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## NEWSLETTER NO 156

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

October 2014

Dear Members and Friends,

The coming weeks will, I'm sure, be very busy leading up to the 100th Anniversary of the Gallipoli Landings and indeed the First World War. This was the War that saw the emergence of the Anzac spirit so important to what Nation stands for today.

I ask that as many of you as possible join me at the Sydney Cenotaph on the 11/11/14 for the laying of a wreath from the 2/18th Battalion as has been the case in previous years. Thus we remember those soldiers who fought and fell to defend our freedom in too many wars.

It is with some regret that we acknowledge the retirement of our NSW Governor, Dame Marie Bashir and her husband, Sir Nicholas Shehadie. Dame Marie has had a long and sincere association with the 8th Division, 2/18 Battalion and in that role, has always shown her interested and caring nature towards all Members and families whenever we were fortunate enough to meet her. Her professional and elegant manner in carrying out her duties was outstanding. I recall one instance when we at the Cenotaph to remember the Fall of Singapore. In Dame Marie's professional career, she was a medical practitioner of some note. On this particular day, one of our members suddenly collapsed. Dame Marie was first on the scene even though she was taking part in the Official Ceremony. She was able to assist in reviving our friend who enjoyed a full recovery.

We take this opportunity to welcome our new Governor, General David Hurley, who we wish a long and rewarding experience in his new role.

I am looking forward to attending our Christmas Lunch in December. Details have already been advised by Larry and Colleen Czarnak.

We must acknowledge the assistance received throughout the year from the 8th Division, particularly Ron Ferguson.

Thanks to Evan for his assistance to Merv Blyth in the matter of welfare updates.

Unfortunately, I have had too many trips to hospital this year and have been unable to attend some Memorial functions during these times. One was the Remembrance Service of the Battle of Pozieres. This was held at St John's Church at Gordon.

There was also a Memorial Service, also at St John's, for the 1/18th Battalion. These services were conducted by Father Keith Dalby who also laid a wreath on our behalf in my absence.

I send my best wishes to you and your families for the coming Christmas season and pray that you have good health for the New Year.

Regards from NOEL SIMMONS

Special thanks from Treasurer Diane to the following donors to be acknowledged and thanked.

Ray and Carolyn Masling  
 Suzanne and Clarry Masling  
 Janine Dunn  
 Peter Loxton  
 Cath and Cliff Olsen  
 Richard Solomon  
 Noni Staggs and Julie Whitehouse  
 Michael James and family  
 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion Memorial Rifle Club Incorporated.  
 Clarice McGrory and family

The Treasurer's Annual Report follows.

Ian Johnstone, youngest son of Tom Johnstone, from Amidale, has mentioned a new book, Descent into Hell by Peter Brune. Ret \$35.00. It mentions his father Tom Johnstone & also my father Doug Okey.

Larry Czarnik has asked me to pass on the following information re the passing of our members.  
**NX40563 Pte. Keith CT Forsyth.** Link is to the Inverell Times from Anzac Day 2013 with Keith in the photo. (Larry has a PDF file of the article)

**NX406770 Cpl. AG Graham ("Tich)** Link is to the SMH Tributes page.

**NX56174 Pte MK Gibson (Mac)**, passed away May 2014 having just celebrated his 97<sup>th</sup> birthday on March 21<sup>st</sup>. 2014. Link is to the Fassifern Guardian (Qld)

#### **Excerpts from Kevins News.**

The passing of two 8<sup>th</sup> Division veterans:- **Cyril Gilbert** who had worked on the Burma/Thailand railway passed away in June, aged 95

**Colin Merchant** passed away early last year. He was seconded in Singapore to the Royal Navy because of his expertise with diesel engines.

At least five Australian soldiers of aboriginal ancestry were sent as POWs to Sandakan.

**Cpl. John "Jacky" Jackson** (8 Div. Provost Coy) had worked on a dairy farm at Alumny Ck. near Grafton, NSW, born 1916. He had an excellent voice and his rendition of "Beautiful Dreamer" was always a favourite with his fellow prisoners. He died of malaria at Sandakan in April 1945.

**Gnr. Wally Roberts** (4<sup>th</sup> Anti Tank Regt.) Born at Lake Condah, Vic. 1918. Was on the first march to Ranau, and was on the rice carrying task from Ranau back to Paginatan. Became ill on one trip and was bayoneted near Paginatan while on the ground, at the end of March 1945.

**Pte Jim Perry** (2/19<sup>th</sup> Infantry Bn.) born at Redfern, NSW in 1916. Sent in 1943 on "E" Force to Sandakan, whereas other four were on "B" Force. Died of malaria at Sandakan in May 1945.

**Sig Colin Ball** (8 Div Sigs) Born at Southport Qld. Was on the second march to Ranau and died along the track, possibly near the 36 mile in June 1945.

**Cpl. Jim Darlington** (2/18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Bn.) from Barraba NSW. A fine heavy weight boxer, he went to the aid of an Australian cook struck by a guard at the airfield. In turn he was assaulted by the other guards and badly injured. Sentenced to six months solitary in Outram Rd. for attacking a guard, he was taken to Changi Hospital after serving his time. He survived his captivity.

Very sad news is the passing of Kevin's wonderful wife, Helena, our deepest sympathy to him and family.

His moving eulogy follows.

