



The Good Guts

Official Newsletter of
 39th AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION
 (1941-43) ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED
 PUBLICATION NUMBER 100018459



Views expressed in material submitted are not necessarily the views of this Association or the editor of *the good guts*. Responsibility for all comment is that of the author of the article. Information regarding member's addresses may be published in the newsletter from time to time for fraternal purposes. Members not wishing this information to be disclosed must advise the editor accordingly. The Logo and Colour Patch may not be used without **permission**.

No. 241
 February
 2023

Welcome to 2023



BBQ- 15TH JANUARY

Kerrie willed the BBQ to cook the sausages while others caught up on all the news of the past year.



Members came from far and wide, even from the Northern Territory. It was great to see Barry Burrows with us. Jo Howard was so proud to have her family with her as they viewed her father's panel on the Walk of Honour



Merren Stockdale was amazed when she discovered she had the lucky ticket for the medal box. Dawn and Trevor Ingram enjoying their lunch as they juggled their plates on their knees.



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear 39th Veterans, Family and Friends,

Firstly, I must acknowledge our two surviving veterans, John Hannah and Jack McLeod. John is going along well and it won't be too long before he turns 101 in February 2023. We wish both Jack and John all the best for the coming year.

We heard the sad news recently of the passing of Pat Akhurst. Pat was a staunch supporter of the Association since its inception and Pat attended virtually all Association events, sometimes with her extended family. Pat stood side-by-side with her husband John, who was a long-time Committee member and took a keen interest in Association activities. We will miss her presence immensely.

We had a successful annual Picnic/BBQ at One Tree Hill in the Dandenongs on Sunday 15th January. A great day was had by all and we also held a quiet service for our veterans past and present. We must highlight and acknowledge the work of Merren, Norman and Kerry for the enormous amount of effort that was put into the BBQ. The food, drink, plates, cutlery and Association merchandise plus many other items are all provided by this hard working family. Thank you Merren, Norman and Kerry for making this event the success it was and for all the work you do behind the scenes at all of our events.

A big vote of thanks to Alfred Mallia for his continued support in changing the veteran plaques at One Tree Hill every month and for having the flags available flying proudly for all to see at our BBQ.

Our thanks also go out to Matt Hoogland at Parks Victoria for his continued support of our Association and his Parks Victoria staff who were on duty during the day.

Anzac Day looming on the horizon in April and it will be here quicker than you think. We look forward to seeing Association members on the day and afterwards at lunch. The venue is normally a hotel in South Melbourne and we share lunch with the 2/14th and 2/16th Battalion Associations. There will be updates closer to the time in the Good Guts magazine and our various social media sites.

The Anzac Schools event at the Dandenong Ranges National Park will be taking place on Wednesday 26th April, which is an outstanding service for all the schools in the area. So for those who haven't attended before, it is a wonderful service with local school children and the event is shared with the 2/14th and 2/16th Battalion Associations.

We keep this Association operating in the memory of our living and past veterans and will make sure we actively keep families and members involved which is the long-term future of our Association.

I look forward to an exciting next 12 months and wish our veterans and members all the best for the coming year.

Deeds not Words

Ross Darrigan
President

Veterans Roll Call

As we go to press, to our knowledge,
we have 2 surviving 39th Battalion Veterans.

DISTRIBUTION

Victoria 2: John Hannah, Jack McLeod

39th Australian Infantry Battalion 1941-1943 Association Inc

<u>PRESIDENT</u>	Ross Darrigan
<u>IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT</u>	Merren Stockdale
<u>VICE PRESIDENT</u>	David Bellairs
<u>HON. SECRETARY</u>	Malcolm Owen
<u>TREASURER</u>	Rosemary Moore
<u>MEMBER</u>	Kerry Sumbler
<u>MEMBER</u>	David Howell
<u>MEMBER</u>	Dylan Howard
<u>NEWS LETTER EDITOR</u>	Mary Holloway
<u>MEMBER-Qld Rep</u>	George Friend
<u>MEMBER</u>	John Redmond
<u>MEMBER</u>	Norman Stockdale
<u>MEMBER</u>	Keith Hallet
<u>MEMBER 1/39 BATTALION WW1 1916-1919</u>	Tim Fitzgerald
<u>BATTALION BUGLER</u>	Darcy Manks
<u>INTERSTATE CONTACTS</u>	
	NSW Judith Matuschka
	QLD George Friend

39th BATTALION WEBSITE and Mailing Address	www.39battalion.com	PO Box 552 Gisborne Vic 3437
--	--	---



Editorial

Australia Day has just passed, marking another year in the history of our remarkable country. What makes it remarkable, I hear you ask?

