

HIGHGATE NEWS

Issue 558
February 2016

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



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

President

Steve Chamarette
Tel: 9242 1865
sunridge@it.net.au

Vice President

Geoff Hourn
Email: ghourn@gmail.com
(Mob): 0414 063 707

Junior Vice President

Roger Buddrige
Tel: 9247 2333
Email: roger.buddrige@gmail.com

Immediate Past President

Peter Farrell
Tel: 9246 1367 - 0458 720 022
Email: peter.farrell@highgate-rsl.org.au

Secretary

Greg Wilson
4 Florian PI DUNCRAIG 6023
9448 8213
Email:
greg.wilson@highgate-rsl.org.au

Treasurer

Richard Adams
PO Box 3551
PERTH WA 6832
Telephone: 9325 6387
Email: richard.adams@highgate-rsl.org.au

Editor

Margot Harness
Telephone: (H) 9293 1076
(M) 0438 936 405
Email: margot.harness@highgate-rsl.org.au

Pensions Officer

Margot Harness
Telephone: 9293 1076

Website

www.highgate-rsl.org.au
Email: john.cleary@highgate-rsl.org.au

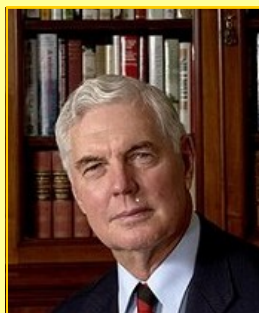
MONTHLY LUNCHEON

Monday 15th February 2016

Venue: Gallipoli Room *** **BOOKING ESSENTIAL!!** ***

Time: 1130 hrs

Major General Michael Jeffery AC, CVO, MC



This distinguished visitor needs little, if any, introduction! WA-born, he served in the Malayan Emergency and the Vietnam War - being awarded the Military Cross during the latter - as well as later becoming CO of the SAS Regiment. After leaving the Army in 1993, he was appointed as the 30th State Governor of WA, a position he held for seven years. In 2003, he became the 24th Governor-General of Australia - the first career Army officer to ever hold that position.

For the **Monthly LUNCHEON**, PLEASE enter your name electronically on the **BOOK-IN SHEET** (by 1400 hrs Thursday - 11th February) using the web-site. Cost is \$30 a head.

Method: GO TO the web-site HOME page. Double-click on "HIGHGATE LUNCHEON" below 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.

You may need to Double-click IN the 'empty' cell for your name to register.

President's Report

I hope you have all recovered from any over indulgence during your Christmas and New Year celebrations and are looking forward to a happy and healthy 2016.

At our final meeting for 2015 we were treated to great Christmas entertainment by Peter Harries and Kelly Green. Thank you, Peter and Kelly, for once again contributing so much to our Sub Branch and putting every one into the Christmas spirit. In addition, Kelly has submitted her application as an affiliate of Highgate so we will hopefully be seeing more of her throughout 2016.

Our President, Graham Edwards dropped in on the meeting to wish members all

Continued P.2

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

LUNCHEON: 15th February, 2016 (Committee meeting: 11.00am that day)



(Continued from p.1)

the best for Christmas and 2016. Unfortunately, Graham is resigning in June 2016 to spend more time with his family. After nearly 50 years of public life and service to the community, we all wish him the best. Having known Graham from our 7RAR days in Holsworthy and SVN I am sure he will continue to serve the community in some capacity into the future "but at a reduced pace".

Graham also delivered the important news that the Government approvals for the **new** ANZAC House plans are expected in 2016. He thought Highgate should be able to continue to use these premises during 2016. The demolition of the "old", and building of the 'NEW' ANZAC House will take over two years. Consequently, your Committee is looking at alternative venues within the Perth CBD to relocate our monthly luncheon meetings. Members will be informed of developments as key dates are known and the options available are identified. Members who may know of a suitable venue that can seat between 50-70 members every 3rd Monday of each month, with appropriate bar and catering facilities please contact Roger Buddrige on 9247 2333 with the details.

There are also four other matters in which members' cooperation and contribution would be appreciated:

- 1. **Guest speakers:** Highgate has been fortunate in having many excellent Guest Speakers over a number of years and 2015 was exceptional. We also know many of our members belong to other organisations that have guest speakers. If you have had the opportunity to hear a notable speaker, please pass on the name and contact details to Vice President: Geoff Hourn, on 0414 063 707.
- 2. **Email Address:** You would be aware that the cost of posting out our Monthly Newsletter is going to increase substantially to over a dollar in 2016. If you are receiving your Newsletter by post but also have an email address, please call Margot Harness with your details to save our postage costs.
- 3. **New Affiliate Members:** As part of the Centenary Celebrations in 2016, the RSL is aiming to increase the membership to over 10,000.

