



HIGHGATE



NEWS

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

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

Monthly Luncheon—Monday 20 September 2010

Other than those on the permanent list please advise
Bob Arnold by 15 September of your attendance at this luncheon.

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Venue: Gallipoli Room

Time: 1130 hrs for 1215 hrs

Guest Speaker: Commodore Bob Trotter OAM RAN (Ret'd) FIEAust—Born in Bunbury, WA, Bob entered the Royal Australian Naval College as a 17 year old Cadet in 1964. Graduating in 1965, he undertook sea training during 1965/66, serving in the destroyers *Anzac* and *Vampire* and the aircraft carrier *Melbourne*. Whilst in *HMAS Vampire*, Bob saw active service with Commonwealth and Malaysian Forces off Indonesia and in escort duties off Vietnam. In 1969 he graduated as BSc(Eng) at the Royal Naval Engineering College at Plymouth in the United Kingdom.

Bob was Promoted to Commander in 1981, Captain in 1986 and Commodore in March 1992.

Following a distinguished career Bob retired from the Navy in February 1998 and has held a number of voluntary and part-time positions including Chairman of the Safer WA Council, Defence Business Adviser to Austal Ships Ltd, Member of the Executive of the Australian Industry Defence Network (WA), National President and President of the WA Section of the Naval Association of Australia.

In 2000/01, Bob was a member of the Technical Committee for the 2001 Navy Seminar for the feasibility of a search for *HMAS Sydney II*, lost with all 645 crew on 19 November 1941 off the coast of Western Australia. In 2002 he was invited to be a member of the Board of *HMAS Sydney Search* Pty Ltd, thus started a life dominating task, resulting in March 2008, in the discovery of the final resting places of both *HSK Kormoran* and *HMAS Sydney*. For his work in finding *HMAS Sydney*, Bob was awarded a Medal in the Order of Australia in January 2009.

Bob and his wife Norelle reside in Swanbourne. He is a recreational cyclist, a social golfer and yacht crewman. (A comprehensive profile of Bob is on the website.)

Topic: Search and Discovery of HMAS Sydney II

PRESIDENT'S MONTHLY REPORT

On your behalf I would like to offer a most sincere thank you to Robert (Bob) Mercer one of Highgate's longstanding members. Having reached OBE status Bob has decided that it is time to step down from the Sub-Branch's Committee after more than 22 years of service, latterly as Custodian. An RSL Life Member, Bob has in the past served on the State Executive and as a Trustee. Earlier this year in recognition of his active role and contribution to the RSL and other community organisations

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Committee: 4 Oct 2010 Monthly Luncheon: 18 Oct 2010



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President's Report

he was a well deserved recipient of a RSL ANZAC of the Year award. Bob has been a long time mentor and friend to me and others who will miss his well considered advice and calm presence at our Committee meetings. Whilst he has more than 'done his bit' for Highgate it is now time to relax a little, enjoy the view and smell the roses. *Well done, thank You Bob.* We look forward to seeing you often at the monthly luncheons.

The feedback from the change of format for the August luncheon has been positive. The meal was simple – plenty of sandwiches, a small plate of curry and rice, a glass of wine, tea or coffee. In lieu of a guest speaker, members rose to their feet to share stories and relive memorable moments of service life. This style of lunch was deemed a great success and will be repeated in 2011 with more stories to enjoy. One member has suggested that they could be incorporated into a small booklet. What do you think?

There will be no guest speaker at the Annual General Meeting which will take place on Monday 18th October when formal election of office bearers for 2010/11 will take place. Nominations for positions on the Committee should be in the hands of the Secretary prior to the meeting on 20th September. At the moment we have only one Vice-President so there is a need for another to share the load. Another vacancy is that of Highgate Historian. Whilst the membership lists, minutes and newsletter are a permanent record of our activities they are only part of our story. We need someone who amongst other things can keep an eye on the newspapers and archive clippings for posterity. Perhaps call on members to clean out their drawers and donate items of interest so that our history is not lost. Could YOU do the job?

