



RETURNED and SERVICES LEAGUE of AUSTRALIA  
EPPING RSL SUB-BRANCH  
**ROUTINE ORDERS**

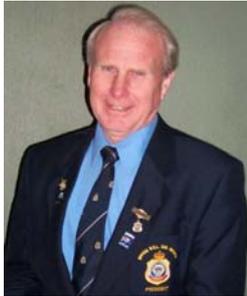


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August-September 2017

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**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**



History records that at the declaration of World War 2 in September 1939, Australia immediately deployed the bulk of its armed forces to Europe and Africa to the aid of Britain as that nation, single handed, defended the free world against the Nazi thrust for world

domination. Following the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbour, in December 1941, the United States was now to become a significant force in the global war. Following the fall of Singapore in Jan 1942 and with the bombing of Darwin, suddenly the war was at our nation's coastline. The next 4 years that war raged across the Pacific and in the confrontation with the common enemy, Australia and United States developed a close alliance, which today is still a vital alliance.

That war in the Pacific was fought in an area of the globe which extended from the Bering Sea in the north to Papua New Guinea, the Torres Strait in the south and in the west from Manchuria, Burma, Netherlands, Coral Sea and easterly to Midway Islands.

To stem the flow of the enemy there were many land battles, such as Singapore and Malaysian Peninsular, Kokoda Track, Milne Bay, Buna, Gona, Sanananda, Bougainville, Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal and Saipan to name a few of the more well-known. Such well-remembered struggles involving infantry and artillery have been often quoted as turning points in the progress to peace.

In the retelling of those momentous land battles we can lose sight of the enormous contribution that the navies of Australia and America made in this conflict. Such naval battles were conducted well out of sight of land and often over the horizon out of sight of each other. The sacrifices of those maritime forces must not be forgotten. These were extensive and savage naval battles which eventually deprived the enemy of its supply routes and its domination of the seas. This diminution of the enemy naval power and

its conquering enterprise can be identified in victories at sea in such events as the Battle of Leyte Gulf, The Battle of the Coral Sea, Battle of the Philippine Sea, Battle of Midway, the battle of the Bismarck Sea and the Battle in the Sunda Strait are some of the more well-known.

These battles on the sea and on land and other confrontations all contributed to Japan's acceptance of the demand for unconditional surrender which was announced in the afternoon of August 15, 1945 in Japan. (Because of time zone differences, it was announced in the United States and the rest of the Americas and Eastern Pacific Islands on August 14, 1945.) Australian governments gazetted a public holiday on August 15 as Victory in the Pacific Day (VP Day). It is at such time that we remember the four years of struggle and the mighty sacrifice and massive contribution of the Australian military forces and the generous assistance and sacrifices of service personnel of the United States of America and that nations massive material support that resulted in a victory over a physical aggression of an enemy bent on the domination of our peace.

From the period of four years in which the war raged over the Pacific Region it is not possible to identify a single time or battle which could be identified as "the battle for Australia"; not like the famous *Battle for Britain* which occurred over some months as Germany tried to take air supremacy and cripple Britain defences. The establishment of peace in Australia and the Pacific region was as a result of many battles on land, sea and air, all of which was at the expense of many lives of young men and women in the services.

It is important that we who are left together and with the rising generations of the youth of both countries join in and be part of the commemorations of VP Day on 15<sup>th</sup> August. It is a time to say thanks to the sacrifices of many who gave to us in Australia peace and hope for tomorrow. WE must not forget.

*John K Curdie* OAM  
Sub Branch President

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

VALE

“WE WILL REMEMBER THEM”

During the months of April-May 2017 advice has been received of the passing of the following members:

NAME	RANK	SERVICE	UNIT	SERVICE NUMBER	DATE JOINED	DATE DECEASED
<b>DAY</b> Cedric V	PO	Merchant Navy	BMS QUEEN MARY	NSWP1258	01/01/1946	26/05/2017
<b>MARIN</b> (ACCHIARDO) Alfred	PTE	ARMY	12 Small Ships Company	NX142141 (N261081)	01/01/1946	04/06/2017
<b>JAMIESON</b> James Lawrence	LCPL	ARMY	1 FIELD SQN RAE	NX140695	01/01/1950	09/06/2017
<b>MILLARD</b> Milton Charles	LAC	RAAF	No. 7 Stores Depot	167150	13/08/2014	04/07/2017

## EPPING RSL SUB BRANCH

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY: AUGUST- SEPTEMBER 2017

#### AUGUST 2017

Tuesday 01	RSL Senior Members Association General Meeting	1400
Thursday 03	RSL Old and Bold Association	1300
Sunday 13	VP Sunday Service (Epping Club Ballroom)	1400
Monday 14	Epping RSL sub-Branch Committee Meeting	0930
Tuesday 15	VP Day (Boronia Park Cenotaph)	1045
Monday 28	Epping RSL sub-Branch Monthly General Meeting	1930
Tuesday 29	RSL Senior Members Association Committee Meeting	1030