If you have a Non Service friend, or know of a widow of a past member who may be interested in joining Highgate as an Affiliate Member, please contact Howard Montagu on 0417 956 621.

4. February Guest Speaker: Highgate Guest Speaker on Monday 15 February 2016, will be Major General Michael Jeffery AC CVO MC. To ensure the correct number of tables are set and sufficient catering is provided please make sure that you register your attendance on-line, or call Margot (or Mike) Harness on 9293 1076. As seats will be at a premium, and to avoid disappointment, please **REGISTER YOUR ATTENDANCE ASAP.**

On behalf of the Committee, I wish you and your families the very best for 2016 and we look forward to seeing you at our monthly lunch meetings and functions throughout the year.

Yours in fellowship, *Steve Chamarette*

Sub-Branch Snippets
TO ALL OUR "BIRTHDAY BOYS 'n' GIRLS FROM JANUARY: You haven't "missed out" on your "baby" bottle of champers folks Your names will be called out with the **FEBRUARY** lot at the next Luncheon! (Hope you had a Happy Day!)

V A L E John Hately

British veteran of both Battles of El Alamein, Sicily and Italy, paratrooper, Arnhem, POW(E), tough career soldier, Sergeant Major But also champion of the disabled, devoted husband, gentle and kind father and grandfather: John Hately was all of these things, and widely loved, respected and admired by all who knew him. After coming to Australia, John served as Secretary to Highgate for eight years, as well as a year as our President, and 12 years as a Sub-Warden.

Rest easy John. You will be greatly missed.



TEE-HEEs and Fiddle-Dee-Dees Corner

An 18th-century vagabond in England, exhausted and famished, came to a roadside Inn with a sign reading: "George and the Dragon."

He knocked. The Innkeeper's wife stuck her head out of a window. "Could ye spare some victuals please me lady?" he asked.

The woman glanced at his shabby, dirty clothes. "No! Bugger off" she shouted.

"Could I have a pint of ale?" " No, No! On yer way" she shouted.

"Could I at least sleep in your stable?" "No! No you cannot! Get the hell out" she shouted again.

The vagabond said, "Might I please ?" "What now?" the woman screeched, not allowing him to finish.

"D'ye suppose," he asked, "that I might have a quick word with George?"



SUB WARDENS DUTIES

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

Sunday **14th February 2016** : 1030 for 1100hrs - WRAAC Association (WA) - Flame

Sunday **14th February 2016** : 1145 for 1215hrs - National Servicemen's Association (WA) - Cenotaph

"The Way We Were" Gallery Our Golden Oldies

Anyone familiar with the well-modulated voice of Honour Avenue "Chief" - Norm Manners, would not be surprised to learn that in his varied, extensive "*curriculum vitae*", he spent many years as a radio announcer. But this is racing ahead. As Maria von Trapp said in the movie: "Let's start at the very beginning" first.

Norm could be described as a "true blue" Western Australian "country boy". Born in Kalgoorlie in 1932, he later moved to Wiluna for several years before being educated at Mt Lawley Primary school and then Perth Boys High School.

Those cultured vocal chords must have attracted the right sort of attention, because at a mere 16 years of age he started work as a junior radio announcer with 6PR. Four years later found him behind the mike at Radio 6IX, by which time he was a fully fledged announcer. But he moved upwards to better things in 1959, becoming the announcer and Programme Manager at 6KY, where this station soon introduced 24 hour broadcasting, a "Rock 'n' Roll" format and reporting from a shark patrol aircraft. (It's always quite fascinating to learn how these innovative changes come about - usually in stages; and due to 'movers-and-shakers': people who "make things happen"!)

By 1967, public broadcasting in WA had well and truly embraced television - and, "up" for a challenge, as ever, our Norm made a switch - becoming the Programme Director at STW Channel 9. These must have been very interesting and stimulating years. Norm had married Pauline in 1954, and was raising a young family (four sons) during these earlier, busy days in his career.

But he undertook a significant change in direction in 1974 when he switched to the field of real estate and property management, becoming an associate director of a company called "WA Property Management". His highflying colleagues were Kerry Stokes and Jack Bendat! Norm simultaneously became the Alternate Director (to Kerry Stokes) of BTW3 Bunbury.