### **Eulogy and Remembrance at Helena's Funeral Service 15/9/14 by her husband Kevin**

Thank you all for coming to say goodbye to our beloved Helena. When she first learned of the award of an OAM, her comment in puzzled awe was "...but quiet little girls like me don't get recognition like that." A good friend put her straight: "Nobody deserves it **more** than you, for your quiet, reliable work for the Diabetes Association over all those years."

At Government House on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September Helena received that award, for her constant commitment for a period of over 65 years to LEGACY and TORCHBEARERS for LEGACY, and for 18 years of leadership and influence in the support of persons with DIABETES.

Shortly after her investiture, while chatting on the crowded colonnade, my darling girl collapsed with a serious and deep haemorrhagic stroke. At St Vincent's Hospital I sat by her bedside for four days, and we talked. Well, at least I talked. Helena had lost her ability to speak. I held her hand (we always enjoyed quietly holding hands). I held her tiny hand, and I hoped that she was hearing me. For the first two days she could give a slight squeeze when I asked her to send me a signal. We recalled many things, often aspects of her life not known to her friends, about some of which I shall tell you now.

We remembered how Helena, grandson Paul and I huddled together on Ireland's Giant's Causeway **protecting each other** from the blasts of icy wind and sleet shrieking in from the Arctic regions. We remembered the beautiful green fields of her Ulster. We talked about those lovely glens of Antrim which she so much enjoyed visiting as a youthful and very keen patrol leader Girl Guide.

Hand in hand we talked of the air raids over Belfast in the early days of World War 2, and of the terror she suppressed while trapped in their house, in the company of a large, unexploded, delayed action bomb, while wardens struggled desperately to gain access and get the family out safely. Next morning there was only a vast crater where once the house had stood.

It's my belief that as the resilience of Helena's youth faded in the 1970s, the tensions of that awful experience emerged as hypertension and possibly what we now call PTSD, post traumatic stress disorder. There were more than enough other terrible experiences and tragedies during her lifetime. Her PTSD became evident in her increasing fear of enclosed spaces and large crowds, and her reluctance to travel. Eventually it led to her collapsing in church or at large social gatherings. Two years ago Helena collapsed suddenly at our family's Christmas lunch.

I recalled for my darling wife our crossing into Germany on one occasion; her bewildered fear when I was taken away by armed border guards. X-rays had shown four suspected drug packages in our baggage. Helena's fears for me, and her tension, were very real, suppressed by her quiet courage. Eventually all was well. It was simply four copies of one of my books.

Three years before our 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary, I saw an attractive Golden Wedding tea set in Colchester, purchased it and brought it back discreetly to Australia. Gave it to Helena as a **complete surprise** on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2005. Ever since, it has been used for our weekly ritual morning tea as we sat together watching that Sunday morning TV programme, *Songs of Praise*.

Helena has been described by one good friend as a woman of integrity and deep faith. Each night my wife read quietly and devoutly from her many little books of Christian wisdom, but her faith was very wide. For example, in Thailand we participated together in Buddhist observances. In Florida Helena enjoyed her times with a Mormon ladies coffee group. In Armidale one of her closest friends has been a Jehovah's Witness. Helena's **independence of mind**, and her strong will in things that mattered to her, were evident to those who knew her well.

In cities around the world Helena explored. During a sabbatical in Nottingham while I worked, Helena explored the mediaeval lanes and the lace factories. She met the Sheriff of Nottingham in his office.

In Paris while I attended the UNESCO Institute for Educational Planning, Helena enjoyed the fabulous apartment they provided, and then went exploring, using her gentle charm rather than French language to make her way. She ascended the Eiffel Tower and it kept drawing her back. In New York my adventurous girl climbed the narrow staircase inside the Statue of Liberty and reached the top. She went to the top of the Empire State Building.

At Lions Clubs conventions in cities as diverse as San Francisco and Hobart my quiet, unassuming girl gained a reputation as one who knew her way around, even if she hadn't been there before.

Sometimes during recent months as she constantly rested, Helena told me I should have married a younger woman. My response was that marrying her was the best thing I had ever done in my entire life. Anyway, none of her friends had a toy boy of their very own.

In Thailand she loved the orchids, replaced each day in our guest apartment at the Thewphaingarm School. After seeing the massed plantings of daffodils on the city walls of York in Britain, Helena insisted that we plant one thousand in our own garden. I think we might now have about two hundred, just this week coming into bloom in Armidale.

There at St Vincent's last week, we tried to recall the time we went on an Irish coach tour of Scotland. Staunchly British in her loyalties, Helena was thrilled to be invited as the one to present a bouquet to the Queen Mother on behalf of our Northern Irish tour group. Following unobtrusive security checks, she made this presentation near Moy Castle in the far north of Scotland

**Family** has always been foremost in Helena's thoughts, her deep love unbounded for our Ian, grandchildren Matthew, Carly, Alice and Paul, and for the great-grandsons. She was so pleased when Carly brought Zachary and Finn to see her on the morning of her investiture. Helena never ceased grieving over the loss of our little daughter Susan all those years ago.

Despite her traumas in those early wartime years, the final years of war brought Helena considerable responsibility and much joy. She had moved to Lincoln and then London. At seventeen she held a senior secretarial position in Britain's Ministry of Production. One of her responsibilities was to manage meetings at Nottingham where arrangements were made between large firms for the exchange of industrial cutting tools to assist the war effort.

In Lincoln she lived alongside a Bomber Command airfield. She danced with Australian airmen to the music of those big bands of the 1940s, and enjoyed the wartime songs of Vera Lynn and Gracie Fields.

