



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 15 August 2011

Venue: Gallipoli Room
Time: 1130 hrs for 1215 hrs
Guest Speaker: **Geoff Hourn**



From the time he was "Sword of Honour" graduate at the RMC Duntroon, our very own member, Geoff Hourn, has enjoyed a distinguished and varied career. This encompassed multiple Army roles (principally in the AA Intelligence Corps) and postings - including a stint on exchange to the British Army, UN-related consultancies and as a Member of the Veterans' Review Board here in WA. Geoff will discuss his experiences over the past decade as a Project Advisor for the UN in the Middle East.

IF ATTENDING THE AUGUST LUNCH AND ARE NOT ON THE 'PERMANENT LIST' PLEASE ADVISE MARGOT HARNESS (Ph: 9293 1076) BEFORE 11 AUGUST.

WE NEED TO BE ABLE TO ADVISE THE ANZAC CLUB MANAGER OF CORRECT NUMBERS FOR CATERING

president's Report

After another long hot summer, winter is with us and the rain is tumbling down. As I write it is cold, wet and bleak and the forecast is very much the same for the next week or so. Great for the farmers and gardeners, not so good for arthritic joints. Whatever the weather I look forward to seeing you at the next Luncheon meeting on Monday 15 August

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Committee: 5 September 2011 Monthly Luncheon 19 Sept 2011



(Continued from page 1)

when the guest speaker will be Highgate member Mr Geoff Hourn. Geoff will share with us his experience of Afghanistan, gained when working there with the United Nations Office of Projects Services. No doubt his talk will help us to understand some of the difficulties and dilemmas faced by UNO and the NGO's as they endeavoured to help rebuild the country after the fall of the Taliban. No doubt we will come away thinking of how fortunate we are to live in Australia.

John Cleary continues to update the Highgate website. Watch out for photos taken at the OBE luncheon in July when SVP Leon Griffiths and JVP Peter Farrell introduced 8 of the members who reach 4 score or 4 score and 10 sometime this year. Whilst each of those honoured could probably write a book or two about their service career, time only allowed us to hear a few of their service highlights. It was a happy occasion and great to see everyone enjoying themselves.

There will be two important but separate agendas taking place at the September meeting (mark Mon 19th in the diary now). It is the occasion of the Annual General Meeting during which a number of reports will be presented and the incoming Executive will be elected. This is a meeting that all members should endeavour to attend and an opportunity to assure yourselves that the Sub-Branch is running smoothly, is financially secure and pursuing a satisfactory path for the future. Each year there is a need for new faces that can offer fresh ideas and new skills to keep the organisation healthy and to share the workload so that it is not left to just a few. Please ask yourself *'Is this my year to do that little bit extra for Highgate?'* and if so, make sure that you nominate. I hope to be overwhelmed by your positive responses. The second part of the meeting concerns the State War Memorial and issues raised by the SAS widows. Over a period of time there has been much discussion and it is obvious that views within the RSL are polarised in the same way that they are within Highgate. I have therefore invited two highly respected members Phillip Skelton and Ken Bladen to prepare short articles for inclusion in the September newsletter. At the Luncheon Meeting each will make a short presentation to clarify the issues, after which a vote will be taken. The result will guide the Executive in formulating a motion to be submitted to the RSL for inclusion on the November State Congress Agenda.

The recent rejection in the Senate of legislation to amend the formula used for indexing ADF retirement benefits was a bitter disappointment to many of our members. Bob Arnold has kept us informed of the intense lobbying to ensure that Defence Force superannuation and death benefits are treated in the same way that age pensions are indexed. Whilst the Commonwealth Government saw fit many years ago to amend the age pension indexation formula, it has consistently refused to treat ADF benefits in the same way. Hopes raised when the Bill was debated and passed through the House of Representatives were dashed when it reached the Senate. It would seem that the majority of Senators who themselves enjoy generous retirement benefits, are content to accept that the purchasing power of ADF benefits continues to be eroded. The excuse *'the country can't afford it'*. A number of senior retired ADF members have seen fit to publicise their views. Watch this space.

Finally may I remind all members that the Annual Poppy Day Appeal in Perth is to be held this year on Remembrance Day, Friday 11th November? Highgate will be collecting in the city as usual with the proceeds enabling welfare assistance to be provided to ex-servicemen and women, their widows and dependents. Closer to the time we will be calling for volunteers to collect for an hour or two so please mark the date in your diary now. With your help we will maintain our good record of a better result

Yours in Fellowship

Martyn

A "Pun can be Fun" Corner

Back in the 1800's the Tate's Watch Company of Massachusetts wanted to produce other products, and since they already made the cases for watches, they used them to produce compasses. The new compasses were so bad that people often ended up in Canada or Mexico rather than California. This, of course, is the origin of the expression-- "He who has a Tate's is lost!"