In 1978, Norm and his eldest son formed "Manners Marketing and Media", which kept him very busy for many years. During this part of his life, Norm joined the Army Reserve, which he somehow juggled with business interests and family. He moved from Trooper to Sgt in 10 Light Horse Regt, and finally to the rank of Captain, over his 18 years in the Reserves.

Never one to twiddle his thumbs though, between 1998 and 2000, Norm researched and wrote the official biography of the famous WW2 Army nurse: Vivian Bullwinkel - sole survivor of the Banka Island massacre and later POW of the Japanese. The book: "Bullwinkel" was launched by then-State Governor, Maj Gen Michael Jeffery AC CVO MC.

Norm Manners has contributed a lot to Highgate RSL Sub-Branch over the years. He has served as SVP and then President; but his unique value continued in 2003, when he became Chairman of the Kings Park Honour Avenues Group (HAG). Norm puts in a great deal of time and dedicated effort liaising with senior staff of the Botanic Parks and Gardens Authority at Kings Park and the Kings Park Board in his role as HAG "chief". One only has to visit Norm and his Band of Merry Men in their little "HQ" at Kings Park to appreciate that he runs a very happy, loyal team with high levels of morale and '*camaraderie*'.



As reported in the November newsletter, Norm Manners and his "HAG team" were formally recognised at the last RSLWA State Congress in October, as the inaugural recipients of "The State President's Award", acknowledging their quiet working-behind-the-scenes in maintaining memorial plaques in Kings Park.

It was a fitting testimony to the dedication of the "HAG team" and adroit leadership skills of their very own "Stormin' Norman!"



LAST POST

John Hatley

Lest We Forget

Be part of this SPECIAL OCCASION



The RSL CENTENARY BALL

**Saturday 18 June, 6.00pm
CROWN CASINO PERTH**

****While the "Early Bird" Payments of Tables of 10 are \$1500 and close on 31 March 2016 it is recommended your group book a table ASAP by calling ANZAC House on 9287 3799.**



Highgate Sub-Branch has requested TWO Tables that must be confirmed and paid for at \$150 per head, by Monday 29 February 2016.

If you wish to be part of the twenty please contact Steve Chamarette on 9242 1865. There are only 8 vacancies, so be quick.

If you prefer to arrange a Table of 10 (or go as a couple) independently, we still encourage you to Register and pre-pay as early as you can.

Let's celebrate 100 years since the RSL was formed. Try to get a table together of Sub-Branch mates, wives, partners, and really **HAVE A BALL!!**





Reaping the bushfire wind: the consequences of bad governance

By Roger Underwood

Many who attended our November Luncheon would remember well the authoritative address given by our Guest Speaker - Roger Underwood: former head of CALM, forester and Bushfire Management expert. Following the devastating fires in the WA's South West in mid-January, Roger has written this follow-up article and had this to say:

On 18 January, I heard Jim McGinty, former union Boss, lawyer, later MLA, and then Attorney-General and Deputy-Premier in the former WA government led by Geoff Gallop, on ABC radio - speaking to listeners on his "bushfire expertise".

McGinty - the classical lawyer turned urban polliwog: plump, pale-skinned with the sort of soft, white hands which have never wielded a fire rake or a D-nose shovel - has never, to the best of my knowledge, acquired any practical experience of bushfire work at any level. Yet here he is, pontificating about how technology, specifically more and bigger water bombers, is the answer to the WA bushfire crisis.

It was not just his deep ignorance about water bombers and their cost-effectiveness that made me angry. Nor was it his failure to acknowledge that the real problem in WA is not our capacity to attack bushfires, but our inability to prevent fires from becoming large and unstoppable. What I was actually remembering was his part in the decisions that directly led to the current bushfire crisis. As a senior Cabinet Minister in the Gallop government, Jim McGinty presided over the erosion of one of the finest bushfire management systems in the world. It was an effective and relatively cheap system that worked; and it was replaced by an obscenely expensive one that does not.

As I listened to his waffle, I was also remembering that up until the mid-1990s, WA was an admired jurisdiction in the international bushfire scene, and widely recognised as the foremost bushfire managers in Australia. We had in place a well-trying and well-tested system. It was based on a broad-acre fuel reduction program in south-west forests, a professional Bush Fires Board that oversaw rural fire prevention by shires and landowners, and a small, but efficient rural firefighting service, led in forests by the staff of the former Forests Department and beyond by a magnificent and independent force of volunteers. For a period of over thirty years from the early 1960s to the mid-1990s, this system maintained southern WA virtually free from large, killer bushfires.

