

HIGHGATE NEWS

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

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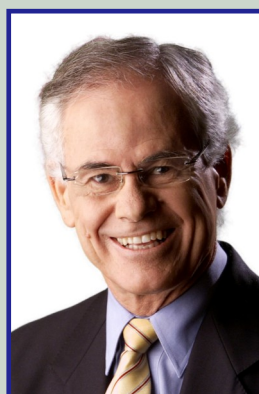
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MONTHLY LUNCHEON

Monday 16 March 2015

Venue: Gallipoli Room

Time: 1130 hrs for 1215 hrs



GUEST SPEAKER: Peter Kennedy.

Any viewers of the ABC News (the channel choice for the *discerning!*) over the years will recognise this good-looking chap. WA-born Peter graduated from UWA in Arts, and was a High School teacher for four years before switching careers. His distinguished CV since includes journalism in newspapers, radio and on TV - his particular forte tending to be in the sphere of politics, and he has been writing a book featuring eleven WA Premiers he has personally known and dealt with over the years. Peter is the nephew of our erstwhile member with the same name!

For the next Luncheon (16th March) PLEASE enter your name electronically on the BOOK-IN SHEET (by Thursday 5th March) - using the web-site). Cost is \$30 a head.

Method: GO TO the web-site. Double-Click on "MARCH LUNCHEON" under the photo of the Flame of Remembrance and **AS IF BY MAGIC**, the printing will change colour and be underlined. 'Click' on it again and the spreadsheet/Book In list will appear). ****FOR THOSE WITHOUT email please call Margot Har-ness: 9293 1076 (or any of the committee listed at left) to book in.**

Please note that the Book-In Sheet allows you to enter a "P" in Column 3 to indicate you are a PERMANENT booking. EFT details appear at the TOP of the Book In spreadsheet.

president's Report

It is a longstanding custom in Highgate Sub-Branch to have a Gunfire Breakfast on ANZAC Day, foregoing the normal monthly Luncheon.

This April, however, the Committee has decided that in the interests of continuity we do both: **as well as** the 'Gunfire', we'll "trial" having an informal lunch at the ANZAC Club on Monday, 20th April, for all those who wish to attend. The idea is to gather and have a few drinks in the Bar area (as usual); then remain downstairs - purchasing a meal and adjourning into the Dining Room.

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

LUNCHEON: 16 March, 2015

(Committee: 10.30am same day)



(Continued from p.1)

Start thinking about booking early for the Gunfire Breakfast. We've had a quote: \$40 a head (same as last year). This price includes the Rum!

Our Editor, Margot, reports that she sometimes gets "bounces" when sending out the Newsletter by email. If you need to change your email address, please ensure that you advise the Secretary, so that we can keep our records up-to-date and accurate. We would like to increasingly use email for communication with members. Those with email can get the newsletter up to a week before those only on post; as printing and posting out take time. If you are not getting it by email and would like to do so, please advise Margot of your e-mail address.

In the past month, four of our members passed away. Thank you to all members who attended the funeral of Past President, Alan Saville and formed the Guard of Honour. As I advised at the meeting, I have a number of Australian flags available for funerals and Geoff Simpson holds at least one.

A note for your diaries: the Memorial Luncheon this year will be on **TUESDAY, 10th November**. Prices have risen (jumped!) again so we need to find a sponsor to help defray the costs. If you can help with identifying a sponsor, please let us know.

The Committee is concerned that older members who experience ill health or Alzheimer's are resigning from the RSL after a lifetime of service and association. We have approached State HQ with a suggestion of a new membership category that can be offered by Sub-Branches to long-serving members suffering ill health, to enable the Sub-Branches to preserve their membership. This thus enables us to maintain contact and accord them Sub-Branch honours on their passing.

Many will remember Brother Ollie Pickett talking to us a

while ago about "Wheelchairs for Kids" - and that a whip around at the luncheon raised enough to build six chairs. You may be interested to know that the 30,000th wheelchair was shipped on 18th February!

Finally, please remember to **book** for the March Luncheon. **AND read the notice re "Gunfire" on back page!**

Yours in fellowship,
Peter

Sub-Branch Snippets

It is a sad month indeed, when we lose FOUR of our valued members. May they Rest in Peace. Our condolences go out to the families and loved ones of:

Alan Saville: former distinguished WW2 Atlantic Maritime pilot (mostly flying out of Canada) and an ex-President of Highgate RSL Sub-Branch. Alan later pursued a highly successful post-war career in the Life Insurance industry.

Alexander Dick: Victorian-born Alex served briefly in the Army Cadets before enlisting in the RAN, and serving on the corvette: HMAS "Geraldton". He saw service in the Persian Gulf, Aden, India, Ceylon and Burma during 1943/44; and later the Pacific theatre and Japan.

Keith Potter: Lived a full life of adventure. WIA whilst with 2/28th Inf Bn at Tobruk; taken POW Ruin Ridge, (in Battle of El Alamein) - wounded again. Survived the torpedoing of the "Nino Bixio" whilst crossing the Med - then POW in Italy and Germany. Died at age 92.

