

Mentioned in Dispatches

Roy Patrick Murphy

(29 Aug 1909 – 01 Oct 1981)



By

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Introduction

While looking back at family history information of the Murphy family, **Roy Patrick Murphy** would often appear on the periphery or get a quick mention in letters. When I found out more about him, he came across as a quiet achiever. He had solid values and integrity and was the sort of family member you could depend on.

A part of his life was in the military in WW2 in the Middle East (Palestine and Syria) and Papua New Guinea. During that time, he won the distinction of being Mentioned in Dispatches, hence the title of the story. That summarised Roy for me. He was the backbone of any group who did the jobs others did not want to do. As he had no descendants, his story needed to be told.

I am connected to Roy Murphy through my wife **Maria Woodall**. Roy Murphy is Maria Woodall's great uncle.

The tree links are as follows:

- **John Murphy** and **Jane Davison**
- **Edgar William Murphy** and **Catherine Mary O'Brien**
- **Jean Cecilia Murphy** and **Alfred Kenneth Woodall**
- **Maria Ann Woodall** and **Max James Kennedy**

- **John Murphy** and **Jane Davison**
- **Roy Patrick Murphy** and **Lilian May Sargent**

I have used maiden names for the women in this story to make identification easier from a genealogy perspective.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to both **Jean Murphy** and **Janise Dickson** for information and photos of Roy Murphy. I am sometimes confused about which came from whom, so I have grouped the photo acknowledgments in this one statement. Both Jean and Jan's collection of family information is outstanding, and very much appreciated.

I would also like to acknowledge the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company (RAAHC) (<https://www.artilleryhistory.org/>) in particular **Keith Glyde**, **Kevin Browning** and **John Cox** for their interest in the story, their invaluable help in locating the details of Roy Murphy's 'Mention in Dispatches' actions, identifying the patches and badges Roy wore, and for ensuring military accuracy. Also, thanks to **Kay Lee** and **Richard Murphy** for linking me to the RAAHC.

Cover Photograph and Patches

The photograph on the cover is of Roy Murphy taken in 1944 when he was working in the Master of General Ordnance Inspection Division in Australia. The photograph shows Roy wearing a beret and several badges and patches on Roy's sleeve.

The badges and patches on the sleeve are from top to bottom:

- Miniature colour patch Royal Australian Artillery (RAA) 7th Division
- Colour Patch Headquarters (HQ) Allied Land Headquarters
- Badge of Rank Staff Sergeant
- Overseas Service Chevrons

The information about the badges and patches are listed below:



Miniature Colour patch RAA 7th Australian Division. "The use of miniature colour patches by serving personnel, originally denoting that the wearer had served overseas as part of the Australian Imperial Force, was introduced in 1921,.....Miniature Colour Patches were to be half the dimensions of the full size patch and were to be worn ½ inch

below the sleeve head ...and above the full size colour patch of the wearer's present unit. Only the miniature colour patch of one of the wearer's previous units could be worn at any one time..

Miniature colour patches were provided at private expense"¹.

"Their use in relation to personnel serving in the 2nd AIF was not considered until August 1941 when approval was given for personnel who had served with AIF units overseas were allowed to wear them. This restriction caused concern and changes were made but; 'The position in relation to the wearing of miniature colour patches was not clearly outlined until February 1945.....i.e. '7 (i) A member of the AIF was entitled to wear the miniature colour patch of any previous AIF unit (if any) in which he had served, or, of any unit with which he had served overseas"¹.



Colour patch HQ Allied Land Headquarters. This indicates he was serving with this unit at the time of the photo and as included in (the) story with 'Master General of Ordnance (MGO Inspection Division)' at Land Headquarters"².



"Badge of rank of Staff Sergeant, crown over three chevrons. The gun badge would indicate he was artillery but from about mid 1943 wearing of the gun badge above chevrons was abolished which suggests that regulations originating from Land Headquarters (LHQ) weren't necessarily enforced at LHQ"².



"Overseas Service Chevrons. Each blue chevron denotes the number of years served overseas. Roy is wearing three chevrons"².

"Also of interest in the photo is the fact he is wearing a beret. The beret is most unusual, being only for armoured formations and units of all Arms and Services. I can only assume that his duties with Inspection Division involved the AFV (Armoured Fighting Vehicle) Directorate. This may also be a reason why he wore the Gun badge so that his link with Artillery was highlighted"².

Growing Up



Roy Patrick Murphy was born on 29 Aug 1909 in Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand. His parents were **John Murphy** (1879-1950) and **Jane Davison** (1885-1973). His family is shown below.

Figure 1: Roy and his siblings. Left to right **Edgar Murphy**, **Roy Murphy** in highchair and **John Murphy**, c1911. Roy's sister, **Annie Murphy** was born later in 1916.

