J.G. Bartrop  
Jim Barty  
J. Bateman  
G.B. Baxter  
J.L. Beard  
A.H. Beckwith  
E.E. Beddoes  
Dallas Begg  
Syd Bennett  
Ray Bennett  
G.S. Besgrove  
D.W. Blackman  
S.E. Blake  
Ray Block  
Con Bogiatzis  
Blake Bosworth  
S.J. Boulton  
Alan Bourke  
J.H. Bowden  
Andrew Bowen  
Tom Bowes  
Vern Bowler  
George Boyle  
Bonsie Bradford  
G.J. Bradshaw

H.J. Bradshaw  
A.K. Bradshaw  
Snow Brady  
Keith Brennan  
Doug Brennan  
R. Bretherton  
G.D. Bridge  
Father Eddie Brill  
S.J. Broadhurst  
Ernie Brogden  
Bert Brooker  
S.J. Brough  
E. Brown  
J.C. Brown  
F.W. Brown  
Percy Broyd  
Bob Bryburgh  
Eric Bryce  
Alex Bull  
F.A. Bulley  
M.J. Bunt  
John Burgess  
Laurie Bussey  
Cpl Robert Buxton

Sir Bernard Callinan  
A.D.G. Cameron  
J.B. Carbers  
Tom Carey  
J. Carey  
Bill Carlson  
Jack Carter  
J.R. Centev  
V.J. Chalker  
Arthur Chambers  
Dave Chaplain  
J.B. Charters  
John Chilcot  
Jim Chisholm  
Keith Christie  
V.G. Cochrane  
Keith Coleman  
Aubrey Coles  
John Collins  
Bill Colyer  
Mick Connaughton  
J.R. Conron  
W.R. Coster  
Roy Cotton  
Don Coupar  
A.G. Cousins  
K.V. Cox  
Sandy Crace  
Cec Crawford  
Jack Crossan  
E.R. Curran  
E.M. Curry

R.T. Dale  
Don Daniels  
Ron Davies  
Alan Davis  
T.E. Davis  
L.S. Davis  
M. Davis

Colin Dawes  
R.S. Dawson  
Dick Derrick  
Owen Devery  
R.K. Diamond  
C.R. Dillon  
Keith Dodd  
Bob Dolgner  
Scotty Dooley  
D.K. Dorrington  
Jim Doyle  
Colin Draper  
P. Druham  
Bob Dryburgh  
Harry Duddington  
A.F. Duffell  
Pat Duffy  
Bob Duncan  
L.B. Dwight  
W.A. Dwyer  
W.H.B. Dyason

C.M. Eadie  
Henry Eather  
Jim Ebzery  
P. Eceritt  
Ron Eckersall  
K.F. Edge  
R.L. Edwards  
John Ellwood  
Arthur Ennis

Ron Farlow  
W.P. Fawcett  
R.M. Featherstone Haugh  
J.R. Feeley  
Eric Felsman  
V.McD. Ferguson  
W.S. Fitzgerald  
Gordon Fleming  
Austin Foers  
R.A. Frail  
P.W. Francis  
A.A. Francis  
Tom Freeman

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J.F. Gardiner  
E.W. Gardner  
Brian Garvey  
N.J. Gerling  
George Gibson  
K.W. Gillespie  
N.G. Goman  
A.M. Graham  
Henry Gramaconi  
Les Grant  
Stu Green  
Jack Green  
N. Green  
N.R. Griggs  
Jack Guy

