



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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MONTHLY LUNCHEON

Monday 16th February 2015

Venue: Gallipoli Room

Time: 1130 hrs for 1215 hrs



Ray Ward (now a member of our Sub-Branch!) - has a long, distinguished history as a member of Legacy since first becoming a legatee in 1980, both here in WA and Victoria - where he later held down positions as President of the Melbourne Legacy Club and appointed to the Legacy Australia Council - of which he was Chairman from 2002 to 2004. Ray is a former "Nasho" - who proudly fought with 5RAR (The "Tiger" battalion) in Vietnam, and has maintained keen interest and commitment to veterans' welfare ever since. He still actively helps run the annual Busselton Legacy Camps for Legacy wards.

Still a bit of a "Tiger" really "Listen up!"

For the next Luncheon (16th February) PLEASE enter your name electronically on the BOOK-IN SHEET (by Thursday 12th Feb) - using the web-site). Cost is \$30 a head.

Method: GO TO the web-site. Double-Click on "FEBRUARY 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 Harness: 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

Greetings to all and welcome to a new year. I trust that everyone had a wonderful Christmas a Happy New Year.

Congratulations to Bob Arnold and Geoff Simpson on their awards of a Medal in the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours. Both richly deserve this recognition for their work in Highgate Sub-Branch and the wider community in a variety of organisations. Thank you Bob and Geoff for your valuable contributions.

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

LUNCHEON: 16 February, 2015

(Committee: 10.30am same day)



(Continued from p.1)

Our first Luncheon for the year is just over a fortnight away and we are looking forward to another year of great lunches and guest speakers. Please don't forget to book into our lunches using the internet (or phoning Margot or another Committee member).

For catering purposes **please** book by Thursday afternoon at the latest because we provide the ANZAC Club with numbers early on the Friday morning. The club does its best to accommodate extras, but in the last few months we have noticed an increase in the number failing to book. This has meant trying to have extra seats squeezed onto tables, not a desirable solution; or the staff having to find and set another table. Tables are set up on the basis of our Friday numbers.

A reminder to those with a permanent lunch booking: if you are away, please cancel the booking and then reinstate it when you return.

With this special year we expect to have some disruptions as members attend special functions or take the opportunity to travel overseas to some of the historical sites. Should you be one of those travelling, we wish you a safe and enjoyable trip.

Finally, I am sure I am not the only RSL member in WA who was delighted for the City of Albany, and proud for the RSL, that the ANZAC Commemorative weekend held late last year was such a stand-out success. People who attended the programme of events have reported that the whole weekend was a memorable tribute to our long military history since the very first Australian Imperial Forces left our shores for "The Great War". And by all accounts, the occasion was a

credit to the many people involved in its superb organisation. The newly opened National ANZAC Centre building is a worthy and tangible legacy of that weekend, which, using multimedia and interactive technology, will attract and inform visitors to Albany for years to come.

Yours in fellowship,

Peter

Sub-Branch Snippets

Our sympathy and condolences to our only veteran of the airborne Battle of Arnhem, **John Hately**, who lost Wynne, his beloved wife recently - after 68 years of marriage. Know that we care John.

Alf Till is now in another Nursing home facility: "Hamersley House" 441 Rokeby Rd Subiaco. Doug Farmer urges all of Alf's mates from the Sub-Branch and HAG to try and make the effort to call in and see him, and maybe take him for a "walk" in his wheelchair out into the fresh air. Alf still likes to hear about what the HAG fellas are up to; and reminisce about his CMF/Reservist days.

Ex-Bomber Command members: **Alex Kerr** and **Les Gordon**, joined by Albany brothers: Eric and Murray Maxton, recently flew to Canberra to join other Bomber Command veterans to be feted and honoured as VIPs. They were all ushered into the Parliament on Day 1, where they were acknowledged first by PM, Tony Abbott; then by visiting British PM: David Cameron, and then paid tribute by each MP present. Lunch at the Aust War Memorial followed - the tables in the shadow below the Lancaster plane "G for George". Les sat at a table with Joe Hockey. What a thrill for you fellas! Good on you!

Mike Harness thanks everyone who has sent him supportive wishes and "vibes" in his latest struggle with cancer. His treatment makes him feel tired, but he is "coping OK".