Arguably every loyal Australian would give a different answer to that question. Some would point to our flora and fauna. Australia has the oldest continuous indigenous culture of any country. It boasts the oldest known living plants in the world; it is the home of the only creature which lays eggs but suckles its young; it has flowers, birds and animals not found anywhere else in the world; it is the homeland of many distinguished scientists such as the discoverer of penicillin; it won sixteen cricket tests in a row and then lost the one that would create the record; it has you and it has me; and the list could go on and on.


Recently, referring to the role of the 39th in the PNG campaign the following remark was once made to one of our veterans, "You must have felt very proud to have been entrusted with the task of keeping Australia safe": a statement that caused him to pause and reflect and make this reply, "I don't believe any of us thought we were doing anything remarkable – we were simply doing what needed to be done", – but history has shown that it was indeed quite remarkable. A seemingly invincible army was stopped by ordinary people faithfully doing their allotted duties. It is so easy for us of an older generation to look at the present day world and wring our hands in horror and express despair about the future. How can these tattooed, dread locked, weirdly dressed and bejewelled creatures ever be responsible citizens. The remarkable thing is that in years to come they will be having the same thoughts and fears about their successors.


The remarkable fact is that we are all really quite remarkable and our planet really is in good hands. And the plain truth is that there are no other hands that can take over its management. It behoves us all to roll up our sleeves and do our bit for this remarkable land of ours. Advance Australia Fair.



MEMBER NEWS



-  It is with great sadness that Merren Stockdale passed on the news that Pat Akhurst has passed away. Pat was the widow of veteran and life member, John Akhurst. She was a loyal and strong supporter of the 39th Battalion Association for many, many, years and her laughter will be greatly missed at all our functions. As Merren prepared for our annual BBQ she had a vivid picture of Pat at one of the picnics when we had a singalong. She and Norman were going full throttle and the whole crowd were thoroughly enjoying it. We send our love and best wishes to the whole Akhurst family, we too will miss her very much.
- Congratulations to Julia Stockdale, grand daughter of Merren and Norman Stockdale, who became a Junior Shrine Ambassador for 2023 at a service held at the Shrine last last year.
- At the same Shrine service the late George McKenzie was honoured as a past Life Governor of the Shrine and his widow, Lorraine, was presented with a certificate acknowledging his contribution to the Shrine. George was also a loyal and supportive member of the 39th and is greatly missed.

-  Phil Clover, a past Secretary of the 2/16th Battalion Association passed away recently and his funeral was held on the 3rd January in Pinnaroo. Phil was a great contributor to the 2/16th and was held in high regard by the members. We extend our sympathy to his family and all members of the 2/16th Battalion Association.
- A number of our members have recently been unwell. We particularly send our best wishes to veteran, Jack McLeod. Elaine Mc Cunn is also hoping that her ankle heals soon after her third time breaking the same one. We wish you all speedy recovery and hope you are feeling much better very soon.

- Although Christmas is behind us, or rather eleven months away, this photo of Tim Fitzgerald as the family Santa cannot be ignored. Looks like this Santa visit was well received by the younger members of the family.



- Murphy's of Healesville offered to donate a medium sized medal box to be raffled at our annual BBQ at One Tree Hill. As we do not usually have a raffle at the BBQ, it was decided to invite those present to take a ticket when putting money in the donation box at lunchtime. It was proposed that the money we raise from the lunch donation tickets be put towards paying for a panel for each of the 2 remaining veterans. Murphy's of Healesville were notified of exactly what the raised money would go towards. There was a well deserving winner in Merren Stockdale who could not believe her good fortune.



- As she walked through the airport in early January, Mary Holloway was grabbed by a passenger and hugged. She was thrilled to discover it was Summer Lynch, great daughter of Jim Cowey, who had come back to visit family for Christmas and was on her way home to Ireland.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



39th Battalion Events

Proposed Calendar Dates for 2023

Events printed in bold are events the 39th Bn Association is running or helping to run.

