



MARCH 2013

The Official Journal of 2/4 Field Regiment Association
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Do you remember this Anzac Day March in Melbourne?



Since the end of WW2, 2/4 Field Regiment veterans, supported by family and friends, have always marched on Anzac Day to honour the memory of their mates who paid the supreme sacrifice in WW2.

Despite the passing of many 2/4 veterans since this photo was taken, we are pleased to report that members of the 2/4 Field Regiment Association still enthusiastically gather each Anzac Day to march behind the Association's banner in memory of the men and women who gave their lives in war for our freedom, and, at the conclusion of the March to once again briefly rekindle the great camaraderie of the men who had served in the 2/4 Field Regiment during the years 1940-1946.

A special **Thank you** to Barbra Brennan from Wunghnu Victoria, the daughter of **VX56906 Clarence William Wakefield**, who kindly sent in this photo. Please turn to page 6 for more information about this photo. If you are able to help us to identify the names of others in the photo please write to us.

Lorell Benier who is the Daughter of VX15358 M.L. Davey wrote to the Editor via email on 16 October, 2012 as follows:

I was very pleased to receive the September edition of Barrage last week. I enjoy reading it like my Mother did. I was hoping to come to the Remembrance Tree Ceremony this coming Sunday but we have a family commitment in Adelaide.

I am sorry we are unable to attend. We went to the ceremony a few years ago when we took Mum. On page 3 of this edition there is a reference to a plaque at "Rocky Creek". I just found it on Google. Dad used to talk about his time there but he just said it was on the Atherton Tablelands. When we start travelling around Australia again we will definitely visit the me-

morial park and hopefully find the 2/4th plaque. I just found the actual plaque on the site but I can't find where it describes exactly where it is in the park. Our eldest Son lives in Brisbane now. We went to Atherton years ago when our Sons were young but didn't realise the memorial park was near there.

Our youngest Son, Lawrence, who lives in Adelaide at the moment is moving to Canberra in January so when we are there we will check out the plaque at the Australian War Memorial.

I hope the ceremony goes well on Sunday and hope that we will be able to get to the next one.

This year we were on the Diamond Princess sailing between Hong Kong and Shanghai on Anzac Day. We had a service on the

ship for the Aussies and Kiwis and other nationalities came to the service as well. My Husband read the Ode, he is ex Navy. We were on a 5 week cruise from Singapore to Vancouver.

We usually go to the March in Melbourne and my Husband marches.

I have never marched for my Dad but have always wanted to. Could you send me details if I would be allowed to march please.

My Dad was Maxwell Lawrence Davey.

Regards, Lorell Benier.

(Lorell - you would be most welcome to march for your Dad with our Association. Please refer to Page 2 for Anzac Day March 2013 details - Ed.)

"Introducing a new website www.changipowart.com of 300 images dedicated to Des Bettany who served during WWII with Lancashire gunners on 25 pounders.

Evacuated from Dunkirk and posted to North Malaya he was imprisoned by the Japanese at various sites POW camps in Changi. He painted to keep his sanity.

This artwork of his service life before and after the Capitulation of Singapore is a range of fascinating illustrations, done sometimes with humour.

This new website has been put together by us, Des' family as a tribute and to help raise awareness of what the POWs went through, as seen through the eyes of one man, Des Bettany.

After 60 years in a cupboard, at last, this artwork is available to all who have access to the internet."

The website records that:

"Des had carried small sketch books with him, and recorded aspects of the voyage out, the actions in Malaya and Singapore, in various media including pencil, ink, water colour and pastel. He continued his artistic endeavours during his new life as a P.O.W. As well as documentary sketches, he kept spirits up by producing a series of cartoons, some of which satirised his captors.

He also became part of a 'production line' producing programmes for the many theatrical and musical entertainments which were produced during the years of captivity, as well as assisting with designing and building theatrical sets for plays, Christmas revues and pantomimes.

Des met Murray Griffin (Australian war artist) and Ronald Searle, who both continued to produce works of art undercover and sometimes with primitive materials. Paints were manufactured from coloured earth from various depths, sometimes as deep as 12 metres. Colours ranged from white, ochre and brown to Indian red. These were dried, ground with bottles and mixed with rice water, and worked very well.

Sets for theatre productions were old tents, made into flats and backdrops. Wood was scrounged or stolen and ingenious uses were made of old army lockers and equipment."