#### SEPTEMBER 2017

Tuesday 05	RSL Senior Members Association General Meeting	1400
Thursday 07	RSL Old and Bold Association	1300
Monday 11	Epping RSL sub-Branch Committee Meeting	0930
Tuesday 12	RSL Senior Members Association Day Trip: Scenic Leura, Blue Mountains, including “Teapot Museum and Tearooms”	0900
Monday 25	Epping RSL sub-Branch Monthly General Meeting	1930
Tuesday 26	RSL Senior Members Association Committee Meeting	1030

#### **VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC**

*To commemorate the end of World War 2 on 15 August 1945, a service will be held in the Grand Ballroom at The Epping Club on Sunday 13 August 2017 commencing at 1400h (2.00 p.m.), followed by a march to the Boronia Park Cenotaph for a wreath-laying ceremony.*

*On VP Day, Tuesday 15 August 2017, a wreath-laying ceremony will be held at the Boronia Park Cenotaph at 1045h (10.45 a.m.)*

## **EPPING RSL SUB-BRANCH HOSPITAL VISITATIONS**

The members listed below perform a great service to the sub-Branch by maintaining close liaison with members when they are not well, and when they have to go to hospital. They also maintain contact with those with more extended problems who spend time in Care Facilities etc.

### **Roster for the Period: August 2017 – October 2017**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone Number</u>	<u>Week Commencing</u>
Don Campton	9871 2025	August 06
Doug Small	8801 1435	August 13
Allan Lotfizadeh	96520590	August 20
David Leece	94848456	August 27
Claire Carpenter	0438539083	September 03
Paul Kim	98725771	September 10
Don Campton	98712025	September 17
Jeanette Swan	9876 8687	September 24
Doug Small	8801 1435	October 01
Allan Lotfizadeh	96520590	October 08
David Leece	94848456	October 15
Claire Carpenter	0438539083	October 22
Henry Jones	9858 4857	October 29

**Home Contacts** – Robin Cummins 9680 4865

**Funerals** – Robin Cummins, Welfare Officer 9680 4865

**It would be appreciated if members when discharged would notify the Welfare Officer (9680 4865) to avoid the Hospital Visiting Team making unnecessary trips. Remember some places involve travelling considerable distances. Additions to the team are always welcome.**

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## **EPPING RSL SUB-BRANCH MEETINGS**

The May General Meeting was attended by 48 members and 7 visitors.

New service members Mrs Beryl Ingle, Mr Sung Ung Lee and Mr Michael Barnett were welcomed.

Guest Speaker Judy Hopwood spoke on Crime Prevention measures.

The June General Meeting was attended by 41 members and 4 visitors. New membership application from Denis Bethune Adams was approved by the meeting. Speakers from North Connex presented an interesting update on progress with the tunnelling.

In July Brian Swan will talk about “Swanning around Manus”.

The guest speaker for August is John Bathgate talking about the Australian Defence Force.

At the September meeting, John Donohue will speak on the Eugowra Gold Robbery.



## GRANNY SMITH DAY CLUB

Granny Smith Day Club is a part of the Epping RSL sub-Branch. We meet each Friday at the Epping Uniting Church Hall, corner Oxford and Chester Streets, Epping, between 10.00am and 2.00pm.

Membership is available to all men and women, veterans and non-veterans who are aged or unable to participate in social/leisure activities within the general community, and who fulfil the membership conditions.

Members should be able to self-medicate and be mobile. By fully participating in mental stimulation and other fun activities offered by Granny Smith Day Club, lonely or isolated people are able to generate friendships and connect with others. At all times, members' interests, needs, skills and physical limitations are taken into consideration and used to help them during the Club day.

There is a dedicated team of volunteers who look after our members. Many of us arrive early to ensure the day runs smoothly. The volunteers find they are involved in rewarding work to make a real difference.

We are a welcoming group, and offer a variety of activities to cover many interests. These include gentle exercises to music, entertainers, guest speakers on a variety of topics, theme days, reminiscing, quizzes, games, Bingo as well as lots of laughter and friendship.

There is a contribution of \$5.00 each time a member or volunteer attends, and this covers morning tea, lunch, dessert and entertainment.

Granny Smith Day Club, similar to other Day Clubs in NSW, is a joint venture between the RSL and DVA. These two organisations are committed to the continuing development and support our Club. Granny Smith Day Club is in its 35<sup>th</sup> year of operation, while 2017 marks 40 years of Day Clubs in NSW. The principles for setting up a Day Club that were implemented in 1977 are still followed today.

The Epping RSL sub-Branch and The Epping Club offer valuable support to run our special events such as our Anniversary in April and our Christmas luncheon in December. The Epping Club also provides a courtesy bus and driver to assist with picking and dropping off members who live within a certain radius, so those who do not drive are still able to attend.

If you, or a friend, would like additional information, or wish to visit us one Friday, please phone Co-ordinator Caroline Pierotti on 9876 4443 or Deputy Co-ordinator John Roddy on 9874 4742.

## Australian Army officer awarded Afghan military medal

Defence News and Media 26 June 2017

Major Conrad Walsh, deployed to Afghanistan with Australian Defence Force (ADF) Kabul Garrison General Command Advisor Team 2 (KGGC AT-2) has been awarded the Afghan Ministry of Interior Medal of Honour.