*Italics are events to which Association invited * = cost*

MONTH	DATE	EVENT	TIME	LOCATION
February 2023	12th	The annual Australian Ex Prisoners of War Memorial Service	1100	The Australian Ex Prisoners of War Memorial, Lake Wendouree
	14th	Committee Meeting	1900	TBC
March 2023	14th	Committee Meeting	1900	TBC
April 2023	11th	Committee Meeting	1900	TBC
	25th	ANZAC Day March	TBC	Melbourne
	25th	ANZAC Day March	TBC	Brisbane
	26	Anzac Day Schools Service	1100	Kokoda Terrace Dandenong Ranges National Park
May 2023	16th	Committee Meeting	1900	TBC
June 2023	13th	Committee Meeting	1900	TBC
July 2023	10th	Committee Meeting	1900	TBC
	23rd	Annual 2/14 th Bn Association Lunch	TBC	Brisbane
August 2023	8th	Kokoda Day Service	1300	OTH Dandenong Ranges Natl Park
	8th	Kokoda Day Service	1000	Cascade Gardens, Gold Coast. Qld
	12th	Kokoda Day Football Match	1330	Reid Oval Warrnambool
	13th	Kokoda Day Pilgrimage	1400	Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance
	13 th	Kokoda Day Service	1100	Sherwood RSL, Brisbane. Qld
	15th	Committee Meeting	1900	TBA
September 2023	12th	Committee Meeting	1900	TBC
October 2023	10th	Committee Meeting	1900	TBC
November 2023	11 th	Remembrance Day	TBA	
	14th	Committee Meeting	1900	TBC
	23rd	TSS Cadet Annual Passing Out Parade	TBA	Southport School. Gold Coast
December 2023	12th	Committee Meeting	1900	TBC

Queensland Members' News

Greetings and Happy New Year for 2023!

What more can one say?

Last year in Queensland, Members saw the conduct of two amazing Kokoda Day 80th Anniversary events, and sadly the passing of our two remaining Queensland WWII 39Bn Veterans, Max Kirwan OAM and George Turner. In August, with over 200 people gathered in the morning at Cascade Gardens for a very special Commemorative Address by the Governor General of Australia, followed by the Official Opening of the new Kokoda Track Walk at Land Warfare Centre (LWC) Canungra. His Excellency's speeches delivered at both events can be found at <https://www.gg.gov.au/about-governor-general/media/80th-anniversary-kokoda-day-cascade-gardens-broadbeach-qld> and <https://www.gg.gov.au/about-governor-general/media/opening-kokoda-track-memorial-walk-kokoda-barracks-canungra-qld> both recognising the magnificent deeds of both the 39Bn and the PIB.

We farewelled Max in a fitting service and celebration of his life in his hometown of Melbourne, attended by many mourners, 39Bn Association Committee Members and Queensland Representatives.

Sadly, only two weeks after the Cascades Service and Canungra Opening, both attended by George and his family, we farewelled him as he passed onto higher service, leaving behind a legacy of generations continuing to serve the Nation (grandson and great grandson both serving in the Australian Regular Army).

We welcome Ian Turner, son of George to the Association and Nicole Kirwan to join our ranks.



Later in the year, I was able to join the 39OSB the day the Unit came off the Track at Owers Corner, 80 years to the day, the original 39Bn also came off the Track on 9 Sep '42. This was a special occasion, and they were greeted with the Banners of both the 39Bn and PIB Associations.



2023 will see us settle into the usual pattern of Commemorative Events here in Queensland, and please diarise the following dates/information:

Tuesday 25 Apr 23: ANZAC Day Brisbane Parade (ADPB): Association Members are invited to participate and join the TSS Banner Party to represent the Association in one of the larger State Capital marches. Details to follow.

Jul 23: Annual 2/14th Bn Association Lunch, details to be advised.

Tuesday 8 Aug 23: Kokoda Day Service at Cascade Gardens.

Sun 6 August 23: Sherwood RSL Kokoda Day Service, to be confirmed.

Sat 11 Nov 23: Annual Remembrance Day Services, details to be advised.

Nov 23: TSS Cadet Unit Annual Passing Out Parade, details to be advised.

Keep an eye out for Notices and further information on the website and next Edition of the Good Guts. It would be fantastic to see a good representation of Association Members to attend and support each of these special occasions.

FACTIS NON VERBIS.

George Friend, OAM

Life Member (2006)

Queensland Representative

39th Australian Infantry Battalion (1941-43) Assoc Inc.

PO Box 7384 GCMC Bundall QLD 9726 Australia

w: www.39battalion.com

e: rsf@kokoda.com

m: 0418 418 282

PS. CHANGES OF ADDRESS, EMAILS, PHONE CONTACTS ETCv

Final note, just a reminder to Queensland 39Bn Assn Members, would you all please ensure all your contact details are updated with the Assn Secretary (Mal Owen) AND your Annual Subs have been paid! If you know of anyone who may not have access to the Internet or are not IT capable, could you kindly assist them with the information contained If you have not joined the 39Bn Assn, please consider and sign up via the above 39Bn Assn website.

MANY THANKS!



Another Veteran's Story

Corporal Reginald George Edgell
V68439/VX120253
B Company
39th Battalion

Written by Jo Howard (Daughter) in collaboration with Dylan Howard (Grandson)

Before the War

Reginald George Edgell was born on 17th September 1912 in Tungamah, in country Victoria, third in a family of four and living much of his early years on a pig farm. His mother passed away of tuberculosis when he was only a boy and Reg was brought up mainly by his older sister and other relatives in various locations around the area as his father was frequently away from home. Young Reg and his brother and sisters walked miles across paddocks barefooted to attend school.