After the 1990s, successive state governments, both Labor and Liberal – in part due to the electoral muscle of the "Greens", have allowed this system to be eroded. I well remember a Minister for the Environment back in those days saying that "we agree with everything you say, Roger, but if we supported you, we would lose the support of the Greens ... on election day". Getting elected came before protecting the lives and assets of West Australians and our beautiful environment.

I also recall a meeting we had with Premier Gallop. This was in about 2004 at a time when the bushfire situation (in WA) was still not too bad, but every old hand could see the writing on the wall; and we had observed the ghastly Canberra bushfires in 2003. It was obvious that a potential calamity was also now present in WA. Three of us meeting with Dr Gallop that day were senior figures in Conservation and Forestry: public servants with an accumulated 150 years of experience and expertise in bushfire administration, management, planning, hands-on Fire Brigade operations and extensive coalface knowledge of fire fighting and forestry risks.

We laid it on the line to Dr Gallop. Basically, we said, WA was on a one-way trip to bushfire chaos and calamity. We pointed out the lamentable folly of cutting back on the fuel reduction program and of the closure of south-west districts with their professional staff and fire fighting crews. We said we were aghast over the disappearance of the Bush Fires Board (which had been incorporated into FESA and fallen under the control of urban firemen). We told him we foresaw serious problems with the volunteers, who had now become (in the eyes of FESA) second-class citizens. **We emphasised that the consequences of moving from a policy of prevention and damage mitigation to one of emergency response was that emergency response would always fail when needed most.** We told him that the wrong people were now in charge.

Continued Page 6



(Continuing **REAPING THE BUSHFIRE WIND** *(by Roger Underwood)*

Gallop listened to us patiently, but turned to look out his office window. "What you are describing, gentlemen", he said, "is something that might be a problem sometime in the future. What *I* have to worry about is the problems of today!" And he gestured towards the *West Australian* newspaper on his desk - the front page devoted to dubious water quality in the Swan River. With that, we were politely thanked, and dismissed. After we'd left the room, I was later told by an Aide that Dr Gallop remarked with a smile: "Well, all I can say is thank God I don't have public servants around me like those guys. They tell me things I don't want to hear!" But it provided a classic insight into one of the key factors which ultimately would lead to the current bushfire debacle.

Over the years, I not ever again met with a Premier, but I have had numerous meetings with senior Government Ministers responsible for land and bushfire management and emergency services, and with senior agency staff. My colleagues and I made dozens of written submissions, spoke at public meetings, wrote letters to polities and to the newspapers, and talked on the radio. At one stage we even used our own money to place a paid bushfire warning in the newspaper. Our basic message was: bushfire management in WA is off the rails; unless it is fixed, there will be calamity after calamity; people will suffer and farms and beautiful forests will be incinerated". We even warned that "whole towns will burn".

Over the years, things did change. We moved from getting the "cold shoulder" (where you are basically ignored) during the Geoff Gallop, Richard Court and Alan Carpenter governments, to getting the "warm shoulder" in the Barnett government. With the warm shoulder, everyone agrees with you, but nothing happens. We also achieved some good support from influential sections of the media, although this declined after a while because our message had become boring.

Well, some things did happen, although mostly not to our liking and not so much as a response to our calls for change, but to the growing number of horrible fires. There was a significant new investment in bushfire suppression, including the build-up of a veritable air force of water bombers and other modern technology. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services has money coming out of its ears and has been able to spare no expense in expanding its empire. But out in the bush, things just got worse, the bushfire toll just kept mounting. In January 2016 our worst fear was realised when the town of Yarloop burned down - something we had predicted, but hoped would never happen again after 1961.

Hearing Jim McGinty call for more and larger water bombers is symptomatic of the mess. The public can be excused for not knowing what is going on, and for being misinformed ... this is par for the course in most matters, not just bushfires. But educated former Ministers cannot be excused. They have been told over and over, and they know in their hearts that killer bushfires are the outcome of mismanagement, not a lack of technology or even of firefighters. The trouble is, for someone like McGinty to admit that the problem is due to mismanagement is to be forced to admit to being accountable, and this is something no politician ever does.

Western Australians and their assets and environment are reaping the bushfire wind - the outcome of fifteen years of bad governance by people who won't admit they were wrong, and in not doing so, are simply perpetuating the problem.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Due to space constraints, parts of the foregoing article had to be abridged)

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

**HOLLYWOOD
PRIVATE HOSPITAL**



**THIS NEWSLETTER IS PRINTED AS A SERVICE TO THE VETERAN COMMUNITY
BY THE OFFICE OF THE HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN,
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR PERTH**