She had been a widow here in Australia for eight years when we met at Forbes. She was a legal secretary, and later became a qualified teacher of secretarial studies.

Our Armidale home became her "nest", her safe haven, the one enclosed space that protected her from life's hazards and sorrows, where she could look out on the Australian wattles and the British daffydils, where life was so peaceful.

This kind, sensitive and gentle lady is now at rest.

Goodbye, my love.

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**Treasurer's Annual Report 2 / 18<sup>th</sup> (A.I.F) Battalion  
Association for 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2014.**

**Opening Balance 1/04/13**

St George balance                      \$642.72

**Plus Income:**

Donations and Subs                      875.00

Interest Esanda                            276.21

ANZAC Day                                    389.00

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1,540.21

**Less Outgoings:**

Newsletter                                    688.60

Bank Fees                                     91.36

Web site fee                                  420.00

Postage                                         59.25

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1,259.21

**Closing St George balance 31/3/2014**

**923.72**

**Term deposits as at 31/03/14:**

Esanda term deposits                      6,737.19

**St George Investment Account**

**2,090.86**

**TOTAL CASH POSITION**

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**\$9,751.77**

Treasurer: Diane Humphries JP

Auditor: Richard Clive

## ANZAC Day 2014

We had another wonderful ANZAC Day and lunch this year at the Bowler's Club in York Street. Merv and many of the Blyth family made it to the lunch. Everyone is genuinely so happy to see Merv present each year at ANZAC Day. He was in fine form and takes on "rock star" status for the day.

Sadly Cliff and Cath Olsen couldn't make it to ANZAC Day, and they were sorely missed.

Of course it was a rainy day (as April is Sydney's wettest month) but the ANZAC March itself gets longer and stronger every year. Surely In 2015, the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing, the ANZAC Day march will be even bigger. We had 64 attendees at the lunch and we also conducted the Battalion Association Annual General Meeting. Noel Simmons presided over the proceedings with our highly capable Secretary, Colleen Czarnik, running the agenda and voting. Democracy reigned supreme and all current Office Bearers were re-elected unopposed. The financial report presented on the day is listed in the newsletter. It is quite amazing the friendly atmosphere and camaraderie displayed on the day. We all have a common bond, through the Battalion, and while we may not see this group of people from one year to the next, it's like meeting an old friend again. I'm certain our forebears who went to War so many years ago, would not have envisaged this legacy they have left us. For some of us ANZAC Day is possibly a sad day and a day for reflection, but it is made more relevant when spent with people having this special connection.

We truly look forward to seeing you all again in 2015.

Kind regards.

Treasurer Diane Humphries



## **ANZAC DAY MARCH UPDATE No. 2**

### **POLICY**

This update is to remind sub-Branch and Association members of the criteria for participating in the Sydney ANZAC Day March and provide some general guidelines. Once again it is important that this information is disseminated as widely as possible.

There are three ways by which an individual can participate in the March: (i) as an Australian veteran, (ii) as the descendant of an Australian veteran (iii) as a veteran or descendant of a Commonwealth or Allied force.

#### **Australian Veteran**

Veteran eligibility to march is based on the criteria to become a Service Member of the RSL i.e. any person who has served in the Australian Defence Force for at least 6 months. Veterans should assemble with one of the service units of which they were/are a member. The choice of where to march is a personal one however; it is recommended that those who served together should march together as an act of remembrance and mateship.

#### **Descendant of an Australian Veteran**

A descendant of a veteran can march with veterans as a carer (one per veteran marching), banner party or flag carrier regardless of whether they are entitled to be a member of the RSL or not. All other descendants are invited to march with the descendants associations in a place of prominence in front of the Commonwealth and Allies contingent. One descendant only of a deceased veteran may honour their relatives service by wearing his/her medals on their right breast.

#### **Commonwealth or Allied Veteran/Descendant**

Veterans:

Veterans should be clearly identifiable by their campaign medals and should be at the head of each national group.

No medals or awards earned whilst a nation was in conflict with Australia or the Commonwealth shall be worn in the Sydney ANZAC Day March.

Dress should reflect the occasion i.e. traditional/national costume or dress (including headdress) is not appropriate.

Both the British Commonwealth and Allied contingents will form up in alphabetical order as printed in the March Broad Sheet and under the direction of the March Marshals.

Displays of foreign national flags are restricted to 1 per group.

No flag of a nation that was used when that nation was in conflict with the Commonwealth or Australia is permitted to be displayed.

Display of historical flags or ensigns of countries that no longer exist is inappropriate.

Banners are restricted to 1 per group and are not to contain any political slogans.

The display of photos or other memorabilia is not permitted.





Descendants:

Descendants of veterans are encouraged to participate to honour the fallen at the express invitation of the contingent leader/organiser.

Descendants are to march behind the veterans within the national group.

Once again, dress should reflect the occasion i.e. traditional/national costume or dress (including headdress) is inappropriate.

The national group may have no more than 30 descendants of veterans participate including banner party and flag bearers.

### **General Policies**

Veterans who are unable to march should make use of the taxi service provided at the beginning of the March (contact ANZAC House for bookings).

Standing in Army Land Rovers is prohibited. Apart from the danger, there are significant insurance and legal implications for the March organisers as well as the military drivers, who are all volunteers for the day.

The Sydney ANZAC Day March is not a parade and therefore no vehicle, animal, weaponry or memorabilia (including historical uniforms) may be included without the prior approval of the March organisers.