At the age of 14 Reg went down to Melbourne to be indentured into hairdressing and boarded with a family friend. He served out his indentureship and worked in barber shops in Moonee Ponds and Ascot Vale. Like many young men who felt that they had a duty to serve their country and with the lure of an adventure overseas, Reg enlisted at Moonee Ponds in 1941 at the age of 29. He was several years older than many of the young soldiers in his battalion. He continued to ply his trade during the war as veteran mate Cecil Driscoll remembered fondly 'he made a few bob in the war as the company barber'.

After a short training period with B company 39th Battalion, Reg boarded the Aquitana in early 1942 and set sail for Port Moresby with the plan to build a fortress. It wasn't long before they were ordered to advance up the Kokoda track to halt the advance of the Japanese soldiers. B Company including Corporal Edgell would fire their first shots in the first stand in Kokoda, again at Deniki and then follow up with an incredibly brave stance at the infamous battle of Isurava.

Reginald had his 30th birthday as the courageous Australians were on the retreat from battling the Japanese offensive at Ioribaiwa Ridge.

In late November 1942, the 39th Battalion were called on to advance to the northern beachheads and assist in the efforts to break through the large enemy defensive positions which had been established there. Alan 'Kanga' Moore who had by this stage become lieutenant of B company at Gona remembers Corporal Reginald Edgell fondly as "a hell of a nice guy" and recently told the story of the lead up to the attack in early December: "Some information was needed about the positions of the Japanese so one night Corporal Edgell went out alone across Gona Creek and into the Japanese positions, crawling around under the cover of darkness. He came back unscathed and the information that he brought back helped a lot with the attack the next day". The next day, and having seen enough of the fighting already, those courageous men gave it one last push to breach the enemy lines.

Extract from Lt Col Ralph Honner in 'To Kokoda and Beyond'

'There was little left of the two platoons when they at last withdrew to dig in under cover. They had lost twelve killed and forty-six wounded and all they had gained was fifty yards of useless kunai and the knowledge that the enemy defence was no easy nut to crack. But it could be breached. A section led by Corporal R.G Edgell had been detailed to give them protection on the other flank by quieting any posts

An extract from 'Mud over Blood Revisited'

'On 6th December 1942 at Gona a company attack on the enemy's defences met with such strong resistance..... Corporal Edgell led the only section that succeeded in breaking through the enemy's defences. He carried on through a network of enemy posts until he reached the mission village and there finding that his party was the only one to get through, decided to lead them back to another part of the front. On the way back he made a surprise flank attack on an enemy post. With his Owen gun and in full career blazing away, he killed a dozen enemy holding the post and led his section safely back to our lines'.

Kanga Moore and Cecil Driscoll both remarked that it was a miracle that Edgell came out intact for his actions. "Men were getting wiped out and Reginald was leading his men straight up the middle and they kept going and going" Cecil said. It would be during the continued Gona advance at Amboga River, at the Village two miles west of Gona only five days after his this action, that Reginald would be wounded by machine gun fire, miraculously escaping certain death by a matter of mere centimetres.

An extract from Mud over Blood Revisited

'Corporal Edgell commanded the leading section moving up the track to make contact with the enemy. An enemy machine gun post fired on the section and Corporal Edgell received two bullet wounds in his right arm. Using his Owen gun, he switched it into his left hand and immediately rushed the position killing the three machine gunners and silencing the gun. This enabled the section to establish itself far enough forward to allow the Company to move well up to launch its attack from forward of the swamp, which the enemy machine gun post had covered. In this action Corporal Edgell had two of his men wounded. He assisted in their evacuation and reported the situation before he himself sought RAP attention to his own wounds'

Distinguished Conduct Medal

For his actions at Gona, Reginald was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM), the nation's second highest award for Gallantry behind the Victorian Cross. When the war was over, he would remain as one of only two members of the 39th Battalion to have been awarded a DCM, with the second being Corporal Stanley Ellis whom also received one at Gona twelve days later.

Following his wounding, Reg was transported by stretcher back to an airfield and eventually flown to the mainland and later to Victoria where he spent about a year in Heidelberg Repatriation hospital recovering from his wounds and the effects of malaria. Due to the subsequent loss of function in some of his fingers on his right hand as a result of the gunshot wounds, Reg was unable to return to work in his former profession as a barber. He was discharged from the army in October 1943 and returned to live with his married sister in Camberwell.

