



2/4TH MACHINE GUN BATTALION

Website Dedication and Launch

Saturday 18th March 2017

2.30 pm

Army Museum of Western Australia - Artillery Barracks

Burt Street, Fremantle

"They died that we may live

May we ever live – worthy of them"

www.2nd4thmgb.com.au



Acknowledgements and thanks

Website Committee members – who led and managed the project and donated hours of their time to collect and upload the content

Cheryl Mellor, Harry Tysoe & Sylvia Norton

Luke Tannock for the contribution of photos and videos
and for the production of the demonstration video

Website development and design – for their enthusiastic support and creativity in building our 'Virtual Memorial'

Craig Harmon – Managing Director, Harmonic New Media

Annie Stanley – Digital Producer, Harmonic New Media

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Lotterywest

2/4th Ex-Members Association

Department of Veterans' Affairs

Individual donations – Dick Ridgwell

Glad Cowie

Mrs Linto

Venue and Catering – we are very grateful for the use of the Fremantle Army Museum and to the catering team for their assistance with this launch function

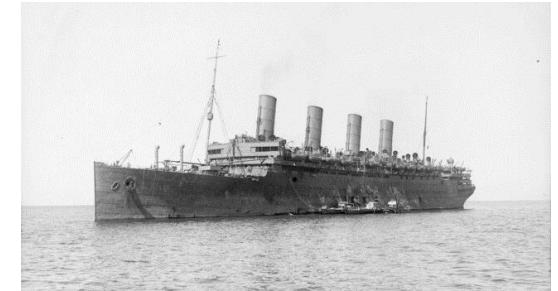
Order of Ceremony

Welcome	MC Jan Stewart
Address	Bernie Dorizzi Vice President, 2/4 th Ex-Members' Association
Website Launch	Hon Graham Edwards AM
Website demonstration	Website Committee
Prayers	Fr Braden Short Prayers Introduction of The Last Post
The Last Post	L/Cpl David Scott
The Ode	John Gilmour "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." Response [all] – 'We will remember them' One minute silence John Gilmour – 'Lest we forget' Response [all] – 'Lest we forget'
Rouse	L/Cpl David Scott
Closing remarks	MC Jan Stewart

2/4th Machine Gun Battalion

Western Australia's 2/4th Machine Gun Battalion was raised at the end of 1940 as one of the support units of the ill-fated 8th Division sent to defend Singapore from the Japanese forces at the end of 1941.

Led by Commanding Officer Lt-Col M.J. Anketell, it was formed with men from throughout WA. They came together at Northam Military Camp east of Perth where they carried out their initial training which included a 3 day march in full pack from Northam to Perth. With further training in Darwin and Adelaide, it was just before Christmas 1941 that they were told of their deployment to Singapore, where they arrived at the end of January 1942.



By this time the Japanese had captured Malaya and were preparing to attack Singapore. After days of air raids the Japanese attacked Singapore on 8th February. The 2/4th's companies were quickly in action but by 10th February the Japanese had captured the island's west coast. Five days later the British and Australian forces were pushed back to a defensive line defending the city. However by that stage the battle was virtually over and on 15th February Lieutenant-General Arthur Percival surrendered Singapore.

The machine gunners suffered heavily. Between 8th and 15th February, the 2/4th had 137 men killed or missing, 106 men wounded and 24 described as having 'shell shock'. These casualties constituted almost one third of the battalion and included their commanding officer, Lt-Col Anketell who died of wounds on Friday 13th February 1942.

Worse was to follow with the battalion held in Japanese prisoner of war camps for next three years including Changi, on the Burma- Thailand railway, in other locations in South-East Asia and in Japan.

By the end of the war in the Pacific on 15th August 1945, another 263 men from the Battalion had died as prisoners of war.

Of the 976 men who set out to defend Singapore, 545 finally came home.

Of these 545 men there are just three remaining and we honour them today with great respect and pride:



Lance Corporal John [Johnny] Barry Gilmour of 'A' Company

Lance Corporal Roy Matthews of Company Headquarters

Private Richard [Dick] William Ridgwell of 'B' Company



As we honour them, we also remember all the men of 2/4th now gone – those whom we never knew ... as well as of all those who were our greatly loved husbands, fathers, grandfathers, brothers, uncles and friends.

The 2/4th website – A 'Virtual' Memorial

This website we launch today is the fulfilment of a long held dream of many on the committee of 2/4th Ex-Members' Association, particularly Cheryl Mellor, the daughter of Private Frederick Noel Matthews, (known as 'Cowboy' Matthews). Cheryl was the driving force that has led to the development of this 'Virtual' Memorial that tells the story of the battalion and of every single member of it.

There are other more conventional memorials – stones and plaques which honour this battalion, as there are written histories including Les Cody's – '*Ghosts in Khaki; the history of the 2/4th Machine Gun Battalion, 8th Australian Division*'. Also, Murray Ewen's book – '*Colour Patch - The Men of the 2/4th Australian Machine Gun Battalion*,' which has been one of the most important sources of material for this website. The committee are very grateful to Murray Ewen for generously granting us permission to use the photos and history of each man, which he worked so hard to collect over many years for his book.



The importance of the creation of a digital memorial and history is that this website now captures, in one location and in a form easily accessible to today's generation, the entire story of this battalion; not only during the war years but also the history of the Ex-Members' Association, which the men established in early 1946 almost immediately after their arrival home.

The Association, whose purpose was to ensure the memory of their fallen comrades was never forgotten and to continue the mateship forged during those years in their training camps and as a POWs, is now managed by a committee of the relatives of the original members.

The website has been built so that it can be continually updated and so others can add their own family member's story to the information currently uploaded to the site. It will also be a place for current information and news about the activities of the Association.



For help with uploading information to the site, please contact:

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Sylvia Norton	sylvia.norton@optusnet.com.au	0411 036 046

Or submit your information at - www.2nd4thmgb.com.au/submit-information/

Please consider making a donation to the ongoing development and maintenance of the website. Enquiries to the Treasurer:

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Requiem for a Soldier

This poem/song was included in the Dedication Service of the 2/4th Memorial on the Pathway of Honour in Adelaide on Friday 27th March, 2009.

It is the theme from the TV series 'Band of Brothers'.

Words by Frank Musker | Music by Michael Kamen

You never lived to see
What you gave to me
One shining dream of hope and love
Life and Liberty
With a host of brave unknown soldiers
For your company, you will live forever
Here in our memory

In fields of sacrifice
Heroes paid the price
Young men who died for old men's wars
Gone to paradise
We are all one great band of brothers
And one day you will see we can live together
When all the world is free

