



# 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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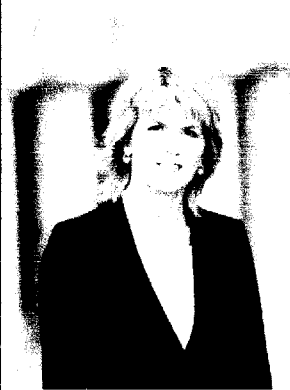
## CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Monday 15th December 2008

Venue: Gallipoli Room

Time: 1130 hrs — Fellowship, 1215 hrs — Luncheon

Guest Speaker: The Hon Julie Bishop MP



Julie was born and educated in South Australia, and, after completing a Bachelor of Laws at the University of Adelaide in 1978, she practised law and became a partner at the age of 26 years of an Adelaide law firm Mangan Ey & Bishop.

In 1983 Julie moved to Perth and practised as a commercial litigation solicitor at Clayton Utz. She became a partner of Clayton Utz in 1985, and was the managing partner of the Perth firm from 1994 to 1998. Julie was responsible for the day-to-day management of the firm with more than 200 employees and a multi-

million dollar turnover.

In 1996, Julie attended Harvard Business School in Boston and completed the Advanced Management Program for Senior Managers, including subjects in global financial accounting and government, business and the international economy.

She is also a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management.

Julie was elected to the House of Representatives as the Member for Curtin in 1998 and again in 2001, 2004 and 2007.

Julie served as a Cabinet Minister in the Coalition Government as Minister for Education, Science and Training and as the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women's Issues. Prior to this, Julie was Minister for Ageing.

She is currently Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Treasurer.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### Poppy Day

An excellent "Poppy Day" result, with nearly \$16,000.00 raised and following disbursement to RSL HQ leaves us \$8,000.00 in the amelioration fund to distribute next year.

(Continued on page 2)

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Committee: 2 Feb 09

Luncheon: 16 Feb 09



(Continued from page 1)

## Dean a Hit

Dean Alston made some good points on how to portray political and other figures that adorn the newspapers and magazines pages in the form of cartoons.

## Toast to Highgate

At this luncheon we will sample the port presented to the Sub-Branch by Bill Wilson and toast Highgate into the future.

I wish all the Highgate Members and families a safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



**Who's that at the Christmas Tree?**



**Seasons Greetings,**

Ian

ing from this environment, mother's strong hand and guidance and an acceptance that our misdemeanours would be dealt with by Dad, when he came home from work, we learned, in our formative years, to consider the needs of others, understand discipline and respect authority.

Today's youngsters, quite frequently are from one child families. They don't play out of doors; are surrounded by play stations and television, the programmes of which many are violent and present unreal images of life and because both mum and dad are working don't have the freedom of movement or the guiding influences with which we were blessed. It is not until their teen years is there any real out of school social activity with their peers, by which time character and values are well established. Is it therefore any real surprise when we see the emergence of the regrettable traits which we noted in the previous editorial?

We can however presume that the conditions of the thirties and forties are not going to return.

The question we should now ask ourselves is, what steps need to be taken to overcome the upsetting features of today's lifestyle that contribute to the behaviour that so disturbs many of us?

## Editorial

You will recall that in the last issue of our newsletter the abysmal behaviour of many of the youth of today was bemoaned and many of us are very concerned at the deteriorating standards that we are witnessing.

It just so happened, that whilst wearing my Legacy hat, I called on a young widow whose husband was killed some eighteen months ago in action in Afghanistan. She is the mother of a pre-school age boy and we got to discussing that topic which was the subject of last month's editorial.

She is an intelligent, thinking young lady and over a cup of coffee we endeavoured to make some sense of what is happening, to what seems to be an increasing number of our youth.

We came to the conclusion that the major differences in today's society to that of yesteryear (when we were young) is technology, the family structure and the respect of authority. Our mothers were mostly at home, we had two, three or more siblings. We had a wireless, on which at night we listened to "Dad and Dave", "Martins Corner" and hour long radio plays, or we read. After school we were outside playing with school friends and our brothers and sisters. Aris-



## Letters to the Editor

Dear Bob

Mounted on the wall facing the bar in Anzac House is a bell recovered from a German position during W.W.I. It was presented by Ross Steele.

My father Ron Halcombe A.B.C. sporting supervisor and broadcaster from the late 40s until the mid 60s and who may be remembered by those who followed sport had met Ross visiting old soldiers at Hollywood. Dad's battalion was the 11<sup>th</sup> and in a highly irregular and most undemocratic act for one who fought against dictatorships, the 11<sup>th</sup>'s President, Roy Walsh M.M. has appointed me his vice.

I met Mr. Steele when on two occasions in the late '50s we drove to Albany and stayed; I slept in the car with a friend at his cottage near the old tea rooms on Emu Point at the end of Middleton Beach.

(Continued on page 3)

### **WA AGED SAILORS', SOLDIERS', AND AIRMAN'S RELIEF FUND TRUST**

Can help veterans/ADF personnel on low incomes, or those unable to pay essential accounts. If you are in necessitous circumstances please don't hesitate to call 9287 3707 (ANZAC House Welfare) for an application form.