Table 1: The children of **John Murphy** and **Jane Davison**

Name	Birth	Death	Age at Death	Location at Death
John Hunter Michael Murphy , known as Jack	12 Dec 1906	10 Sep 1984	77	Lower Hutt
Edgar William Murphy	15 Apr 1908	21 Aug 1988	80	Timaru
Roy Patrick Murphy	29 Aug 1909	01 Oct 1981	72	Christchurch
Annie Jean Catherine Murphy , known as Jean	13 Dec 1916	22 Oct 1982	65	Christchurch

Roy grew up in a family of four. There is a story related by **Edgar Murphy** of Roy when he was young. "Well there was a time when Roy as a kid went by himself to the pictures. In those days they were silent pictures and they were the continuous pictures. They would start at 10 o'clock in the morning and then they'd put the (crow?) band through and then through and then through and then through to about 10 o'clock or later at night. People would go anytime and then when it came around to 'this



Figure 2: back row - Roy Murphy, John Murphy, Edgar Murphy. Seated is Annie Murphy. c1936.

is where I came in they would go out. That's where the expression comes from. Anyway Roy went in there in the early afternoon and he didn't come home for tea and he didn't come home and later Dad [John Murphy] went down about nine and went in at half time for the evening session at 9 o'clock and here he was just sitting in the Globe Theatre and he had to drag him out and pull him home"³. It must have been a fantastic film.

Roy's career in journalism developed and he eventually became Head Reader at the Christchurch Star. Presumably the Head Reader was the equivalent of editor today. Roy owned a copy of the Complete Works of William Shakespeare so was of a literary bent.

At the age of 18, Roy married Lilian May Sargent aged 22 at the Catholic Cathedral in Christchurch on 27 Apr 1928. Roy was unlucky in love and the marriage eventually failed after 10 years in 1938. Lilian stayed in Timaru with her last appearance in the census records being in 1972. Roy and Lilian lived for a short time in Waimate. Both Roy and his brother, Edgar Murphy, were in the St Joseph's Literary and Debating Club. This was a Catholic Church group.



Figure 3: St Joseph's Literary and Debating Club, Executive Committee 1934. Edgar Murphy is centre top and Roy Murphy (bottom left).



Figure 4: Roy and his mother. **Jane Davison, Roy Murphy**, crossing Princes Bridge, Melbourne, VIC, Australia, 21 May 1939. Roy's war years were just ahead.

After the end of the marriage, about 1938, Roy went to Melbourne, VIC, Australia.

Emily Sturgess (mother in-law of Edgar Murphy, Roy's brother) went to Melbourne in about 1939 to see her relations and saw Roy. "Roy is taking his holidays in August so will be returning with me [**Emily Sturgess**]. He hopes to take Jean [**Annie Jean Murphy**] back with him for her holidays"⁴.

War Service

WW2 was rapidly approaching. Roy enlisted in the Australian Army on 29 May 1940 at St Kilda, Melbourne at the age of 30 with his occupation described as Assistant Reader (newspaper). He is listed as single and living at Flat 5, 15 Marine Parade, St Kilda, Melbourne. Roy joined the 4th Field Regiment of the 2nd Australian Imperial Force (2AIF), which was an artillery regiment (2/4 Field Regiment).

Roy's medical states he was initially rejected for height. Roy was a small man and was measured at 5ft 3 inches (1.60m) when he enlisted - although on discharge his height is listed as 5ft 5 inches (1.65m).

Roy must have tried again when the Army lowered its height requirements. He was described as Fit for Class I, having no medical issues.

Roy entered training at Puckapunyal, VIC on 30 May 1940. Roy's training was short (5 months), and he left for overseas on 20 Oct 1940 from Port Melbourne. The ship had a short stop in Bombay (Mumbai), India from 5-11 Nov 1940 before disembarking El Kantara, Suez in Egypt on 26 Nov 1940. "The regiment travelled by train to Deir Suneid, Palestine. However, the regiment did not receive its first guns until January 1941 and it was not until mid-April, when the unit was at Ikingi Maryut, that it received its full compliment of 25-pounders, 18-pounders, and 4.5 inch howitzers"⁵.



Figure 5: **Roy Murphy**, dated 21 Oct 1940. It was taken before he sailed from Melbourne to the middle east.



Roy sent a photo to his brother **Edgar Murphy** in about Mar 1941, when Roy was in Palestine. *“Taken at the end of Feb 1941 in my ‘giggle’ hat. Let’s hope the head remains this time. Thanks for the parcel belatedly”*⁶. *“Known to Australians as a ‘giggle’ hat, it is otherwise known generally as a boonie or to kiwi troops, a ‘J-hat.’ These hats have a short brim to provide sun cover ... yet stay out of your field of vision”*⁷.