Neville Haack  
Bob Hales

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R.W. Jacobi	G.W. Mathers	W.A. O'Brien
W.S. Jardine	L.C. Mathews	H.J. O'Connor
Eddie Jensen	Kemp Maxwell	Gidgea Oliver
H.J. Job	George Maxwell	J.A. Oliver
H.L. Johns	Pat Maxwell	E. Oliver
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C.A. Johnson	J.A. McCalman	Joe Packer
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E.A. Joiner	W.J. McDonald	JWD Peebles
J.L. Jollife	V.R. McFarlane	F.M. Peile
L.V. Jones	R.L. McGowan	J. Peoples
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Errol Jorgenson	Eric McHugh	D.A. Philbrook
	B. McInnes	Cliff Phillips
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John Kane	Ted McKinnon	Max Pitkin
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F.W. Kelly	Norm McIntyre	K.D. Power
J.D. Kelly	J.V. McMahon	K.G. Prentice
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V.G. King	George McManus	Alan Prime MM
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	Gordon McPherson	A.D. Raine
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 P. Rogan  
 Wally Rogers  
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 A.W. Rolfe  
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 S.C. Rose  
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 R.J. Sullivan  
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 A.G. Taylor  
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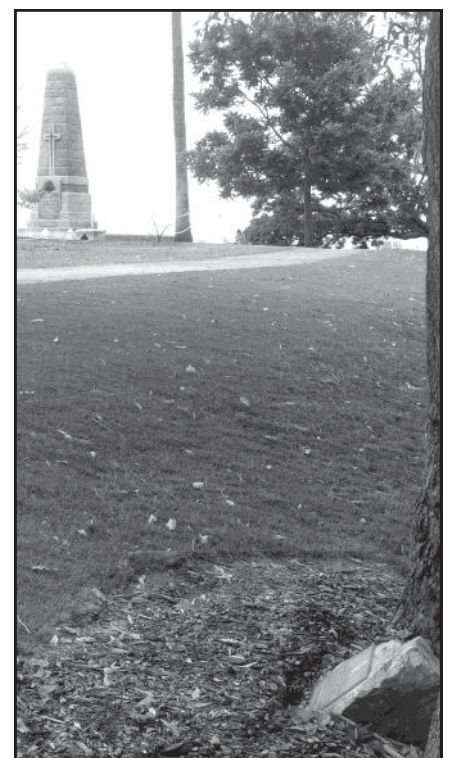
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If this list needs additions or  
 corrections or please notify the Editor  
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## Visit to King Park, Perth

Newsletter Editor, **Colin Block** holidayed in Perth recently and visited the 26th Battalion plaque located under a tree near the War Memorial at Kings Park.



## 31/51 Battalion connection

In early 1942 the **11th Brigade**, with its headquarters in Townsville, was allocated the defence of Far North Queensland. The **31st Battalion** was allocated to Townsville, the **26th** went to Charters Towers, and the **51st** to Cairns.

In March 1942 the 51st was relocated to Sellheim near Charters Towers. Townsville though was becoming increasingly important as a naval base and in April the 51st moved to Townsville. There were several Japanese air raids on the town and harbour while the brigade was in Townsville.

In order to meet the needs of the ever-growing war economy, along with the threat of a possible Japanese landing, in February 1943 the Federal Government released the men who had worked in essential industries from the army. When the rural workers were discharged the 31st and 51st became severely depleted. Hence, on 12 April 1943 the two battalions were merged, forming the **31st/51st Infantry Battalion**.

Leaving Australia in June 1943, the battalion travelled to Merauke in Dutch New Guinea, via Horn Island in the Torres Strait, arriving in July.

**Merauke Force** was comprised of units mostly from the 11th Brigade. Consequently, the 11th Brigade had the distinction of being the only Militia unit to have served outside Commonwealth territory.

In August 1944 the brigade was withdrawn from Dutch New Guinea and the 31st/51st travelled via Thursday Island to Townsville, for some well-appreciated leave.

The battalion, along with the rest of the brigade, then assembled at Strathpine for training, in preparation for its next deployment - Bougainville. Until now the 11th Brigade had spent the war doing garrison duties; but this was about to change.

In December 1944 the 11th Brigade, now the **26th**, 31st/51st, and 55th/53rd Battalions, moved to Bougainville. The brigade was responsible for the Northern and Central Sectors.

The Australians did not meet any major Japanese resistance until the battalion reached the Genga River. Here, at Tsimba Ridge, the Japanese had dug in and heavily fortified their position. After 21 days of continuous fighting the Japanese finally abandoned the ridge. The 31st/51st was then relieved by the **26th**, which continued the advance north.

Article source: An extract from [http://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit\\_11316.asp](http://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit_11316.asp)



*Bougainville. 1945-05-25. Troops of 31/51 Infantry Battalion coming ashore from barges onto the beach in the North Bougainville area where they will go into action under 11 Infantry Brigade. AWM092563*

## WW2 Chain of Command

<b>Army</b>	Two or more corps.
<i>Commander:</i>	General
<b>Corps</b>	30,000 or more men 2 or more divisions. Lieutenant General
<b>Division</b>	10,000 - 20,000 men 3 brigades. Major General
<b>Brigade</b>	2,500 - 5,000 men 3 battalions. Brigadier General
<b>Battalion</b>	550 - 1000 men 4 companies. Lieutenant Colonel
<b>Company</b>	100 - 225 men 3 platoons. Captain or Major
<b>Platoon</b>	30 - 60 men 3 sections. Lieutenant
<b>Section</b>	9 - 16 men. Corporal/Sergeant