



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 18 July 2011

Venue: Gallipoli Room
Time: 1130 hrs for 1215 hrs
Guest Speaker: NONE

Highgate has a well-established tradition of devoting every July Luncheon to celebrating the birthdays of our longstanding members who have, or are due to have, their 80th birthday during the year. We also honour **all** of our members who are “**Over Bloody Eighty**” - which is the origin of our ‘O.B.E.’ tradition. We are truly fortunate to have so many surviving WW2 veterans in our ranks, and to each and every one of our “Over Eighties” may we say “Happy Birthday!” : we honour you for your part in our history; and we thank you for your many and varied contributions.

IF ATTENDING THE JULY O.B.E. LUNCH AND ARE NOT ON THE ‘PERMANENT LIST’ PLEASE ADVISE MARGOT HARNESS (Ph: 9293 1076) BEFORE 14 JULY.

president's Report

One of our founding fathers’ objectives in establishing RSL Highgate Sub Branch was to provide an avenue by which former serving members of the Australian Defence Force who worked in the CBD could meet regularly. These World War II veterans had enjoyed the military camaraderie and mateship of their service and found it missing in their civilian lives. They met, talked and listened to one another (today it would probably be called counselling and debriefing), then shared a meal together.

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Committee: 1 August 2011 Monthly Luncheon 15 August 2011



(Continued from page 1)

Today researchers give us tips for living longer that include being active and staying connected. Volunteering to help others, making the effort to turn out for a meeting or two and having a good time with friends are believed to be powerful influences on how long we live - powerfully portrayed in the television advertisement that shows the Kings Park Sub Wardens greeting each other when the parade is dismissed. Again when the Honour Avenue chaps have finished their tasks, their spirits are always raised prior to returning home. To make our gatherings at Highgate more appealing we incorporate a silver service sit down luncheon with a guest speaker whose subject we hope will be topical, interesting and stimulating. We should never lose sight of our foundation members' belief that civilian life is enhanced by strengthening the bonds formed through service life.

There are times however when I feel that we take ourselves very seriously and forget those original aims and concepts. Last month I encouraged members to invite wives and partners to our luncheons. Whilst members have always been able to bring along a guest, it has been somewhat of a tradition to only invite men to our monthly luncheon meetings. I have had some negative feedback that the announcement was not well received in some quarters. I do not think for one minute that we will be overwhelmed by pleas for an invitation so again I encourage you share with those nearest and dearest to you, some of the 'bonhomie' that we ex service personnel have enjoyed for so long. I expect that there will be a few more ladies at each meeting and I trust that each and every guest will be welcomed to Highgate as we would welcome them into our home.

This month's meeting is one that we look forward to with anticipation. Although there will not be as many OBE's as last year, we should be able to fill a table with members who achieve the status of octogenarian or nonagenarian sometime in 2011. Philip Loffman will again be bringing his sword to tackle the cake. It's now up to us to fill the dining room. Do come and join in the festivities and birthday celebrations, but **please, please** book in unless you are on the permanent list (in which case you need to ring if you are not coming).

Mindful of the rise in the cost of living, your Committee has endeavoured to maintain the luncheon charge at \$25 per head which has not been easy. You book in, we confirm the number with the House Manager, he orders the food, sets up the room, and lays the

place settings so that everything is in order when we sit down to lunch on Monday. It is better that you ring me even as late as Sunday if you suddenly find that you are free to attend, rather than arrive without a booking.

In last month's newsletter I gave a run through of the luncheon program up to the October meeting. At this month's meeting two motions will be presented for your consideration prior to forwarding them for inclusion in the RSL Congress Agenda. As well as holding the Annual General Meeting at the September meeting a short period of time will be set aside to hear two different positions on the RSL policy re names engraved on the State War Memorial.

Globe trotter Jim Eayrs has come down to earth and officially taken over the role of Secretary from Margot Harness. Margot is now Editor of the Newsletter and is also the person whom you telephone or email to book in for lunch.

Yours in Fellowship
Martyn

NOTICE BOARD

Several of our members haven't been too well recently. Our best wishes to Errol Smith (exWRAAC Sgt) who is currently grappling with breast cancer. Nice to see John Hately back on his feet and at our June Luncheon after several months of illhealth and a lengthy stay in hospital. And Jen Mulholland (wife of our Immediate Past President, now living in Denmark), has also recently undergone surgery for breast cancer for the second time. Our warmest Best Wishes to you all

A "Pun can be Fun" Corner

A marine biologist developed a race of genetically engineered dolphins that could live forever if they were fed a steady diet of seagulls. One day, his supply of the birds ran out so he had to go out and trap some more. On the way back, he spied two lions asleep on the road. Afraid to wake them, he gingerly stepped over them. Immediately, he was arrested and charged with -- transporting gulls across sedate lions for immortal porpoises.



