

The Furphy Flyer

in Mufti

'I Hold Fast'

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May-June 2022



Birthday Luncheon Friday 1 July 2022

Pascoe Vale RSL

12 noon for a 12.30 start

Join us for the Birth Date of the Battalion, which was formed when the CO was appointed on 1 July 1940

82 years ago

Come to enjoy a meal, a chat and a speaker

It is essential to book places for this lunch. Ring Janice on 0414 782 557, or e-mail with name and number attending to janice.young@2-24.battalion.org.au

***The Furphy Flyer in Mufti* is the Official Organ of
The 2/24 Australian Infantry Battalion Association Inc.**

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Committee (2021-2022)

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Committee, Sandra Sharpe, Cameron Blackwood, Rod Wilson, Russell Edwards, Maurice Bennett

Website: Cameron Blackwood, Alastair Davison

Welcome to the New Members of the Association

Cheryl Moyle, daughter of Cyril Martin VX53646

Trevor MacNeill, Descendant of A A MacNeill VX25679

Tony Scully, Son of Maurice Scully VX31717

Neil Rankin, Descendant of Bob Thompson VX29230

Cherelle Burnham, granddaughter of Bob Clark VX44006

Nicole Masters, Descendant of Bob Clark VX44006

Sheridan Turco, Descendant of Bob Clark VX44006

Gerald Walker, Son of Raymond Walker VX113788

Nicole Peet, Descendant of Keith Stevens VX50311

Steven Smithwick, Descendant of Keith Stevens VX50311

Simone Smithwick, Descendant of Keith Stevens VX50311

Scott Smithwick, Descendant of Keith Stevens VX50311

Anzac Day in Melbourne 2022

Wattle Park Service



On Sunday 24 April Roland Nicholson and Bruce Williams represented the Association at the Annual Wattle Park Service, at which over 100 people attended – along with a swathe of politicians. Bruce acted as Banner-bearer with our new Processional Banner; attracting quite a bit of interest afterwards. Roland laid a wreath of behalf of the Association in the colours of the original 24 Battalion – the red and white of their colour patch. Wattle Park is worth visiting to see the Commemorative precinct. Overlooking the oval is the Lone Pine, that was planted in 1933 in remembrance of fallen comrades of the 24th Battalion. It is one of four plantings in Victoria with seed from the original Lone Pine. Only two of the original cone Lone Pines remain – this one and the one at Warrnambool Botanic Gardens. The tree at the Shine died of disease in 2012 and the one at The Sisters was struck by lightning in 2017.



The Association in Melbourne

ne could not have asked for a more beautiful day. Early morning saw the arrival of six Wangaratta High School Prefects who had come to carry our banner in the March - Stephanie Grant, Jarrod Bell, Hayley Murphy-Graham, Fiona Schilling, Tom Solimo and Jordan Gosbell. A big thank you to Bec Younger of WHS for organising the safe travel of the students to Melbourne for the March, and for the Reunion lunch.

As usual the Battalion people met in Flinders Street, opposite Federation Square, for the 10.20 am step-off. Our marchers – there were twenty - were by far the smartest looking and most respectful of all Battalions – we should be very proud! VP Janice led the group with descendant Matthew O'Shea carrying our Australian Flag.

The Anzac Reunion Luncheon was held at Pascoe Vale RSL with 38 people in attendance. The Prefects were hosted by the Association and were presented with Junior Honorary Certificates, along with a mug and a pen.



Wangaratta High School Anzac Day Service and Parade Banner Presentation

On Thursday 29 April, Janice and Treasurer Karen travelled to Wangaratta High School. Roland had intended to be with them at the services but had to withdraw at the last minute.



At the School Assemblies Janice and Karen presented the new Parade Banner to the Wangaratta High School Principal, David Armstrong. This banner is to be kept by the school for use at future School Assemblies and the Wangaratta Anzac Day Parade and Remembrance Day Services.

