



PRESIDENT'S REPORT & CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2024

As we close out 2024, it's appropriate to reflect on the broader world in which we live. It's been a year that serves as a reminder of the importance of community, resilience and action in the face of adversity.

While we've enjoyed safety and security in Australia, we cannot ignore the turbulent global landscape we inhabit. From ongoing geopolitical tensions to humanitarian crises that continue to unfold in places like Ukraine, Gaza and other conflict zones, we are reminded that the struggles for justice, peace, and dignity are not confined to any one time or place.

We stand in solidarity with all those affected by these conflicts, understanding that the values of freedom and respect for all people are universal. In that spirit, we reflect on the lessons of history, particularly the courage shown by Australian servicemen and women in the Second World War.

Before they set off for their part in Operation Oboe in July 1945, the 2/16th Battalion spent months training in harsh conditions on the Atherton Tablelands in far north Queensland. It was there that they spent Christmas 1944. The remote Kairi Camp, in the dense tropical rainforest, was known for its gruelling training exercises which tested the soldiers' endurance, resilience and ability to work as a team. They also undertook extensive combined forces training and exercises in preparation for the amphibious landings at Balikpapan in Borneo.

Much like the soldiers who endured this intense preparation to face future battles, we too face challenges that require steadfast preparation, collaboration and grit. Their resolve reminds us that even in the darkest times we can find strength in unity.

I am deeply grateful to our volunteers, committee members, and supporters. Your dedication has made this year's successes possible. To all those who have supported our Association, whether by attending functions, donations or through their time and effort—thank you.

We must also pause to remember those who have fought for our freedom, particularly the men of the 2/16th Battalion AIF, who serve as an enduring reminder of the sacrifices required to protect us from tyranny and to preserve justice and freedom. Their legacy is woven into the fabric of everything we do.

As we look ahead to 2025, I take inspiration from those who have come before us. Together we will meet the challenges of tomorrow as they have done in the past. In the spirit of this festive season, I'd like to extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you for your continued support. As we reflect on all that we've achieved this year and look forward to what lies ahead, may this Christmas bring peace, joy and a well-deserved rest to you and your loved ones.

Here's to a new year filled with hope, possibility, and continued collaboration. I am confident that together we will make 2025 another successful year.

Yours sincerely,
Bill Grayden





PIGEON POST

Official Journal of the
2/16 Battalion (A.I.F.) Association Inc.



Vol. 58, No. 159

Price 5c

December 2024

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Welcome

Welcome to the December 2024 issue of Pigeon Post, the official journal of the 2/16th Battalion AIF Association.

We trust you will find some interesting reports on events that have been held here in Western Australia and some very significant commemorations in Queensland.

Our thanks to everyone who has contributed in any way to Pigeon Post during this year. Without your support we could not share the stories and reports that we do.

We must especially thank our two eastern states representatives, Trevor Ingram and Steve Harrold who send the news and reports on events they have attended or have organised on behalf of our association. Thank you, gentlemen.

So many Australians are looking forward to the new year hoping for a better year for all, for Australians and for all people who have suffered in any way over the past year.

Sadly, we see the ranks of our 2/16th Diggers diminished to two known veterans, our President WX8868 Bill Grayden, here in WA and NX173972 Russell Fuller in NSW.

We owe it to them and to all their mates to continue to honour the legacy they bestowed on us. Their legacy should remain as a guiding light, for not only our generations today, not only for those who treasure our Australia, but for those Australians still to make their mark in the world and for all those who have sought the best that Australia has to offer.

Every person who claims Australia as home needs to stand up and be counted, holding true to the values that all our serving men and women have demonstrated in serving our country.

Our wish for you is for the Joy of Christmas to touch your hearts and for a New Year which brings Peace and Understanding to our Australian people and all people around the world.

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ISSUE MONTH	SUBMISSION DEADLINE
March	First Friday in February
June	First Friday in May
September	First Friday in August
December	First Friday in November

Upcoming WA Events

ASSOCIATION GET TOGETHER SUNDAY FEBRUARY 23rd 2025 11AM

This annual event will be held in Kings Park on the grassed area adjacent to the Zamia Café, come HAIL or RAIN or SHINE! Whilst we hope for SHINE we shall all enjoy the company irrespective of events outside our control.

Please bring your own chair, a Picnic lunch and suitable gear, sunscreen or umbrella! Do bring along your family members and friends and let us get 2025 off to a wonderful year commemorating and honouring our blokes whilst enjoying the comradery of like-minded people.

All events are listed on the outside BACK cover of each issue of Pigeon Post. WA Events will be published in the "Can You Help" column of The West Australian, on the Monday of the week prior to the event.

Looking forward to catching up with old friends, and of course, we would love to welcome those who have not attended these events before. No time like the present!

Subs & Donations

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2024-2025

All SUBS are now due to comply with the Association's financial year from 1st July to June 30th, With the EXCEPTION OF MEMBERS WHO HAVE PAID THE FIVE YEAR MEMBERSHIP. SUBS are \$25 per year, no increase, which also covers your receipt of Pigeon Post every three months.

THE OPTION FOR 5 YEAR MEMBERSHIP FOR \$100 IS STILL AVAILABLE

Please note the first 5 year memberships were due for renewal in June 2022. If you are unsure of your membership status please contact the Treasurer.

VETERANS and WIDOWS are NOT required to pay, so you will never be unfinancial. Likewise, Life Members are not required to pay but donations are gratefully accepted.

PAYMENTS

Please make cheque or money order payable to 2/16th Battalion Association and forward to The Treasurer PO Box 434 COTTESLOE WA 6911. ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSFER to Bendigo Bank BSB: 633-000 Account: 1499-652-95. Please ensure you state NAMES associated with each payment for subs or donation.

SUBS AND APPLICATION UPDATES

Many of our “members” have not filled in an application form, which can be found on the last page of Pigeon Post.

These forms provide essential information regarding your connection to 2/16th family members and can also include your date of birth to allow us to celebrate your ‘centenary’ with you. Please fill in a form and return by mail or email to our Secretary.