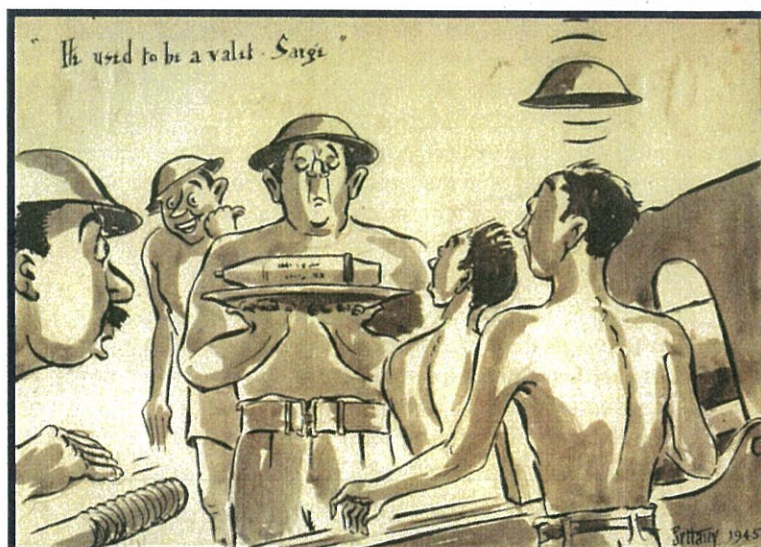
"...In contrast to much of the POW art which survives from this period, Des's work finds uplifting humour in the day-to-day existence of the POW. There are serious works document-

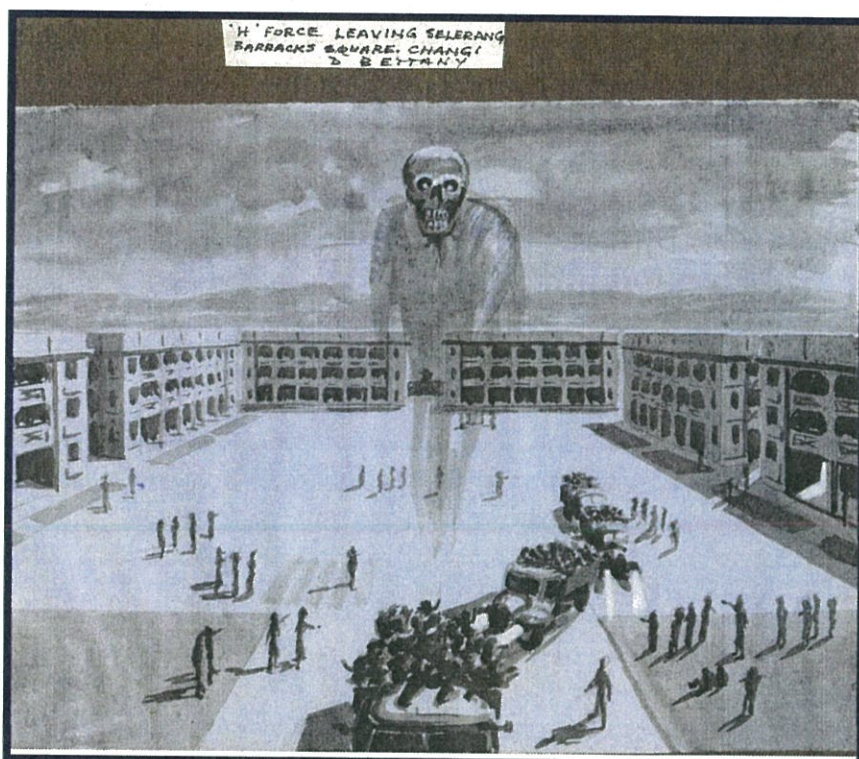
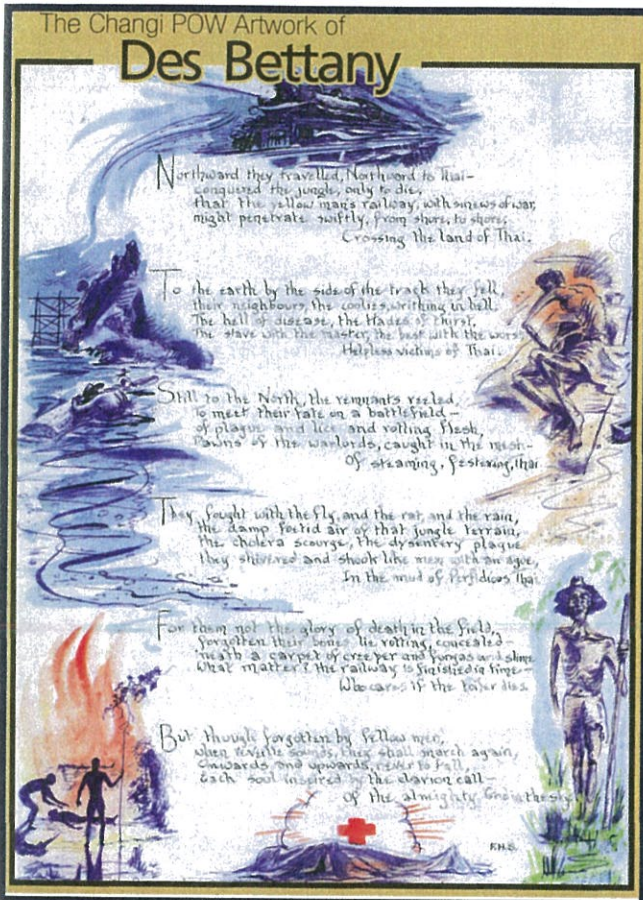
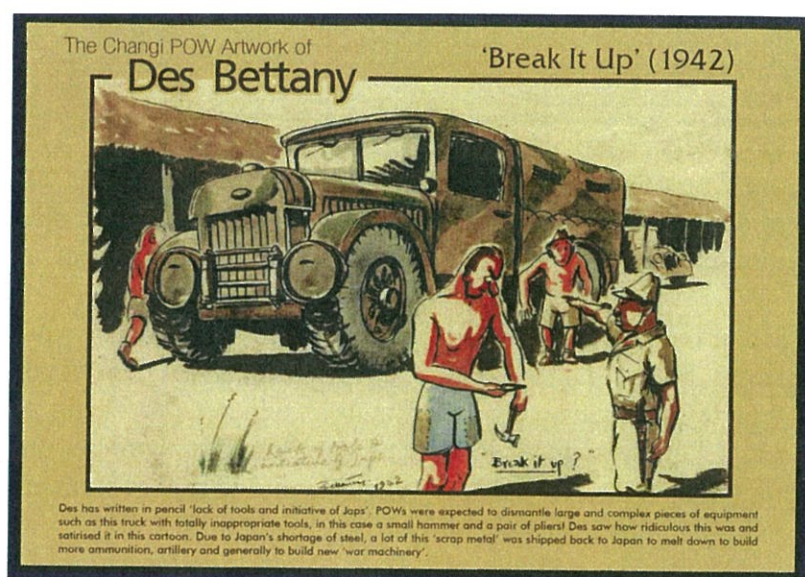
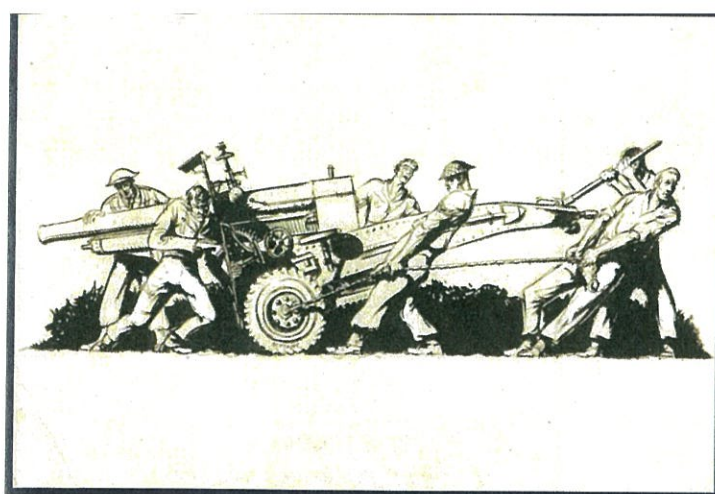
ing incidents which occurred during the various campaigns, but the spirit of much of the work is one of light-heartedness, helping Des to keep a sense of optimism in the face of a brutal captor. There are also touching works of nostalgia..."