Reginald gained employment at Kodak in the emulsion processing department and remained there until his slightly early retirement on a TPI pension thirty years later. It would be during his time at Kodak that he met stenographer Doris. They married a few years later and had two children, later in life than most of their family and friends. He rode his bike to work for many years, loved his family and garden and kept reasonable health. Reg used his original Barbers kit to cut his two children's hair until they were teenagers.

However his physical health from middle age was affected no doubt by his war experience and his insistence on smoking cigarettes without filters - like those handed out during the years in the army. He suffered a series of strokes in his final years but his courage and resilience shone through during those difficult times also. He was always considered a gentleman by those who knew him. He remarried Marjery in his senior years and she encouraged him to reflect and talk about the war a little more.

In the early 1990's and almost 50 years after the war, in researching for his book 'Gona's Gone', Peter Brune contacted Reg and visited him and showed him a map of Gona. I was present when Peter was asking him to point out the tracks used during the assaults at the northern beachheads. Reg was able to point to the map but unable to speak as he was totally overcome by emotion, in a way I had never witnessed before.

Reginald passed away in 1995 at the age of 82 and is remembered as a wonderful husband, father, grandfather and a real gentleman. The original Bugler from the 39th Battalion played the Last Post at his funeral in honour of their mateship and their mutual experiences fighting for our country. It was a very moving tribute.

Trek to Kokoda

In April 2019, I went on the Non-Trekking Tour organised by Kokoda Historical.

The opportunity to visit PNG and particularly Kokoda and the northern beachheads of Gona, Sananada and Buna allowed me to understand and learn more about the experiences of my father and his mates from the 39th and associated battalions who traversed that rugged jungle terrain to get there. It provided me with a chance to feel my father's presence again and seek answers to the questions I am sorry I never asked him before he passed.

Like many veterans Reg was reticent to speak of the Kokoda Trail as he called it. Some of the small snippets of conversations I recall from my childhood in relation to my father's wartime experiences were of him alluding to "the smell of death" the unspeakable cruelty of the Japanese, and the fact he could never eat rice again, let alone any form of Asian food, even as it came into fashion to do so for many Australians in more modern times and his later years.

To be standing on the grey sands at Gona beach and to visualise it being covered with hundreds of bodies of both Japanese and Australians and to hear of the mouldy Japanese rice being the only available food for days, if in fact any, helped me to put those snippets into awful context.

My father did speak highly of the Fuzzy Wuzzy angels and put his life being saved after being wounded, down to their gentle care and attention as they carried him on a stretcher for days as he recalled. He also gave credit to the maggots that were laid in his gaping wound - which somehow prevented the travel of infection.

Reg was never one to attend RSL gatherings of veterans, stating that he didn't wish to recount stories from the war. However as a family for many years we attended the Kokoda day service in August. I recall what a sombre occasion it was with all those names of dead soldiers being read out at the Shrine of Remembrance, but then there was a distinct sense of jovial comradeship at the afternoon tea held with his living mates from the 39th afterwards.

My father's inability to discuss the horrors of war led to me not being keen to probe further while he was alive, but the trip to PNG allowed me to join many more dots. I felt that it also provided me with some 'closure' along the path of associated grief, which I think may be common to descendants of veterans.

My mother, who passed away 20 years before my father, had told me as a child how brave he had been and about his DCM medal, but I remember being shocked to find out that he had actually killed Japanese soldiers, as it seemed so out of character for this gentle man I knew. So I guess it was hard to reconcile. And unlike other kids who wore their grandfathers' medals to school for Anzac day, I was never allowed to wear my fathers' medals to school in case I lost them. I now understand why they were so cherished.

My father never marched or attended an Anzac Day service, but we always watched the Melbourne March on television and came to recognise the banner of the 39th Battalion. So it has been a privilege to become re-acquainted with that Mud over Blood symbol and Banner in recent years with joining the 39th Battalion Association.

My father had no respect for General Blamey's leadership nor 'the Yanks' who he felt took much of the glory immediately after the war. Growing up in Reservoir, a suburb near Kingsbury, I recall my father telling me that Kingsbury was named after his mate from the AIF who got a Victorian Cross at Isurava. I was reminded of this when I saw Captain Bruce Kingsbury's final resting place at Bomana War Cemetery. The tour helped me put some of these snippets from childhood that I recall into better perspective.

My son Dylan has always shown an interest in war history and took a similar opportunity to visit PNG also in April 2019. He simultaneously embarked on walking the Kokoda Track as well as touring the northern beachheads of Gona, Sanananda and Buna. On his tour he reflected about his "Poppy" who he has fond memories of, but with whom he never got the chance to discuss the war with either.