Figure 6: Roy Murphy with his 'giggle hat' in Palestine, Feb 1941

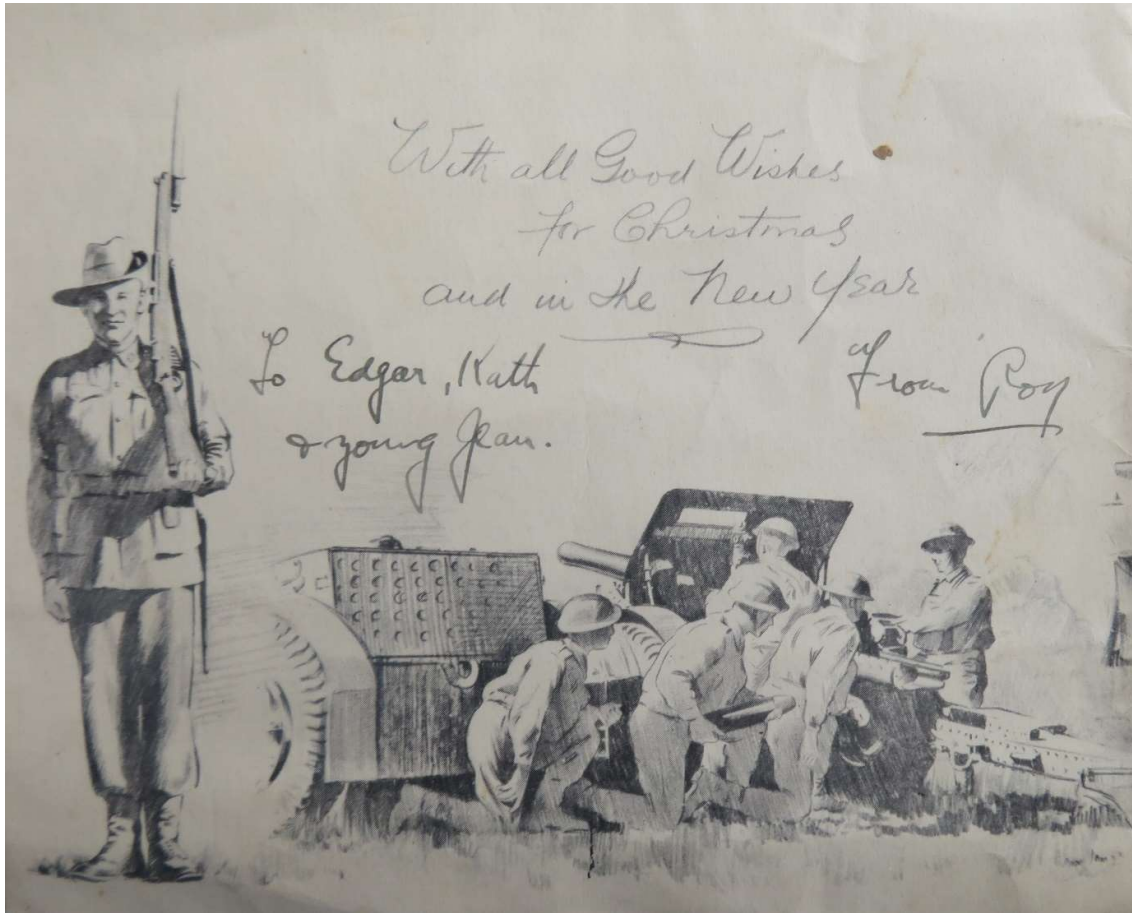


Figure 7: Roy Murphy's Christmas card to his brother Edgar Murphy and his niece Jean Murphy, from Palestine, 02 Dec 1940

While in Palestine, Roy fulfilled one of his ambitions and visited Jerusalem. In his 02 Dec 1940 Christmas card home he stated "You can judge some of the possibilities for me in the future when I say I am in Palestine & believe I may have the chance to see Jerusalem & Tel Aviv in due course.

Particularly am I keen on seeing Jerusalem & I believe I will have much to say when I do"⁸.



Figure 8: postcard of the Al-Aqsa mosque which Roy Murphy sent home from his visit to Jerusalem.

He sent a postcard home describing the Al-Aqsa mosque in the Old City of Jerusalem. "This mosque is said to have

*originally been a crusader's church. The cruciform was done away with by extra outside aisle and a building across the rear. Inside there is much of beauty. The fountain in the centre enables the Moslems to wash their feet before entering mosque for devotions"*⁹.

Roy leadership qualities were recognized when on 04 Apr 1941 he was promoted to Lance-Bombardier (equivalent to Lance Corporal). *"Lance Bombardier was an appointment, a certain number of which were allowed amongst the Gunners (Privates in the rest of the Army) in the regiment. He wore one 'stripe', had an increment to his pay and a tiny bit of authority"*¹⁴.

Roy's first action was helping the AIF 7th Division defend the Mersa Matruh fortress, in Egypt. Next he was involved in the Allied invasion of Vichy controlled Syria. The Vichy French, in the southern part of France, was on the side of Germany.