### **ALLAN SHELLABEAR**

Allan has been in hospital but has now returned home to RSL Homes, Menora. He is unwell but would like to see any of his old friends from Highgate who are able to call on him. He has asked that you phone on 92638564 before visiting.



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



*(Continued from page 2)*

With my Father's death when we were all living in Victoria I came across a few items that had clearly come from Ross and on my return to Perth made contact with Digger Cleak O.A.M. then President of the Albany R.S.L. sub branch but now living in Perth.

Digger was perfectly aware that Ross had been not only the man behind the Avenue Of Honour alongside the start of Apex Drive, but very instrumental in getting the re-worked memorial to the W.W.I Desert Mounted Corps re-erected on Mt. Clarence. The original had been erected in 1932 at Port Said but damaged beyond repair during the Suez Crisis riots of 1956.

He gave me copies of letters Ross had filed with the R.S.L. and I was able to prepare an eight page pamphlet on this old soldier. Along with John Moyle, the Apex President who had the vision and membership to construct the Drive, Ross has left an indelible mark on Albany.

Born in Gnosall, Staffordshire 1890, Ross was in South Africa when war broke out in 1914. After some local service he found he would be commissioned if he got back to England. By November 1915 he had married his sweetheart from Capetown, Marguerite Le Quesne and was in France. Active service ended with gassing at Paschendale in 1917.

They tried farming back in Capetown; then in WA's south west, but Ross' lungs couldn't take it. Working for the Agricultural bank and operating out of Tambellup he settled returned soldiers on the land. He was invalided out in 1947 in poor health and they retired to Emu Point only for Margot to die early in 1949.

In 1954 the Albany Apex Club began

making their road up Mt. Clarence and Ross as a helper saw that part of it could serve as an Avenue of Honour. This became his passion. But the road had also revealed an ideal site for the Memorial to the Desert Mounted Corps that was now to be returned to Australia.

Ross played a large part in the drama surrounding where it should be placed. Few would now challenge the selected site overlooking King George Sound, but it certainly didn't happen by accident.

Sadly, he died seven months before it was officially re-dedicated by Prime Minister Robert Menzies in late 1964, but the Avenue of Honour and the Desert Corps Memorial at the top of Apex Drive would not have happened without him.

He has been recognized by the R.S.L. members inside the entrance to their meeting rooms and in the Ross Steele Memorial Rose Garden outside.

If anyone is interested I would be happy to post them his story. I would also welcome a call from anyone who knew Ross and could add to my knowledge.

Rodney Halcombe. Ph. 93843989

**FOUNDATION MEMBER**  
**John Fitzhardinge AO MBE ED**  
 1911—2008  
**(President 1953)**

Pre-War (Militia) Artillery Horse Drawn 1939 WX9 Australian Imperial Force, 6th Div 2/3rd Field Regiment. Captain Leader, E Troop 6th Battery. Shipped to UK North Africa, Greece and Crete. Prisoner of War. Italy and Germany. 1946 State Exec RSL. 1950 President POW Assoc. Past Commodore Royal Perth Yacht Club. Architect.

## THE VOLUNTEER

It's 1966 - Woodside Army Camp about 40 km north-east of Adelaide. 3RAR are only rumoured to be going to Vietnam and the guys are treating every furphy as being a glimmer of hope. There's something to be said about conscripting 20 year olds to fight a war. They're gullible, stupid, bullet proof and ready to tackle anything with a fist or a gun.

At the 6.30am reveille on this bright, sunny, summer day we are called to attention. The flies are taking the opportunity to test the mettle. Every man is surreptitiously making 'whews' and 'hisses' in an effort to keep them from the mouth, nose and eyes.

"Adams" screams the sergeant "Sarr!" I hollered back "You're wanted at the CO's office - on the DOUBLE!"

Oh Shit! I thought as I broke ranks and doubled off up the hill to face my fate. Some bastard must have blabbed that I was AWOL the day before. So I hurried up the hill while frustratingly bashing flies from my face and madly thinking of excuses.

The Barossa Valley the day before had been a great day. My mate and I took off straight after morning reveille - directly to my FJ Holden sitting in the car park. In fact, there was still a carton of sparkling white wine sitting in the boot as stark evidence.

By the time I reached the CO's office I had already kissed good bye the idea of meeting up with the little blonde from Glenelg that I met at the Norwood Town Hall dance the previous Saturday night. This is going to be a 21 day CB for sure.

"Adams, Sir! I was told to report here." The duty officer looks me up and down. "The CO wants to talk to you!"

*(Continued on page 4)*



## LAST POST

Edwin (Ed) Bensusan AM - Ray Hepworth - Alfred Thomas (Pat) Houlahan  
 John Fitzhardinge AO MBE ED  
**- Lest We Forget -**



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he snaps back. "Left right, left right, left right, halt!" And I'm in front of the CO. He glares at me from behind his large desk. Oh shit! I hope this is a quick shooting!

"Adams, you have completed your clerical course and you seemed to have done quite well in the exam." Now I'm beginning to relax. This is not the way one faces a firing squad. What's going on? "Thank you sir." I replied, "Anything I may be able to do for you?" I'm thinking that maybe he's is going to offer me a job in HQ.