SUB WARDENS DUTIES

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

Sunday 17 July 2011 - 0830 for 0900 hrs - Assoc of the Movement of SC Combatants
 Sunday 17 July 2011 - 1130 for 1200 hrs - Greek Cypriot Community of WA
 Sunday 31 July 2011 - 1030 for 1100 hrs - AATTV Association

SNIPPET FROM JUNE LUNCHEON

Highgate was graced with a very interesting and animated Speaker in June: Dr Anne Aly, (a lecturer at Edith Cowan University), who spoke on contemporary problems of extremism, terrorism, counter-terrorism and Islamist ideologies. Egyptian-born Dr Aly recently released a book on the subject: "Terrorism and Global Security: A Historical and Contemporary Perspective" - the first book of its kind

published in Australia. Making the point that zealots are not the product of, or confined to, any one country, religion or ethnic group - she showed photos of a range of convicted terrorists, of all shapes, sizes and nationalities.

At the August Luncheon, we will have the chance to hear our own member: Geoff Hourm, who will be speaking on his own personal experiences in countering terrorist activity in Iraq and Afghanistan. COME ALONG should be good!



The scene: London. The 2012 Olympics have just begun

A Scotsman, an Englishman and an Irishman want to get in, but they haven't got tickets. The Scotsman picks up a manhole cover, tucks it under his arm and walks to the gate: "McTavish, Scotland", he says, "Discus". He's given the nod - and in he walks.

The Englishman picks up a length of scaffolding and slings it over his shoulder: "Waddington-Smythe, England", says he: "Pole vault". And in he walks.

The Irishman looks around, picks up a roll of barbed wire tucked behind the admission gate, and, holding it under his arm declares: "O'Malley - Ireland. Fencing".

An elderly man is stopped by a police car at 1.15 am and asked where he is going at this time of night. The man replies: "I am going to a lecture about alcohol abuse and the effects it has on the human body".

"Hmmmnn," says the cop - "Really? Who is giving that lecture at this time of night?"

The man replies: "That would be my wife".

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

If so please contact me personally on 9244 8072

Ken Bladen



Most Australians are familiar with some of the famous, great battles in which Australian troops have taken part over various wars. Not so well-known however, are several battles that took place during Australia's long involvement in the Vietnam War. Most people would be familiar with the Battle of Long Tan; but many would be unaware of two occasions when Australian Fire Support Bases (FSBs) were actually almost over-run by enemy (North Vietnamese - NVA) troops. These became known as the Battles for Coral and Balmoral.

The **Battle of Coral-Balmoral** (12 May – 6 June 1968) was a series of actions fought by the 1st Australian Task Force (IATF), and elements of the 2/35th Battalion US Artillery, against the NVA 7th Division and Viet Cong, 40 kilometres north-east of Saigon. Following the defeat of the communist Tet offensive in January and February, in late April two Australian battalions with supporting arms were again redeployed from their base at Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy province to positions astride infiltration routes leading to Saigon, in order to interdict renewed movement against the capital. Part of the wider allied Operation Toan Thang I, it was launched in response to intelligence reports of another impending communist offensive, however the Australians experienced little fighting during this period. Meanwhile the Viet Cong successfully penetrated the capital on 5 May, plunging Saigon into chaos during the May Offensive in an attempt to influence the upcoming Paris peace talks scheduled to begin on the 13th.

Occupation of Coral began on 12 May 1968, but the defences were still unfinished when at about 3.30am on 13 May, it was attacked following a brief but intense rocket and mortar barrage. The IRAR mortar platoon position was over-run along with one of 102 Field Battery's six 105mm M2A2 howitzers in the base. With the aid of extensive air support, the attack was beaten off by 6.30am and the captured gun-pit was re-taken, fortunately with the gun still in it. Eleven Australians were killed and 28 wounded.

At 2.30am on 16 May, Coral came under attack again - this time by an estimated NVA force of three battalions. The base by this time had been further fortified by armoured personnel carriers of A Sqn, 3rd Cavalry Regt, and IRAR's rifle companies - all of whom were heavily engaged. Part of the A Company position was occupied for a period, but the enemy were repulsed and forced to withdraw.

On the 24/25th May, aggressive enemy assaults took place on both Coral and FSB Balmoral. At 7.30 hrs on 25 May, B Coy IRAR and 2 Troop, C Sqn 1 Armd Regt departed Nui Dat for FSB Balmoral, with 3RAR approx 6000m away. En-route and just before noon, the force struck the outskirts of an enemy defended base. With tanks leading, the infantry commenced to clear the heavily fortified position. Air strikes were called in, and fighting was vigorous on both sides. On 26th May, D Coy IRAR and 1 Troop C Sqn 1 Armd Regt left FSB Coral to lend further support. Tank fire and flame-throwers were used to clear bunkers in an action that lasted until nightfall.

This proved to be Australia's costliest and most protracted battle of the Vietnam War. **Casualty Figures:** Australians: 24 KIA, 100 WIA, including 5 US soldiers. *Estimates of Enemy:* 237 KIA, 56 KIA not confirmed. 13 taken POW.

LAST POST



Lest We Forget



**THIS NEWSLETTER IS PRINTED AS A SERVICE TO THE VETERAN COMMUNITY
BY THE OFFICE OF STEPHEN SMITH
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR PERTH**

The continuing support of Hollywood Private Hospital and their generous assistance to RSL Highgate Sub-Branch is greatly appreciated.

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