



# HIGHGATE



## NEWS

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Website: <http://Highgate-rsl.org.au>

The official newsletter of the Highgate (WA) Sub-Branch of the Returned & Services League of Australia

### President

Leon Griffiths

Telephone: 93329039 - 0439 033 300  
Email: [leon.griffiths@highgate-rsl.org.au](mailto:leon.griffiths@highgate-rsl.org.au)

### Vice President

Peter Farrell

Tel: 92461367- 0458 720 022  
Email: [peterfarrell@highgate-rsl.org.au](mailto:peterfarrell@highgate-rsl.org.au)

### Junior Vice President

Ian Petkoff

Telephone: 9275 9295  
Email: [thepetkoffs@hotmail.com](mailto:thepetkoffs@hotmail.com)

### Immediate Past President

Martyn Thompson

Telephone: 9383 2681  
Email: [martyn.thompson@highgate-rsl.org.au](mailto:martyn.thompson@highgate-rsl.org.au)

### Secretary

Ray Galliot

Telephone: 0412 990 799  
Email: [raygalliot@gmail.com](mailto:raygalliot@gmail.com)

### Treasurer

Richard Adams

PO Box 3551

Perth WA 6832

Telephone: 0411 737 723  
Email: [richard.adams@highgate-rsl.org.au](mailto:richard.adams@highgate-rsl.org.au)

### Editor

Margot Harness

Telephone: 9293 1076 – 0438 936 405  
Email: [margot.harness@highgate-rsl.org.au](mailto:margot.harness@highgate-rsl.org.au)

### Pensions Officer

Jim Eayrs

Telephone: 9341 2979

### Website

[www.highgate-rsl.org.au](http://www.highgate-rsl.org.au)

Email: [john.cleary@highgate-rsl.org.au](mailto:john.cleary@highgate-rsl.org.au)

## Monthly Luncheon

### Monday 21 May 2012

**Venue:** Gallipoli Room

**Time:** 1130 hrs for 1215 hrs

**Guest Speaker:** Geoff Simpson

**Topic:** Drought-Proofing Perth - Is Desalination the Answer?

Geoff, a retired Reserve Forces Colonel and a member of Highgate RSL graduated from the University of Western Australia in 1971 with a BE (Mech) degree and in 1974 from Curtin University with a Dip Admin.

He enlisted in the Army Reserve on 28 March 1967 in the Western Australian University Regiment. Following a distinguished career over 32 years which included the appointment of CO of WAUR he was placed on the Inactive List on the 29th of March 1999. His final Army Appointment, prior to retirement was as Director Army Personnel/Perth. He is a recipient of the Reserve Forces Decoration (RFD).

In 2002 he was appointed Colonel Commandant RAE Western Region an appointment which he still holds.

Geoff succeeded Phillip Skelton in November of last year as Deputy Warden of the State War Memorial.

He was the overall Commissioning Director for the Perth Sea Water Desalination Plant and its downstream projects. A \$650 million project to provide a 45Gl/year desalination plant together with a major transfer pumping station, 40 kms of interconnecting pipe mains and associated control systems.

There are few countries on earth which have the need to establish new sources of freshwater as does Australia and there is no doubt that Geoff's presentation will prove to be of great interest to us all.

## President's Report

Another ANZAC day passes.

It was pleasing to see the strong participation in services all over the State and the surge of support coming from the community to keep the spirit of ANZAC alive, particularly the obvious open enthusiasm shown by our younger generation attending the services and marches.

It was NOT pleasing to read an article published in the *West Australian* newspaper condemning the RSL President and Executive for not advising the SAS widows that their husbands' names had been entered on the State War Memorial. Worse than this, widows were not allowed due respect to lay wreaths in the official party at the dawn service. I would have thought that they should be the first to deserve the opportunity. Highgate Sub Branch put the motion to State Congress last November for the names to be added to the SWM and it was passed by unanimous vote, despite an attempt by the State President to

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## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

**Committee: 4 June 2012 - Monthly Luncheon: 18 June 2012**



(Continued from page 1)

defeat the motion by legal argument. All delegates at the Congress expressed a desire to show their support for the valiant efforts and sacrifices made by our soldiers and this is certainly not reflected by these actions.