After the War, "... Des studied art in Leeds and was appointed to the South Shields School of Art in the north-east of England, eventually becoming Acting Principal, as well as teaching night classes at a local secondary school. He had married Irene Kay in 1946, and, disillusioned by the way politics was affecting art education in England, emigrated to Australia in 1958 with Irene and his three children. One wonders what influence his fellow Aussie POWs with their carefree attitude, may have had on Des making this decision to move to Australia. Arriving from an English winter to a very hot South Australia in February, his first art teaching post was at the technical high school in Whyalla, on the edge of the desert. After several months he was transferred to the South Australian School of Art in Adelaide, rising to the position of Assistant Principal and finally Acting Principal before retiring in 1974.

During his years as an educator he continued his passion for art, experimenting in various media in his home studio, and even after retirement continued to teach art to a local church group. He also indulged his interest in music, forming a successful harmonica trio (the Des Bettany Trio) which appeared regularly on national television and at many live music venues, and also produced an LP record.

He seldom spoke about his wartime experiences. His children were aware of the album of sketches, and an envelope full of theatre programmes, which he kept in his wardrobe, but it was only in 1995, on the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, that he spoke in more detail about his life as an artilleryman and a POW, having re-met two colleagues from the 88th Field Regiment living in Australia, and rediscovered a series of lost artworks which went missing at the end of the war. At this time he was also asked if some of his artwork could be published in a book commemorating 50 years since end world war 2 'Their Sacrifice: Australia Remembers 1945 - 1995', by Rob Linn. Later, in 1999, some of his work appeared in a regimental history by Dr. Stephen Bull 'Lancashire Gunners at War: The 88th Field Regiment, 1939 - 1945'."





'The Last Gun Position': 25 Pounder Gun, Singapore, F Troop, 464 Battery.

Painted in 1946 by Des Bettany as a personal tribute to his fellow soldiers - many of whom did not return from the P.O.W. camps in the Far East.

"...Des Bettany died in 2000 at the age of 81. The website was developed by his two sons and daughter as a dedication to his talent and to the other POWs who suffered through this terrible period of history..."

THE CHANGI ARTWORK
OF DES BETTANY WEB SITE
CAN BE FOUND AT:

www.changipowart.com