



Thumbs Up 2017

The Annual Newsletter of the
2/20th Battalion Association.

Check us out on the web:
www.secondtwentieth.org.au

Vale:

NX45896 Corporal Noel Newton Harrison, Association Life Member

Noel enlisted in the AIF on 28 June 1940, and was posted to 2/20th. After the war Noel served on the committee from 1947 up until a few years ago. He served as the battalion treasure on a number of occasions from 1947. He was a man much loved by the battalion associates and always had a kind word of encouragement for those who served the battalion. Noel is a great loss to the battalion but closer to home a great loss to me. We had some very long and personal conversations about his time as a guest of the Nippon. Noel once said "if it was not for Tom Uren (Labour Politician) he would not have survived". Tom tells a different story. His comment was "it was a two way street". Every POW had a mate and mates would look after one another or you didn't survive. Noel out lived Tom by four years. - James Keady

NX35013 Lieutenant Barton 'Bart' Dalyell Richardson OAM

Bart enlisted in the AIF on 15 June 1940, and was posted to 2/20th. During his service, Bart was commissioned a Lieutenant. Following the war Bart married June, whom he had three children with. They were married for 64 years, with June passing away in 2010. Bart was the last surviving officer of the Battalion, and had been the Associations Patron for a number of years. Bart wrote and had published a book entitled "The Army As I Saw It-My Time In The Army From 1936 To 1945. It makes excellent reading and I recommend it to you.

Bart was actively involved with his community, particularly Rotary and Legacy. He was a man who gave much and inspired many. He will be missed. - Dennis Baker

LEST WE FORGET

Presidents Report:

Bart Richardson our Patron of many years passed away on Saturday, 11 March 2017. Bart was 97 years old. Last year Bart was in Borneo for Anzac Day, it was a place he always wanted to visit. He was looking forward to marching with us this year, but it was not to be. Rest in Peace Bart. This past year has seen the passing of Noel Harrison. I attended the celebration of Noel's life at Macquarie Park Cemetery and Crematorium on the 22 October 2016 representing our Association. Rest in Peace Noel.

The 8th Division Association held three meetings during the course of the year. At the August 2016 meeting, it was moved that the 8th Division Association's remaining funds would be donated to Legacy. An item of importance to us all which was advised at the by the 8th Division was that after the final Fall of Singapore Service the Australian War Memorial, during their daily Last Post Ceremony, will, on the Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore, name a member of the 8th Division who is listed on the Honour Roll. Short of a service at the Cenotaph, this, I believe, is fitting tribute to the 8th Division.

This year marked the 75th Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore. The annual Fall of Singapore Service was held at the Martin Place Cenotaph, and was the last service conducted by the 8th Australian Division Association. This service was extremely well represented including all members of the 2/20th Battalion Executive. There were eight veterans of the 8th Division who attended - including our Max Denning and Frank Smith.

Following the service the patron of the 8th Australian Division Association, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retired) Governor of NSW hosted a reception at Government House for veterans and their immediate families. Max Denning, Frank Smith and their daughters attended as well as my wife and I.

Whilst the 8th Division Association is winding up, our Battalion Association will continue and whilst we have motivated and committed members will grow in strength. We have a blend of youth and more mature members who represent their husbands, fathers, Grandfathers, and uncles. Some other unit associations have folded due to lack of support but I do not see that happening to us.

I look forward to seeing you all on Anzac Day. - Dennis Baker.

Website:

A couple of years ago the Association website was established, however, due to a number of factors, has not been updated. We are looking for someone to take over the role of publisher for the website, any enquiries to either the President or Secretary.

ANZAC Day 2016:

Form up at 11:10am on King Street at the intersection of Pitt Street (northern end of Pitt Street Mall). Unfortunately, there will be no Land Rover assistance, however, if you require a wheelchair, please advise the Secretary by 20 April. Everyone need to please be mindful that the light rail building works in George Street have changed some aspects of this year's march, again adding another layer of complexity. Please be patient.

ANZAC Day Lunch & AGM:

We are at Tattersals Club again this year. The lunch will commence at 12:30pm sharp. Lunch will cost \$110, which will include a two course meal, beverages and Association Membership. The address of Tattersals Club is 181 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, opposite Hyde Park.

Address to 8th Division by His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales

As Patron of the 8th Australian Division Association, I am honoured to address you at today's final Fall of Singapore service here at the Cenotaph. We gather today on the lands of the Gadigal people - to whom we also pay our respects - and to their Aboriginal brothers and sisters who have also served in defence of our nation.

This service is a special commemoration on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore.

I thank Neil James for his excellent address. He has reminded us of the service and sacrifice of the men - and the women who served with the Australian Army Nursing Service as part of the 8th Division Australian Imperial Force - in circumstances that could well have been avoided.