The widows deserve an apology on behalf of our members who do care.

It gets even worse. The next day we have the State President speaking up for sacked mine workers in the press, rather than give an apology to the widows - or perhaps try to stand up against the Government to rectify the erosion of pensions for many ex-service personnel. We have members that have had their purchasing power eroded by as much as \$480 per fortnight and nothing is done by the President or Executive to rectify this anomaly. Delegates at State Congress last November passed a motion directing the RSL WVA, through its President 'to actively and publicly support' a fair and equitable method of indexation for pensions. I do not have a problem with supporting mine workers if it is warranted - but I wonder where our priorities lie?

We are not far off having a new Executive election and I hope these issues are not forgotten when votes are cast. We have a lack of leadership and accountability at present.

Moving on to more pleasant issues.

Eighty seven members and friends attended a casual day on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> in the new clubrooms at the Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club. Unfortunately the original early March club booking had to be changed, as works were not complete. This brought the date too close to ANZAC commemorations and other pre-existing commitments so many could not attend. Thanks go to Lynn Durant-Lovell and Martyn Thomson for their assistance in making the day the success it was.

Following the weekend we had relatively lower numbers enjoying the Gunfire Breakfast at ANZAC House with the State Warden giving an open insight into her life in the Shean household.

Both events will be examined by our committee to enable wider participation next year. In the meantime we will continue with our monthly luncheons and planning for our 4<sup>th</sup> November memorial lunch at Kings Park. Any raffle donations are welcome and will help to reduce costs. Please help.

Yours in friendship.

Leon

It's maybe human nature and maybe peculiar to an individual, but on joining the ranks of the OBE's a few years ago and talking to others of the same vintage it seems that we may frequently have a yearning for the things of yesteryear. Life seemed simpler, more comfortable and largely stress free. And, on coming across the following piece of verse in an old publication, nostalgia took over and I thought maybe you would also enjoy it:



### THE COOK'S REVENGE

*It was just a harmless little joke it didn't wound or maim, though I have to say I'll never try the likes of it again.*

*Intending to Jazz up the cook, I caught a Joey-roo and threw it in to liven up the cook upon the loo.*

*The thunderbox had iron walls, that roo just bounced around, and the yells and screams that rent the air were stomach-splitting sounds.*

*The prank was soon forgotten till I ate some curried stew, that the cook had laced with Epsom Salts in payment for the roo.*

*Well it got my bowels a-boiling, while tasting quite benign, and had me rushing t'ward the loo in next to nothing time.*

*The pressure of the moment made me walk a little tight, while I tried to act unhurried just to curb the cook's delight.*

*I could have sworn I felt a seepage, the prelude to a flood, my teeth were clenched in grim resolve, my pores were sweating blood.*

*My legs were twined like rubber-vine, my brow was cold and damp, my cheeks were gripped by rigor-mortis, locked in fear and cramp.*

*The dictates of my posture meant a crabbing, shuffle gait, and I prayed, with progress slowing, that I wouldn't be too late.*

*When I finally reached the dunny there were horrors still in store, the cook with wretched humour, had jammed the bloody door.*

*The neatly driven three inch spikes skewed in through door and frame, were calculated to inflict more punishment and shame.*

*Well I didn't even hesitate, I wouldn't be denied, I put my shoulder to the boards, relief was just inside.*

*No twisted mind would do me in. I'd beat the bugger yet, and I prayed the trickle down my leg was nothing more than sweat.*

*Before my desperate onslaught, the timber burst apart, to reveal a waiting wooden throne, a sight to warm*

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## SUB WARDENS DUTIES

**Wreath Laying Services currently scheduled at the State War Memorial Kings Park**

Monday 7 May 2012 - 1030 hrs for 1100 hrs - Australian American Association (Battle of the Coral Sea)

Sunday 20 May 2012 - 1200 hrs for 1230 hrs - Consulate of Greece (71st Anniversary Battle of Crete and Mainland Greece) **{Date to be Confirmed}**

Tuesday 22 May 2012 - 1100 hrs for 1130 hrs - RSL Women's Auxiliary Conference.