TEE-HEEs and Fiddle-Dee-Dees Corner

A senior citizen drove his brand new BMW Z4 convertible out of the car sale room. Taking off down the highway, he floored it to 100kph, enjoying the wind blowing through what little hair he had left.

"Amazing!" he thought as he flew along the road, enjoying pushing the pedal to the metal even more. Looking in his rear view mirror, he saw a police car behind him, blue lights flashing and siren blaring. He felt like

a 19 year old tearaway once again: "I can get away from him - no problem!" thought the elderly nut-case as he floored it to 120kph, then 130 then 150kph.

Suddenly, commonsense kicked in and he thought, "What on earth am I doing? I'm too old for this nonsense!" So he pulled over to the side of the road and waited for the police car to catch up with him.

Pulling in behind him, the police officer walked up the driver's side of the BMW, looked at his watch and said, "Sir, my shift ends in 10 minutes. Today is Friday and I'm taking off for the weekend. If you can give me a reason why you were speeding that I've never heard before, I'll let you go."

The old man looked very seriously at the policeman for a long minute, and then replied, "Years ago, my wife ran off with a policeman. I thought you were bringing her back."

"Have a good day Sir", said the policeman.



SUB WARDENS DUTIES

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

Saturday: **14 February 2015** : 1030 hrs for 1100 hrs - National Servicemen Association

Sunday: **15 February 2015** : 1030 hrs for 1100 hrs - WRAAC Association

“The Way We Were” Gallery Our Golden Oldies

Even on first meeting, Don Blair's energy and vitality are apparent - although the man himself has been known to cheerily describe these attributes as “a robust nature and cunning”! His earliest memories are of growing up in NSW hotels in Wollongong and Walgett; his dad was a Publican. Don admits to having been a bit of an adventurous scamp as a kid - setting fire to the Hotel garages whilst playing with matches one Christmas; on another occasion, having raced along the hotel verandah, Don crashed through a plate glass door into the Guest Lounge Room cutting his arm so severely he required 32 surgical stitches and lost a great quantity of blood. His life was saved by blood transfusions donated by local townspeople - one of whom was a wealthy farmer but an alcoholic. Don sometimes ponders on this rich blood of his ...

In 1945, at the tender age of eight and a half years, this ‘harem scarum’ lad was sent to board at Epping Grammar School (Sydney) - 359 miles from Walgett. Several years later, his parents transferred him to the De La Salle Brothers at Cronulla, from where he graduated in 1952. Don's first job was as a Jackaroo on his brother-in-law's Haddon Rig Merina Stud property at Walgett. After two years of this he entered the auto trade as a Panel Beater, serving 12 years, from Canberra to Melbourne to Perth - his final four years as Manager of a prominent Perth Panel Work Shop. During these years, Don had been called-up for his three-month National Service in 1955 - the commencement of a 30-year strong association with the CMF and Reserves that would endure until 1985. Within three years, Don was commissioned into the RAAOC.

For seven of those CMF years, from 1966, Don committed to full-time military service which saw him appointed Adjutant/Quarter Master of 28 Battalion RWAR - a CMF Infantry Battalion raised for National Servicemen who served their two-year terms under special conditions. The CO of this unit was a Colonel K.T. Johnson, (known as “KT”) an impressive WW2 veteran, former 2/11th Bn officer and POW, who Don recognised as a man of unique ability and gifted leader of men. “KT” was a great mentor and inspiration to Don.

As the years passed, Don served in three Corps in all, and in various capacities. He was Commander RA Inf IRWAR Assault Pioneers (1962-66); Adjt/QM 28 RWAR (1966-73 on FTD, as described above); Adjutant 5 Base Ordnance Depot Midland and OC A Coy 28 Independent Rifle Company RWAR (1973-78); OC Perth Water Transport RACT (1978-1980); and his final posting: Instructor CSTU Karrakatta 1981-1985.

On completion of his full-time duty in 1973, Don continued in the Reserve and simultaneously commenced a business with his wife Jennifer (whom he had married in 1961). This venture: “Kingsize Menswear”, was born from Jennifer's frustrations and difficulties finding clothing to fit her tall, well-built husband - and became a spectacular success. There are now 11 stores across Australia (one, in Canberra, is franchised). Juggling these dual careers, this busy husband and father-of-two somehow also made time to devote to Freemasonry and the RSL, which he first joined in June 1978.