*"Vichy France was the French state headed by Marshal Philippe Pétain during World War II. Officially independent, but with half of its territory occupied under the harsh terms of the armistice with Nazi Germany, it adopted a policy of collaboration [with Germany]"*¹⁰.

*"The invasion of Syria was to occur on three axes, with the 2/4th [which Roy was a part of] supporting the 7th Division's 21st Brigade as it advanced along the coast. The regiment crossed the borders on 8 June and its 7th Battery, part of the advance guard overlooking the Litani River, fired the first shots. Thereafter, single guns and sections were continually used forward to anti-tank and direct-fire tasks. The regiment also experienced counter battery fire and came under enemy air attack."*⁵



Figure 9: Allen Pyborne, Maurice and Roy Murphy, Syria, 1941

"On 9 June the regiment came under fire from a French sloop, which came close to shore, and shelled and machine-gunned the regiment's positions near Sidon. In accordance with orders not to reveal their position, the gunners took cover but, when the sloop began to move out to sea, the regiment's guns opened fire, at a range of 4,000 yards, until the ship was out of range. The next day, 10 June, the regiment fired 1,440 rounds as it supported the attack on Aldoun. There was heavy fighting for the next ten days, as the regiment's gunners helped repel French tank attacks, although members of a forward were killed and wounded when they sustained direct hits while engaging a French gun over open sights. One of the guns had to be abandoned but was later recovered. Before Saida fell on 20 June, a French sloop came in close to shore, shelling the 21st Brigade, but was driven off by the regiment's artillery fire. The final major operation of the campaign was the battle for Damour, which began on 5 July and during which the regiment fired thousands of rounds to support the attack. Fighting lasted until 12 July when an armistice was signed, bringing an end to the campaign with the surrender of Vichy French forces. During the Syrian campaign, Australian artillery had fired 147,399 rounds, 40,152 of which

were fired by the 2/4th"⁵.

"The regiment spent the rest of the year in Syria as part of the garrison force and were based at Jdaide. In September artillery regiments were reorganised and the regiment formed a third battery - the 54th. In December the 7th Division was relieved by the 9th Division in Syria, as the 6th and 7th Division were to return to Australia. The last members of the 2/4th left the Middle East at the end of January and the regiment arrived in Australia, at Port Adelaide, on 23 March [1942]"⁵.

Roy was part of these last members to leave and was shipped to Bombay on the Ile de France, and then on the Eastern Prince back to Adelaide. He must have been glad to get out of the desert and be back in Australia.



Figure 10: Roy Murphy's medal - 1939-1945 Star.

While in Syria, Roy sent a photo of **Allen Pyborne** and **Maurice** with himself. *"I consider this a good snap so I am enclosing the negative in case you want others taken off for Edgar [Edgar Murphy] and Jack [John Murphy]. The ... friend is Allen Pyborne and the boy is Maurice, a Syrian acquaintance who can speak good English because he goes to an American school"*¹¹.

It was when he was back in Australia that Roy was recognized for his actions in Syria. On 02 Apr 1942 he was Mentioned in Dispatches in the London Gazette and received a card on behalf of his actions, which occurred during a river crossing. The reason for the Mentioned in Dispatches is not mentioned in correspondence from the Army. The London Gazette mentions only his name.

The full description of the action that earned Roy his Mention in Dispatches is that mentioned in *The Story of the 2/4th Field Regiment*, R L Henry, The Merrion Press, Melbourne, 1950, republished 1987, p89-94. Several parts of this mention Roy, and it concerns an incident on the Litani River, Lebanon. Roy's battery (in A Troop) was to provide support for infantry (D Company) crossing the river. *"Communication problems set in as the line to the wireless was cut...After fruitlessly waiting for communication to be established, L/Bdr. Murphy set off to check up on the line. Later the OPA (Observation Post Assistant) telephoned through from the original OP (Observation Post) to say that a crossing had been affected and the infantry would arrange for us to use their cable across the river for fire orders to the guns. The offer was gratefully accepted and L/Bdr. Murphy proceeded across the river after arranging for a guide to meet the FOO (Forward Observation Officer) at the crossing point. The river was fast flowing, and an assault boat was used as a ferry, the boat being hauled by rope from bank to bank"*¹².

The infantry was commanded by Captain D Hawley of D Company. *"Capt. Gaunt with L/Bdr. Murphy reported to Capt. D Hawley of D Coy... Capt. Hawley was very happy when told that he had six 25-pounders available from A Troop to assist in pushing the enemy off his high ground and shared his tin of bully beef with the OP (Observation Post) party whilst arrangements were made to pass the telephone line from 21st brigade through RHQ (Regimental Headquarters) to A Troop guns"*¹².