A small ceremony was also conducted by Janice at the schools 2/24 Fig Tree with the School Principal, Deputy Principal, Prefects and other invited guests in attendance. The tree is in fine health. This was followed by lunch and a further presentation of a Certificates, mugs and placemats was made to the WHS Prefects who represented the 2/24 Battalion Association in the Wangaratta Anzac Day March with their new 2/24 Parade Banner. [Handover speech on page 7]



Janice talking to the WHS group at the Fig Tree

The 2/24 men from Nulla Nulla Station

This article is compiled from a marvellous set of material supplied by Craig Proctor; with additional material from the book on Nulla Nulla, titled Wool away at Nulla Nulla by Beryl Goodfellow. Additional details were also added from Australian War Memorial website, National Archives of Australia and Wikipedia (Nulla Nulla Station).

In the 1890s the main activity of the Lake Victoria station started to transfer from their Murray River frontage to the Nulla Nulla and Noola outstations. Then, in the 1920s, these outstations became the centre of activity for the Lake Victoria holding. Road transport gradually became more reliable ensuring less reliance on river and steam boats. Nulla Nulla is 95kms north west of Mildura and 90 km east of Renmark.



The famous saw-toothed roof on woolshed at Nulla Nulla
Built 1920.



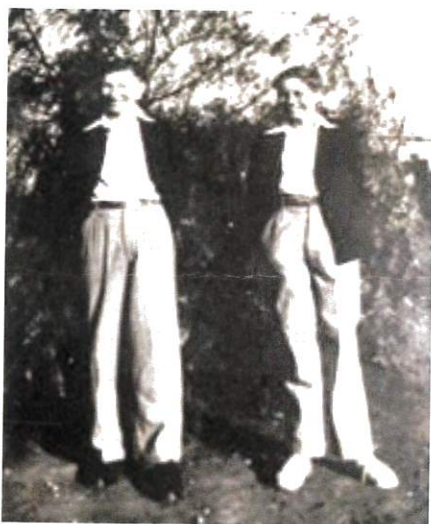
Homestead and manager's residence at Nulla Nulla outstation.

The men who enlisted from Nulla Nulla Station were

Private Harold Jerry Proctor VX28606
Corporal Alexander 'Alec' Armstrong MacNeil VX25679
Lance Corporal Robert "Bob" Henderson Taylor VX25756
Private Clifford 'Clive' Archibald MacIntyre Drummond VX22179

Another worker at Nulla Nulla, who enlisted, was Craig's uncle, Laurie Hennessy VX28607, who joined the 2/22 Battalion.

Private Harold 'Jerry' Proctor, VX28606



Jerry was born 24 October 1919 at Wentworth NSW and grew up at Nulla Nulla Station where his parents worked. He was 20 years 7 months when he enlisted on 27 May 1940, entering station hand on his Attestation form as his vocation, and nominated his mother, Marion, as his Next of Kin. At the time of his enlistment he was driving the mail truck from the Station to Wentworth. Originally posted to Transport he was transferred to *Infantry: General Reinforcement*.

This photo would have been about the time that Jerry (left) and Alec MacNeill started work at Nulla Nulla. [Courtesy: Craig Proctor]

Jerry commenced full time duty on 24 June 1940 and was posted to the 4 Training Battalion in Albury, then to the 10 Transport Depot in Bendigo where the licensee of the Shamrock Hotel let Jerry and his mates in the through the back door for a few beers and something to eat. Jerry was then moved to the No.3 Army Medical Corps – before finally ending up as a

member of the 2/24 Battalion, 3rd Reinforcement. On 8 April 1941 they embarked on the Queen Mary, travelling in convoy with *Queen Elizabeth* and *Mauretania* (II), via Jervis Bay, Fremantle, Ceylon to the Red Sea. Unable to navigate the Suez Canal the Queen Mary anchored in the Red Sea on 4 May and the troops disembarked to smaller ships.

After about 12 days at the Amiraya Staging camp Jerry had further training with the 26 Training Brigade (which was the training and re-training facility for the 2/24). He joined the 2/24 Battalion in operations on 8 July 1941 in Tobruk but was hospitalised with an infected wound and, after convalescing, retraining and some time with the 9 Division Australian Special Group, was back with the Battalion on 11 January 1942.

He served through the two battles of Alamein. There was heavy shelling of the 2/24 during the morning of 24 October 1942. Jerry was wounded in the knee, but was back with the Battalion in a couple of weeks in time to embark for Australia. Jerry, along with the Battalion, was retrained for jungle warfare and embarked for Milne Bay

on 1 August 1943, serving in the campaign at Lae and then at Finschhafen, where the fighting on 9 December was a fierce confrontation at close quarters in the jungle. Jerry was evacuated to 2/1 AGH, but came back with the troops to Brisbane where he was laid low with malaria.