Major Walsh was presented the medal for his outstanding mentoring and commitment to the development of KGGC Public Affairs and Information Operations capability.

The award came as a surprise to Major Walsh, who has spent the past eight months on Operation Highroad embedded with the three star headquarters as part of the ADF KGGC AT-2.

"I'm very humbled, it was a bit of a surprise given the fact that I've not heard of any Australian receiving the award, it's certainly not something I was expecting," Major Walsh said.

"I'm very appreciative of them having valued my contribution and glad I could have done it."

Major Walsh hopes the inroads made during his time as Public Affairs, Information Operations and Cultural and Religious Affairs Advisor is carried on by his mentee.

"I'd like to wish my mentee well for the future and hope he perseveres with all the work we have achieved together in establishing the media centre and Intelligence Fusion Centre at KGGC," Major Walsh said.

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**ROUTINE ORDERS** is issued 5 times per year, in January, April, June, August and October.

Contributions for inclusion in **ROUTINE ORDERS**, such as forward activities, interesting personal notes etc. are always welcome. Items for the next issue on Monday 25 September 2017 are required before Wednesday 13 September 2017. Earlier would be appreciated. Electronic copy preferred if possible.

*Routine Orders* Editor Barry Hoschke  
bhoschke@tpg.com.au

## 100 YEARS AGO

### Third Battle of Ypres

The Third Battle of Ypres was the major British offensive in Flanders in 1917. It was planned to break through the strongly fortified and in-depth German defences enclosing the Ypres salient, a protruding bulge in the British front line, with the intention of sweeping through to the German submarine bases on the Belgian coast. The battle comprised of a series of limited and costly offensives, often undertaken in the most difficult of waterlogged conditions - a consequence of frequent periods of rain and the destruction of the Flanders' lowlands drainage systems by intense artillery bombardment. As the opportunity for breakthrough receded, Haig still saw virtue in maintaining the offensives, hoping in the process to drain German manpower through attrition. The main battles associated with Third Battle of Ypres were:

- Pilckem, 31 July to 2 August
- Langemarck, 16-18 August
- Menin Road, 20-25 September
- Polygon Wood, 26 September to 3 October
- Broodseinde, 4 October
- Poelcapelle, 9 October
- Passchendaele (First Battle), 12 October
- Passchendaele (Second Battle), 26 October to 10 November.

Australian Divisions participated in the battles of Menin Road, Polygon Wood, Broodseinde, Poelcapelle and the First Battle of Passchendaele. In eight weeks of fighting Australian forces incurred 38,000 casualties. The combined total of British and Dominion casualties has been estimated at 310,000 (estimated German losses were slightly lower) and no breakthrough was achieved. The costly offensives, ending with the capture of Passchendaele village, merely widened the Ypres salient by a few kilometres.

Four soldiers were awarded the Victoria Cross for their gallantry in the face of the enemy:

### Second Lieutenant Frederick Birks VC

Service Number 47  
Birth Date 16 August 1894  
Birth Place United Kingdom: Wales, Flintshire, Buckley  
Death Date 21 September 1917  
Death Place Belgium: Flanders, West-Vlaanderen, Glencorse Wood  
Final Rank Second Lieutenant

Frederick Birks (1894-1917) was born in North Wales, and migrated to Australia in 1913. He held different jobs before enlisting in August 1914. He was posted to the medical corps and served as a stretcher-bearer on Gallipoli; he was wounded in June 1915. In France next year he was awarded the Military Medal for bravery.

Having been selected for officer-training, Birks was commissioned in the 6th Battalion, AIF, in May 1917. On 20 September, during the battle of Menin Road, Birks and a corporal attacked a German pillbox which was holding up the advance; the corporal was wounded but Birks went on, killing those in the pillbox and capturing a machine-gun. Later he led a small party against another strongpoint, capturing 16 men and killing or wounding nine others. The following day, while trying to rescue some of his men who had been buried by an explosion, the brave officer was killed by a shell. He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross; the award was accepted by his brother, who was serving in the British army.

Birks received the Victoria Cross, a Military Medal, and service medals for the First World War.

### Corporal Reginald Roy Inwood VC

Service Number 506  
Birth Date 14 July 1890  
Birth Place Australia: South Australia, Adelaide  
Death Date 23 October 1971  
Death Place Australia: South Australia, Adelaide  
Final Rank Corporal

Roy Inwood (1890-1971), like many other fellow miners from Broken Hill, in far western New South Wales, enlisted in South Australia. He served on Gallipoli before being sent to France, where his brother serving in the same battalion was killed at Pozieres.

During the battle of Menin Road, Inwood attacked enemy strongpoints, capturing machine-guns and prisoners. Already a skilful scout, during the night he also went out with a patrol and gathered useful information.

In 1918 Inwood returned to Australia to help with recruiting. He served again in the Second World War.