Now with the communication line in place, the attack on the enemy commenced. *"An OP (Observation Post) was set up on the right edge of a thicket just over the river and as movement was drawing fire a tree trunk offered substantial cover. Registration was completed with L/Bdr. Murphy performing the dual role of OPA (Observation Post Assistant) and sig. (Signals Officer)...As zero hour approached it was with more than ordinary interest that the concentration of fire was awaited as it*

was the first the troop (the Regiment in fact) had fired in support of a direct attack. However, we were very thrilled when it fell, as it was right on time and most effective. Capt. Hawley expressed satisfaction in no uncertain terms. Just quietly we were relieved to see the target area erupting in rock and smoke”¹². With Roy’s assistance the attack had been a success.

“The OP (Observation Post) for the next attack was established in a concrete irrigation drain from which observation was gained over the remainder of the enemy positions. It was not a textbook OP, but the best offering at the time. D Coy (D Company) immediately followed up the initial successes and further attacks supported by A Troop yielded equally good results in ground equipment and enemy equipment... The troop sigs. (Signal Officers) and extra cable and telephones were also ferried across. They were particularly welcome as the cable was out to the limit and relief was given to L/Bdr. Murphy who had carried on very capably all OP (Observation Post) duties single-handed”¹².

“For their courage, initiative and devotion to duty during this day, Capt. Dave Gaunt was awarded the Military Cross and L/Bdr. Murphy was mentioned in dispatches”¹².

Roy’s mother and father, **Jane Davison** and **John Murphy**, received a letter telling of the Mention in Dispatches on 16 Apr 1942 along with a card stating King George VI’s appreciation.

On 04 Aug 1942 Roy was promoted to A/BDR. A/BDR means Acting Bombardier. “The next step up in rank was Bombardier (Corporal in the rest of the Army). In Roy’s case it might be that he was filling another Bombardier’s position while the latter was absent from the regiment for some period of time but expected to return. Rather than exceed the ‘salary cap’ he was appointed to acting rank to give him the authority needed to carry out the job until the other individual returned. It also may be as John has stated that he was not confirmed in the substantive rank while he was learning a particular job, ‘on probation’ as it were”¹⁴.

On 18 Aug 1942 Roy was given Home leave, which he extended with leave without pay until 29 Sep 1942. Perhaps he even made it back to New Zealand. Upon his return to the unit he was appointed L/Sgt (Lance Sergeant or acting Sergeant).

“After a period of leave, the regiment concentrated around Caloundra, in Queensland, after which a long period of training for jungle warfare took place. During this time the regiment was warned out for possible deployment on a number of occasions, but was ultimately not required. Some personnel were detached for service in Papua New Guinea around Milne Bay and with “Lilliput Force”¹³.

From 08 Feb 1943 – 13 Mar 1943 Roy attended a S of A NCO’s Wing Bty Assistants course. It is a little difficult to decipher what the course was, but perhaps it was a Battery Assistants course. “The Battery Assistant course suggests that he served in the Command Post or Observation Post as an assistant to the officer who was commanding at the guns or directing their fire. It was a responsible position and certainly at the observation post the assistant was trained to take the place of the officer if he became a casualty or similar”¹⁴.

The course was held at Holsworthy in south-western Sydney, NSW. At the course he was assessed as “recommended for staff duties and suitable as instructor...Knowledge excellent. Should be considered for further promotion”. His personality was described as “quiet but pleasant personality”. On 14-20



Figure 11: Roy Murphy's medal - Australian Service Medal 1939-1945.

Jun 1943 Roy attended another course, this time 18th Australian Infantry Brigade Intelligence course at Palmerston, NT. The army clearly thought Roy had potential.



By the KING'S Order the name of
Lance-Bombardier R. P. Murphy,
Royal Australian Artillery,
was published in the London Gazette on
30 December, 1941,
as mentioned in a Despatch for distinguished service.
I am charged to record
His Majesty's high appreciation.

David Margesson
Secretary of State for War

Figure 12: Roy Murphy's 'Mention in Despatches' certificate was sent to his parents on 16 Apr 1942

After his time in the Middle East fighting the Germans, Roy was now off to the Pacific theatre to fight the Japanese. On 30 Jul 1943 Roy left Townsville on the ship Katoomba and disembarked at Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea on 04 Aug 1943. He would be in Papua New Guinea for 9 months. Roy and the 2/4th Field Artillery saw action in "early September 1943 when the 54th Battery deployed a detachment of 31 artillerymen and two Short 25-pound artillery pieces to support the US 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment's airborne landing at Nadzab, as part of Allied efforts to capture Lae during the Salamaua–Lae campaign. Following the successful capture of Nadzab, the rest of the regiment was transported by air and supported the Australian 25th Brigade's advance on Lae, and then the Australian 7th Division's subsequent involvement in the Finisterre Range campaign, during which its fire played a significant role in the successful capture of Shaggy Ridge by the Australian infantry on 27 December. The regiment was withdrawn to Australia in February 1944 for rest and reorganisation"⁵.