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

If so please contact me personally on 9244 8072

Ken Bladen



SUB WARDENS DUTIES

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

Wednesday 31 August 2011 : 1030 for 1100 hrs - National Malaya and Borneo Veterans of Australia Association WA
Monday 26 September 2011 : 0930 for 1000 hrs - Australian Army Cadets Brigade

NOTIFICATION OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

PLEASE PAY SPECIAL NOTE: The Highgate RSL Sub-Branch AGM will be held at the September meeting: on **MONDAY, 19th September**. **President Martyn asks that you mark this in your diaries, and PLEASE attend.** A number of key Committee positions will be declared **VACANT**, and we are seeking members to nominate to replace them. **REMEMBER: If everyone is prepared to do just one year on the Committee, then the responsibilities are rotated fairly across the Sub-Branch.**

OF INTEREST TO THE NAVY-MEN AMONGST US - and those who reside in the Northern Suburbs:

We've been advised by the Naval Association of Australia (Perth North Sub-Section), that they have been appointed to be the Custodian of the City of Stirling War Memorial, and have committed to conduct two forthcoming services at the Memorial.

The first will be to commemorate Vietnam Veterans Day (Thursday, 18th August at 2pm); this will be in addition to other services to be held at Kings Park (Sunday, 14th August, 2011) and Mandurah (18th August).

As yet, we have no details about the second service.

COMING EVENT!

After the success of last year's Memorial Luncheon at Frazer's Restaurant in Kings Park - Highgate will be holding this event again in 2011. After the 'CHOGM-inspired refit', Fraser's should look even better than ever!; so mark the date in your calendars.

It will be on Sunday 6th November; and members and wives/partners will attend a Memorial Service at the Flame of Remembrance before adjourning for Lunch and fellowship. Cost: \$70 a couple for members. More details later. Our thanks to SVP: Leon Griffiths, who is the prime-mover and organiser of these very enjoyable occasions.

ARE YOU A DFRDB OR EX-ADF SUPERANNUANT??

Dissatisfaction with CPI -tied Indexation rates is pretty widespread amongst this fraternity at the moment - and several hard-hitting letters from former Senior Officers are lending robust support for some of the ESOs at the fore. The RSL, at National level, remains resolutely "apolitical" - but this issue is gathering steam. More up-to-date information can be accessed by going to www.dfga.org.au



LAST POST

Allan Terry John Lenton Maurice Taylor

Lest We Forget



“OH GRANDPA—WHAT GREAT TALES YOU CAN TELL!”

Our OBE Luncheon in July was a reminder, yet again, of some of the characters we have had, and still treasure having, in our Sub-Branch and the rich tales of adventure many of them can tell.

Sadly, we have lost too many of our World War 2-era men these past few year - the ex-matelots, “diggers” and former “Brylcreem Boys”, whose war-time exploits, in hindsight, read like adventure yarns now. But it is a great privilege whenever we can look at their stories, and reflect on them again - often stories of great daring, courage in adversity and endurance. So it was with great pleasure that we honoured SOME of our wonderful members from this bunch at the July Luncheon. Unfortunately, TWO of those invited, were unable to accept: **Basil (Dick) Larsen** (Militia who soon switched to RAAF - saw action SW Pacific and New Guinea), due to ill-health; and **Neil Anderson** (ex-Sandhurst/British Army, whose latter career was mainly commanding Gurkha Infantry units) on holiday in UIK. Those who attended were:

Doug (Jim) Tippetts - (ex-RAAF Air Crew) - who travelled all the way up from his current home in Denmark to join us. Jim had WW2 Op service in the South West Pacific and with BCOF (Japan).

Bruce Gaston DFC - joined RAAF in 1940 - served in England (RAF Coastal Command), and as Captain of a Liberator, was credited with sinking German U-boat in the North Atlantic. Bruce’s last RAF appointment was less daunting: as a flying instructor at OTU Nassau, in the Bahamas.



(Back -L to R) Peter Salmon, Jim Tippetts. (Front): Bill Wilson, Alex Kerr, Bruce Gaston

Peter Salmon - ex-2nd AIF (2/28th Inf Bn 9th Div). Saw Active service in the Middle East, Western Desert, the defence of Tobruk and was wounded at El Alamein. From the sands to the Tropics, he then served in the SW Pacific, New Guinea, Lae—and later (with 2/4th Pioneer Bn. Took part in the landing at Labuan (Borneo).

William (Bill) Wilson MBE - devoted 38 years in all to the Army: 10 full-time and 28 part-time (CMF and reserves), and a great variety of postings - rising to the rank of WO1 in the process.

****Alex Kerr PhD** - (ex-RAAF pilot, RAF Bomber Command) - shot down over Europe 11 May 1941 flying a Wellington that caught fire and was well alight

before he “came to” and managed to bail out. As a POW in various Stalags, Alex worked on a University degree in Economics (talk about self-discipline!) - later becoming a Professor in Economics at both Curtin Uni and UWA.

WE CONGRATULATE YOU ALL ON YOUR FINE WAR-SERVICE, REACHING A VENERABLE AGE AND YOUR DISTINGUISHED POST-WAR LIVES OF CONSIDERABLE ACHIEVEMENT. Happy Birthdays men!

**** Alex Kerr’s own story of his near-death survival, and subsequent POW experiences, is one of a number to be found in the excellent book: “Silk and Barbed Wire” - written by he and other WW2 ex-Air Crew survivors. The stories are wonderful - inspiring. It is still available through www.sagebooks.com.au**



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

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