### **Sergeant John James Dwyer VC**

Service number 20610

Birth Date 9 March 1890

Birth Place Lovett, Tasmania

Death Date 17 January 1962

Final Rank Lieutenant

Sergeant Dwyer, in charge of a Vickers machine gun, went forward with the first wave of the brigade. On reaching the final objective, this non-commissioned officer rushed his gun forward in advance of the captured position in order to obtain a commanding spot. Whilst advancing, he noticed an enemy machine gun firing on the troops on our right flank, and causing casualties. Unhesitatingly, he rushed his gun forward to within 30 yards of the enemy gun, and fired point blank at it, putting it out of action, and killing the gun crew. He then seized the gun and, totally ignoring the snipers from the rear of the enemy position carried it back across the shell swept ground to our front line, and established both it and his Vickers gun on the right flank of our brigade. Sergeant Dwyer commanded these guns with great coolness, and, when the enemy counter attacked our positions, he rendered great assistance in repulsing them. On the following day, when the position was heavily shelled, this non-commissioned officer took up successive positions. On one occasion, his Vickers gun was blown up by shell fire, but he conducted his gun team back to Headquarters through the enemy barrage, secured one of the reserve guns, and rushed it back to our position in the shortest possible time. During the whole of the attack, his contempt of danger, cheerfulness, and courage, raised the spirits of all who were in his sector of the line.

Elected to the Tasmanian House of Assembly in 1931, Dwyer served as Deputy Premier of Tasmania

from August 1958 to May 1959 and remained in office until his death.

### **Private Patrick Joseph Bugden VC**

Service Number 3774

Birth Date 17 March 1897

Birth Place Australia: New South Wales  
Death Date 28 September 1917

Death Place Belgium  
Final Rank Private

Twenty-year-old Pat Bugden (1897-1917), a hotelkeeper from the north coast of New South Wales before enlistment, was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his outstanding bravery over three days during one of the Australians' successful step-by-step advances in late September 1917. On two occasions, when held up by intense fire from machine-guns, he led small parties to silence the enemy posts. Five times he rescued wounded men trapped by intense shelling and machine-gun fire. Once, seeing that an Australian corporal had been taken prisoner, he single-handedly rushed to his comrade's aid, shooting and bayoneting the enemy. He kept fighting until he was killed.

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### **EULOGY FOR A VETERAN**

Do not stand at my grave and weep.  
I am not there, I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow.  
I am the diamond glints on snow.  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.  
I am the gentle autumn rain.  
When you awaken in the morning's hush,  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
Of quiet birds in circled flight,  
I am the soft stars that shine at night.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry,  
I am not there, I did not die.

*Anonymous*

*from "Soldiers Tales", ed Denny Neave, Big Sky Publishing, 2008*

## **RECOGNISING OUR WWII VETERANS: CEDRIC VINCENT DAY**

### **Cedric's memories as told to his daughter Edwina**

During the period of 1910-1912, Cunard/White Star developed the idea of having large liners travelling the Atlantic run simultaneously with one ship being in Southampton, one midway across the Atlantic and a third ship berthed in New York City, thereby offering a circular route. This system operated for a number of years. Ships using this route included Aquitania, Titanic (sunk due to hitting iceberg in 1912), Mauretania, Olympic, Lusitania (torpedoed off Northern Ireland in 1914), amongst others, all 40-45000 tonne 3-4 propeller coal burners. The Britannic was fitted out in the builder's yard and subsequently converted to a hospital ship (she was lost subsequently during WW2 when she was struck by a mine in the Mediterranean Sea).

In the 1920s, Cunard/White Star talked about the possibility of building two ships, each around 80,000 tonnes for the Atlantic run. Subsequently Cunard took over White Star. Cunard again considered this prospect in the 1930's. The first of these two ships - Queen Mary - was constructed at John Brown's yard Clyde Bank near Glasgow and entered service in 1936. Queen Mary was embarking passengers at Southampton at the outbreak of WW2. On arrival back in New York City, Queen Mary was tied up for a period, with all crew (barring a small crew to look after the ship) returning to England. During this time, Queen Mary was converted to a troop carrier, and was then brought to Sydney, Australia for further fit out to troop carrier. In the meantime, the second 80,000 tonner, Queen Elizabeth, was fitting out at John Brown's Glasgow, also to troop carrier.

Due to WW2 and possible air raids, the Queen Elizabeth was moved out of Scotland. She was diverted to Singapore for dry docking and for removal of some the fittings from her original launch. She then joined Queen Mary in Australia. As there was not enough room for both ships, Queen Elizabeth was anchored off Jervis Bay.

While Queen Mary was docked in Sydney, a ferry service was operating from Circular Quay for passengers to view the great ship. I went along on one such trip together with my parents and younger

