

## ***AGM Report – 2/31<sup>st</sup> Bn Veterans, Family & Friends Activities 2020***

*It has been an interesting year in many ways for the 2/31st Battalion. It started with Sue Mullins (daughter of Cpl John Mullins MM, (who was in, with Lt Aubrey Lewis, 10 Pl " B " Coy , when the Japanese exploded 5 X 500lb bombs on the " Milford Highway ", killing 3 and wounding 17), sending photos that, presumably, her father had taken. The curious thing is that the negatives were in Aubrey's desk and John Mullins had his developed in Tully at a pharmacy that the locals tell me closed many years ago. There is more to the story and the mystery remains unsolved, however, we now have more or less two copies of the same photos.*

*We commemorated Kokoda Day at the Sherwood/ Indooroopilly RSL on the 9th of August 2020. We were joined by Elizabeth and Lindsay Timms, Patricia and Brig Bill Date (Patricia being the daughter of 70th Battalion member Vincent McGrath), and Cherrie Cameron, daughter of James Cameron both of their fathers were TOS 27th June 1940, along with their best mate Murray Hogden. The trio joined the same day and were initially assigned to the 1st A/T unit. They were then " Volunteered " as part of the 70th Battalion startup which subsequently became the 31st Battalion to make up the 25th Brigade. All three survived the war, however, Murray reenlisted after the war and was KIA on 29th October 1950 at Chong Ju while serving with 'D' Coy 3 RAR in Korea, not knowing that his son had been born and had been adopted out. More on that to come.*

*Alf Cumberland celebrated his 103rd Birthday on the 2nd of September, however, because of the Covid-19 lockdowns, we weren't able to join him as we had done the year before.*

*He did enjoy those cakes and a gathering.*

*He passed away, peacefully, on the 8th October. His funeral was held at Robina and a Guard of Honour was formed by Mick James, Tim Lewis and Tony Wadeson. His Life Membership certificate had*



*been struck only a week or so before his death, however, due to the restrictions we were unable to deliver it to him, so we placed it on his coffin, ceremoniously, on the day. Mick and Tim preceded the cortege with the 2/31st Banner at the Slow March. Alf was remarkable as a soldier ( see our web site ) and as we heard at and after his funeral service, was remarkable as a man, husband and philanthropist ( he gave away two houses to families who were in need ) May Alf Rest in Peace.*

*November, saw a dossier on the Hurrell family and compiled by the Late Captain Lloyd Hurrell MC being presented to Tony Wadeson by Sunnybank RSL board members Beurskens and his wife Gia ( pronounced GEAR ). The compilation had been found and handed in to the Sunnybank RSL . When it was realised that most of the information pertained to the 2/31st they contacted Tony for the handover.*

*It was then decided that it should be back with the family. Sue Hurrell's name had been previously mentioned regarding another matter so, with the help of Peter Cave, son of Fred Cave , Bren Gunner with the 2/31st, she was tracked down and a meeting arranged to pass it back to the family; she was thrilled and relived some of the stories depicted in the folder.*

*We come to December, when on the 6th, the meeting of the descendants of the " Three Amigos " took place at the " Salt and Pepper Cafe " at Keperra . Patricia Date and Cherrie Cameron had been trying to track down the son of their father's mate Murray Hogden for years, however, they were looking for a Hogden , not an Ian Smith. Through our 2/31st network, we were able to bring the three together to share stories and photographs. It was a very happy occasion and a fitting end to activities of the 2/31st for 2020.*

**TIM LEWIS**