Escorts to Colours etc. and catafalque parties may carry arms. Otherwise service contingents should only carry arms when specially authorized by the ANZAC Day March Executive Committee c/- ANZAC House.

As the head of each unit approaches the Cenotaph, hats are to be removed (by following the unit leader's movements or by order) and the right hand held over the heart and kept in that position until the unit is clear of the Cenotaph, when the reverse is to be followed.

Heads are to be turned towards the Cenotaph when passing it. Banners and Flags are to be dipped. Defence Force formations are to salute the Cenotaph as they pass it.

JOHN HAINES

CHAIR

**ANZAC DAY MARCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**WELFARE REPORT**

For this Welfare Report I have concentrated on our great 7. These are the remaining members of the 2/18<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

**John and Therese Smith** – I spoke to both John and Therese recently to find out how they were travelling. Therese said that John at this time was getting on really well. He had certainly had a bad cough recently but has now recovered. John is 94 a great achievement and both John and Therese are a little hard of hearing. I said that I would keep in contact.

**Cliff and Kath Olsen** – It is always a pleasure to speak to Kath. What a wonderful woman she is and a great support for Cliff. Cliff who is 91 has various health issues that are a trial for Cliff and his family but with Kath’s undying support Cliff is still able to live as good a life as possible. Cliff goes to War Veteran’s Home a couple of times a week which is good for Cliff and also some time out for Kath.

**Ray (Jack) and Marie Trimmingham** – Jack and Marie were recently in touch with Merv and are going as well as can be expected. Merv enjoys these contacts although he can tire fairly quickly.

**George Smith** – I recently spoke to George Smith. George is 91 and lives in the Western Australian town of Pingelly which is approximately 150 kilometres South East of Perth (yes I had to look it up on a map). George is quite a character and still stacks the bar in his local bowling club. George unfortunately has been a widower since 1970 and his daughter lives in way off Townsville but he is going well. I look forward to more conversations with George.

**Merv and Heather Blyth** – Merv will be 96 next month. Merv is going pretty well for his age but mobility is a big problem as he is unable to walk long distances anymore. Merv tires quite quickly also. As a Son in Law I can say that Merv is a wonderful Husband, Father, Grand Father and Great Grand Father and we are very proud of his achievements (who would have believed back in 1942 to 1945 that he would reach this age). Heather was recently in Hospital but is now home for which we are thankful. During September Heather celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday with her family and had an enjoyable party. A great time was had by all.

Both Heather and Merv have wonderful support from their family (especially David and Alison) and the additional in-home support allows them to live at home.

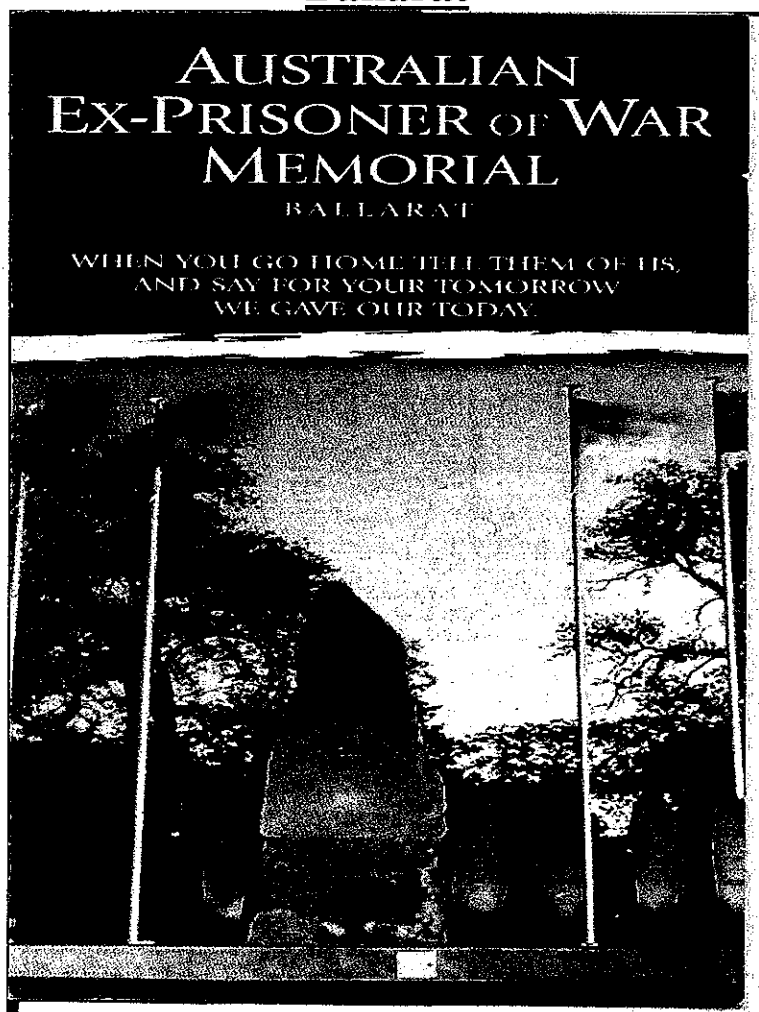
I have not at this stage been able to contact **Frank Bender** who would appear to be in a Nursing Home at Mittagong and **John Woodward** whose last known address was in South Grafton. If anyone can help me with contact numbers for Frank and John I would be most appreciative.