sister. I had completed 6 months military training in the Ordnance Corp for all tradesmen, and I wrote to the shipping office in Sydney and on the Friday afternoon arrived home from my first week of work for an interview with the Shore Superintendent Engineer of the Cunard Line. I went in on the Saturday morning and was accepted for the position of 6<sup>th</sup> plumber. Preparations were then made for my departure, including photograph, documents of identity, various injections, uniform including cap, white overalls and shoes. On the Wednesday, I had another interview and was given a pass to go to Man O War steps to board the lifeboat to Queen Mary, where I met up with other plumbers and the Sanitary Engineer. A few days later I signed on as the 6<sup>th</sup> plumber. On the Saturday morning my parents and younger sister took me to join the ship with my tools. The ship later left Sydney for Jervis Bay, having embarked troops, swapping places with the Queen Elizabeth, who was embarking troops in Sydney. Both ships then departed the East coast bound for Fremantle, then both proceeding to the naval base North Ceylon. Queen Mary then went on to Port Seth in the Red Sea to disembark troops. Next stop was Singapore for dry docking. Whilst in Singapore, the Japanese were approaching and Queen Elizabeth was headed back to Sydney. Queen Mary, meanwhile, was in Singapore for three weeks prior to sailing as an empty ship to Capetown, where fuel and supplies were loaded before heading across to Rio de Janeiro. From Rio the ship proceeded North to port on the North coast of South America for fuel and supplies. We then sailed up to New York City, arriving January 1942 - it was damn cold! Boston for dry docking was next and all services on board closed down, with all crew going ashore for all services including toilets/washing. Queen Mary came out of dry dock, embarking troops, supplies and fuel in Boston. Accommodation for troops had been increased considerably. We departed Boston and anchored off Florida where there was a new Captain. - a very pleasant man - who hadn't been told which ship he would be captaining. Queen Mary left Florida retracing the journey back to Rio, across to Capetown, into the Southern Ocean and up into Fremantle and back around to Sydney, entering Sydney Harbour on a Saturday afternoon. Two of the ships in the convoy were the Aquitania and the Ile de France. What a sight! Every vantage point around the harbour was taken up with spectators. The only thing missing was harbour craft.

We were given a few days leave before departing Sydney once again back to Fremantle with more Australian troops bound for the Middle East. From Fremantle it was back to Capetown, then a port on the West coast of Africa for more supplies then tie up at the Clyde River UK. More supplies and fuel were loaded and British troops embarked. We went back to the West coast of Africa, followed by Capetown. From Capetown this time we were escorted by a County class cruiser for several days, with a change of escort up to Port Seth in the Red Sea. We disembarked troops from the 9th division then it was back to Fremantle. We met up with Aquitania for the journey back into Sydney. This would be the last time for Queen Mary in Sydney (around 1943). It was then back to Fremantle, via Southern Ocean to Capetown, across to Rio, arriving back in New York City. Queen Mary was then on the Atlantic run transporting American troops. On occasions, the ship picked up British PM Winston Churchill, First Lord of the British Army Lord Mountbatten as well as Lord Portal of the Royal Air Force. Queen Mary did about two trips a month back and forth on the North Atlantic. On one of these trips on my watch I had occasion to pick up the note "hot and cold taps on washbasin" to find a Royal Marine Guard on a suite on the main deck. On entering, the party of officials including Mr. Churchill was meeting together. I felt proud to be in the presence of these men in high positions. This trip, after their meeting with the US President, brought the US into the war. Queen Mary continued carrying troops.

Not long before the approach to Dunkirk was the start of the advance in Europe and eventually the end of the war and defeat of Germany. I left Queen Mary in December 1944 and came down to London along with a number of other chaps, returning to Australia via the Panama Canal, followed by Wellington NZ and then Sydney.

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*Cedric Day joined the RSL in 1946 after serving in the merchant navy as a Petty Officer.*

*He died on 26 May 2017. This article was submitted to Welfare Officer Robin Cummins in March 2017 for possible publication in Routine Orders.*

## THE SILENT RANKS

by Courtney Lane

I wear no uniforms, no blues or greens  
 But I am in the Army of the Ranks rarely seen  
 I have no rank upon my shoulders- salutes I do not  
 give  
 But the military world is the place where I live

I'm not in the chain of command, orders I do not  
 give or get  
 But my husband is the one who does, and this I  
 can't forget  
 I'm not the one who fires the weapon, who puts my  
 life on the line  
 But my job is just as tough, I'm the one that's left  
 behind

My husband is a patriot, a brave and prideful man  
 And the call to serve his country not all can  
 understand  
 Behind the lines I see the things needed to keep this  
 country free  
 My husband makes the sacrifice, but so do the kids  
 and me

I love the man I married, military is his life  
 So I pledge to support my hero  
 And stand among the ranks as the  
 Unknown Army Wife...

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A photographer for a national magazine was assigned to get photos of a great forest fire. Smoke at the scene was too thick to get any good shots, so he frantically called his home office to hire a plane. "It will be waiting for you at the airport!" he was assured by his editor. As soon as he got to the small, rural airport, sure enough, a plane was warming up near the runway. He jumped in with his equipment and yelled, "Lets go! Lets go!" The pilot swung the plane into the wind and soon they were in the air. "Fly over the north side of the fire," said the photographer, "and make three or four low level passes." "Why?" asked the pilot. "Because Im going to take pictures! Im a photographer, and photographers take pictures!" said the photographer with great exasperation. After a long pause the pilot said, "You mean you're not the instructor?"

## **HMAS PLATYPUS**

### **Former Dedicated Submarine Base in the 21st Century**

**By Captain Christopher Skinner RAN Rtd,  
Submarine Institute of Australia**

This article describes the current status and near future planning for the former HMAS PLATYPUS submarine base in Neutral Bay, Sydney NSW. The site is controlled by the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust who have managed the decontamination from the first use of the site as a gasworks and then as the Royal Australian Navy Torpedo Establishment from 1942. The current phase leads to the site being opened to the general public from 2018.