Roy arrived back in Brisbane on 14 Mar 1944. On 02 Jun 1944 he was then transferred to Land Headquarters and posted to the Master General of Ordnance (MGO) Inspection Division. On 01 Aug 1944 Roy was promoted to sergeant and then on 25 Nov 1944 to staff sergeant. Roy spent the rest of his time in the army at the Headquarters of the Army Inspection Division in VIC. He was marched in for discharge on 04 Sep 1945 and discharged on 10 Sep 1945, aged 36.

Roy had spent 1,931 days in the Australian Imperial Force of which 1,016 days were active service in Australia and 752 days active service offshore. He was assessed as in A1 medical condition upon discharge.

Back in Melbourne and Christchurch

After Roy's father, **John Murphy**, died on 17 Jan 1950, Roy came home to New Zealand to live with and look after his mother, **Jane Davison**. In 1951 when they returned to New Zealand, Jane was aged 65 and Roy 41. They lived in Roy's house at 40 Strickland St, Christchurch. This was close to where Roy's sister, **Annie Murphy**, lived on Somerfield St. Roy took up a position working on the Christchurch Star newspaper as Head Reader.



Figure 13: Roy Murphy's tennis win was mentioned in the newspaper. Titled *Readers at Tennis*, I estimate it appeared c1947. Newspaper unknown.

Roy was very active in the tennis club, both in Australia and New Zealand. *"On January 9, the Reading Room Tennis Club arranged a picnic at Seaford [Melbourne]. During the afternoon a Singles Handicap was played. The Winner was **Roy Murphy**"*¹⁵. His caricature appeared in the newspaper.

Roy had a *"life-long interest in the administration of tennis. He was elected, at least appointed, to the Canterbury Lawn Tennis Association and they appointed them a life member"*³.

*"Mr **Roy Murphy**, [was a] servant of Canterbury Tennis for over 30 years... Mr Murphy a life member of the Canterbury Lawn Tennis Association since 1973, was elected to the Associations tennis committee in 1951 and Chaired the body from 1958-1965... Mr Murphy was active in the Cathedral Tennis Club until it disbanded and later played an important administrative role with the Beckenham Tennis Club, of which he was President...The President of the CLTA (Mr **Brian Faulls**) said Mr Murphy was always a man who looked after the everyday player"*¹⁶

"Roy was a great guardian of Wilding Park. He was a very humane person who had every user of the park at heart... The competitions committee is the workhorse of the association. Roy did not shirk his duties and responsibilities to it in any way. Another senior member of the CLTA, Mr Sam Clarke, described Mr Murphy as one of the most clear thinking administrators the CLTA has been lucky enough to have had... Mr Murphy who has been playing tennis until recently, is remembered for his organization of the annual Show Weekend [Canterbury Show] tournament at Wilding Park, which operated under a format devised by him. He was instrumental in the installation of an electronic scoreboard, which has been in service in Wilding park for some 3 years".



Figure 14: Roy Murphy, Jane Davison, Catherine O'Brien on a trip to Wanaka, 1956.

Roy would travel to Timaru and play tennis with **Alfred Woodall** and **Chris Woodall**. In 1972, "Uncle Roy was down for a few days last week and had a game of tennis with your father and Chris. He came out with mum [**Catherine O'Brien**] and dad [**Edgar Murphy**] for tea on Sunday night. We all had to talk into the tape to be sent to Australia to Boy [**Oliver Colgan**] and his family"¹⁷. Cassette tapes that could record audio was a novelty at the time and their prices had dropped so they were

affordable. This meant many people swapped tapes, particularly to those far away, rather than write letters.

Roy maintained strong contacts with Australia. He went back on holiday to Australia on one occasion with **Edgar Murphy** and their friend **Bren Daley**³. He also travelled to Australia by himself in 1974, "We had Uncle Roy in to see us about a fortnight ago. He came down to say goodbye before going to Australia for a holiday. He left on Sunday 29 Sep and is staying over there for 5 weeks"¹⁸

Roy made many visits to Timaru to see his brother **Edgar Murphy** and family. "Uncle Roy spent a couple of nights with mum [**Catherine O'Brien**] and dad [**Edgar Murphy**] last week. He came out to us for tea on Thursday night. After tea we had a game of euchre [cards]. Fay [**Fay Woodall**], mum [**Catherine O'Brien**] and I [**Jean Murphy**] played uncle Roy, dad [**Edgar Murphy**] and your father [**Alfred Woodall**], and the girls won 2:1"¹⁹.



Figure 15: Roy Murphy holding Alfred Woodall Jnr on a trip to Timaru, c1957.

Cards were a favourite family pastime. "I had such happy memories of earlier days when Edgar [**Edgar Murphy**], your mother [**Catherine O'Brien**] visited Christchurch and of the many games of crib with him [**Edgar Murphy**], Roy [**Roy Murphy**] and your grandmother [**Jane Davison**]"²⁰. "Uncle Roy arrived down for a couple of days. It was good to see him. He is good company. We all had a game of euchre on Sunday night and we had quite an hilarious game, especially with Kathryn [**Kathryn Woodall**] playing"²¹.