My Sister in Law Alison recently contacted **Shirley and Noel Simmons** – Noel is doing OK and is comfortable. Noel is home and receives nursing care 3 or 4 times a week. Noel is very happy to be back in his home.

Noel and Shirley we are all thinking of you.

Evan Richard

## A Trip to the Australian Ex- Prisoner of War Memorial Ballarat



On a recent trip to Victoria, Liz, my Son Will and I made a trip to the Australian Ex-Prisoner of War Memorial at Ballarat.

The Memorial was opened by now Governor General, General Sir Peter Cosgrove, on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2004 in front of over 11,000 people, including Liz's Parents, Merv and Heather.

The Memorial was declared the First Military Memorial of National Significance outside of Canberra by Act of Parliament in 2008 and honours and pays tribute to over more that 36,000 Australians who have become Prisoners of War from the Boer War to the present.

The location of the Memorial is in the beautiful City of Ballarat with its lovely gardens and magnificent old buildings dating from the gold rush of the 1850's. The Memorial is near Lake Wendouree, a lovely lake that hosted the Olympic Rowing was held in 1956.

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The Memorial has a stone pathway which has paving stones that are shaped like railway sleepers, very meaningful, and has all 36,000 names of known Australian Prisoners of War etched onto a black granite wall parallel to the pathway.

Liz, Will and Myself found the experience very moving and to see Merv's and his brother Arthur's names amongst the 36,000 names added to the experience.

Within the precincts of the Memorial there is also a Memorial to the Montevideo Maru which is dedicated to the Prisoners of War and members of the Salvation Band that perished when this ship was sunk without survivors.

I can only recommend anyone who is visiting Victoria to take some time to visit this Memorial.

Evan Richard

*LEST WE FORGET*

News

# dailytelegraph.com.au

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News

## Arise, Dame Marie Bashir: Retiring NSW Governor receives Queen's Birthday honour

- by: **EXCLUSIVE** Simon Benson National Political Editor
- From: The Daily Telegraph
- June 09, 2014 12:00AM



Arise, Dame Marie Bashir.  
Source: News Limited

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**RETIRING NSW Governor Marie Bashir will today become the second woman in Australia to be awarded a Dameship by Prime Minister Tony Abbott.**

The Daily Telegraph understands the title will be included among today's Queens Birthday honours list. It would confirm that Dame Marie and her husband, former Sydney Lord Mayor and rugby great Sir Nicholas Shehadie, would become the most celebrated couple in the country.

The already honoured and much loved Governor will become Dame in the Order of Australia, following in the footsteps of former Governor-General Quentin Bryce who became the first to receive the title of Dame after Mr Abbott controversially revived the British honorific system earlier this year.

Former defence force chief Peter Cosgrove was granted a knighthood on accepting the role of Governor-General.

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/arise-dame-mar...> 13/07/2014

# Arise, Dame Marie Bashir: Retiring NSW Governor receives... Page 2 of 3

## QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY: FULL HONOURS LIST (<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/queens-birthday-honours-the-full-list/story-fni0cx12-1226947467346>)

The Queen, whom Mr Abbott met last week in France during D-Day celebrations, is believed to have accepted the recommendation that Ms Bashir receive the country's highest honour — a British honorific — after serving as NSW Governor for 13 years, the second-longest in the country's history.



Her Excellency, The Governor of NSW, Marie Bashir.  
Source: News Limited

Senior government sources, while remaining tight lipped, hinted strongly that Governor Bashir would receive the honour to add to her already impressive collection of titles including a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) and a Royal Victorian Order (CVO).

Sources said the honour recognises Dame Marie's lifetime of work and service in psychiatry, tertiary education, public administration and as Governor.

Dame Marie is one of the country's most loved governors, having been described by Premier Mike Baird as an "inspiration" to all Australians. She will step down as Governor in October to be replaced by Australian Defence Force chief David Hurley.

Mr Abbott came under attack for restoring the title system when he announced he would award up to four knights or dames each year.



GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
SYDNEY

Monday, 30 June 2014

Colonel D H Ross CSC (Retd)  
President  
8<sup>th</sup> Australian Division Association  
10 Alexander Avenue  
**WILLOUGHBY NSW 2068**

Dear Colonel Ross,

Thank you for your gracious letter of congratulations and good wishes on behalf of the 8<sup>th</sup> Australian Division following the recent announcement of the Queen's Birthday Honours Award within the Order of Australia.

I am deeply touched by this honour and by your generous words also. As you know, the great privilege – and joy – is being able to walk and to work amongst the people of our incomparable land, among whom our returned servicemen hold a special place. And I can never forget the contribution of the 8<sup>th</sup> Australian Division in the history of service and courage to our nation.