Many thanks

Mary Goldthorpe

Guardian Roster

JANUARY - week commencing		FEBRUARY - week commencing	
30/12/24	Ellen Anderson-Knight	3/2/25	Janice McKenzie
6/1/25	Noelene Wiseman	10/2/25	Gawned Family
13/1/25	Wayne Koch	17/2/25	Marion Clive
20/1/25	Peter Norrish	24/2/25	Murdoch Family
27/1/25	Mary Goldthorpe		

MARCH – week commencing	
3/3/25	Wayne Koch
10/3/25	Janice McKenzie
17/3/25	Peter Norrish
24/3/25	Anna Pollard

Please Note: The Roster Week now commences on a MONDAY going through to the Sunday. That way the Saturday / Sunday are offered as a 2 day block at the end of that roster week.

THANK YOU so much to everyone volunteering their time for the cleaning.
Please contact Marion Ph: 0427 184 503 if you would like to participate.
Marion Clive



VALE

THE ODE

*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*

LEST WE FORGET



WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

VALE

We are all saddened to hear of the passing of Judith Mathwin, elder daughter of Brigadier Arnold Potts and his wife Doreen

Our sincere condolences are extended to all members of Judith's family, her husband John, the Mathwins and the Harpers, especially to Mary Price our Association Treasurer, her brother Tony Mathwin, member and ex-member of the 16th Battalions' Foundation Committee and their families.

Our warmest wishes and our sympathy are sent to Nan Harper, Judith's younger sister and her husband John.

The March 2025 issue of Pigeon Post will contain a worthy tribute to Judith.

Articles & Reports

2024 AGM OCTOBER 6TH at IRWIN BARRACKS KARRAKATTA W.A.

The Annual General Meeting of the 2/16th Battalion A.I.F. Association (Inc) was held at O'Meara's Mess, at Irwin Barracks, home of 16RWAR and 13 Brigade.

The MINUTES and REPORTS from this AGM will be published in the next March 2025 issue of Pigeon Post.

Faye Utting reported that after the meeting all the attendees enjoyed a bar-b-q lunch outside, enjoying the sausages cooked by Phil Utting, the plentiful fool supplied by members and the beautiful weather.

Donation from Joy Wheatley, in memory of her late husband Norm, supported the cost of lunch. Thank you Joy.

Photos, thanks to Mary Goldthorpe, show everyone enjoying the food and weather.



CONGRATULATIONS RUSSELL FULLER

The President, Bill Grayden and all the members of the 2/16th Battalion Association Congratulate Battalion Veteran NX173972 Russell Fuller on joining the ranks of our Centenarians.

Russell will turn 100 on the 1st February 2025 and we trust he will enjoy the Celebrations with his daughter Michelle at her Tolga Goat Farm.

HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY RUSSELL. 100 AMAZING YEARS!

REPORT ON QUEENSLAND SERVICES As promised in September 2024 issue of Pigeon Post. KOKODA MEMORIAL SERVICE CASCADE GARDENS BROADBEACH

2/16th Battalion Association Representative for Queensland, Steve Harrold and his partner Emely, travelled to Cascade Gardens at Broadbeach on the Gold Coast on the 8th August to attend the Kokoda Memorial Service for 2024.

This annual service is held at the magnificent Kokoda Memorial at Cascades Gardens and draws many people who want to honour those brave men who fought on the brutal Kokoda Track.

This memorial walk was created in Cascade Gardens to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Kokoda Campaign in 2002. It was created to help visitors to the Cascade Gardens appreciate the courage and determination of the men who fought on the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea in WWII.

It is also home to the Rotary Kokoda Memorial Wall which tells the Kokoda story through sculptured images on a slightly curved wall, in the shape of the topography of the Kokoda Track.

During the service Steve laid a wreath on behalf of our Association as a tribute to all the 2/16th Diggers who had served and to the many who had paid the supreme sacrifice. Cascade Gardens is where there are many pavers dedicated to those who served on the Track, including many 2/16th Battalion members.

Lt Alan Haddy, WX3636 Alan Campbell Haddy, born in Laverton WA and subject of the book "An Unrewarded Hero", enlisted in May 1940 and fought with the 2/16th in Syria and on the Kokoda Track. His courage became legendary, but he was sadly killed whilst in action on the Kokoda Track.

A sincere thank you to Steve who has long lobbied for Alan Haddy to be recognised and have a paver dedicated to him.

Steve was present to hear Alan Haddy's name read out, with a brief description of his service, as Alan's paver was dedicated, along with other veterans who had pavers installed in their honour this year.



UNVEILING AND RE-DEDICATION OF 21ST BRIGADE PLAQUE ATHERTON TABLELANDS

Following the Kokoda Memorial Service on the Gold Coast, Steve Harrold and his partner Emely travelled north to Cairns and then on to Tolga on the Atherton Tablelands.

They were there as the 2/16th Representatives for the Unveiling and Rededication of a new replacement plaque for the 21st Brigade.

The purchase and transportation costs of this new plaque were covered, partially by a grant from DVA, and the remaining amount was paid for by the 2/16th Battalion Association from the funds that were donated after the closure of the 21st Brigade association.



Every year in August, on the Sunday closest to the Victory in the Pacific (VP) Day, the 15th, a service is held to commemorate VP Day and includes a dedication and unveiling ceremony.

This year saw the 79th Anniversary being commemorated and the new 21st Brigade Plaque was unveiled and rededicated.

Steve and Jill Bear from the 2/14th Battalion Association each gave a short speech prior to the Laying of Wreaths with Steve laying a wreath on behalf of our Association.

We are most grateful to Steve and Emely for undertaking the representation at two very important commemorations in Queensland.

Steve was keen to thank our other eastern states representative, Trevor Ingram, based in Melbourne, for a 'job well done in getting this replacement plaque project actioned and completed. Great job.'



One of the individual plaques that was unveiled that day was for 2/16th Battalion soldier QX30581 Lance Corporal Roy Reid. Steve took the opportunity to speak with the family of L/Cpl Reid, who were there for the dedication of his individual plaque, and to tell them about our association and he reports that they showed interest in joining.

Having seen our President's Christmas Message, (which you will find on the inside front cover of this issue of Pigeon Post), it was interesting to read that the Atherton Tablelands, and Kairi Camp, in particular, is where the soldiers of the 2/16th spent Christmas in 1944.

