

26 Battalion Association

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

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NEWSLETTER

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Assembly time in
Melbourne on Anzac Day
is 9.15am

*Above: Bougainville, 24 May 1945.
Lieutenant D.F. Chaplain, D Company,
26 Infantry Battalion briefing his patrol
and explaining enemy movements before
leaving the Company perimeter.*

AWM 092540

Welcome to Newsletter No. 34

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

It is important to note, for the
ANZAC Day March in Melbourne,
that there is a change in the
start time for the 26 Battalion.
We step off at 9.50am.
Assembly time is between 9.15am
and 9.45am. Full details are on
page 3.

I have come to the conclusion
that due to other commitments,
I am unable to continue as Editor
of this Newsletter.

If you or someone you know who
has an interest in our Association
and has the skills to voluntary
produce this Newsletter, our
readers and I would be very
grateful.

With today's electronic

communication it does not
matter where you are located, so
if you would like to give it a go
please email me on

WebMaster26Bn@gmail.com

Your contributions keep this
newsletter interesting. If you
have something relevant to share
we would love to hear from you.
Colin Block, Editor

LETTER

In his handwritten letter transcribed below, former President of the 26th Battalion Reunion Association, Keith Miles from Bundaberg, Qld and who will be 97 in June, jotted down some random memories of his time in the Army



Keith Miles and Colin Block, 2017

Dear Colin

Thanks for the Newsletter, it's always welcome and interesting to read.

This should be of interest to you with things which occurred while in the Army.

Firstly, the first reunion in 1986 was at Rocky RSL with 28 people.

Secondly, I did not know of the loss of life on Porton Peninsula by the 31/51 Bn [as reported in our newsletter last April].

A Company did two landings, one at Soraken Peninsula and another on Saposa Island which ended in tragedy with the loss of one chap (shot by a single Jap in his lookout position).

Now cop this! At Saposa we were dropped off by a boat that was to return at 10pm but they turned up early and our blokes opened fire and there was lead flying around all over the place for a while. But there was no one hurt.

After our landing on Soraken on some black late night, we went inland to a high piece of ground in a plantation. Two blokes stayed in the barge - no names! Anyhow we discovered we had no phone contact, so Les Grant and I were sent to see what the problem was and we came across a long piece cut out [of the telephone line]. So, hearts beating and praying, we went down to 9 Platoon. It was fixed the next day.

While we were in our camp there, this Jap came running along only to be shot plenty. This was in retaliation for Corporal Burton who was previously shot by a sniper while we were standing around.

One Sunday morning, in our underpants, [we were] laying around reading out-of-date newspapers, when we heard these planes and up there were eight Jap Bombers. We were in three big buildings and believe it or not, they dropped the bombs on the local natives huts, half a mile away. All we saw were a couple of bullet holes in the big concrete tanks.

There are a lot of Dutch cottages up there, which was a political prison, that were opposite us. It is on that big river running down from the ranges. Fresh water crocs were running on the banks - didn't go to say hello!

We were sent there to

extend the airstrips for fighter planes in the proposed operations. We had these four wheel drive trucks which kept breaking down, so no work got done there. Someone decided to go for a hike to try to reach the Fly River. So ten of us set out for ten days with leeches in your socks and head hunters [in] tree houses.

Anyhow on our last night we got the natives to build us beds up off the ground and it poured rain. We were walking in water up to our knees. Fun eh?

When coming home a Catalina flying boat came to take some home and we reckon there was 40 odd on her. It took miles, as we watched, before it got airborne. My mob came home on a DC3 landing on the west side of Cape York.

Then we were loaded on the "Canberra" for a trip to Townsville. But, after tea on deck, in front of us was a great sand bar sticking out a mile, so over the top they go, tearing the bottom out of the ship. So all barges, boats and anything else that floats were sent to get us off. Down the side on a rope ladder we went and onto these flat bottom boats and headed for Thursday Island. So after a couple of weeks on Thursday Island we got to Townsville and home and I was discharged on 6th June after four years and one month.

I am not expecting you to print any of this tirade of events, but I just thought that I would get this on paper.

Cheers,

Keith.

MELB ANZAC DAY MARCH & REUNION

Once again former 26th Battalion members and descendants are invited to march on ANZAC Day in Melbourne to join families of former members from our unit.

We will be meeting at the new time of **9.15am to 9.45am in Swanston St between Flinders Lane and Collins St** (look for 26 INFANTRY BN sign).

NEW TIME

Vice President, Alan Preston has secured adequate transport for those who are unable to march the full distance.

Immediately after the unit has completed their march, we will meet at the 26th Bn Tree - the third tree on the driveway from the Shrine, on the St Kilda Rd side.

After the parade, we will return to The George Hotel, 139 Cecil Street, South Melbourne (corner of Coventry Street) at 12.15pm for the reunion lunch. All are welcome.



The latest updates are on the website via this QR code or Web: 26bn.org/anzac-day.html



Above: Colin Block and Alan Preston hold the banner with veterans Vin Frawley, Laurie Hill and Bob Preston at the 2017 Reunion gathering at The George Hotel.