Would you please convey my deep appreciation to all.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Dame Marie R Bashir AD CVO  
Governor of New South Wales



# Incredible WWI Tribute In London Looks Like A River Of Blood... But Look Closer!

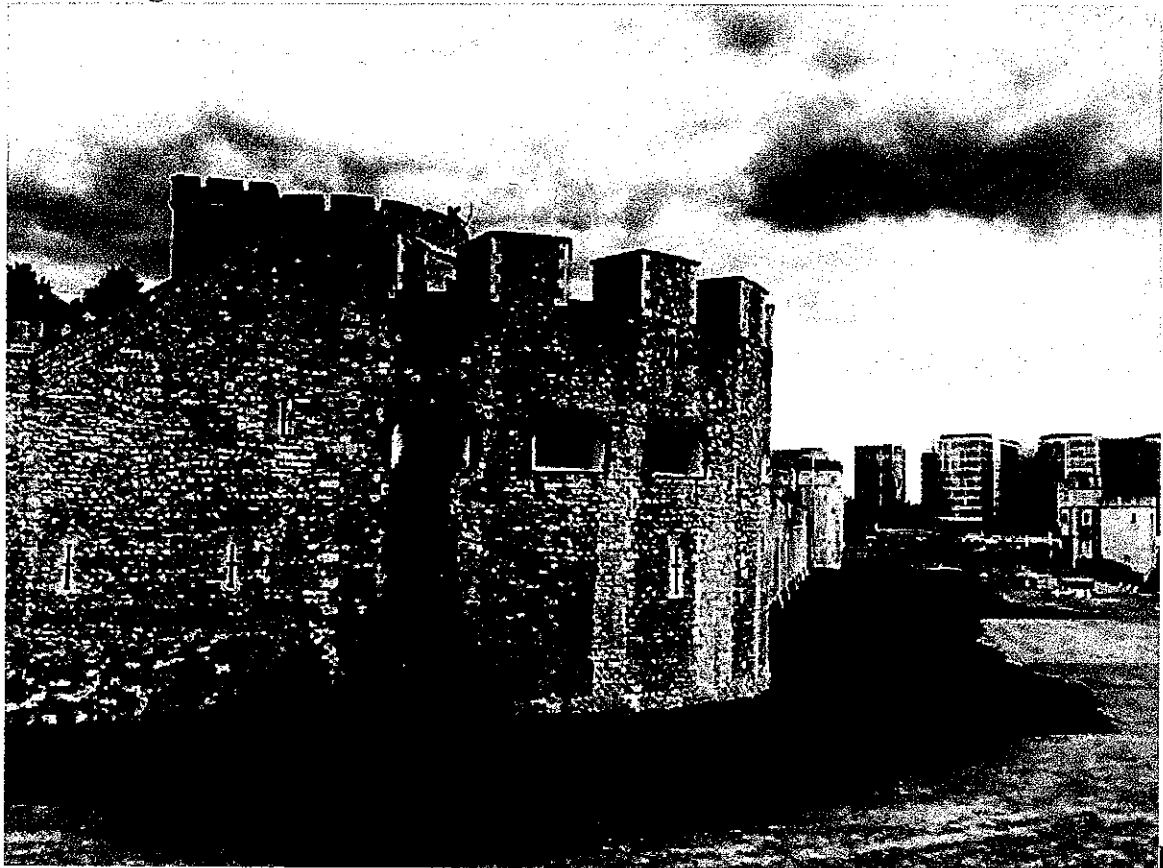
By Steve Rushing

AUGUST 2, 2014

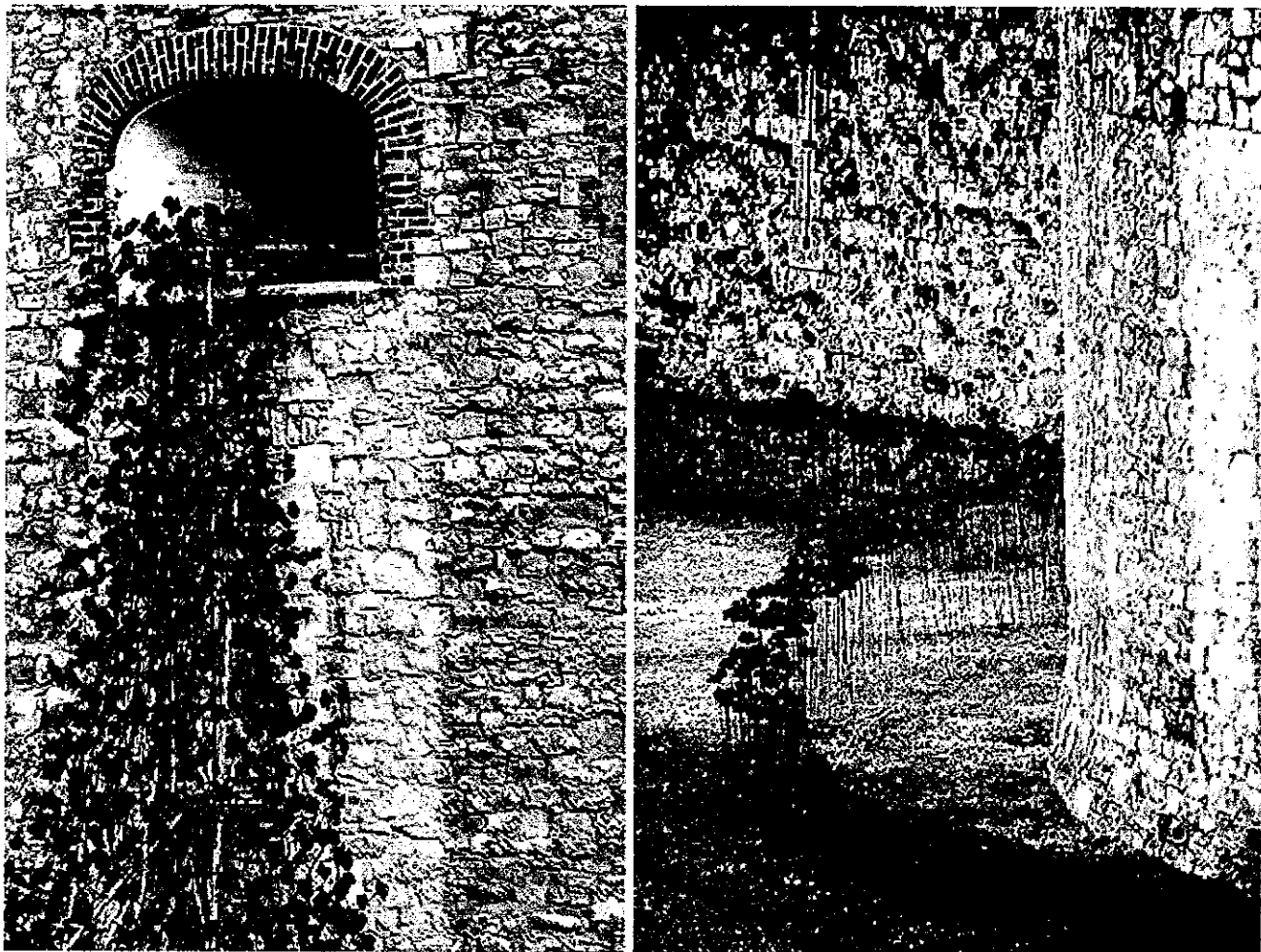
World War I, known at the time as the Great War, was thought to be the war that would end all future wars. All sides suffered an incredibly high number of needless deaths and the war devastated an entire generation. In fact, the sheer amount of destruction and death has only been eclipsed by World War II.