John McKenzie: Former WW2 Rear Gunner and Wireless Operator with Bomber Command. Post-war, a top sports photographer for the "West Australian" (in the days of 'film' and long before "Photoshop")! John later proved successful in a new career path: Life Insurance and Finance. Always dapper, John was an active member who rarely missed a Luncheon before ill-health caught up with him.



TEE-HEEs and Fiddle-Dee-Dees Corner

Teacher Arrested at Sydney International Airport

A high school teacher was arrested today at Sydney's Kingsford-Smith International airport as he attempted to board a flight while in possession of a ruler, a protractor, a compass, a slide-rule and a calculator.

At a hastily organised press conference, the Attorney General said he believed the man was a member of the notorious extremist Al-Gebra movement.

He did not identify the man, who has been charged by the Australian Federal Police with carrying weapons of maths instruction.

"Al-Gebra is a problem for us", the Attorney General said. "They derive solutions by means and extremes, and sometimes go off on tangents in search of absolute values. They use secret code names like 'X' and 'Y' and refer to themselves as 'unknowns', but we have determined that they belong to a common denominator of the axis of medieval with co-ordinates in every country." As the Greek philosopher Isosceles used to say, "There are three sides to every triangle."

When asked to comment on the arrest, Prime Minister Tony Abbott said, "If God had wanted us to have better weapons of maths instruction, He would have given us more fingers and toes."

Fellow Liberal colleagues told reporters they could not recall a more intelligent or profound statement by the Prime Minister.



SUB WARDENS DUTIES

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

- Sunday : **10 March 2015** : 1000 hrs for 1030 hrs - Irish Consul and Ambassador, accompanied by a senior Irish MP
- Sunday : **22 March 2015** : 0830 hrs for 0900 hrs - The Order of Australia Association WA Branch Inc
- Saturday : **28 March 2015** : 0915 hrs for 0945 hrs - RAAF Association WA - Anniversary of formation of the RAAF
- Sunday : **29 March 2015** : 1200 hrs for 1230 hrs - Consulate of Greece (National Day)

“The Way We Were” Gallery Our Golden Oldies

“Heave Ho me hearties” - for this is a tale of a genuine “Sea Dog”! Somehow the tang of salt air wafted overland to the dry red dust of Kalgoorlie, and induced a young nine-year old Bill Gray Ritchie to dream of A Life on the Ocean Wave! At that stage he would not have had an inkling as to where those dreams and aspirations would end up taking him.

Bill was educated in local Catholic schools before beginning work in the Gold Mines as a Junior Surveyor, and was attending the School of Mines, studying to be a Mining Surveyor, when in 1943, aged seventeen, he was accepted by the Navy. However, with gold mining an essential service, he was “manpowered”; and so temporarily joined the Volunteer Defence Force in which he was “trained by WWI diggers to use all types of weapons and how to fire from the hip”! But ‘twasn’t to be for long ...

In 1944, the Navy Reserve trained him in the then-secret field of Radar, and he was sent north to the SW Pacific region, where he served on various ships and minesweepers, sweeping for mines as far afield as Hong Kong and the China coast. Whilst acting as a stores complex sentry ashore at Madang (New Guinea), he was charged with trying to kill the Officer of the Guard doing his rounds. Having received no answer to his challenges, Bill fired a warning shot. A small branch fell from the tree the OOG was hiding behind, hitting him. Bill was charged, but the case dismissed. He says he has been hauled before his superiors in every rank from Ordinary Seaman, up to and including Commander - but ALWAYS “Not Guilty” of course!!

Back in Australia, Bill became a Radar instructor, transferred to the Permanent Naval Forces. Rapidly promoted, he served in HMAS Bataan, twice, with the Occupation Forces in Japan. But in 1949 his long association with the Fleet Air Arm began - firstly in HMAS Albatross (Nowra, NSW) and then to sea - joining HMAS Sydney: his first of seven postings to aircraft carriers. He saw service in Korea in HMAS Sydney. Promoted to Chief Petty Officer, Plot and Radar Instructor, he served in HMAS Vengeance; whilst there - being selected for Officer Training in the UK (1955). This is when some of his more adventurous times really got underway.

As a young officer Bill served with the Royal Navy in a succession of interesting ships and postings: HMS Tumult (anti-sub frigate); HMS Sheffield (a cruiser) - both during the Cold War and ranging from the Arctic Circle to the Red Sea. Sent back to Australia, he became OIC Ops Room Training Centre at South Head (Sydney) for three years - then back to England to qualify in Maritime Warfare and as an Aircraft Controller. He had stints on the RN carriers “Ark Royal” and “Hermes” and with 890 Sea Vixen Night Fighter Squadron ashore in England. During exercises with the RAF V Bombers, who required fighter affiliation to be fully qualified, Bill placed two fighters behind a bomber whose crew were completely unaware of their presence until the bomber’s control panel lit up bright red when the fighters switched on their radar firing systems. The Bomber crew declared an emergency and later stormed into the 890 crew room wanting to know how the hell it happened. The Navy pilots all pointed a finger at the Royal “Amateur” Navy culprit and Bill told the bomber lads how he had done it. They had happily thought any fighter trying to get to them would have been detected, so were mortified someone had exposed their vulnerability! Bill later returned to Australia, enjoyed three postings to HMAS Melbourne and HMA Ships Stuart and Perth, the latter deployment in Vietnam, earning him a Naval Commendation for his efforts. On Christmas Day, 1974, he was duty officer, when Cyclone Tracy hit Darwin, becoming the on-board coordinator of supplying manpower for the Navy Help Darwin effort. When not at sea, Bill’s career took him back to South Head (HMAS Watson) as Deputy - and then OIC.

