

# 26 Battalion Association

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

President  
Jeff Collings

Vice President  
Colin Block

Editor of Newsletter  
Colin Block

Web: [www.26bn.org](http://www.26bn.org)

Email: [WebMaster26Bn@gmail.com](mailto:WebMaster26Bn@gmail.com)

# NEWSLETTER

November 2015

ISSUE 27



*"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."*

### Welcome to

### Newsletter No. 27

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

Just like the Ode states, "As we that are left grow old", we are all finding our age wearying us and there is naught we can do about it. But also consider the remaining veterans, now in

their nineties, who used every bit of courage as young men to keep the enemy from our shores.

Former President, Keith Miles sent me a handful of sketches drawn by the late Ron Davies, a 26th Battalion veteran. He was a very talented commercial artist,

as illustrated above.



Ron Davies

Last April, I was disappointed that I could not participate in the Anzac

Day march and reunion lunch in Melbourne. As it happens I was facing my own personal challenges.

Just before last Easter, I was diagnosed with a cancer that turned out to be non-Hodgkin lymphoma. I was told this type of cancer was curable with chemotherapy treatment. Last Anzac Day I had just undergone my first chemotherapy, so I was susceptible to picking up infections. However I was fortunate to be able to chat to veterans Vin Frawley and Bob Preston via mobile phone when they were at lunch.

It is now six months on and I have completed all my chemo treatments and my most recent scan shows that the cancer has cleared. Although I am feeling better every day, I still have some lingering side effects.

I was great to receive another email from Peter Nowlan who has always had a high interest in the history of the 26th Battalion

As always, your contribution to this Newsletter would be gratefully accepted.

Colin Block,  
Editor

## LETTERS

Dear Colin

I had to smile in the last Newsletter on the excerpt from the Captain Gibson memoir about the lost Lieutenant. We had a chap in that category who was filling in for Alan Lea. I can't think of his name.

Anyhow, we landed at Soraken Peninsula at some ungodly hour, pitch black, couldn't see your hand in front of you. Anyhow this fill-in chap says, "If you can see anything move in front of you, shoot!" Yes, you are right, it was him! [*the commanding officer*]

Another time out and I think the Japs were sending over a few mortars nowhere near us. So up a tree he climbs with his binoculars trying to see where the fire was coming from with all of the tree in front of him!

Anyhow, Alan Lea came back to us, thankfully.

Keith Miles



Keith Miles stands next to the 26th Battalion honour board (also below) mounted in the RSL at Charters Towers, Qld.



Ron Davies with Keith Miles and his wife Margery

## EMAILS

Although 26 Bn Assn was formed to represent those who served in the 26 Battalion during WW2, occasionally we receive emails from families of WW1, like this one from Bree-arne.

After her ten year anniversary of her diagnosis with MS, Bree-arne bravely participated in the Centenary Anzac Day parade in Canberra to remember her ancestors from the Chamley family. She writes in her email:

Hi Colin

I thought I'd forward this picture (below) from last ANZAC Day.

I had a couple of ancestors in WW1. One being in Galipoli, in the 26th Battalion.. I carried his name and patch on my jacket in the Canberra march.

We will remember them!

Bree-arne Marley



Hi Colin

This image is of my grandfather S.R. Golding.

The attached [shown below] are from little negatives we found amongst his photos.

Will have a hunt and see if I can come across anything else.

Suzie Lorenz

Salisbury Downs SA



Corporal Stephen Golding,  
26th Battalion, 1945



Above: A concert stage in Dutch New Guinea. The sign above reads "Nederland zal herrijzen" which translates to "Netherlands will rise"

Below: Tanah Merah



## EMAILS

Hi Colin

In Mount Isa for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ANZAC landings they unveiled a new statue a few weeks ago opposite the Civic Centre for this Anzac Day Service.

Directly opposite on the pedestrian crossing the Local Reserve unit a company of the 51st Battalion unveiled a 25-pounder gun and a sign setting out what happened at Porton Plantation in 1945.

Porton Plantation was located in Northern Bougainville and was the scene of a major clash with the Japanese.

During WW11 31/51 Battalion was the sister unit of the 26 Battalion.

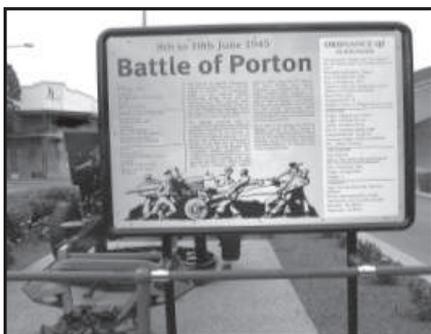
From memory 31/51 Battalion had taken over from the 26 Battalion when this action occurred or it was in support of operations by 26 Battalion.

I can remember a few old veterans mentioning it. I never expected to sign about the action. Obviously someone in the Local Reserve Unit decided to put it in.

Battalion Headquarters for 51 Battalion in Cairns in known as *Porton Barracks*.

Regards

Peter Nowlan.



Former assistant editor of this Newsletter, Elizabeth Davies wrote to us to let us know that her mother Anne Mackinnon passed away

on 6 May 2015 very quietly and peacefully.

Anne was amongst the first people



to support the formation of the 26 Battalion Association in Victoria. She came to the tree plaque ceremony and then to the service in the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance. She also went to the Anzac Day reunion lunches which she really enjoyed

Anne was born in Glasgow in 1923 and came to Australia as a toddler. She suffered from the bone disorder, rickets, as she was growing up in the bush at Running Creek, near Rathdowney via Kyogal in Queensland but after four years she returned to Scotland with an unusual Aussie/Scott accent.

After going through the Depression in Glasgow and just after starting employment at a paint and paper shop, WWII was declared. She joined the

## Vale Anne Mackinnon

Scottish Women's Timber Corps which was part of the Women's Land Army. The work of the Timber Corps included all the jobs involved with the forestry industry, including felling, stripping limbs, loading, crosscutting, working with horses and operating sawmills. During that time she wrote to serving soldiers, most of whom she had never met. They were not just notes but long twenty-plus page letters.

After the War, Anne came back to Australia this time to Victoria, where she met her future mother-in-law at Flinders Street Station when she assisted an elderly lady with her cases. They instantly struck up a friendship then and there, and eventually Anne married her son, Ted.

Anne went to the Timber Corps reunions that were held in Scotland biannually but after returning to Australia she couldn't attend, so she felt by attending all of her husband's 26th Battalion events it made up for it in a little way. Meeting author, Norm Turrell and all the other men from the Battalion who knew her husband Ted, helped Anne appreciate their mateship whenever they shared their memories.

The Association appreciates Anne's contribution and she will be missed, but her memory will live on.

*Left: 25 pounder gun and sign describing the Battle of Porton, 8th to 10th June 1945 by the 31/51 and 26 Battalions.*

*It is erected near the Civic Centre in Mount Isa, Qld*