During World War 2 in response to the sudden threat from Japan and the perceived vulnerability of supply of armaments from Europe or North America, a number of munitions and other military logistics facilities were built in Australia. One of these was the RAN Torpedo Establishment (RANTE) on the former gasworks site at High Street, North Sydney, supported by the Torpedo Firing facility at Clareville on Pittwater where torpedoes were test fired and calibrated.

Australia had no RAN submarines during WW2 and post-war based a squadron of Royal Navy (RN) submarines at HMAS PENGUIN in Balmoral, Middle Harbour. However, the prevailing swell sometimes required submarines berthed there to be moved to the wharf at RANTE as a more sheltered berth.

When the RN withdrew from east of Suez the RAN committed to form the Australian Submarine Squadron and on 18th August 1967, HMAS PLATYPUS was commissioned as a dedicated submarine base on the RANTE site.

The Australian Submarine Squadron relocated to HMAS STIRLING in WA and HMAS PLATYPUS was decommissioned in 1999. RANTE had become the RAN Torpedo Maintenance Establishment and it too had closed after the last of the Mk 8 torpedoes had been serviced and placed into storage. The site was later transferred to the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (SHFT) that had been set up to manage several federal government controlled sites around Sydney Harbour.

Over several years contamination at the PLATYPUS site was removed and site readied for its ultimate uses as described in a very detailed management plan available for download from the SHFT website. The decontamination had required the

removal of the former Submarine Squadron Administration Building, but the other squadron buildings — Naval Stores, Fleet Intermediate Maintenance Authority workshops building and the Submarine School buildings have all been retained, albeit with some remodelling planned.

The northern part of the site has been terraced and is the site for the Submariners' Memorial being erected by the Submarines Association Australia with generous contributions from several state RSL sub-branches. The memorial will be dedicated at a ceremony on Friday 18th August, marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of PLATYPUS commissioning and also the arrival in Sydney of HMAS OXLEY, first of six Oberon-class boats to form the squadron. The first commanding officer CAPT Bill OWEN RAN Rtd will be attendance at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony, as will the Minister for Defence and the Chief of Navy.

The site works to prepare all of the RANTME and squadron buildings for public access and commercial and public uses are due to complete in 2018.

*From "Call the Hands", NNSA Digital  
Newsletter, Issue No. 10, July 2017*

*Contributed by John Gibbins*

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### **SUBMARINE JOKES**

A new ensign assigned to submarines was eager to impress his commanding officer with all the knowledge he had picked up at submarine school.

After listening patiently for five minutes, the senior officer said:

"Listen, it's simple. Add the number of times we dive to the number of times we surface. Divide that number by two. If the result doesn't come out to a whole number, don't open the hatch."

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Our five-year-old grandson couldn't wait to tell his grandfather about the movie we had watched on television, "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea".

The scenes with the submarine and the giant octopus had kept him wide-eyed. In the middle of the telling, my husband interrupted Mark, "What made the submarine sink. Was it the octopus?"

With a look of incredulity, Mark replied, "No, Grandpa, it was the 20,000 leaks."

## **The Battle of Long Tan and the Vietnam War**

One of the most well-known Australian engagements of the Vietnam War was the Battle of Long Tan, **18 August 1966**. The battle saw the action of 108 Anzacs against a Viet Cong (North Vietnamese) force estimated between 1,500 and 2,500. The Battle was one of the heaviest conflicts of the Vietnam War as well as one of the few battles in the recorded history of the world to be won against such odds.

Vietnam Veterans' Day, celebrated in Australia on 18 August each year, commemorates the Battle of Long Tan and those Australians who served during the Vietnam War and is an opportunity to remember those who did not come home.

The Vietnam War was the longest war Australia was ever involved in. Australian involvement in the Vietnam War was marked by controversy and significant levels of public opposition to conscription and concern about casualties. The Vietnam War was also the first war witnessed 'live' on television.

In the late 1960s, the escalation of the Vietnam War coincided with the hippy movement with music as the chosen vehicle for an alternative lifestyle. It also was a period when Australians reflected on their relationships with the United States of America (USA) and with Asia.

### **Long Tan (1966)**

The Australian operations base at Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy province was fired upon by the Viet Cong with mortar and shell at about 2 am on 17 August 1966. On 18 August, D Company, 6 RAR Battalion, numbering 105 Australians and a three-man New Zealand artillery team, was sent into the Long Tan rubber plantation, all coming under heavy machine-gun fire and mortar attacks from Viet Cong – estimated to be at least 1,500 and possibly 2,500 troops. D Company commander, Major Harry Smith, requested resupply of ammunition and troop reinforcements by helicopter, which was supplied.

After almost three hours of intense fighting by D Company, reinforcements from A Company arrived

in armoured personnel carriers (APCs). Ammunition was distributed and the wounded were tended. Early in the evening, B Company also arrived and engaged the Viet Cong. Soon after that, seven APCs arrived, having risked skirmishes with the Viet Cong along the way. The extra fire-power finally stopped the Viet Cong, and all firing ceased.