As our two Kokoda Historical Tours ran parallel last April, we were very lucky to be able to share Anzac Day with both tour groups at Bomana War Cemetery and lay the wreath on behalf of the 39th Battalion. This was a true honour and one that we will both never forget.

In writing this I would like to express my gratitude to Alan 'Kanga' Moore and Cecil Driscoll for recently sharing their stories with my son Dylan, to David Howell for imparting his knowledge of the Kokoda story and the research he did in preparation for our trips to Papua New Guinea in 2019. I would also like to acknowledge the 39th Battalion Association for all they do to honour the memory of those brave men who fought so gallantly against indomitable odds in defence of our country.

Jo Howard 2019

Reprinted from August 2019 Good Guts



Kipling's Korner

The Men Who Make The Stew

We may point out all the factors that we think had won the war;
We may boast of decorations that gallant men of ours have won;
We may talk about the good work done by the Army Service Corps,
Or of the men who bravely stood behind a stuttering Lewis gun;

But there's one group of Diggers to whom strong words of praise are due;
It's the greasy, grimy chaps that kept the troops supplied with stew,
We may think back on the dangers of the old days on the Track,
We may prate about hard times for those who fought and won it back!

We often had to worry whether food would reach us on the Track
Where we stood or slipped in mud and water and mumbled "Up you Jack";
For we knew that, black and grimy, somewhere just beyond the Fuss,
Some good old brother Diggers were making army stew for us.

We may brag about the dangers that we faced through nights of storm,
When the Hirohito's soldiers threw hurtful scraps of steel about;
And we cursed accursed Tojo till the atmosphere grew warm,
And wondered if ever the Brass would pull us out.

But the cooks were ever cooking, through the cold and rain and heat
For they had to feed the army; and the troops should always eat.
We may growl about the battles that we fought on blistered feet,
With backs, and hearts, that almost broke time and time again;

But the blessed cooks were with us and we had some grub to eat,
To build our hopes and feed the worms to ease our stomach pains.
And an epicurean pleasure, and a certain dubious peace of mind
Was engendered by the knowledge - of the cooks on behind.

Armies march upon their stomachs, so old Napoleon said.
And thoughts like this have come to more than just a few
There's a great sustaining power for the fighting men ahead
In the hopeful promise of a dixie full of hot and steaming stew.

And our hearts were singing praises as we backed our carts for more
To the grimy, greasy Digger cooks who helped to win the war,

*This was copied from another Association Newsletter, the identity of which has been mislaid.
We apologise for not being able to acknowledge the original source. Ed.GG.*

Cookhouse, Bootless Bay, PNG



TAKE TIME FOR A LAUGH



ROBERT (BOB) MCDONALD (1936-2009)

Nearly every trekker who walks the Kokoda Track passes through McDonald's Corner but how much thought is ever given to the family behind the name. The October 2009 Good Guts carried a tribute to Bob McDonald written by Wayne Rotherham and is reprinted here with other recollections of the McDonald family from families of 39th veterans.

A tribute from Wayne Rotherham



I was saddened to hear of the recent passing of Bob McDonald. I was very fortunate to have walked the Track from Owers to Kokoda with Bob in 2007. Bob spoke at length about his childhood and has many fond memories of his dad PJ, and living on the plantation near McDonalds Corner. As all trekkers do, we stopped at the monuments at Iloilo to pay our respects, and it was wonderful to have Bob explain the circumstances which led to his dad taking that now famous picture of Captain Sam Templeton and his company marching off from McDonalds Corner.

Bob spoke of the old homestead and likened it to Tara out of gone with the wind. Always the sceptic, I asked him how could such a beautiful home be built in such harsh and remote conditions. He said, "Lets try and find the house, I'll show you". Bob and I with a few others broke away from the main group and drove back to where Bob thought the house might be.

We went bush and walked for a while and suddenly the land opened up and here was this two storey, white timber home with pillars and archways. Although now dilapidated, I could see just how splendid the house must have been. Bob and I went inside and he showed me his bedroom, and the room where the pool table once stood. Bobs eyes welled up as he related the wonderful stories of his earlier years in the home. Bob was a great story teller. After we left and just before arriving at the archways at Owers Corner to begin our Trek, an old Papuan gentleman raced up and hugged Bob. It was really emotional, as his father was PJ's driver on the plantation. He heard Bob had visited the homestead, and now aged in his 70's, raced to catch up to us to see Bob.



Bob was a very fit and strong man. I recall walking down a very steep part of the track and Bob slipped, I couldn't grab him in time and he tumbled head over heels all the way to the bottom. I was sure it was going to be a medi vac but he bounced up as he hit the bottom and said "Wow that was fun" and off he went. He was a kind, generous man and my son Robert, and daughter Erica who were also with us, were very privileged to have been part of the informal mentoring role he adopted. "Remember when you all went ahead and Bob staged the ambush from the Japanese weapons pits and scared the hell out of us!" – he had a great sense of humour too.