Vice President Leon has been busy coordinating a number of activities for the social calendar. The first of these is the *Highgate RSL Sub Branch Memorial Luncheon* on 7th November which promises to be outstanding. He has followed up on the suggestion of a Saturday or Sunday morning brunch which with the assistance of Lyn Durant-Lovell will be held

early next year at Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club – another glorious location for whiling away a few hours. With the assistance of the Rev Tim Harrison, Leon is also arranging a Saturday morning tour of the many military memorials and points of interest in St George's Cathedral which will be followed by lunch in the Burt Memorial Hall. I urge you to support each of these daytime functions and to bring along those nearest and dearest to you so that they too may feel a part of Highgate.

For part of September and October I will be in London getting to know our youngest granddaughter. During this time Highgate will be in the capable hands of Vice-President Leon with support from our wonderful Secretary Margot.

Take care and give those you love an extra hug,

Martyn

WELFARE ASSISTANCE

If any Sub-Branch member is suffering financial hardship, or has knowledge of another veteran, widow, or ex-serviceman/servicewoman (even if not RSL members) experiencing temporary or permanent financial stress - then help is available through the RSL. It can be via the Sub-Branch Secretary (Margot Harness - (H) 9293 1076), or the State Welfare Officer: Rosalind Howat (9287 3707).

Both can provide/mail out application forms, on request; or they can be accessed via the State RSL's website: www.rslwa.org.au Help may be in the form of Coles or Woolworths cards for groceries; assistance to pay necessary utilities bills; or to provide for "one-off" items that the person cannot afford to purchase - for example: essential white goods or a replacement HWS, car repairs or tyres etc. No reasonable request is ignored.

All cases are evaluated on their merits. Every case is confidential and

welfare assistance can be varied - Examples may include:

- British, US, NZ, Canadian and former Allied veterans can seek assistance with Disability Compensation, as well as monetary help. Mrs Howat (9287 3707 - Mob: 0400 200 191) is the best contact; she can also arrange Hospital visiting and/or home visits for elderly veterans/widows/ex service personnel with personal problems.
- Need for Legal advice. The RSL State Welfare Officer can arrange for a half-hour's free Legal advice (in such matters as Family Law, probate and Wills, charges under the Criminal Code etc).
- Referral to a range of government and non-government agencies. Assistance with Emergency housing, seeking rental accommodation.

www.highgate-rsl.org.au

For those who are not already aware our website is now being managed by Bob Cleary. Bob brings much expertise and enthusiasm and is a worthy successor to Ian Mulholland, who during his term as Sub-Branch President, introduced and managed the site.

Our website is informative and interesting and in the current presentation those OBE's who celebrated their birthdays in 2009 and this year are displayed in all their glory. It is well worth a look. Those now 80 are looking to the celebrations of their 90th birthday.

The website under Bob's management is just another example of the work undertaken by your Committee on behalf of all those who had the foresight and good judgement to be members of Highgate RSL Sub-Branch.



SUB WARDENS DUTIES

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

Sunday 12 September 2010 1140 hrs for 1200 hrs - Maltese Association

SCAM TARGETTING EX NATIONAL SERVICEMEN.

I have just been advised by DVA Cairns that some people are scamming mainly ex National serviceman. The ex serviceman is initially sent a letter advising them that they are entitled to Service pension and to contact the author. Once they do this they are then sent a letter with AMF (not used for many years) headed paper asking for bank details to put the service pension

into, date of birth and other personal information. Their bank accounts are then cleaned out. Please advise as many others as possible of this scam.

Cheers

John King JP (Qual)
Advocate | Pensions, Advocacy & Welfare Services.

(We have confirmed with the State Branch of the DFWA who in turn had previously established the authenticity of this report with the National Headquarters who state that is a genuine report of a scam; not that any of our members are likely to fall for such a confidence trick.)

Editor



Editorial

Our sub-branch has nearly 300 members, but less than a quarter regularly attend our luncheons. This will be for a variety of reasons many probably associated with age and health; almost half of our members are of the grand age of 80 years and beyond. In the case of the 200 plus odd who can't get to lunch the only regular contact that most will have with the sub-branch is the newsletter. I believe that you will agree that it is a pity that we don't share more of ourselves with this large group.