Roy was a compassionate care giver. "Aunty Bess [**Elizabeth Davison**] is also out of hospital, although I don't think she is really well enough to look after herself. Roy is keeping an eye on her"²². "We had a ring from Uncle Roy to say that nana Murphy [**Jane Davison**] is out of hospital. She says we are not getting rid of her that easy"²³.

Roy developed a strong friendship with **Fay Mabel Davidson**. They could not get married in the Catholic Church because of Roy's divorce. They remained close friends throughout Roy's life, even after Fay got married to someone else. Roy and Fay were godparents to **Julie Patricia Dickson** in 1958. Roy left Fay \$3000 in stocks and shares in his will when he died in 1981. Fay Davidson's relationship with the family continued. Fay wrote to **Jean Murphy** after **Edgar Murphy's** death in 1988. *"I am so very sorry to hear of your father's death. I have such happy memories of earlier days when Edgar [Edgar Murphy] and your mother [Catherine O'Brien] visited Christchurch and of the many games of crib with him, Roy and your grandmother [Jane Davison]. I am grateful that we were able to see him when we visited Timaru late last year"*²⁴.



Figure 16: Roy Murphy and Fay Davidson with their goddaughter Julie Patricia Dickson, c1958.

Later Years



Figure 17: L-R Edgar Murphy, Chris Woodall, Paul Woodall, Kathryn Woodall, Roy Murphy, Maria Woodall, Jean Murphy, picnic, Jul 1977.

gear around, but he has told me to ring him up if I want to visit relations or otherwise"²⁸. "Phoned Uncle Roy. He is going to meet me [Maria Woodall] when I come back & he is booking a place on the Starliner [bus]"²⁹.

Roy also helped his nieces and nephews when they came to Christchurch. *"Uncle Roy got me to orchestra practise OK. However, I [Maria Woodall] left my purse in the car and he came into the hall we were practising to give it back"*²⁵. *"Uncle Roy is bringing Bren Daley and myself [Maria Woodall] down to Timaru on Saturday afternoon and we shall return on Sunday afternoon"*²⁶. *"Roy took me [Maria Woodall] to the airport and helped me sort things out. He also took me to Jan's [Janise Dickson] place on the Sunday night"*²⁷. *"So possibly Uncle Roy might bring me [Maria Woodall] home the following weekend (he offered his services for last weekend, so I will grab him for next).... Have seen nothing of Uncle Roy since he brought my*

Roy did have an interest in genealogy and put together a family tree which he gave to his brother **Edgar Murphy**. *"I don't know if you [Maria Woodall] have seen the genealogical table that was drawn up by **Roy Murphy**. What surprised me was the number of relations and names which I have never heard of before. There are Murphy relations all over the place"*³. *"You [**Maria Woodall**] have obviously been caught up in the genealogical fever, which is not a bad thing, but I don't think I [Edgar Murphy] can be a great deal of help. Roy had obviously done much keen research and therefore gone beyond any personal knowledge I might have acquired about the family"*³⁰.

In 1972 *"Uncle Jack [**John Murphy**], Aunty Eileen [**Eileen English**], Uncle Roy [**Roy Murphy**] and great nana [**Jane Davison**] were down from Christchurch on August 27th. They all had dinner down at the Hydro Grand with mum [**Catherine O'Brien**] and dad [**Edgar Murphy**] and then they came out to us for afternoon tea. Uncle Jack [**John Murphy**] has a 1972 Vauxhall car. It is a beautiful car"*³¹. The Hydro Grand was the opulent pub in Timaru at the time. One of its claims to fame was to have heated salt water from Caroline Bay pumped into the bathrooms³². The Hydro Grand was demolished in 2017. It must have been a great trip in **John Murphy's** new car and then to have lunch at the Hydro Grand.

On 12 Mar 1973, Roy's mother **Jane Davison** died. Roy was involved in looking after his mother's affairs and wishes³³.

On 24 Jan 1974, Christchurch held the opening of the Commonwealth Games, and this led to many visitors to Roy and further afield.

*"Dear Jean [**Jean Murphy**],*

Get something for the kids and yourself with the enclosed.

*Shall we be seeing you during January at all? Jack [**John Murphy**] and Eileen [**Eileen English**] will be down for the Games, and of course Boy [**Oliver Colgan**] and Marg [**Margaret Lawley**] will be over from Melbourne. However, B&M will be looking in on you Timaruvians before the games on their trip south DV WOP – that's God willing, weather and all permitting!*

*Tell Alf [**Alfred Woodall**] I enjoyed my tennis day with him and haven't omitted to do a bit of skiting up here on helping St John's win their match.*

Roy"³⁴

Roy died on 01 Oct 1981 in Christchurch aged 72. He collapsed while at the bank. He was the first of his siblings to die. He is buried in Block 13, Plot 379, Ruru Lawn Cemetery, Christchurch. Roy was much missed by his family and the community. The Canterbury Lawn Tennis Association stated *"He was one of the fairest men I have met. It is hard to replace people like that. He will be sorely missed'* **Mr Clarke** said"¹⁶.