The final campaign was looming and Jerry embarked on the *General Button* for Morotai, landing on Tarakan on 2 July 1945. With the war ceasefire on 15 August the Battalion was involved in 'mopping up' operations. Jerry Left Tarakan on 22 October 1945 and was discharged 27 November 1945 at Royal Park, having completed 1983 days of service – with 1111 of them overseas.

After the war Jerry moved to Broken Hill. He was a wonderful, self-taught musician and played in the Broken Hill RSL Band. He also had his own Jazz Band and then a Dance Band. While in Broken Hill he sought employment with the Department of Civil Aviation, but required confirmation of his Discharge. Jerry had to write to Army Records for a copy as his original that was burned with rubbish as the family cleaned up in readiness to shift to Broken Hill in 1952.

Corporal Alexander Armstrong 'Clicker' MacNeill VX25679

Born on 14 October 1918 at Wentworth, Alexander MacNeill was, at time of enlistment a mechanic **lerner**, but his Attestation states his occupation as a station hand. He enlisted on 12 June 1940 at age of 26 and 11 months and allocated to the 3rd/4th Field Training Brigade. A month he was transferred to the 2/11 Field Regiment in Geelong and then in September to the 4th Training Battalion in Bendigo before being posted to the 2/24 Battalion as part of the 3rd Reinforcement.

They left Melbourne for the Middle East on 3 February 1941 and were taken to the 26 Australian Infantry Training Battalion in Palestine, from where he, with the other Reinforcement, was shipped to Tobruk in June 1941. Relieved from Tobruk they were in Syria for rest and garrison duties before again heading to face Rommel on 10 April 1942.



Bob Taylor and Clicker MacNeill. Courtesy: Craig Proctor

Clicker was wounded at the First Battle of Alamein with a gunshot wound to the left thigh and was evacuated via the 2nd British General Hospital to the 6th Australian GH. This was during the major battle to capture the Tel el Eisa Ridge. The 26 Brigade was to move from Trigg 33 to capture Baillieu's Bluff and Snell's Spur, but it was 2/24 job to capture Baillieu's Bluff – about 2.2 km in from of their position. The the enemy was well entrenched and its strength was about six times that of the 26 Brigade. The result was a heavy loss. This is his story of this event from the book, *Wool Away at Null Nulla*,

On 22 July 1942 during the Battle of El Alamein, Clicker's platoon was ambushed and all but three of the 19 men were killed. The other survivors were Lyle Taylor and Trevor Fitzmorrison, who was later killed in New Guinea. In trying to escape the ambush Clicker was shot in the thigh, spending

Back in Australia, the 2/24 retrained for jungle warfare. He received a letter written in June 1943 by a mate, Bob Taylor, who was a POW in Stalag VIIA in southern Bavaria. [see next page]

After retraining, the 2/24 left Cairns on the *Westralia* for New Guinea, arriving at Milne Bay on 4 August 1943. Some days later Clicker was appointed L/Corp and then Acting Corporal on 15 October 1943. At Finschhafen Clicker was a forward scout. This was a dangerous role and one usually allocated to country boys who were used to observing their environment.

Back in Australia he undertook a refresher course for Instructors and had a stint in 2/6 AGH with a bout of malaria. Then in April 1945 the Battalion went to Tarakan via Morotai.

On 23 May Clicker was in a patrol that met an enemy advance and Clicker used his Owen gun to great effect. Then, when communication lines had been cut, he and another soldier volunteered to take a report to Company HQ.

He left Tarakan on 22 October 1945, arriving in Sydney on 1 November and was discharged some weeks later after 1183 days on active overseas service.

Letter dated 8 June 1943 from Cpl Robert H Taylor POW. (DOW 7 November 1943) to Cpl Alexander 'Ckicker' MacNeill.

Dear Alec

Well I do hope these few lines find you well as it leaves me not too bad, but I will have a silver plate in my head as there is no skull at the front of my skull as big as a crown piece. I have gone out to it three times but I am okay.

I bet they were all glad when you all got back home safe [and Laurie too].

Where is Nugget and Stan. Please remember me to Joan, I have written to her but she hasn't received my letters. I have not received a letter from her.