Bob, thanks for the Books you put together, and were so proud of. I bought one each for Robert and Erica, and I have one pride of place on my office desk. With your inscription inside the cover, it serves as a great inspiration.

I thought I'd just share a couple of these memories, and a few pictures I took whilst on the Trek with Bob. RIP old mate!.

Gwen Salmon, widow of Alf Salmon, wrote at the time

"It was with great sadness that I read of Bob McDonald's death in your recent edition of the GG and my loving sympathy goes out to Patti and all members of his family. We have all lost a wonderful friend. As I read that Bob and Patti had kept the letter of appreciation from the Battalion for their hospitality I was overwhelmed with wonderful memories. It was because of their hard work that the celebration of the establishment of the memorial at McDonald's Corner took place. What a wonderful day it turned out to be!

To the veterans this was a very special spot; from here on they would be on their own. Just what did happen to them is now history. But the fact that their mates who made the supreme sacrifice, and also their own efforts, would be remembered by generations to come consoled them. They had not fought in vain.

The Association's first pilgrimage was in 1967 to mark the 25th anniversary of the Battle for Kokoda. There were 62 pilgrims who made the trip. From memory. I think 49 of the pilgrims were veterans and the other 13 were wives or relatives.

Much of the information is in Alf's Scrap Book which is in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra Of great interest is a letter from Bob McDonald to Alf giving a sketch of the metal figure he intended to have erected during our pilgrimage in 1967 in time for our visit. Also in the Scrap Book is the front page of the Herald/Sun, just showing a large photo of Bob McDonald outside his home at Ilolo, dated August 1942. This, followed by a large list of names, give all the casualties of the first encounter with the Japanese. Alf's name is on it. I am sure you would be able to get a copy of this letter, at a small cost, and of the newspaper cutting.



During the ceremony at McDonald's Corner in 1967 Bob McDonald presented a photograph taken by his father, P J McDonald, of Captain Sam Templeton leading B Company off into the jungle to meet the Japanese. The photo is a bit faded but it has been enlarged and framed (at Bob's expense) and is now one of the most highly prized possessions of the Battalion. Also present at the ceremony were members of the Papuan Infantry Battalion with their flag, the Union Jack, on display, as well as some of the native

carriers who brought the supplies up to the front line and carried the wounded on the way back.

It is at this point that I think the men who flew the "Biscuit Bombers" should get a mention. The recent tragedy in PNG when 13 people lost their lives in a plane crash in the jungle near Isurava shows how dangerous flying conditions can be there.

I enclose a photo of Horton Davies (21 July 1913 – 14 Sept 2007) who flew in supplies to the 39th. I sent it to the National War Memorial and asked that it be included with Alf's Scrap Book but they rejected it and returned it to me.

One other last thing that I can remember after the ceremony, apart from the beautiful luncheon, was the tour Bob gave us to show how the sap from the rubber trees was collected and treated until it became a flexible solid which was rolled out like a long carpet and then cut into sections and rolled up and secured ready for export.

I think the Battalion should have its own name and "The Jungle" beside it.

For example the word

ANZAC conjures up GALLIPOLI and all that stands for;

INFANTRY BATTALION & TRENCH WARFARE creates a [picture of MENIN GATE

39TH BATTALION (1941-43) conjures up THE JUNGLE and all that stands for.

When we were in Port Moresby for the 1972 pilgrimage Alf and I were presented with a beautiful oil painting by Meta Hawthorne of the jungle. When we came home we gave it "pride of place" over the mantelpiece in our dining room. It has graced our home ever since and has been the talking point of all who visited us. Invariably it ends up with the story of the 39th Battalion and the Kokoda Track. To me it shows the jungle as it was then and not the manicured version today where every trekker has two porters and all they carry is their own food. The jungle speaks for itself and I would like to think that in every history text book in our schools the picture of the jungle should be included when setting out the exploits of our 39th Battalion.

I am enclosing a photograph of Meta Hawthorne's painting for your information.



In his 1942 diary, Peter Holloway also recalls visiting the McDonald plantation. His diary entry for the 10th July 1942 reads as follows, "Went up to Ilola with Captain Addams. Had dinner at McDonalds. It was beautiful"

What Peter did not record in his diary but spoke about much later, is that he was sitting out in the jeep waiting for the Captain when he was invited to join the group for the meal. On their return to the jeep there was a bullet hole in the seat where Peter had been sitting.



TSS Cadets News

St Alban's Chapel ~ a part of TSS' history

At the very core of The Southport School is St Alban's Chapel – a place of worship, happiness and commitment to the Anglican ethos.