The Rocky Creek Memorial Park was established in 1995 and was dedicated to those who served in the 2/2AGH and those soldiers who had spent time on the Tablelands area which became the largest military base in Australia in WWII. Camps were located across the Tablelands at Tinaroo, Kairi, Atherton, Wongabel, Herberton, Wondecla, Ravenshoe and Mount Garnet.

The 2/2 Australian General Hospital treated over 60,000 Australian soldiers for war related conditions. It was the largest military hospital in the Southern Hemisphere in WWII.

The Memorial Park is a unique design of individual plaques set amongst the trees with now over 115 memorial plaques, recognising the 6th, 7th and 9th Divisions and supporting units, installed and dedicated. A special Wall of Remembrance was erected in 2009.

Thank you to Steve Harrold for sending this information to share with all our members. Steve has included some photos which show us the beautiful settings of both memorials and the services held there.



REMEMBRANCE DAY AT ARALUEN 2024

The annual Remembrance Day Service at Araluen Botanic Park was held in the beautiful setting of The Grove of the Unforgotten. The Grove is a series of terraces, framed by pencil pines that form the shape of a lyre (the international symbol for music). Water gently cascades down the terraces into The Pool of Reflection, a large pond filled with water lilies. The Remembrance Day service has been held in The Grove of the Unforgotten annually since 1934.

The Grove was built in memory of 89 Young Australia League members who were killed in the First World War. At the time there were 200 members, of which 100% signed up for the war. A majority of these members played instruments and were part of the YAL musical department which eventually morphed into the Town of Victoria Park Brass Band who, fittingly, performed The Last Post, The Rouse and the National Anthem at the ceremony.

Students from Armadale Senior High School recited a poem and recounted the story of an Indigenous War Veteran from the local area.

The Commemorative Address was given by Mr Mike Nelson, a veteran of the Vietnam and Borneo War, Captain in 1st Battalion RAR and President of the Araluen Botanic Park Foundation. A gust of wind blew Mike's notes into the air, but his reactions were quick enough to save all the pages bar one, which gracefully descended into the Pool of Reflection! Mike's father also served as an adjutant in the 16th Battalion in WW1.

Attendees were invited to lay floating wreaths in the Pool of Reflection. Mary Price and her daughter Erin presented a wreath on behalf of the 2/16th Battalion Association. At the conclusion of the ceremony, guests were invited to a very tasty morning tea on the nearby veranda of Chalet Healy Café.



On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, We will remember them.

Mary Price

REMEMBRANCE DAY 2024 KINGS PARK



Mary Goldthorpe and her eldest grandchild, Stirling Stilwell, both representing the 2/16th Battalion Association, attended the Remembrance Day Service at The Flame of Remembrance in Kings Park.

As part of the commemorations, wreaths were laid in remembrance of those who served and those who had paid the supreme sacrifice.

The traffic in the city of Perth was stopped at every major intersection where Buglers also brought the crowds to a standstill, playing *The Last Post*, followed by the silence and then the playing of *The Rouse* as an RAAF Jet flew over Kings Park and the city.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

At the town War Monument she quietly stands
A single red poppy in her hand.
Every eleventh November she's there without fail.
Her son was killed on the Kokoda Trail.
She places the poppy near the list of dead
Whispers "Lest we Forget". - Bows her head.
No she won't forget, nor will she surrender
A love for a boy she will always remember.
She shows no grief, sheds no tears,
Time has healed slowly – it's been many years
But deep inside there remains concealed
A loneliness that has never healed.
Yes. She's mastered the sorrow, the grief, the pain,
Only the memory ever remains.
And though she tries to never look back
She curses that cruel jungle track.
Now old and frail, five decades have passed
Soon God will take her – to her son at last.
For God in his mercy, understands like no other
The love for a Son, the love of a mother.

Lest We Forget

From "A COMPILATION OF VERSE" AS WRITTEN BY CLYDE HAMILTON OF
BUNJURGEN QUEENSLAND

The first page of this 'compilation' carries a note from Clyde which reads

*"Thanks to my family who encouraged me to write,
Especially daughter Fayz
Who hopefully now will get off my back about publication"
C.H.*

NX 175565 Private Clyde Hamilton 9 Platoon 2/16 Australian Infantry Battalion

CLYDE HAMILTON – THE MAN



Clyde Hamilton was born at Gore Hill, New South Wales on the 26th February 1926.

In 1943, at age 17, he presented himself to an Army Recruiting Office as a 19 year old, concerned that World War 2 might end before he was of age to serve his country.

Clyde trained as an Owen Gunner with the 2/16th Infantry Battalion, then received his 'baptism of fire' following an amphibious landing at Balikpapan Borneo on the 1st July 1945. (The landing involved approximately 120 vessels and 30,000 troops, mostly Australian.)

His Platoon Commander, at the time, Lieutenant Kempton, later reflected on the first encounter that Private Hamilton, his 19 year old Forward Scout, had with the enemy.

"Hamilton and another member of the Platoon were in the forward position when we came into contact with the enemy" he said. "Hamilton was a good soldier who acquitted himself well in carrying out his duty. But being a very young man, and in his first action, he was very upset at killing another human being."

The battle resulted in 229 Australians killed in action, with 634 wounded. The Japanese KIA count was 1783.

After the war Clyde volunteered for duty in Japan with the British Commonwealth Occupational Force (BCOF), returning to Australia for discharge in 1948.

It is generally accepted that no combatant returns from war psychologically unscarred. Clyde Hamilton is no exception. Life's impact on him as a young 19 year old Digger fighting for his life against the might of the Japanese Imperial Army is reflected in his

writings. Clyde expresses in his verse the deep pride and camaraderie that developed within him as a young man serving his country at war.

His writings are a meaningful legacy for our youth in keeping the ANZAC Spirit alive. A 'closet writer' up to this point, Clyde has kept his sentiments in verse in an old cupboard drawer.

In this, **The International Year of the Older Persons (1999)**, his writings have been 'requisitioned' and compiled as a tribute to all our older persons, for the contribution they have made throughout their lives. It has been their hard work and sacrifices that allows us to choose the way we now live: the quality of life we enjoy; and the heritage we pass on to our children.

K. Moss
Compiler
1st January 1999

Co-Editor's Note: I was so happy when I found the booklet, that was the compilation! I do remember Clyde had sent it to my daughter, Adele when she and Clyde had developed an ongoing email correspondence whilst she was a co-editor of Pigeon Post.