The interesting experiences described by a number of our members at our last luncheon are worth sharing and those that were unable to attend should not be deprived of this pleasure.

One of the most exciting and maybe emotional experiences is the first time that one enters a war zone on active service. We will, individually, have a tale to tell, and being a betting man, wager at the odds of a hundred to one that each will be markedly different and of real interest.

Plea: Let me have your experience and we will share it with our membership at large.



DEMOCRACY

An economics expert, Professor Tyler of Britain, wrote 200 years ago.

“A democracy can exist only until the voters discover that they can vote themselves largesse from the public treasury.”

“From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the public treasury with the result that democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy, followed by dictatorship.”

“The nations have progressed through this sequence from bondage to spiritual faith; from spiritual faith to courage; from great courage to liberty; from liberty to abundance; from abundance to selfishness; from selfishness to complacency; complacency to apathy; from apathy to dependency; from dependency back to bondage.”

Where does Australia stand today?

A basic precept in Maori wisdom might be pertinent—“Youth talks, experience teaches.”

W.M. Maslen
Monash Avenue, Hollywood.

(Truly food for thought - Thank you to the member who provided this letter - Editor)

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

If so please contact me personally on 9244 8072

Ken Bladen



Bailey's VIEW

On calling Martyn this morning and after discussing the President's Report for this issue of the newsletter, and other matters with him, I realised that his voice was so distinctive that he needed no introduction and that it had the intonation of a particular region of England. In other words a Pommy accent, albeit with the resonant culture of the guards officer. I didn't think any more about it until my wife who had been going through old photos and paper cuttings (the sort of things that women hoard) when she interrupted me and said "I don't know why I kept this but you should read it." It was a cutting from "The West Australian" dated March 12 1979 - in simpler days! With due respect to our President it follows:

After the publishing and television success of "Roots", surely it can be only a matter of time before someone realises the potential of that other great human saga of our times, "Poms."

This heart-rending drama, so far largely ignored by television, would show how families are torn apart by the dreaded agents from Australia house as they stalk the sleepy hamlets and villages of Britain, luring their innocent victims with promises of high wages, sunshine and sandy beaches.

Selected for the long journey to the other side of the world , the simple villagers are taken from their normal peaceful pursuits like bingo, football pools and striking for British Leyland. They are driven across the country by men called by "Bruce" and "Trevor" in wide-brimmed hats and herded into chartered Jumbo jets where they endure the squalid conditions of modern air travel.

Share the heart-breaking trials of the migrant, through the long hours of

upper air turbulence, lost luggage, wilting sandwiches and endless cups of coffee, set upon by ruthless money-changers and souvenir sellers at every stop.

Finally, they reach their destination and uniformed officials stride among them with cans of Mortein, dragging them into the harsh sunlight while the newcomers are still nursing the frostbite of their homeland and clad in their stifling Marks and Spencer underwear.

Reeling from the jet lag and homesickness, they are put into migrant camps and forced to change their eating habits from fish and chips and black puddings to lamingtons and Vegemite. Under the pitiless glare of the sun their pale skins take on sickly tans, and their children, talking a strange new language grow to enormous size.

They are derided for speaking their natural tongue, and soon homely phrases like "Eehh by goom" are only slightly remembered by the elders, the keepers of the old

traditions who still cling to their tribal dress of cloth caps and chilblains.

Slowly they learn to say "Bewdy" and "Hopefully," the key words of the local dialect.

From time to time, visiting teams of their countrymen are brought out, dressed in all white, paraded in the middle of a vast green arena and publicly humiliated, all though sometimes they forget the script.

With the passage of years, the old ways are all but forgotten, and the newcomers adjust to their lives of servitude, almost growing to love the chains of mortgages, Tupperware parties and P and C meetings which bind them to a life of barbecues and the "Don Lane Show"

Perhaps it does need a bit of work, but I think I could be on the track of a best seller.

Bill Bailey



Last Post

Robert Judge

Lest We Forget

This publication is produced with the support of Hollywood Private Hospital and their generous assistance is greatly appreciated.

**HOLLYWOOD
PRIVATE HOSPITAL**