I got one from Mother, two from Jeannie, one from Marion, also a photo of the baby Marie, also one from Betsy. Do you think I will get my photos out of my kit bag, do you know whether they are home, I hope they are.

Have you heard anything of Keith Crawley. He was wounded about fifty yards from me he seemed to be seriously wounded, he was screaming. [1]

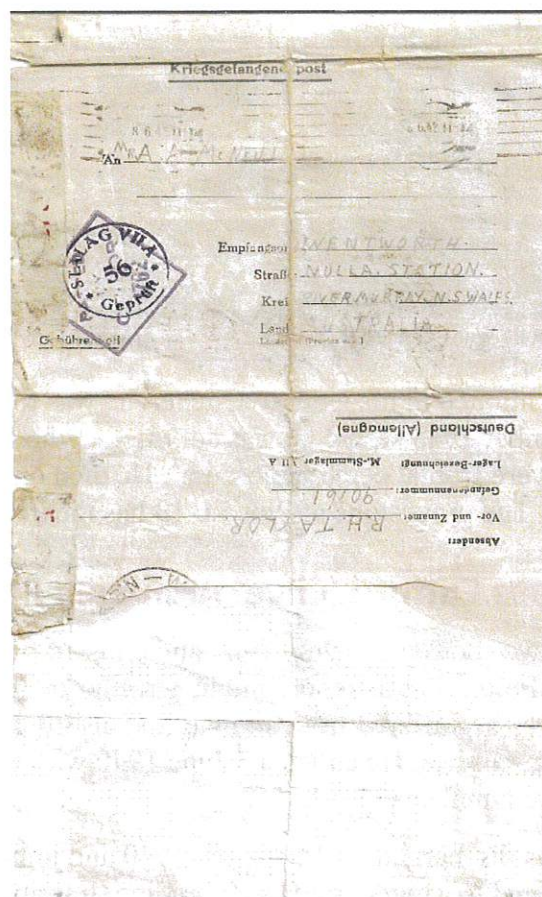
They told me I was going to where Bill is, I hope so.

I'm down for DV? I'm supposed to be going there to the international Red Cross from Geneva. [2]

Was Joan and Peggy at the dance, did you like it. Bill is in the airforce. Give Joan and Peggy and Bessy my love and all at home from the Station.

What is Melbourne like and how are the Yanks?

Well Alec I will close with love and give my love to all the boys, Lyle and Joe [?]. From your best mate, Bill XXXX



[1] Sgt Keith Crawley (VX25935) was killed in action 22 July 1942.

[2] Bob Taylor was in a POW exchange program and arrived in Egypt to the No.1 NZGH on 3 November 1943 but passed away four days later.

Lance Corporal Robert "Bob" Henderson Taylor VX25756

Robert Taylor, known as Bob, was born on 19 June 1917 and joined the Army on 12 June 1940 at the age of twenty-three. He started his training at No. 1 and 2 Training Depots, Balcombe then at the Bendigo Showgrounds before being posted, in December 1940, to the 3rd Reinforcements. Four days later he was promoted to Acting Corporal. As in most cases of promotion before embarkation and during the voyage these promotions were rescinded. Bob reverted to Private after landing in the Middle East.

On 5 February 1941 he sailed from Melbourne on the Troopship *MX3*, arriving in Palestine in late March. In June 1941 he was taken to hospital with cellulitis. After convalescence he went to the 26th Australian Infantry Training Brigade before joining the 2/24 and its transfer to El Alamein. In the first Battle of El Alamein

There was a plan to capture Dier el Shein and the 9th Division was to capture the Tel el Eisa Ridge at first light on 22 July. The objective of the 2/24 was to capture Baillieu's Bluff. Intelligence reports suggested that the enemy had a formidable number of troops. Tank support was refused. The attack commenced at 5.30 am and by light the companies were separated. As they neared their objective they came under heavy machine gun fire to the right flank where 15 Platoon was positioned, including Bob Taylor. Within 200 yards of their objective they were forced to ground and attempted to shoot it out, being quite effective with a bren gun at close range. Two men charge the enemy post, throwing grenades as they went and the post was taken. Bob Taylor had been hit and had a groove across his forehead and a wounded hip. 'Bomber' Brown dressed Bob's wounds and moved forward after being hit in the face. The enemy started to mortar the position and the remaining men of the 15 Platoon sheltered in a cave with their prisoners. The Germans retook the post and men became POWs.