Clyde had sent it to Adele as a 'personal gift' and he told her to do what 'she liked' with the contents. I believe that she had intended to share them through Pigeon Post and I know some were published but it will take me some time to search back copies to find those that she shared. I remember her feeling so honoured that 'Mr Hamilton' had given her such a 'special' gift that she treasured.

KOKODA MEMORIAL SERVICE KINGS PARK 2024

The sound of the Pipes and Drums Australian Army Band Perth drifted towards the crowded carpark on a very busy day in Kings Park as people made their way to visit the September Spring Festival being held in Kings Park. Many visitors continued past the Flame of Remembrance on to the 16th Battalions' Precinct where the mystical sounds of the pipes and drums caused people to pause, stop and then stay on to join the upcoming service to pay tribute to the men of the original 16th and 2/16th Battalions.



It was wonderful to welcome many members of the Papua New Guinea Association WA, beautifully adorned in their colourful outfits, the red, yellow and black of their national flag, yellow Birds of Paradise and white stars of the Southern Cross.

We were delighted that they joined us for this special Kokoda Memorial Service as they too honoured those who had served including many Papuan and New Guinea people, the Papuan Regiment and of course, the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels, who provided such support for our soldiers and especially those who were wounded.



The Army Cadets from Guildford Grammar School attended to provide the Guard of Honour at the Memorials which were centrepiece for the commemorations.

Just prior to 11A.M. the Pipers ceased and the Service commenced with the Guildford Army Cadets taking up their places around the memorial. The MC for the day was John Murdoch, son of WX 3254 Ken Murdoch, an original member of the 2/16th who marched into Northam Camp with the Advance Party in May 1940.

John welcomed family members, friends and members of the general public who had stayed on after following the sounds of the Pipes & Drums. Lt Col Lachlan Bromley, CO 16 RWAR was introduced and delivered his address.

After the official wreaths were laid family, friends and all who wanted to pay tribute to the brave men of the 2/16th, those who served, those who came home and those who paid the supreme sacrifice and to all those who fought on the infamous Kokoda Track, moved forward to lay their flowers or sprigs of Rosemary that were made available for all.



The Bagpipes provided the background for this special moment in the commemorations, floral tributes laid to honour those who had served, those who had fallen and to show

appreciation for the future that they had secured for us all.

After the playing of our Australian National Anthem, Advance Australia Fair, we were all delighted by a choral rendition of the National Anthem of Papua & New Guinea, 'O Arise, All You Sons' by the members our local PNG community.

Padre Matt Hall from 16RWAR conducted the prayers and also spoke to us about the meaning of the word "KOKODA", such a message of inspiration and encouragement. Thank you, Padre.

We were delighted to see so many members of the Mathwin branch of Brigadier Pott's family joining the commemorations. Granddaughter of the "Brig", Elizabeth Mathwin, an Army Cadet at Guildford Grammar School was a member of the Catafalque Party which once again honoured all our veterans with their dedication and commitment, providing a most significant poignancy to this special service.

We extend our most grateful THANK YOU to all the Cadets and to their CO for their continuing support of the 2/16th Battalion Association as we endeavour to 'honour in perpetuity the Service and Sacrifice of all those who have worn or wear the "16"'.

It was wonderful to see so many members and friends at the service and to welcome newcomers joining us for the first time and also seeing some 'old' friends who had been missing due to illness.

We welcomed Ros Wang and her mother, a niece of 'Bluey' Lambert, WX11368 Henry Lambert and Lyn Harvey whose father WX16694 R.E.(Rex) Lowther and 'Bluey' were together when 'Bluey' was killed on Kokoda. The ladies spent time together following the service exchanging welcome information.

Supporting us once again were the wonderful members of The Salvation Army. Thank you, we are always so very pleased to see you and to avail ourselves of your refreshments, tea, coffee and tasty delights all served with beautiful smiles.

We are grateful to committee members Phil and Faye Utting for providing the audio equipment; thank you. Thank you to Anna Pollard, daughter of WX4050 Syd Bell, for her organisation of the Service, to Guildford Grammar Cadets, to Pipes & Drums of The Australian Army Band Perth, Members of the PNG Association, MC John Murdoch, Lt Col Lachlan Bromley, RSM Scott Myers, Padre Matt Hall, all of 16RWAR, Bugler Dave Scott and to all who joined us for our annual Kokoda Commemoration.

We look forward to welcoming you to our Commemorations in Kings Park in April and September next year, 2025.

Margaret Smith

PADRE'S REFLECTION AND PRAYER
KOKODA TRACK MEMORIAL SERVICE
KING'S PARK 2/16TH BATTALION MEMORIAL

Reading: Romans 8: 35, 37-39 "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels or demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."



Editor-MAS: I am truly grateful to Padre Matt Hall from 16RWAR, pictured left, for sending me a copy of his presentation, made at the Kokoda Memorial Service held in Kings Park on Sunday 15th September, allowing us to share it with all our members through Pigeon Post.

I had not known that there was a meaning for KOKODA and as you shall read below, just how appropriate and significant is the Padre's interpretation of KOKODA and its continuing importance and its encompassing magnitude emanating from our soldiers' remarkable victory on KOKODA all those years ago.

We must never, ever let KOKODA be forgotten and must hold fast to the Celebrations and Commemorations. We must never, ever forget the Service and Sacrifice of all who served and of those left behind on Kokoda.

Another amazing Legacy bestowed on all Australians!

"Kokoda means to knock; to hammer. The hammer, perhaps the most ancient of tools, is used only to effect change. The Kokoda like hammer reshapes people, events and a nation into a new, predetermined form.

And if Australia was to continue to be a great nation, Kokoda must become true.

And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of Efogi and The Gap.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of Owen Stanley Range.

Let freedom ring from the heightening climb of Isurava with Courage, Endurance,
Mateship and Sacrifice.

Let freedom ring from the rain forest topped Imita Ridge.

Let freedom ring from Mission Ridge and Brigade Hill.

But not only that, let freedom ring from Mt. Hawthorn to Mount Dale.

Let freedom ring from Bald Hill to Tuart Hill.

Let freedom ring from every hill and mount of Stirling Range.

Let freedom ring.

(Inspired by 'I Have a Dream' speech (28 Aug. 1963) Martin Luther King, Jnr.)