Since it ended, all countries involved have held memorials to remember their fallen dead who sacrificed their lives for the good of their country. This fact is all the more so in England, where nearly a million people lost their lives. What they've done to commemorate their fallen soldiers is truly beautiful, while also helping us understand the true scope of these soldiers' sacrifice. Even a hundred years later, we should not forget their incredible acts of heroism.

**The moat that surrounds the Tower of London has long stood empty and dry. But now, what may look like gushing blood from it's very walls, is actually something beautiful**



**This summer, the moat has been filled with 888,246 red ceramic poppies, one for each British and Colonial soldier who perished during World War I.**



**For the past few weeks, a team of 150 volunteers has been placing red ceramic poppies one by one around the Tower.**

**Each evening, the Last Post will be sounded and a selection of names of the dead read out loud. It's stunning and sobering commémoration that befits the Great War.**

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**The last poppy will be symbolically planted on the last day of the installation: November 11, Armistice Day.**

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**Regardless of why their countries went to war, we should never forget the selfless acts of these brave men.**

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

As many of you are aware, postage expenses are quite high & we are trying to reduce our costs by asking as many of you as possible to receive the newsletter on line instead of having a copy posted.

Please send an e mail including your wishes to [secretary@218battalion.org.au](mailto:secretary@218battalion.org.au) ;subject "e mail notice in lieu of 2/18<sup>th</sup> newsletter"

Now a very important date on your calendar is **Monday December 1<sup>st</sup> 2014**, our **Annual Christmas Luncheon** to be held at the Roseville RSL.

Plenty of parking available off the Pacific Highway, MacLaurin Parade, then Larkin Lane.

**Each individual pays for his/her own lunch at the club.**

**Do not send any money to the Secretary.**

**Please notify Secretary of your intention to attend** as the Club would like to know how many to reserve the tables for.

I am informed that the 2/18<sup>th</sup> Association has a Facebook page. We are trying to reach the younger generation , so check us out at [www.facebook.com/218battalionorgau](http://www.facebook.com/218battalionorgau) and "Like" us

### **Dates to mark on your calendar for lunch at the Roseville RSL**

First Monday in February.....February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015

First Monday in April.....April 6<sup>th</sup> 2015

### **News from Borneo** from Lynette Silver. (June 2014)

We had a recent trip to Sabah where it was very hot & dirty, with little or no water in creeks & rivers well below their normal level.

After a most enjoyable trip to Tasmania to give a talk on Sandakan & to receive an excellent donation towards our Scholarship Trust, organised by a POW relative we were back in Sabah to join an Anzac Day trek, comprising 17 Australian army officers & 3 civilians, two of whom came along specially to capture footage for a proposed documentary

#### **Update on our Special Sandakan Projects.**

##### **Friends of Miruru Village.**

Robyn, a member of the May trekking party, who works in a pre-school in WA; accompanied us to Miruru village to inspect how work was progressing. The villagers had decided to increase the size of the building so we advanced funds to the headman so hopefully the building will be ready for occupation by August. There are 14 children anxiously awaiting the move to their new home. Sets of matching clothing, donated by the St Michael's church congregation are being put to very good use. Robyn's organisational skills and enthusiasm was catching as when the group heard of her successful trip, they donated AUD200 to buy a small keyboard & some simple percussion instruments so that the children can have some music. The village is very grateful to all those helping out with this special project.

Mr Domoit, who found the Australian POW hiding from the Japanese on the death march track in the Taviu valley, did come to meet us & to partake of a morning tea organised by the village ladies. It is fortunate that we located this amazing man in time to hear his story as even though he is physically well, his mental faculties are fading. In the interests of historical accuracy, to film him as he confirmed that the death march route, which we had plotted from wartime maps & information, was correct. (On reaching the Telupid River, it followed the Taviu River & then ascended the Lolosing Ridge, passing through unexplored, uninhabited jungle. It did not go anywhere near Miruru village or the populated Liwagu valley, as had been claimed.)