Figure 18: Roy Murphy's grave marker, Ruru Lawn Cemetery, Christchurch.

His colleague in the Australian Imperial Force from WW2, **David Gaunt** wrote the following tribute for the Regimental newspaper.



Figure 19: Maria Woodall (Roy Murphy's grand niece) lays a flower at Roy Murphy's grave in 2022. He is not forgotten.

“On the passing of Roy Murphy, the Regiment has lost one of its most respected members, and in our remembrance of him we recall the many qualities which he exemplified during his life. To those who were privileged to know him it was obvious that his abiding principles were integrity and devotion to duty. He was blessed with a keen sense of humour and an outstanding technical ability – these traits being amply demonstrated by his remarkable coolness and efficiency under fire. We are saddened by the loss of a gallant comrade, but those thoughts can also invoke gratitude that we knew such a

man”³⁵.

In his will, Roy left money to the Catholic Church, The Canterbury Lawn Tennis Association, Fay Davidson and his brother's families. Roy was a man of courage and integrity. He had high standards and values. He was the backbone of society and the person you would want on your team; a son of New Zealand that Australia borrowed for a while. He is fondly remembered.

Timeline of Roy Patrick Murphy's Life

Date	Place	Comment
29 Aug 1909	Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand	Roy Patrick Murphy's birth.
27 Apr 1928	Catholic Cathedral, Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand	Roy marries Lilian May Sargent .
1938	Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand	Roy's marriage ends
c1939	Melbourne, VIC, Australia	Roy moves to Australia
21 May 1939	Melbourne, VIC, Australia	Jane Davison visits Roy in Australia
29 May 1940	St Kilda, Melbourne, VIC, Australia	Roy enlists in the Australian Army
30 May 1940	Puckapunyal, VIC, Australia	Roy enters military training
20 Oct 1940	Port Melbourne, Melbourne, VIC, Australia	Roy leaves for overseas duty
5-11 Nov 1940	Mumbai, India	Roy has a stopover in India
26 Nov 1940	El Kantara, Suez, Egypt	Roy arrives in Egypt
Early 1941	Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Israel	Roy visits Holy city on leave
Mar 1941	Palestine	Roy sends photos home of him in his giggle hat
04 Apr 1941	Palestine	Roy promoted to Lance Bombardier
Apr-Jul 1941	Lebanon, Palestine and Syria	Roy involved in action in against Vichy French in Syrian Campaign
23 Mar 1942	Port Adelaide, Adelaide, South Australia, Australia	Roy arrives back in Australia
02 Apr 1942	London, England	Roy is Mentioned in Dispatches in the London Gazette, relating to a river crossing
16 Apr 1942	Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand	Roy's parents, John Murphy and Jane Davison receive notification of Roy's Mention in Dispatches
04 Aug 1942	Australia	Roy is promoted to Acting Bombardier (A/BDR)
18 Aug - 29 Sep 1942	Australia	Roy takes home leave
08 Feb -13 Mar 1943	Holsworthy, NSW, Australia	Roy attends Battery Assistant's course
14-20 Jun 1943	Palmerston, NT, Australia	Roy attends 18 th Australian Infantry Brigade Intelligence Course
30 Jul 1943	Townsville, QLD, Australia	Roy leaves on ship Katoomba for Papua New Guinea
04 Aug 1943	Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea	Roy arrives in Papua New Guinea
Sep 1943	Nadzab or Lae, Papua New Guinea	Roy is involved in action
14 Mar 1944	Brisbane, QLD, Australia	Roy arrives back in Australia
02 Jun 1944	Australia	Roy is posted to the Master of General Ordinance Inspection Division
10 Sep 1945	Australia	Roy is discharged from the Australian Army
c1949	Melbourne, VIC, Australia	Roy wins the Reading Room Tennis Club Singles Handicap tennis competition

Date	Place	Comment
17 Jan 1950	Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand	Roy's father [John Murphy] dies. Roy subsequently returns home to Christchurch to look after his mother Jane Davison
1951 onwards	Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand	Roy is a life member of the Canterbury Lawn Tennis Association and is Chair from 1958-1965
1950s-1970s	Timaru, Canterbury, New Zealand	Roy makes various trips to Timaru to see Edgar Murphy and family. Playing cards is a popular pastime on the visits
1970s	Melbourne, VIC, Australia	Roy makes various trips back to Australia
12 Mar 1973	Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand	Roy's mother, Jane Davison dies
01 Oct 1981	Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand	Roy dies. He is buried in Block 13, Plot 379, Ruru Lawn Cemetery

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