“Our Father and God, thank you for the blood, sweat and tears of those ordinary men who fought to defend Australia. Thank you for Jesus who came to this earth to fight death and evil which is behind so much of trouble in this fallen world. Give us the wisdom and strength to fight evil in the world today – to shine a light into the darkness. In the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.” Benediction: “Our times are in your hands; deliver us from our enemies and from those who pursue with evil.” (Psalm 31:15)

Chaplain Matt Hall 16 RWAR

ANNUAL COUNTRY SERVICE & LUNCH 2024



On October 20 2024 in Bunbury, a small gathering of ex-servicemen's family and friends of the 2/16 Battalion met at the Bunbury War Memorial to not only commemorate, but to also reflect on their bravery, sacrifice and commitment to duty during their service in places like the Middle East and New Guinea during World War 2.

Many of the servicemen from the 2/16th came from Bunbury and surrounding areas.



The service was led by Ken Walker* and assisted by Bugler Brett Corkery, pictured right and Piper Davina Goldthorpe.*



The sky remained grey and foreboding but luckily for everyone the rain held off until the ceremonies were complete. Many wreaths were laid, led by the honourable Mayor of Bunbury Jaysen De San Miguel and member for Forrest The Hon Nola Marino MP, pictured together left.

Notably many roses were laid from private gardens adding to the occasion. At the completion of the service everyone retired to the Lord Forrest Hotel for a luncheon and a friendly chat with old and new friends.

A good time was had by all and on leaving everyone was looking forward to next year and also possibly catching up before.

Denis and Dianne Wyatt With Fred and Marilyn Glen

Footnote: Dianne Wyatt's father was Albert John (Jack) Hardisty WX5695
Fred Glen's father was George Langley Glen (Lance Corporal) WX13116

Editor's note: Sincere and grateful thanks to Dianne, Denis, Marilyn and Fred who combined to give us the above report. I am sure readers enjoy hearing about our annual events from a different perspective. Readers may remember that a chance encounter, at probably one of the hottest places in Australia, Marble Bar, (Western Australia) between Dianne, Denis and Margaret led to connecting the two couples, from Bunbury, to their father's wartime battalion, the 2/16th Association.

We are so very happy that they have continued that connection by regularly attending the service and lunch held annually in Bunbury.

**Ken Walker, Association Committee Member, son of WX 5620 W. (Bill) Walker*

**Davina Goldthorpe, Co-editor of Pigeon Post, Granddaughter of WX3254 J.K.(Ken) Murdoch*

**FROM VICTORIA
INCLUDING INFORMATION FROM
TREVOR INGRAM NSW/VIC/ACT/TAS REPRESENTATIVE**

We CONGRATULATE Trevor Ingram for serving his 25th consecutive year as the 2/16th Battalion Association Representative for Victoria and continuing to represent the ACT, Tasmania and New South Wales.

Trevor is also the 2/16th Battalion Association Representative on the 2/14th Battalion Association Committee, also for 25 years. Thank you, Trevor, for your continuing dedication and commitment.

Trevor will once again be organising events to bring our eastern states members together, particularly in Victoria where he is planning a Luncheon early in 2025.

As Trevor says it is an increasing challenge to maintain members' interest in events, especially now, as we do not know of any veterans still in Victoria, Tasmania or the ACT and believe we only have one Veteran left in NSW.

NX173972 Russell Fuller will be celebrating 100 amazing Years on February 1st 2025.

We are hoping that members, family and friends will respond positively to Trevor's proposed get togethers as that is the way that the men of the 16th and 2/16th Battalions can be remembered and honoured for their service and sacrifices.

Trevor will once again be organising the ANZAC Day Service for Schools in the Dandenong Ranges. Mark the date in your 2025 Diary NOW: Wednesday 23rd April.

This event is a wonderful opportunity for members, family and friends to join in the commemorations with our next generation. Trevor works diligently to ensure that this special commemoration is meaningful and interesting as well as educational to the hundreds of schoolchildren who attend.

Please do consider being part of this special event; just by attending you will be supporting Trevor and of course, 'our blokes' who trusted us to ensure that they would not be forgotten, their service and their sacrifices for all of us, and in particular to honour their mates who did not make it home to Australia.

Dates of events in Victoria will always be published on the back outside cover of each issue of Pigeon Post. You will also be able to access the information via our website www.2nd16thassoc.com.au or on our Facebook page or if all else fails contact Trevor.

Sadly, due to lack of interest the 2024 Bacchus Marsh Lunch was postponed and will be reconsidered in the new year.

The 2/16th Battalion A.I.F. Association will be proudly marching behind the banner in the Melbourne ANZAC Day March. This is the year for you to attend. Bring your family and friends to honour and pay tribute to those brave men, many of whom sacrificed their all for each and every one of us. We owe it to them, as does everyone who calls this amazing country Australia home!

The commemorations will move from the March to the Rising Sun Hotel in South Melbourne. Be part of this just as our blokes were, joining with members of fellow associations, the 2/14th, 2/27th and the 39th Battalions. They were there for each other, now it is our turn to be there for them.

Margaret Smith

ANNUAL WINDUP - O'MEARA'S MESS SUNDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2024

Attendees: Bob Bayliss, Maren Bayliss, Kim Bayliss, Jim Grayden, Tammy Grayden, Fay Utting, Phil Utting, Aydin Utting, Jaxon Utting, Mary Price, Penny Thomas, Mary Goldthorpe, John Murdoch, Carolyn Murdoch, Noelene Wiseman, Scott Myers RSM 16RWAR, Marion Clive, Ken Walker, Margaret Walker, Anna Pollard, Steve White, Davina Goldthorpe, Damien Stilwell, Stirling Stilwell, Neve Stilwell, Hadley Stilwell, Amity Stilwell.

A welcoming crowd enjoyed the last function for 2024 in O'Meara's Mess on Sunday 24 November.



New faces were very welcome including grandson's of Faye and Phil Utting, who enjoyed badminton on the lawn outside, and son and daughter-in-law of Bob and Maren Bayliss were greeted warmly by regular attendees.

Due to illness Bruce Wiseman was unable to attend allowing Noelene to bring our annual Christmas cake. Thank you to the bakery and Bruce. We hope you have recovered well.