Monday 28 May 2012 - 1020 hrs for 1050 hrs - North American Veterans' Unit (USA Memorial Day)

## **NATIONAL BOER WAR MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION**

1899



1902



The National Boer War Memorial Association (NBWMA) has secured the support of the Canberra National Memorials Committee and the National Capital Authority. A memorial site has been allocated on ANZAC Parade and the conduct of a competition to design the memorial approved.

ANZAC Parade Canberra stretches from the Australian War Memorial to Lake Burley Griffin, along a line between the Memorial and Parliament House.

Flanking this grand avenue with a gravel marching surface in the broad median, there are memorials of specific focus.

- \*Australian Hellenic Memorial.
- \*Australian Army National Memorial.
- \*Australian National Korean War Memorial.
- \*Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial.
- \*Desert Mounded Corps Memorial.
- \*New Zealand Memorial.
- \*Rats of Tobruk Memorial.
- \*Royal Australian Air Force Memorial.
- \*Australian Service Nurses National Memorial.
- \*Royal Australian Navy Memorial.
- \*Kemal Ataturk Memorial.

These are beautiful structures

commemorating the service of our countrymen and our relations with other nations. There is even a memorial to our most respected adversary, Kemal Attaturk the Turkish commander at Gallipoli but, as yet, there is no memorial to those who died in the Boer War

The NBWMA is conducting a national design competition whilst continuing the necessary fundraising for construction of the memorial.

By going to: [www.bwm.org.au](http://www.bwm.org.au) you will be provided with details about the war and its place in Australian military history. You will also be able to download the Boer War Descendant Registration Form, should you have descendants, and make donations to the fund which are tax deductible.

**NEED A LIFT TO ANZAC HOUSE TO ATTEND MONTHLY HIGHGATE LUNCHEONS?**

If so please contact me personally on 9244 8072

*Ken Bladen*



## GUNFIRE BREAKFAST - 25 APRIL 2012

For the first time, certainly within the memory of your very temporary editor and his membership of Highgate RSL, the Gunfire Breakfast was held away from its traditional home, the WA Club. There was a good role call of 50 plus members and guests and judging from the animated conversation and the background buzz and laughter the occasion was well enjoyed.

The Guest Speaker Dr Shean told us of her distinguished father's history and his service. She is justly proud of his achievements and was able to give us an understanding of the important place he holds in the history of the R.A.N.

Lieutenant-Commander Max Shean, was one of the small band of young men who, in the face of extraordinary peril, carried the sea war into enemy harbours; in the process they won a total of 68 awards for bravery, including four VCs; for his own exploits, he received a DSO and Bar.

In September 1942 Max volunteered for special and hazardous service without knowing what this meant. After only 10 days' training. He learned soon afterwards that he



*Our Guest Speaker, Dr Ruth Shean, Warden of the State War Memorial, receiving a Certificate of Appreciation from Don Blair, following his most ably delivered vote of thanks to her for her stirring address.*

was to become a diver in a secret, 51ft, four-man submarine known as an X-craft, he had some trepidation. But with his combination of engineering skills and seamanship, it turned out to be a task for which he was well-suited.

His first of many missions was Operation Source, the attack by a flotilla of X-craft on the German battleship *Tirpitz* north Norway in September 1943. The X-craft were manned by passage crews and towed there by parent submarines, while attack crews, including Shean's, prepared themselves in the towing vessels.

Disaster struck, however, when Shean's X-9, behind *Syrtis*, broke her tow and the passage crew was lost. The towrope became tangled round *Syrtis*'s port propeller, and Shean, whose diving suit was in X-9, plunged over the side into the freezing waters. Wearing overalls weighted with steel bars in the pockets, he repeatedly duck-dived until he could free the tangled rope. Knowing that, if attacked from the air, *Syrtis* would dive and abandon him on the surface.

It is said that he was more frightened than he had ever been; and when he was hauled on board, the submarine's Commanding Officer rewarded him with a brusque "Well done!"



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### THE COOK'S REVENGE

*my heart.*

*But the cook's revenge compounded, it wasn't just or right.*

*The vindictive little vixen had screwed the lid down tight.*



**THIS NEWSLETTER IS PRINTED AS A SERVICE TO THE VETERAN COMMUNITY  
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FEDERAL MEMBER FOR PERTH & MINISTER FOR DEFENCE**

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**HOLLYWOOD  
PRIVATE HOSPITAL**