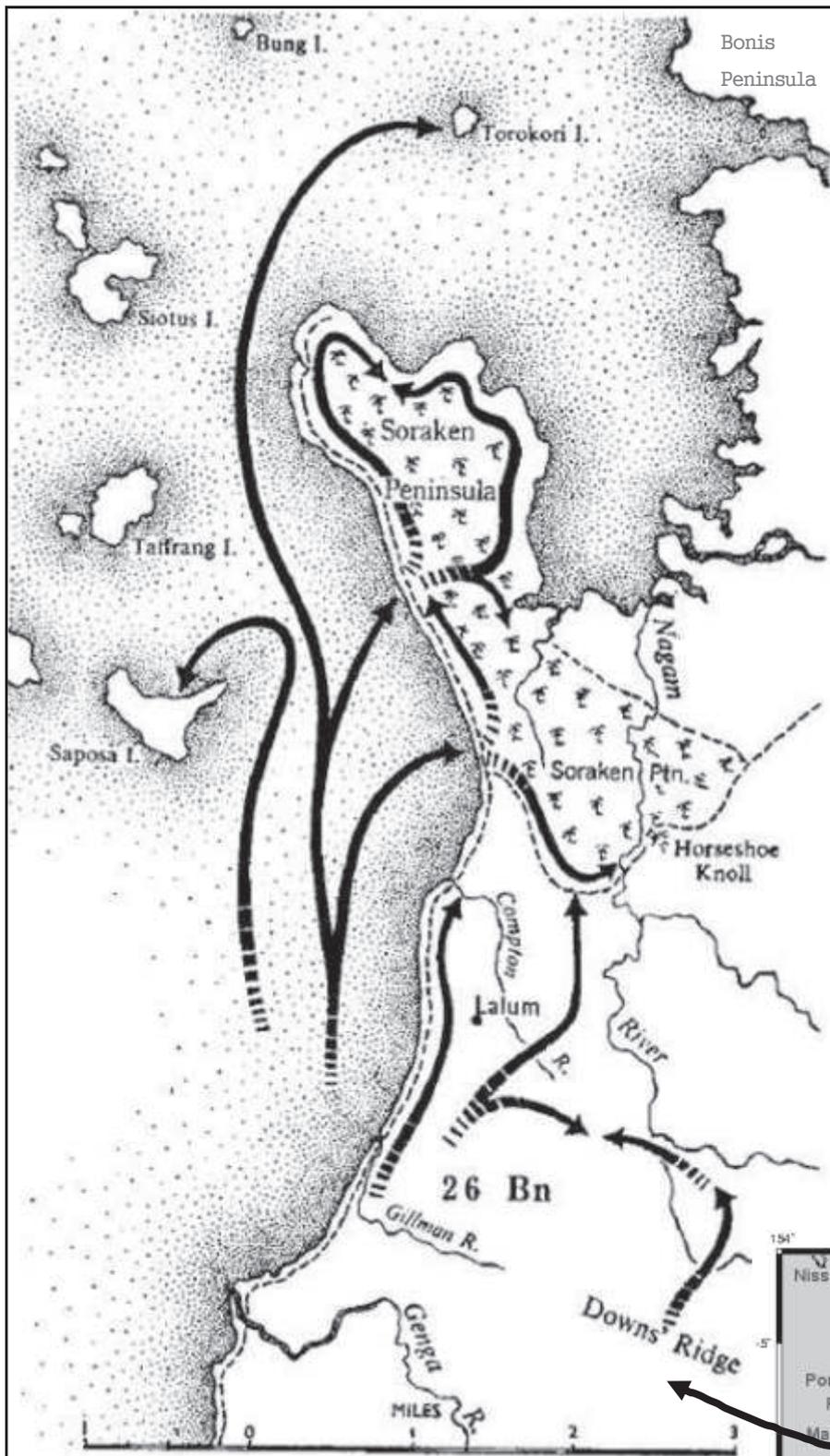
Left: Ken Flakemore in Melbourne on Anzac Day 2018

Which signs don't apply on a public holiday?

In the City of Melbourne on a public holiday, at any signs marked with any day of the week, you could park for free, for as long as you like. Other signs without a day of week, apply as normal. Please check signs before parking on the day.



BOUGAINVILLE ISLAND



Movements of the 26th Infantry Battalion on Bougainville Island, Northern Sector in 1945.

As their supplies dwindled, between May and June 1945, the Japanese sailors began to raid the Australian supply lines between Ruri Bay and Ratsua as they attempted to hold a position between Porton Plantation and Tarbut

Australian troops from the 11th Brigade continued their advance north from Tsimba Ridge in April and May 1945, clearing up to the Soraken Peninsula, which was captured by the middle of the month by the 26th Infantry Battalion.

Throughout May, the 26th had also carried out an amphibious landing on Torokori Island.

By the end of May, the Japanese fell back behind a series of fortified positions along the base of the Bonis Peninsula.