Phil Utting missed out on being chef for the day as three friendly chaps from 16RWAR attended the bar and efficiently cooked the sausages and onions which soon disappeared to be enjoyed by hungry members.

The History Room was open and available for viewing with many attendees noting the amazing work that has been completed since we were last in the Mess for the last event of 2023. Definitely worth a visit for those who have not been – so please note the 2025 dates on the back of Pigeon Post and join us in November 2025.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the welcome event in February that will be held in Kings Park.

Mary Goldthorpe

**WX2872 ERIC ANDERSON
KNOWN AS “YOUNG ERIC” TO HIS FELLOW 2/16TH BATTALION MEMBERS!**

From the Editor

As you read the following article you will notice that it does not follow the usual contents of ex-2/16th Battalion members' stories, but it is a story that a family member wanted to share.

On reading this, and speaking with Eric's daughter Shirley, I knew that this story should be shared. I know that sadly, Eric was not the only brave and courageous man who answered the call to defend his country, only to return to his country, Australia, that he had so proudly fought for and saved for all of us, the future generations, but then spent the rest of his shortened life forever changed by the evil and horrendous hostilities that he and his mates had been subjected to.

I am so grateful to Shirley for willingly sharing Eric's story with us.

SHIRLEY'S LETTER

9th September 2024

Hello Margaret,

I have finally returned from Exmouth and prepared this letter.

I have written ERIC'S STORY and included a photo of him.

The story is actually some extracts from a book that I wrote about him some time ago. Not all stories are “happy ever after” tales, and for some families the war continued long after the guns were silenced.....

You can do whatever you wish to do with all the above items (Shirley also sent me three other items that will follow Eric's Story) I just wanted to share them with you before I got any older and they get lost somewhere in my life.

Thank you for reading all of the above.

Kind Regards,

Shirley Cirillo

ERIC'S STORY



Our Dad, Eric Anderson was actually 18 years-old when he enlisted in the Australian Army in May 1940.

He was ranked as Private Eric Anderson-WX2872-of the 2/16th Battalion of the 21st Brigade of the 7th Division.

He was dubbed "Bluey" for his reddish-brown hair or called "young Eric" to differentiate him from another older man also named Eric Anderson. By coincidence neither of them had a middle name to identify them individually, so they became known as "young Eric" and "old Eric".

Young Eric came from a dairy farm in the small rural community of Oakford, 30 kms south of Perth. He came from a family of 10 children and had a very harsh upbringing. When the opportunity to enlist arose he 'inflated' his age to 19 and farewelled his 161/2 year old girlfriend Sylvia Bailey of Armadale, and sailed to the Middle East, where he would spend the next 15 months fighting in the hostilities. He eventually returned back to Western Australia after the tragedies of the sinking of the Sydney and the bombing of Pearl Harbour, and the grim news that the Japanese were making their presence known in New Guinea. Back home he was briefly able to catch up with his 18 year-old sweetheart Sylvia in Armadale before heading to south-east Queensland for jungle training, in preparation of an inevitable Japanese invasion.

In August 1942 he sailed from Brisbane to Port Moresby where he began to encounter the infamous Kokoda Track and all the horrors associated with it. In just one month he took part in the Battle of Brigade Hill. This costly and bitter battle was forever etched in young Eric's mind as it was here that he lost his best mate who was killed from a Japanese sniper's bullet as he was standing in close proximity to Eric, as well as losing many other comrades and mates suffering horrific shocking wounds.

Eric and others soldiered on, enduring the ongoing atrocities of the Track until December 1942 When he fell gravely ill to malaria and was air-lifted back to Cairns for recovery. In February 1943, from Queensland, he managed some well-deserved leave and briefly returned to Perth in Western Australia where he proposed to his beloved 19 year-old Sylvia and put an engagement ring on her finger.

He subsequently was returned to New Guinea in August 1943 to resume the rigours of the Kokoda Track where he continued to suffer several more bouts of malaria. During this tumultuous period, he and Sylvia planned for their wedding next year. So, in 1944 Eric was granted leave to return home to Perth and he married his beautiful Sylvia on 4th March 1944. He returned to duty on 25th March and was once again ill with malaria. He recovered from his 5th bout and was duly sent back to New Guinea. Back on the Track in May 1944 he was suffering his 6th bout of malaria when he received the joyful news of Sylvia's pregnancy. Another 7th bout of malaria again plagued him and he was discharged from the Army in October 1944.

He served 1605 days of service – 882 of them being overseas.

Eric and Sylvia welcomed their first child – daughter Aileen Sylvia in December 1944. However, Eric's return to civilian life was not an easy one. It is highly likely that he was discharged from his military service with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), formerly called "battle fatigue". As well as recovering physically from illnesses many veterans of WW2 suffered ongoing psychological problems resulting from major traumatic experiences, such as 'survivor guilt', recurrent nightmares, sleep disturbances, flashback to trauma scenes, over reaction to sudden noises and other triggers, excessive irritability, anger outbursts and depression. While Eric may have had some help with his physical health there is nothing to show in his records that he was counselled in any way about his wartime experiences.

In July 1946 Eric and Sylvia had a second child-a son Robert, and in August 1948 a third child-another daughter Shirley. Eric was a 27-year-old father of three and struggled with employment opportunities and housing and finances. He was also beginning to find solace in alcohol, and it was becoming a major problem for Sylvia who was juggling the household as best she could when a fourth child arrived – a son Douglas, in 1951.

Eric was now going on drinking binges and gambling and became violent towards his wife. At the same time he was still experiencing bouts of malaria and was admitted to Hollywood Hospital several times. Eric was now 33 years-old and he and Sylvia were struggling bitterly with life, when in 1955 a fifth child – daughter Lynette arrived. His drinking and violence had escalated, and Sylvia was admitted to hospital several times due to domestic violence injuries inflicted by Eric. The Andersons were hopelessly struggling, living a 'no frills' existence and Sylvia only had the regular Government Child Endowment cheque to rely on to buy food and pay rent, as alcoholism was preventing him from working.

On ANZAC Day Eric refused to acknowledge the day and participate in any activities and would completely disappear for 3 days on a drinking bender. He also refused to collect his 6 war medals which had remained unclaimed for some time, so Sylvia quietly went to collect them on his behalf.