This morning, I would like to pay my respects to those gathering for our 'sister' 75th Anniversary commemoration that will take place on Bangka Island, Indonesia tomorrow, for friends and relatives of the nurses and civilian internees massacred on this island.

As Patron of the Association, I have been asked to provide an 'Epilogue' on the 8th Australian Division Association.

An Epilogue usually contains some final, summary or concluding words. This is more difficult than it sounds. Where do I begin?

How to provide some 'End Words' on what for many here today can never be at an end?

How to convey the human cost of a devastating conflict in which we lost so many ... to children who never knew fathers, grandchildren who never knew grandparents, to widows who searched in vain for husbands ... and descendants who are still searching or seeking permission to visit a memorial or burial site on foreign soil ... To mates who lost comrades?

How to sum up the events that consumed the lives of those who fought on land and those at sea?

How to explain to the descendants the emaciated and scarred bodies, the hollowed out cheeks and the silence ...?

The stories too painful to be told to next of kin, to loved ones.

How to attempt to sum up in words what will convey the deep gratitude that we hold for our 8th Division veterans, our warriors, who lived through and suffered so much in defence of our nation?

There are no Last Words that we can say ... except to say thank you - to our veterans of the 8th Division - and our eight representatives here today.

There is one other final word.

On behalf of the people of New South Wales, I would like to acknowledge the work of the 8th Australian Division Association, which, up until 1987, was titled the Council of the Eighth Division and Service Associates.

The 8th Australian Division Association was formed in mid-1945 from the surviving members of this Division.

Following the repatriation of Prisoners of War and the recovery in 1944 of survivors from the sinking of SS Rakuyō Maru, a Japanese ship that had been transporting POW survivors of the Burma-Thailand Railway, it became clear that there were several very strong reasons for the Association to be established:

- to assist injured, ill and traumatised veterans and their spouses, families and dependants;
- to urge speedy release of those still held as POWs;
- to push for full recognition of service; and
- to ensure the physical, mental and economic rehabilitation of the Division's members.

Our current experiences with the impact of operations on the mental health of our Defence personnel give us an insight into the challenges that 8th Division soldiers and families faced.

The 8th Australian Division Association, perhaps, more fully than any under association at that time, understood and worked towards ameliorating the effect of war on its veterans.

The Association members were unfailingly loyal to each other and to the 8th Division command.

This has been demonstrated on several occasions, including the unanimous support for General Bennett and the two inquiries into his actions in 1942.

This loyalty is also demonstrated by the commitment to holding the Fall of Singapore Commemoration service each year, here at the Cenotaph, since 1946.

After the war, large crowds attended these services, initially held in the evening after work, following a march down Martin Place from Macquarie Street, led by Generals Bennett and Callaghan. For some years, reunions were held afterwards.

And this loyalty has been shown through the support and commitment of many veterans and their descendants, working through RSL Sub-Branched and other ex-service organisations, to provide ongoing support to families as they faced deep and ongoing mental, physical, emotional and financial difficulties.

The ranks of the 8th Division may have diminished but their spirit lived on through the work of this Association.

While there are several physical memorials to the 8th Australian Division Association, I congratulate the Association on its continuing support for a "living" memorial – the sponsorship of the AIF Malaya Nursing Scholarship for the education of Singaporean and Malaysian postgraduate nurses in Australia.

This is an important legacy of the work of the Association.

The 8th Australian Division and the Association can look back with pride on a long and distinguished history of service to our nation.

The Association can also look to the future, with a legacy that will remain undiminished in our nation's memory.

For now, each year from 2018, at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, an 8th Division veteran will be honoured at the annual 15th February Last Post Ceremony.

The service of the men and women of the 8th Australian Division will never be forgotten.

On behalf of the people of New South Wales, I thank the Association for your support of our veterans and their families.

I especially thank the 8th Australian Division ... our 8th Australian Division veterans here today, and those that have gone before you.

I convey our deepest gratitude from generations of Australians who have grown up in freedom - because of your defence of that freedom.

Lest we forget

ANZAC DAY 2017

Lunch, Reunion and AGM
Tattersals Club
181 Elizabeth Street, Sydney
12.30pm

Member's Name:			
Member's Address			
Member's Email Address:			
Member's Phone Number:			
Invited Family Guests:			
Dietary Requirements:			
ANZAC Day Lunch			
Members Lunch	\$110.00	<i>Per head (includes 2017 membership)</i>	\$ _____
2017 Membership	\$10.00	<i>If not attending the lunch</i>	\$ _____
Donations Thankfully Received			\$ _____
Singapore & Beyond	\$27.50	<i>Battalion History Book</i>	\$ _____
Battalion Tie	\$20.00		\$ _____
Battalion Badge	\$10.00		\$ _____
Total			\$ _____

RSVP NO LATER THAN THE 17th APRIL 2017

Payment can be made to the Treasurer by either cheque or electronic bank transfer.

The Treasurer

2/20th Battalion

2/20th Battalion

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