##### **The Scholarship Memorial Trust.**

A special thank you to all donors, especially our generous RSL friends in Sydney who have made the funds available for the hostel building. Thanks also to Bendigo for the recent annual donation.

To complete this round of good news, I am delighted to report that one of our Scholarship girls, who elected to study bio technics, is doing extremely well at university. Thank you to all members of our 'silent' army who give so generously to this wonderful living memorial.

The Minister for Veterans Affairs has just advised us that a grant of \$1850 has been approved to repaint the steel railings around the Last Camp Memorial. This funding is most welcome, and the support of the DVA is greatly appreciated.

**NEW BOOK**.....My friend Derek Emerson-Elliott and I have combined our creative and historical talents to produce a work of fiction entitled "In the Mouth of the Tiger". Largely based on fact, it is set against the exotic wartime backdrop of Malaya and Singapore, where it enters the world of secret intelligence, incorporating much of the research collated for my various books on Special Operations and the Malayan Campaign. The title of the book has been taken from an old Malayan saying that ' the safest place in the jungle is in the mouth of the tiger'

The book is \$32 from me, posted anywhere in Australia.(\$29.99in the shops).

### **Return to Sandakan Tour, for Anzac Day 2015**

2015 marks the centenary of the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli. It is also the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the deaths of many POWs on the marches, at Ranau & at Sandakan, and is also the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the installation of the Windows of Remembrance in the Church of St Michael and all Angels, Sandakan, and the establishment of our Living Memorial – the highly successful educational programme for Kadazandusun students from remote regions in Sabah, supported by the Sandakan Memorial Scholarship Trust.

To commemorate these significant events, we have organised a special 2015 ANZAC Day Tour, 'Return to Sandakan'. This is not only designed for those who have been to Borneo previously, but also for those who wish to travel there for the first time in this very significant year. Members of the group will attend the standard Anzac Day Dawn Service held at the POW Park and also a special anniversary service to celebrate the installation of the Windows, which honour the 2428 Australian and British POWs who did not come home.

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VALE.

It is always sad to learn of the death of a 'family' member, & it is with great sorrow that I report that Valmai (Val) Glennon (nee Black), died on Mothers' Day. She was almost 93 years old. Her fiancé had died as a POW and she was a staunch supporter of everything connected to the Sandakan story. Val had visited Sandakan twice and regularly attended the 'Family' services in Sydney, even after she was confined to a wheelchair. Born on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1921, Val, enlisted in August 1942 with the Australian Women's Army Service, with army number NF410409. She served as a 'signalman' with the Australian Special Wireless Section, until January 1946 and was therefore very deserving of the Australian flag draped over her coffin. We were in Sabah so could not attend the funeral, but Judy Hunter, a member of the Sydney family, represented us all. Vale to a gentle and lovely lady.

Another death, and one that came as a great shock to me, was that of Bill Robb. You won't know his name, but you might know of his work, as Bill was a tireless investigator for the organization, Australian and New Zealand Military Impostors ANZMI as it is known is a group of ex-military personnel who expose

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military frauds, those who embroider their war service and/or wear medals to which they are not entitled. I 'met' Bill when I was invited by ANZMI to have input into investigations involving people claiming to have served with SOA and other covert units. However, Bill and I also met in real life, and it was after this that we became friends and I learned of his 'double' identity.

Bill, who served with the regular army and SAS, was also a detective-sergeant in the WA police force. He had a sharp analytical mind and, like his fellow ANZMI investigators, protected his identity by using a pseudonym – in Bill's case a popular US Marshall from the 1950-60s TV programme. Laconic, with steel-like determination, Bill was an expert on military medals and very skilled at uncovering secrets that people, who came into his area of interest, would have preferred stayed that way. Being ex-SAS, and with a distinct historical bent, he was intensely interested in WW2 Special Operations and I was helping him find his way through a maze of SOA files so that he could establish a website devoted to its history. Unfortunately, before he had a chance to achieve his ambition, Bill lost his life in a scuba diving accident.

Until next time  
Lynette (and Neil).

And finally a spot of humour.

### **Holy Humour**

A father was approached by his small son who told him proudly, "I know what the bible means!" His father smiled and replied, "What do you mean, you 'know' what the bible means?" The son replied, "I do know".

"Okay" said his father, "What does the bible mean?"

"That's easy, Dad" the young boy replied excitedly, "It stands for 'Basic Information Before Leaving Earth!'"

A Sunday School teacher began her lesson with a question, "Boys and girls, what do we know about God?" A hand shot up in the air. "He's an artist!" said the kindergarten boy.

"Really? How do you know?" the teacher asked.

"You know – Our Father, who does art in heaven...."

My young grandson called the other day to wish me happy birthday. He asked me how old I was, and I told him, 80. My grandson was quiet for a moment, and then asked, "Did you start at 1?"

My grandparents are funny, when they bend over, you hear gas leaks and they blame their dog!!

A six year-old was asked where his grandma lived. "Oh," he said, "she lives at the airport, and when we want her, we just go and get her. Then, when we're done having her visit, we take her back to the airport."

After putting her grandchildren to bed, a grandmother changed into old slacks and a droopy blouse and proceeded to wash her hair. As she heard the children getting more and more rambunctious, her patience grew thin. Finally, she threw a towel round her head and stormed into their room, putting them back to bed with stern warnings.

As she left the room, she heard the three-year old say with a trembling voice, "Who was THAT?"