Their sixth child arrived in 1956 - a son Colin, when Eric was now a 35 year-old unpredictable violent drunk. By now Eric was referring to his growing family as "the troops" and in 1957 their seventh child – a son Brian-arrived. Following Brian's birth Sylvia was running a household of seven children under the age of 13. Providing for them was supposed to be Eric's job but he was now a 36 year-old out-of-control gambler and his drinking rendered him completely unreliable and useless as a breadwinner. Sylvia finally planned to leave him.

One day early in 1958 whilst Eric was absent from the house, Sylvia quickly gathered her seven children and fled to Fremantle train station to make the journey to her parent's house in Armadale.

On fleeing to her new destination Sylvia soon discovered she was pregnant with their eighth child – a daughter Pamela who was born in 1958. It was here in Armadale that Sylvia managed to gain some measure of normalcy in her life and was eventually granted a State Housing Commission home for herself and her eight children – 4 daughters and 4 sons.

Meanwhile the estranged and homeless Eric continued his downhill spiral. He lost entirely everything to alcohol and gambling: his wife, his children, a home, employment, everything that could make life worthwhile including his own self-worth and respect. Without addressing his alcoholism, any hope for a decent life disappeared.

He eventually passed away at the age of 46 years.

In the game of life Eric had been handed a lousy pack of cards. The deck was stacked against him. Yet there is a chance that he may have avoided dying as a complete loser with absolutely nothing. Perhaps this could have been averted with attention to his Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and alcoholism.

Eric was remembered as "a good man ruined by drink, who had a tribe of kids". As no-one has walked in Eric's shoes, he should not be blamed for anything and forgiven for everything.

The above is extracted from a book I have written about my Dad Eric.

"The Private, the Heroine and The Troops"

Shirley Cirillo – Second Daughter-No 3

Two of my sisters wrote a poem for Dad, which I included in my book.

This man was our father we would love to see
But time and tragedy would not let it be
Due to circumstance beyond his control
He never made it to when e'er he grew old

We will remember his peaceful times, and be glad
To us this man was someone – he was our Dad.

Above poem written by Pamela Anderson – Youngest Fourth Daughter No. 8

This man – to what great heights did he aspire?
His dreams: his plans: what was his heart's desire?
A battle fought long aft' he left the realms of war
Life a bitter struggle; through his heart it tore
His mind and body broken; young in years – but dead
"We were too young to understand" we said.

Above poem written by Aileen McKay – Eldest First Daughter No.1

MORE ITEMS SHARED WITH US by SHIRLEY CIRILLO (nee ANDERSON)

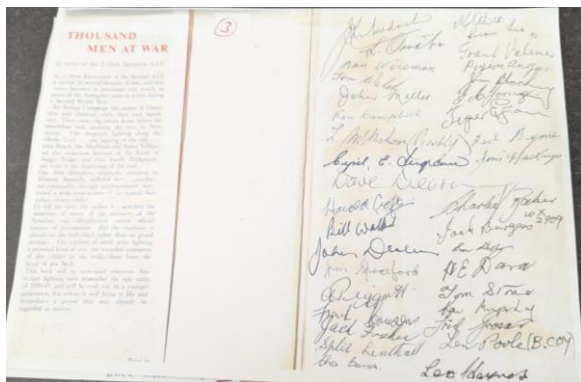
1. PHOTO of 2/16TH INFANTRY BATTALION – CARRIER PLATOON (No 4) PRE-EMBARKATION 1940. This photo is on the 2/16th website- Unit photos. On the website it states that the soldier at extreme back row L-R is "L. Anderson" but in fact it is WX2872 Eric Anderson.



2."SNAKE" PHOTO Shirley wants to share this "snake" photo. Apparently it was taken in Kairi in Queensland and the soldier on the extreme right is WX2872 Eric Anderson.



3. PHOTO of inside cover of Shirley's copy of "1000 Men at War". Shirley tells that 'Many years ago on an ANZAC DAY my book "1000 Men at War" was taken to a gathering and all these signatures were obtained.'



Co-Editor Margaret Smith: Thank You Shirley for sharing so many memories with us and for correcting the ID of your father in a photo that appears on our website.

The signatures from your "1000 Men at War" brought back memories of the many veterans of the 2/16th that I was so privileged to meet and work with many years after these signatures were obtained. I do not know the exact year that the book was signed but do know that it was before we 'females' were welcomed as associate members. That I know, because my father's unforgettable signature is top of the left column and sadly many of these men had passed before we were allowed to join the 2/16th Battalion Association.

After reading and re reading Eric's Story I remember other brave and courageous young men who offered their lives in the service of our country Australia, and sadly ever so many did pay the supreme sacrifice, but of those who did make it through that horrendous war and returned home, unfortunately were not the same brave happy-go-lucky, young men, who had faced death alongside their mates and witnessed such terrible conditions and the results of ghastly atrocities, as they had once been.

Support for all members of our Defence Forces was sadly lacking with many areas of need not even covered or any thought even given to them.

Some support did come through the establishment of the battalion associations, such as the 2/16th but I have heard from many veterans over the years it was difficult to find out the blokes who needed help and even more difficult to persuade them that they needed help. I do remember being told that as some vets were found to be in dire straits they covered their tracks, and it became more about their pride and not wanting their mates to know just how bad things were for them. I was told that when all they had left was their pride their mates found it almost impossible to take that away from them.

Another comment I heard from many of our vets was that those of their battalion mates who needed the help most, would shy away from attending any functions and definitely stay away from ANZAC Days.

Eric's Story could describe any of the thousands of returned service men and I sadly can say that one of our family members came home a shadow of his former self, however he was luckier than Eric but also passed from this life way too early. These blokes had served our country well, had ensured our freedom, yours and mine, tolerated and survived such horrendous, soul destroying, seemingly never-ending war atrocities and came home with the expectation that life would resume as normal!!