There were 18 Australians killed – 17 from D Company and one from the 1st Armoured Personnel Carrier Squadron – and 21 wounded. The Viet Cong insurgents left 245 dead and many more wounded. In later years, it was found out that D Company had run into a reinforced regimental force waiting to attack Nui Dat.

*[www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/battle-of-long-tan](http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/battle-of-long-tan)*

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## **Battle of Long Tan soldiers 'finally' awarded bravery medals 50 years on**

ABC News November 08, 2016

Ten Australian soldiers have been recognised for their bravery more than 50 years after they fought in the Vietnam War's Battle of Long Tan.

On 18 August, 1966, members of D Company, who were outnumbered 20 to one, fought against the odds to defeat the Viet Cong.

About 245 Viet Cong were killed in the rubber plantation and 18 Australians were killed and more were wounded.

But for half a century many of the men received no official recognition of their courage, despite sustained campaigning for recognition.

Now 10 of those soldiers have been recognised at Government House in Canberra.

Presenting them with their bravery awards, Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove told them they were brave, dedicated and professional.

"Today many years after the event we think we have discovered all of those whose special efforts needed to be recognised," he said.

“Let nobody dispute that the Battle of Long Tan stands as the emblem of that long war . . . we recognise people who for 50 years have been waiting.

“I commend the way you fought 50 years ago. Well done.”

Three of the medals were accepted posthumously, including for Gordon Sharp — the only Australian officer to die in the battle.

His nephew collected the medal for courage on his behalf.

### **Long Tan soldiers recognised with bravery awards:**

Frank Alcorta OAM

The late Barry Eugene Magnussen

Colonel Francis Adrian Roberts OAM

Neil Raymond Bextrum

The late Ronald Howard Brett

Ian Martin Campbell

Noel John Grimes

Geoffrey Michael Peters

William Alfred Roche

The late Second Lieutenant Gordon Cameron Sharp

### **‘End of 50 years of frustration’**

Company Commander Harry Smith has long fought for recognition for Long Tan’s frontline soldiers.

He said a 30-year secrecy period and bureaucratic red tape stood in the way of the awards.

“I can go home and pick up cases and cases of paperwork and throw it in the bin and get on with life,” he said.

“I’m very pleased for the soldiers and their families and loved ones, that they’ve finally got the recognition they should have got in 1966.

“I think it’s the end of 50 years of frustration.”

Colonel Francis Roberts said the battle was “hell” but his fellow soldiers helped him through.

“It was rainy, stormy, thunder and lightning, artillery fire was all over the place, lots of bullets flying around, lots of dead people,” he said.

“The thing that amazed me was the steadfastness of the Australian soldiers. A lot of them were 20, 21, 22 years old and they didn’t waver . . . I admire that.”

Frank Alcorta said it was a “momentous occasion” in his life to be recognised.

“I’m only sad that my wife, who passed away in 2010, couldn’t be here,” he said.

“I can remember everything [from the war]. I go to the supermarket and I can’t remember what I went there for, but those memories [from Long Tan] never leave you.”

*abc.net.au/news/2016-11-08*

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### **For those who love the philosophy of ambiguity, as well as the idiosyncrasies of English:**

1. One tequila, two tequila, three tequila . . . floor.
2. atheism is a non-prophet organization.
3. If man evolved from monkeys and apes, why do we still have monkeys and apes?
4. The main reason that Santa is so jolly is because he knows where all the bad girls live.
5. I went to a bookstore and asked the saleswoman, “where’s the self-help section?” She said if she told me, it would defeat the purpose.
6. What if there were no hypothetical questions?
7. If a deaf child writes swear words, does his mother wash his hands with soap?
8. If someone with multiple personalities threatens to kill himself, is it considered a hostage situation?
9. Is there another word for synonym?
10. Where do forest rangers go to “get away from it all?”
11. What do you do when you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?
12. If a parsley farmer is sued, can they garnish his wages?
13. Would a fly without wings be called a walk?
14. Why do they lock gas station bathrooms? Are they afraid someone will break-in and clean them?
15. If a turtle doesn’t have a shell, is he homeless or naked?
16. Can vegetarians eat animal crackers?
17. If the police arrest a mute, do they tell him he has the right to remain silent?
18. Why do they put braille on the drive-through bank machines?

19. How do they get deer to cross the road only at the yellow road warning signs?
20. What was the best thing before sliced bread?
21. One nice thing about egotists: they don't talk about other people.
22. Does the little mermaid wear an algebra? (this one took me a minute)
23. How is it possible to have a civil war?
24. If one synchronized swimmer drowns, do the rest drown too?
25. If you ate both pasta and antipasto, would you still be hungry?
26. If you try to fail, and succeed, which have you done?
27. Whose cruel idea was it for the word 'lisp' to have 's' in it?
28. Why are hemorrhoids called "hemorrhoids" instead of "assteroids"?
29. Why is it called tourist season if we can't shoot at them?
30. Why is there an expiration date on sour cream?
31. If you spin an oriental man in a circle three times, does he become disoriented?
32. Can an atheist get insurance against acts of god?
33. Why do shops have signs, 'guide dogs only', the dogs can't read and their owners are blind?