Bob Taylor was reported missing on 22 July 1942.



Heliopolis War Cemetery



Headstone of Bob Taylor

Five weeks later it was reported to the Battalion that Bob was in an internment hospital in Athens. Information through the Red Cross listed his injuries as *'forehead grazed by shell splinters, Gun shot wound to left buttock. Both wounds healed'*. A month later he was reported to be a POW in Stalag VIIA, but the news did not reach the family until 8 June 1943. During his time at Stalag Bob suffered from angina and scarlet fever. Red Cross reports from Stalag indicated that he was recovering well.

As mentioned in his letter to Clicker, he was to be involved in the No.3 POW Exchange and arrived in Egypt on 3 November 1943 where he was admitted to the No.1 New Zealand General Hospital. His head wound was reported as *'severe frontal cerebral abscess'*. He died on 7 November 1943 and is buried in the Heliopolis War Cemetery at Cairo. The gravestone at Plot 5.0.13 has the inscription: *'HE DIED AS HE LIVED EVERYBODY'S FRIEND'*.

Private Clifford 'Clive' Archibald MacIntyre Drummond VX22179

Clive was born on 14 July 1907 and enlisted on 9 August when he was 33 years of age. Clive was the only married man of those in this report and he gave his address as Mildura. Everyone was amazed that he was accepted into the Army as he suffered from an inherited disorder, known as spastic paraplegia, that caused weakness and stiffness in the leg muscles. He enlisted 5 June 1940 with a medical classification of Class II as a clerk with the No.2 RRD. His Service Number was V84562.

He was discharged on 18 August 1940 and joined the AIF. He was sent to the 2/22 Training Battalion and appointed to Trade Group 3 at Bendigo, training as a driver. He was posted to the 2/24 Battalion and embarked for the Middle East 16 November 1940. As his occupation was a motor mechanic this was a good arrangement for him. He sailed for the Middle East in December 1940, arriving one month later. In May 1941 the Commanding Officer of the 2/24 fined Clive £3 for an offence.

In June 1941 he was classified as fit for duties other than active service with field formations and was transferred to Ordnance Workshop at HQ. In August he was in 2 AGH as his leg was causing him trouble, but he was back in service a week later. In January 1942 he was transferred to the Australian Ordnance Training Regiment with another stint in hospital, but was back with his unit in early February. Moved again he was transferred to the 1 Australian Depot Battalion in May but was noted as being temporarily unfit for service for a period greater than six months and returned to Australia on the *Manganui* on 3 June 1942.

Clive was sent to Heidelberg General Hospital with leg problems and palsy in his right arm. He was granted disembarkation leave and then returned to duties in the Ordnance companies in Melbourne. In February 1943 he was sent to the Australian Water Transport (Small Craft) Training Centre, and worked at the Water Transport Holding Company until he was posted, in April 1945, to the 16 Australian Small Ship Company.

On 29 April Clive flew from Brisbane to serve in Lae at Jacquinet Bay, and later in Finschhafen during May. On 20 May 1945 he flew to Morotai to serve for nearly six months. During this time he was an Acting Corporal. However, field promotions are not confirmed until after two months of active service. Clive left Morotai by ship on 25 October, arriving back in Sydney on 7 November 1945. He was discharged on 20 November 1945. Clive died on 12 July 1971, aged 64.

Vale - Annie Margaret 'Peg' Mackenzie



Peg Mackenzie was born in February 1924 and passed away on 28 April 2022, aged 98. Peg rarely missed one of the Battalion luncheons – on Anzac Day and for the Birthday celebration.

Peg's brother was John Beech VX32871, who served in the Middle East, New Guinea and was seriously wounded in Tarakan; dying on 10 July 1945.

Peg married George Mackenzie VX28541. George was wounded and captured May 1941. He was interned at POW Camp 106 in Italy and escaped to Switzerland in 1943..



Presentation of the 2/24 Procession Banner to Wangaratta High School April 2022

Presentation speech given by Janice Young

Thankyou Allanah and Stephanie, all the prefects and school community and honoured guests for having Karen and myself here today.