With his customary vigour, enthusiasm and prodigious talents, Don's contributions to the life of Highgate Sub-Branch over the years have been remarkable. He has supported all projects of the Sub-Branch, particularly the Sub Warden duties at the SWM; and for years ran the Poppy Day Appeal. He was involved with the management committee continuously from 1997 to 2009, serving two terms as President over 2002-2003. He has also rendered prominent service as a Trustee of the WA State Branch of the RSL, fervently supporting the RSL's aims and ethos.



Somewhere along the line, he and his family acquired a cattle raising property at Toodyay, where they love to spend the odd weekend. Don feels he has been blessed and privileged along the way to have had such a full life, a wonderful wife and family, two rich and rewarding careers in parallel, and the brotherhood and companionship derived from Freemasonry and the RSL - having made a host of wonderful friends along the way.

Be assured Don Blair OAM, that a host of those friends feel pretty blessed to have you as a pal too!



LAST POST

All deceased men and women of Highgate Sub-Branch. R.I.P.

Lest We Forget





CONGRATULATIONS!!

Everyone in Highgate was delighted to see the names of two of our prominent Sub-Branch members listed as having been formally recognised in the Australia Day Honours List published last Monday. Both of these men have rendered an extraordinary level of time, energy and effort to multiple community organisations - not least the RSL. Both have been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM).

We offer both men our heartiest "Congratulations" - and a sincere "Thank You" for the positive effects they have brought to various organisations, welfare groups, **many** people And US! They are:

Mr Robert (Bob) ARNOLD DSM : For service to veterans, and to the community.
Member, Highgate Sub-Branch, Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL), over 20 years; Editor, monthly newsletter, 8 years; State RSL Representative, Western Australian Senior's Consultative Forum, several years. Member, Perth Legacy, since 1979.
Long-time Member of the Defence Forces Welfare Association.
Volunteer Librarian, Royal Australian Artillery Historical Association, for several years.
Honorary Colonel, Royal Australian Regiment Ordnance Corps (RAAOC), 1986-1992; President and Treasurer, RAAOC Association Western Australia, many years.
Inaugural President, Perth Branch, Association of Independent Retirees Western Australia, 1996; President, Western Australian Division, several years; Editor, quarterly branch magazine, 10 years; Member, since 1996.
Volunteer, Perth Community Drug Service, several years prior to 2005.
Justice of the Peace, 33 years.

Well done and well-deserved Bob!!

Mr Geoff SIMPSON RFD : For service to veterans and their families, and to service groups.
Deputy Warden, State War Memorial, Western Australia, since 2011. Responsible for the conduct of all ceremonies at the War Memorial and the Flame of Remembrance.
Member, Highgate Sub-Branch, Returned and Services League of Australia, current.
Current Member, Defence Reserves Association; Western Australian University Regiment; Royal Australian Engineers Association of Western Australia.
Coordinator, Western Region, Rotary Leadership Institute, since 2013.
Trustee, Rotary Club of West Perth, since 2012; President, 2000-2001; Bulletin Editor, 2005-2006; Vice-President and Director Club Service, 1999-2000; Director, Youth and Vocational Services, 1996-1998; Member, since 1995.
Chairman, Rotary Foundation Committee, Rotary District 9455, 2013-2016; Director, Training and Leadership Development, 2010-2013; Information Officer, 2013-2014.
Past District Governor, Rotary District 9450 (now merged into District 9455), 2009-2010; Governor Elect, 2008-2009; Governor Nominee, 2007-2008; District Secretary, 2007-2008; Assistant Governor, 2003-2005; Coordinator, Water, Health and Hunger Resource Group.

A hearty pat-on-the-back Geoff!!

* * * * *

Although another local recipient of the OAM this week, **John BURROWS** (Lt Col Ret'd) - is not a member of Highgate (he belongs to the Bicton-Palmyra RSL Sub-Branch) - we extend our warmest "Congratulations" to him too. John is a former member of the SASR, and has spent many years as an Advocate for DVA Pensions here in Perth - his particular *forte* being assisting the widows and children of men who have paid the supreme sacrifice in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. He has been a Guest Speaker at one of our Luncheons.

Our warmest "Congratulations" John!!

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



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