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### **Award-winning translations**

Defence News and Media 27 June 2017

An Afghan-born interpreter has been awarded the Australian Operational Service Medal – Civilian, for his outstanding work assisting Australian Defence Force (ADF) advisors on Operation Highroad.

For the past 15 months, Mr Saduruddin Stori has interpreted for each rotation of the ADF Advisory Team (AT) who are mentoring the Kabul Garrison General Command (KGGC) as part of the Australian train, advise, assist mission.

Mr Stori started working alongside the US Special Forces in Kunar as an interpreter in 2005 because he wanted to help create a safer Afghanistan.

"I wanted to work with the Coalition forces to help the people of Afghanistan who do not have security," Mr Stori said.

After gaining US citizenship for his work during the previous International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission, Mr Stori moved to California where he commenced his Registered Nursing degree.

However it was not long before he decided to return to Afghanistan as an interpreter for the ADF in 2016.

Mr Stori has since interpreted for the past three KGGC AT Commanders, enabling critical mentoring and key leadership engagements translating English, Dari, Pashtu and Urdu (the national language of Pakistan).

Commander KGGC AT-3, Colonel Mark Ascough, said interpreters are integral to the coalition effort in Afghanistan.

"In addition to translation, interpreters provide cultural insights that allow relationships built on respect to grow between the Advisors and their Afghan counterparts," Colonel Ascough said.

"I know the previous two teams greatly valued the efforts of Mr Stori and the other interpreters - the achievements over the past 15 months with the KGGC would not have been possible without them."

Colonel Ascough said Mr Stori would be missed and that his expertise contributed to KGGC's growth as a joint organisation.

"He has played a vital role in the development of the first and only Afghan Joint Operational Headquarters responsible for coordinating security in Kabul," he said.

"We will miss his expertise but wish him every success in his next career."

Heading back to California to complete the final semester of nursing studies, Mr Stori said he will miss working for the Australian mentors but will return to Afghanistan in the future.

"Working with the ADF KGGC AT has been an amazing experience but I have a bigger goal now: I will finish my schooling so that I can come back and help the people of Afghanistan with new skills."

"I am thankful to the ADF and really appreciate what they have done for the Afghan people, for the interpreters and for me."

## **SUB-BRANCH ACTIVITIES**

### **SUB-BRANCH MONTHLY MEETINGS**

Are held at 1930 on the last Monday of each month.

Next Meetings:           Monday 28 August 2017  
                                  Monday 25 September 2017  
                                  Monday 30 October 2017

Contact: John Prestidge, Secretary, Ph 9868 3272 (sub-Branch Office), 9871 1617 (Home)

### **SENIOR MEMBERS ASSOCIATION**

Meetings are held at 1400 on the first Tuesday of each month.

Next Meetings:           Tuesday 01 August 2017  
                                  Tuesday 07 September 2017  
                                  Tuesday 12 September 2017 Tour

Outings and functions are usually conducted on the second Tuesday of alternate months.

Membership is available to all financial members of the Epping RSL sub-Branch, their spouses, and the widows and widowers of ex-service personnel who were eligible to join the Epping RSL sub-Branch.

Contact: Margaret Cummins, Secretary, Ph 9680 4865

### **OLD & BOLD**

Meetings are held at 1300 on the first Thursday of each month.

Next Meetings:           Thursday 03 August 2017  
                                  Thursday 07 September 2017  
                                  Thursday 05 October 2017

Membership is available to all financial members of the Epping RSL sub-Branch.

Contact: David Taylor, Secretary, Ph 9871 4266

### **GRANNY SMITH DAY CLUB**

Meet at 1000 every Friday in the Uniting Church Hall, Chester Street, Epping.

Details of activities are shown in the Granny Smith column in this newsletter.

Contact:                    Caroline Pierotti, Ph 9876 4443

**VISITORS & THE WIVES & FRIENDS OF MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND ALL MEETINGS**

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**EPPING RSL SUB-BRANCH I  
YEAR 2017**

<b>SUB-BRANCH COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Sub-Branch Office</b>	
	<b>President</b>	J
	<b>Vice-Presidents</b>	R D
	<b>Secretary</b>	J
	<b>Treasurer</b>	M
	<b>Welfare Officer</b>	R
	<b>Pensions Officer</b>	R
	<b>Membership Co-Ord.</b>	A
	<b>Ceremonial</b>	R
	<b>Minute Secretary</b>	A
	<b>Committee Member</b>	R
	<b>Youth Club Liaison</b>	J
	<b>Trustees</b>	R J M
	<b>Memorabilia Consultant</b>	C
<b>SENIOR MEMBERS ASSN.</b>	<b>Patron</b>	V
	<b>President</b>	M
	<b>Vice President</b>	M
	<b>Secretary</b>	M
	<b>Treasurer</b>	I
	<b>Tours Manager</b>	
	<b>Committee</b>	I R I

**Epping RSL Seniors Association travel to Mooney Mooney July 2017**



*Compiled by John K. Curdie*