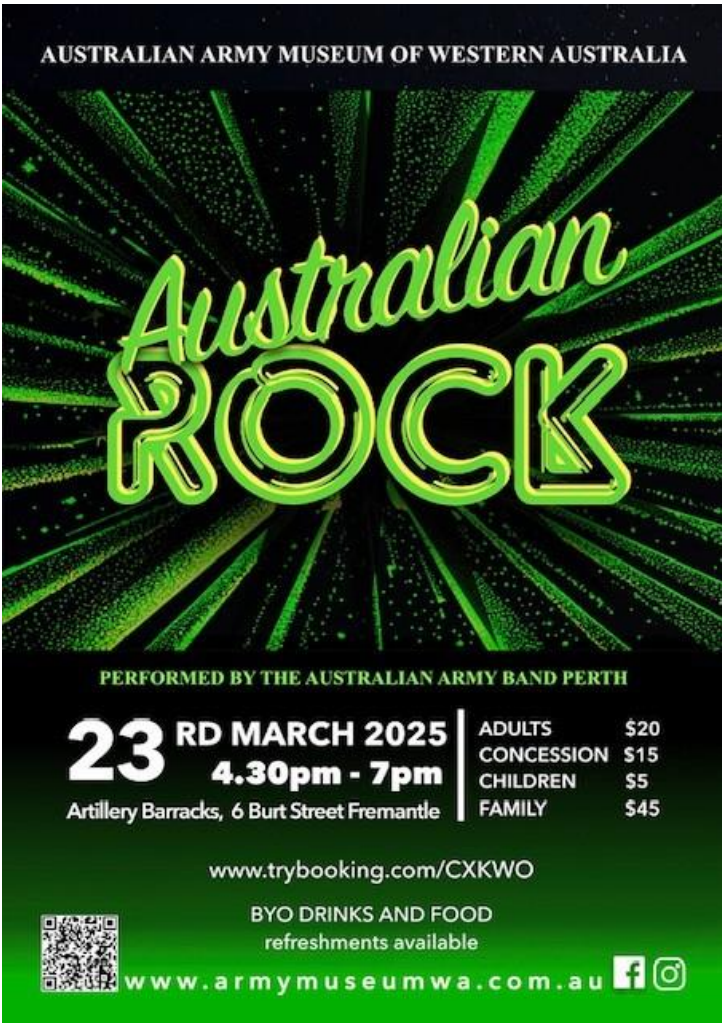
What was the Government and the people of Australia thinking?

These were servicemen and servicewomen who had faced the most despicable foes and conditions that were too horrendous to contemplate but no one was there for THEM!

To me, Eric Anderson was not a loser; he volunteered and fought alongside other courageous Aussie boys and endured what HELL threw at them, he gave his all, fighting in some of the worst campaigns seen in WWII and he returned home with great expectations for his wife and family only to have his ghastly experiences affect his life, his waking hours and even descended on his sleeping hours when he truly deserved the peace that he had fought so hard to give to the people of Australia, but could not find for himself.

My heart goes out to Sylvia and their eight children and what they went through, such terrible experiences especially for Sylvia who held their family together when, so very sadly Eric, the love of her life from a girl of 16 years, having returned safely, albeit with recurring malaria, was filled with demons that had descended on him and this was the one almighty battle that he could not win.

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I am.... (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE OF THE BELOW)

VETERAN	WIDOW	SON	DAUGHTER	SON IN LAW	DAUGHTER IN LAW
GRANDCHILD	GREAT GRANDCHILD	NIECE	NEPHEW	FRIEND	ASSOCIATION
NAME OF VETERAN					
SERVICE NO				16 th or 2/16 th Batt	

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BIRTHDAYS

Birthday wishes to all members, veterans and widows

DECEMBER

4 Ellen Anderson-Knight
6 John Vivian-Williams
10 Dawn Whitehurst
11 Pamela Godsall-Smith
12 Ken Walker
14 Kerry Parnell
15 Ron Jarratt
19 Robert Looby
25 Max Donohoe
27 Bevan Norrish
29 Aileen McKay
30 Lorraine Learmonth
31 Alex Northcott

JANUARY

1 Stirling Stilwell
7 Alan O'Meara
Peta Hewitt
9 Doris Beech
10 Elaine Gibbs
13 Leanne Sammels
15 Lindsay Allan
Russell Mehan
21 Anne-Marie Hill
John Caro
Frank Taylor
Peter Norrish
24 Lorna Williamson
Peter Cary
28 James Griffiths

FEBRUARY

1 Russell Fuller (100)
Jillian Woodthorpe
Lauren Murdoch
2 John Speed
4 Mary Holloway
5 Janice MacKenzie
6 Michael Northcott
7 Hadley Stilwell
8 Carolyn Murdoch
11 Ian Smith
12 Alec Hack
13 Anna Pollard
14 Dawn Ingram
15 Damian Sharrock
18 Richard Ingram
Vera Bailey
19 Bob Bayliss
23 Tim Murdoch
24 Margaret Smith
26 Mardi Dungey
28 Bernice Tonkin

WISHING ALL OUR MEMBERS WHO CELEBRATE THEIR SPECIAL DAY IN
DECEMBER, JANUARY & FEBRUARY

A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY & MANY HAPPY RETURNS

**SPECIAL MENTION TO RUSSELL FULLER REACHING 100 YEARS
ON 1 FEBRUARY**



CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2025

Dates subject to change and venues to be confirmed

FEBRUARY	
23	Welcome Event Kings Park 11am
APRIL	
13	ANZAC Service Kings Park 11am
23	ANZAC Service VIC Kokoda Memorials Dandenong Ranges 11am
25	ANZAC Day March Perth & Lunch at 16RWAR
25	ANZAC Day March Melbourne & Lunch Rising Sun Hotel
25	ANZAC Day Parade Brisbane
MAY	
24	May Lunch Bedford-Morley RSL
JULY	
6	RWAR Association Church Service St Georges Cathedral
TBC	Army Museum Visit Fremantle
TBC	2025 Brigadier Arnold Potts Oration
SEPTEMBER	
21	Kokoda Memorial Service Kings Park 11am
OCTOBER	
5	Association AGM Karrakatta
TBC	Memorial Service & Country Lunch Northam
NOVEMBER	
9	Association Christmas Wind Up Karrakatta
<p>All committee meetings First Sunday of each month 10.30am 16RWAR Karrakatta (Feb – Dec) All members are invited to attend – please contact the Secretary, Peter Norrish, for confirmed details Email: peterchucknorrish@gmail.com Phone: 0417 985 400</p>	

Note: All events in WA will have details in the “Can You Help” column in Monday’s edition of ‘The West Australian’ the week prior to the event; or please phone/email a committee member as listed in the front of this and all issues of Pigeon Post.