Firstly I would like to thank and acknowledge the Prefects that marched with us in Melbourne on Monday and also the prefects that marched here with the new Banner in Wangaratta RSL's Anzac Day service. And to thank Rebecca Younger for all her assistance and organisational skills in making this happen!



It is a great pleasure and an honour to present this banner to Wangaratta High School. We present it to the School in recognition of the very special association between Wangaratta High School and *The 2/24 Battalion Australian Infantry Battalion Association*. Our connections goes back decades and we are also formally linked through an 'Adopt a Battalion' program that was organised by the Shrine of Remembrance. However, there is a link that goes back to World War One. John Austin Mahoney was the dux of the Wangaratta Agricultural School in 1910. He enlisted in the original 24th Battalion. This man's photograph in the school's office foyer.

Today, we present this Banner so that Wangaratta High School can display it and parade with it on ceremonial occasions such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. We give thanks for the connection between our two organisations that was formed when the soldiers of the 2/24 were camped and trained in the showgrounds here at Wangaratta. There is a mural and a plaque at the showgrounds that commemorates this and I urge you to take a look at it!

We now present this to your Principal, David Armstrong. On behalf of the 2/24 Battalion Association, I place this banner in the safe keeping of the School in honour of the men who served in our famous Battalion.

Subscriptions and Donations

We apologise if we have missed listing your sub and/or donation. The Association is implementing new systems as Working Groups take on tasks. We appreciate your continued support for the memory of the men of the 2/24 Battalion.

Subs: R & B Rowley, D Wymond, D McKenzie, J Hale, B Scully, T MacNeill, W Anderson, I Dunstan, J Richardson, Pitts Family, S Drayton, T Oram, P Evans, B Shelton, B Kesby, P Clark, F & P Tyrrell, D Radnell, M Alabaster, C Austin, R Weir, S Valentine, L Jackman, J Bienert, D Muir, J Robertson, I Goldsmith, G Edwards, S Mollard, J Mollard, M & D Bennett, M-E McKay, G Masters, C Hollier, R Smith, N Campbell, C Blackwood & N Price, Lopez Family, B Williams, N Roche, G Caple, R Smithwick, N Adams, S Gleeson, C Moyles, T Munro, Skalka Family.

Donations: D Wymond, C Proctor, Pitts Family, J Hunter, B Shelton, B Kesby, P Clark, F & P Tyrrell, L Holland, D Radnell, S Valentine, L Jackman, J Bienert, I Goldsmith, J Mollard, C Hollier, B Williams, N Roche, F Macfarlane, G Pech.

Hautrie Crick – in the news

Hautrie was interviewed by the local paper, the Pakenham Gazette, sharing a news item with another resident, Sybil, who had celebrated her 104th Birthday.

Reporter: *Making it to 103 is quite an achievement. How does it feel to have reached this age?*

Hautrie: The good, the bad and the ugly. Life is how you make it. You treat everyone the same.

Are you from this area originally? What do you like most about Pakenham and what are some of the biggest changes you've seen in the area over the years?

Born in Melbourne, lived in a babies home for six years, came out to foster care outside of Swan Hill. My best mate was my dog at the time.

What are some of your fondest memories or greatest achievements over your lifetime?

Moving to Pakenham was the best thing I ever did. I was involved in a lot of things, RSL, Senior Citizens, Pakenham Show with Roger in the cattle section. I was a farmer until I joined the army at 21. Getting married and

having three daughters (only one survived birth) and I was a Rat if Tobruk for eight months. I am proud of my achievements.

Is there a secret to living a long and happy life?

I have enjoyed life and working with others. Going back to farming in Euroa.

How were your birthday celebrations this year compared to others?

Marvellous, I am happy to see my carer Ann on my birthday. I felt special.

Any pearls of wisdom can you share with us? Any good advice to live your life by?

Be happy. As I said earlier treat people how you like to be treated. And the most important thing in life is to go with the flow.

Sharing Anzac Day with Hautrie and Ray, and a visit from the Police Band



Hautrie and Ray Juinette



A staff member did this beading portrait - it took five weeks



Members of the Police Band who paid a visit to McGregor Gardens

Anzac Day Photos – Melbourne, Wangaratta and Wangaratta High School





The Processional Banner at the Wangaratta Anzac Day March