As one of the oldest buildings on the Gold Coast, this beautiful chapel with its magnificent stained glass windows and beautiful English oak ceiling and pews is nearing its centenary and is a true tribute to the foresight of the School's founder. Canon Horace Henry Oxon.

When Canon Dixon opened his school in 1901, on the site of the Queensland Governor's former holiday residence, he visualised that a chapel commanding views of the school should be the school's first purpose-built building and from this would develop the Christian spirit that forms the rich tapestry of TSS' history and tradition.

The Founder also recognised the service given by many of his young charges who had fought and died for their country in World War I and thought that the chapel would be a suitable dedication to their memory. Prior to the building of St Alban's church services and religious studies were held by the Founder, who had originally been posted to Southport as rector for the region, in an annex next to the classrooms of 1905.

It had always been Dixon's desire to build a separate chapel for worship but construction had to be delayed until the Armistice had been signed in November 1918. From that date onwards, Dixon wasted no time in setting about planning construction of the chapel in memory of those past students who had died. He felt the beautiful Queen's College chapel at Cambridge was the perfect design to replicate at TSS after discussing his plans with the architect of St John's Cathedral in Brisbane, Robin Dods.

It was estimated that the chapel would cost £5000 and, after gaining support from the School Council, the task of raising the monies began in earnest. This was not to be an easy task but, with help from the resurrected Old Southportians' Association fund-raising began to achieve its goal and by the end of December 1919 a total of £1403/10/5d had been raised. A further £453 was raised in following months so it was decided in 1920 that the project would go ahead.

The collegiate-style chapel with seating facing inwards towards a central aisle, as seen in many English universities and colleges, was designed by Brisbane architects Atkinson & Conrad. By the following June construction had begun by local builder George Carter who had built a number of distinguished homes & buildings in Southport including the former Southport Ambulance Station. Costing approximately £8000, the chapel was dedicated on November 13, 1921 by Archbishop Gerald Sharpe. It was named in honour of St Alban which had special significance for the Founder who had been ordained at St. Alban's in England.

The archbishop played a significant role in running the Corporation of the Synod of the Diocese of Brisbane which acquired all the assets and goodwill of the school from the Reverend Horace Dixon and Charles Thorold. (Thorold, the son of a Church of England cleric, came to Australia in 1906, accepted a position to teach at Southport after Dixon had acquired archbishop ownership of the school buildings. He built his own residence at the school on the condition that it could accommodate students and in 1910 Thorold and Dixon established a formal partnership of ownership of the school and its buildings. He was the first bishop of Brisbane chosen by the local Anglican community through the synod and fulfilled this role from 1921 to 1933 when he died in office. Subsequently a memorial service was held in St Alban's Chapel which he had dedicated in his first year of office. Gothic in design and covering an area of 100 feet by 30 feet and 40 feet high, the oak panelling and stalls allow worshippers to enjoy the spectacular stained glass windows which have been donated by many families in memory of loved ones including the window above the altar, "Ascension",

This window is in memory of Brian Palmes, a member of McKinley House 1909-1915 and a keen sportsman. He completed Senior in 1915 and then enlisted in the AIF and died while on active service. Two of three panes in the window were given in his memory while the third pane was provided by the boys at school when the Chapel was built. Mr C. Tute was the chapel window designer. The chapel has 14 magnificent stained glass windows, several of which have recently been restored as part of the on-going preservation of the chapel. who have given their life during war.

The chapel's original organ, while not grand, served its purpose for some years until a fund-raising campaign was started to purchase a far grander organ. The present organ in use today in the chapel was designed by Henry John King, a composer of church music and whose works were played in Westminster Abbey. The new organ was installed and dedicated in 1925 and apart from this legacy, the school also offers annual H.J. King music scholarships each year.

Giving a sense of community, to the chapel are the House banners which hang high above the windows with each banner depicting the House emblem. During combined services students and staff from each House sit under their banner while other seats are reserved for the Headmaster, Chaplain, Housemasters and Master, of the Preparatory School.

An important addition to the chapel was an official banner of the 39th Infantry Battalion for which TSS is the official custodian after it was presented in 2006. This official banner holds special significance for many Old Southportians as it belongs to the veterans of Kokoda Track World War II and, today, many students and staff have started following in the footsteps of those veterans on treks to Papua New Guinea. With its doors perpetually open all members of the TSS community St Alban's Chapel is at the very heart of the school and remains an integral part of school life not only for current students but also staff and past students.



39TH BBQ

Throughout the day news was shared and many friendships were renewed. Fortunately Norman's sausage and bread were safe from kookaburras this year but a friendly magpie remained hopeful he might be lucky.