In 1970, Bill’s job in Canberra involved him closely in the establishment of a new Naval Base in WA - and he dreamed that one day he might serve at that new base. Promoted to Commander at the end of 1975, and as Deputy Director of Naval Training, his dream became reality when after 33 years away, he finally “came west” as the pre-commissioning Exec Officer at HMAS Stirling and its second

Commanding Officer. A posting as Deputy Commander of the Harold E Holt base at Exmouth followed, and then his last posting: back to HMAS Stirling as the third Executive Officer. He retired 1 Sep 1983 after just over 39 years Naval service. He was awarded the OAM for his services to the RAN, particularly the operation of HMAS Stirling.



Never one to let grass grow under his feet, Bill has, since retirement, contributed hugely to the Rockingham community. He helped set up its Tourist Centre; planned/helped set up the Rockingham Naval Memorial Park; been active in two Rotary Clubs; was a foundation member of the Safety Bay Probus Club; he’s a life member of the Naval Assn; was inaugural Chairman of the very successful Rockingham Bicentenary celebrations; and was Bicentennial Tall Ships Coordinator for WA. Is it any wonder they made him Rockingham Bicentennial Citizen of that landmark year?!

Sadly, Bill’s wife of 57 years died in 2012. He has four children and eleven grandchildren. His eldest son served as a Submarine Weapons Officer. What a life of wonderful variety: well lived and well-enjoyed! Good onya Bill!

LAST POST

Alexander Dick Alan Saville Keith Potter John McKenzie

Lest We Forget





THEY SHOULD HAVE ASKED MY HOOSBAND!

By the redoubtable **Pam Ayres** (ex Women's Royal Air Force)

You know this world is complicated, imperfect and oppressed
And it's not hard to feel timid, apprehensive and depressed.
It seems that all around us tides of questions ebb and flow
And people want solutions but they don't know where to go.

Opinions abound: but who is wrong - and who is right?
People need a prophet, a diffuser of the light.
Someone they can turn to as the crises rage and swirl,
Someone with the remedy, the wisdom, and the pearl.

Well . . . they should have asked my 'usband, he'd have told 'em then and there.
His thoughts on immigration ... teenage mothers ... Tony Blair,
The future of the monarchy, house prices in the south
The wait for hip replacements, BSE and foot and mouth.

Yes . . . they should have asked my husband - he can sort out any mess
He can rejuvenate the railways, he can cure the NHS;
So any little niggle, *anything* you want to know
Just run it past my husband, wind him up and **let him go!**

Congestion on the motorways, free holidays for thugs
The damage to the ozone layer, refugees and drugs.
These may defeat the brain of any politician bloke
But present it to my husband - and he'll solve it at a stroke.

He'll clarify the situation; he will make it crystal clear
You'll feel the glazing of your eyeballs, and the bending of your ear.
Corruption at the top, he's an authority on that
And the Mafia, Gadafia and Yasser Arafat.

Upon these areas he brings his intellect to shine
In a great compelling voice that's twice as loud as yours or mine.
I often wonder what it must be like to be so strong,
Infallible, articulate, self-confident and wrong.

When it comes to tolerance - he hasn't got a lot
Joyriders should be guillotined and muggers should be shot.
The sound of his own voice becomes like music to his ears
And he hasn't got an inkling that he's boring us to tears.

My friends don't call so often, they have busy lives I know
But it's not everyday you want to hear a windbag suck and blow,
Encyclopaedias, on them we never have to call,
Why clutter up the bookshelf when my husband knows it all!

Editor's Note: *This reminds me of someone But I just cannot put my finger on WHO*



The lovely Pam during her RAF days

“AT-TEN...SHUN!!!”

Access to the ANZAC Club on ANZAC Day

Due to the centennial significance of this coming ANZAC Day, entry restrictions are being applied to give precedence to MEMBERS on this special day and (just this once). limit admittance of the general public.

Access will be strictly limited to:

- * Members with either RSL badge or members' card;
- * A guest of a member - members are permitted to sign in ONE guest on the day;
- * ADF personnel (in uniform)

If you are planning to attend the Gunfire Breakfast therefore - be aware that you are able to book in just the ONE non-member guest on this day.

The web-site's “Book in” screen is now “up-and-running”!

The continuing support of Hollywood Private Hospital and their generous assistance to RSL Highgate Sub - Branch is warmly and gratefully acknowledged.

HOLLYWOOD PRIVATE HOSPITAL



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