"A volunteer clerk is needed in Vietnam to assist with 7RAR's arrival next April" he blurts, "Do you want to go?"

My mind is racing and before I could open my mouth he followed with. "Now you don't have to give me an immediate answer right here and now because I have a few other clerks in the waiting room to pose the same question to."

"I'll do it!" And I can't believe I actually said it. Christ! Now I've done it! I think I was more excited at not being charged than the gravity of my decision. I now realise that I'm the only one in the whole of 3RAR that will see service in Vietnam.

When I marched out I couldn't help but notice there was not a soul in reception – let alone a clerk. I think I've been conned, I thought. Oh well, it's done now. So I'm off to Vietnam! Aren't the folks back home going to be deliriously excited!

Canungra, what a mongrel place! Everyone doing duty overseas has to front the tough jungle training in a mosquito and leach infested Queensland rain forest.

After three weeks of gruelling physical hell I'm fit and dangerous. I'm sent home to Perth for seven days leave to party and say goodbye. I just got that feeling that my brother, some seven years older than me and who always watched over me, was sure he'd never see me again.

Family and friends watched and waved as the diesel train pulled out of Perth Station. My orders now were to report to South Head Army camp in Sydney.

From South Head it was a civilian plane to Manilla in the Philippines.

There was an overnight stay at Clark Airbase. Wow! What an eye opener this US base was. I'd never seen a base the size of four suburbs before. It was the largest US base in the world. The OR's mess was mind boggling with a choice of food you'd expect at a good restaurant. It was a bit different to just getting the standard meal as everyone else.

That night a few Yanks took me around to see the nightlife on the base. The nightclubs, the girls, rock n roll – it was all there. No need to go to town. How well I remember that the stage held a 13 piece orchestra playing all the top tunes of the day. And there were pretty Phillipino girls in their droves to be danced with but they came at a cost. The Aussie dollar was not on a par with the Yankee dollar so I abstained. Besides – I had a 5am flight on my mind.

I was staggered by the number of huge 'Yank tanks' on the Clark base. There were big long 60's Buicks, Chevies and Cadillacs everywhere. It was explained to me that after a year, a serviceman can request his car be brought over from the US – at the taxpayers' expense.

The Hercules lifts off from Clark at 5am full of troops and one Aussie clerk. There's no civilian comforts this time and reality hits: We are off to war!

The hot tropical air nearly knocked me over as we alighted at Tan Son Nhut air base. At that stage, Tan Son Nhut was the busiest airport in the world with a plane reportedly landing and taking off every three minutes. That was mind boggling stuff back then.

I bought a Coke from a little Vietnamese kid selling from a bucket strapped to his bike. Then I was issued with an SLR rifle before boarding the waiting Caribou. This time the plane is full of Aussies and hell only knows where they came from?

"Nui Dat!" screams the sergeant as the tail gate drops down and we get another burst of fierce hot air which quickly dispenses the cool air in the aircraft. I get up - but no one else does.

"OK, that's it – the rest are for Vung Tau!" yells the sergeant!

I'm thrown out clutching my kit bag and the rear door closes. What the f....! Why would all our troops, I thought, be going anywhere but this base? I was of the understanding that Nui Dat was our front line.

(As it turned out, they were all back the next day. Apparently no one told them they also were supposed to get out at Nui Dat not Vung Tau.)

The Caribou wheels around in its own length and accelerates off down the enormous air strip. I looked around. There's no one and I'm in the middle of nowhere. I watched the big bird disappear over the distant mountains. So here I am sitting on my kit bag on a desolate airstrip with no sign of life or habitation anywhere in sight.

Then it suddenly dawned on me that this is a war zone. So I'm off my bottom and darting around so no imaginary sniper could pick me off.

After 15 minutes a jeep appears. The driver tells me to jump in and takes me to HQ. Only then did I realise that the base was obscured from the airstrip by the dense growth of the rubber tree plantation.

"Adams 5713759 reporting for duty Sir!" I snapped as I came to attention.

"Who the f... are you?" says the duty officer.

"A reinforcement clerk, sir, to handle the demob from 5RAR to 7RAR!"

"A clerk!" he says. "We need another clerk like a hole in the head" "Fine"! I said "there's obviously been a mistake. Can you tell me when the next plane leaves?"

"LEAVES?" he screams. "Oh no sunny boy! Now you're here, you are here to stay." Isn't that funny! That's just what mother said the devil would say to me one day. I'm cursing to myself, typical army - great coats on, great coats off and no one knows what is going on. So here I am, a bloody volunteer to a war zone for a job that doesn't exist. That mongrel CO back in 3RAR set me up – the bastard!

Richard Adams—16 November 2008

Richard was finally given a job once 7RAR arrived three weeks later. bringing in the first of the 7RAR personnel His job was riding 'shotgun' on the laundry truck. Richard was also typist for A company admin under commander Ken Bladen AM. These days he and Ken are close mates at Highgate RSL sub-branch where Richard is treasurer.

**(Thanks Richard, a good yarn which will bring back memories to many.)**  
Editor