

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 18th May 2015

Venue: Gallipoli Room

Time: 1130 hrs for 1215 hrs



GUEST SPEAKER: Peter Farrell. His Topic: "Seeing Europe from its Canals". Peter and his wife have enjoyed SIX journeys along Canals in Ireland, Holland, England and France - and swear that this is a uniquely wonderful way to travel.

NOTE: Our Advertised Guest Speaker for this luncheon: Aviation journalist: Geoffrey Thomas, has regretfully had to withdraw. We are most fortunate that our President was prepared to "step-into-the-breach" at short notice.

For the **Monthly LUNCHEON (18th May)** PLEASE enter your name electronically on the **BOOK-IN SHEET** (by 1400 hrs Thursday 14th May) - using the web-site. Cost is \$30 a head.

Method: GO TO the web-site HOME page. Double-click on "MAY 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 cell for your name to register.

President's Report

On Friday, 24th of April, I attended an ANZAC Ceremony at Chisholm Catholic Girls' College, representing our Sub-Branch. Their student-centred ceremony was both moving and very respectful. Seventeen hundred young adults filed into the quadrangle in silence whilst names of fallen soldiers were read out. Cadets formed a Guard of Honour and two students played the bugle calls.

I was honoured and privileged to address the college during the ceremony. At the end of the ceremony, the Principal announced that one of their students was at that time in Gallipoli, having been selected as one of the Premier's 30 student ANZAC representatives. Later, speaking at the Gunfire Breakfast the following day, I said

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

LUNCHEON: 18 May, 2015

(Committee meeting at 10.30 that day)



(Continued from p.1)

from what I observed, I believe we are leaving the commemoration in safe hands.

Prior to the ceremony, the French teacher told me that they had taken a French language tour to France. One day they had found an Australian War Cemetery and stopped. She said that the visit to the cemetery had had a profound effect on the students and turned out to be one of the most talked about parts of the trip.

Nearly 60 members attended our annual Gunfire Breakfast. Due to unforeseen circumstances our proposed Guest Speaker was unavailable and at very short notice our Treasurer: Richard Adams, stepped in. His entertaining address: "Above and Below the Radar" brought a good deal of levity and much laughter to the day and cast him in a new light. There have been suggestions of an encore performance later.

Our experiment to have an informal luncheon in April (as well as the "Gunfire") was voted a success. Twelve members sat down together in the ground floor Dining area of ANZAC House to a very convivial lunch and conversation. Although unnecessary, a number contacted me to apologise that they wouldn't be able to attend. It is very likely that we will repeat the informal luncheon in November.

It was most heartening to read in the Listening Post that our Sub-Branch's suggestion that members who have to retire due to ill-health be able to retain 'inactive' membership status, has been accepted by the WA State Branch, and a membership class of "Retired" is being established. More details later.

Remember to book for the May luncheon on the 18th of May.

Yours in fellowship, **Peter**

Sub-Branch Snippets

Our warmest wishes go out to our Hospital Visitor on the Committee: **Kevin Graham**. Kevin underwent a knee replacement op in November, and whilst it was a great success - it put so much strain on the other one, that he had to undergo knee surgery AGAIN in March. He's been valiantly hobbling around on his crutches. Let's hope you are healing well Kevin. As a Marriage AND Funeral celebrant - he needs to be nippy and "on his TOES"!

DON'T FORGET TO SUPPORT our very own "everyday hero" and perennial Peter Pan: **Peter Kennedy** - 95 years old and running in the "HBF Run for a Reason" on 24th May. Peter's cause is to raise money for the Telethon Kids Institute. It's a fine thing he is doing, so be sure to donate and get behind him!

ANOTHER good soul "doing his bit" and running-for-a-reason (he assures me he is "toddling-for-a-reason"!) in the HBF "dash", is fellow team member of Peter's: **Allan Downs**. Allan's special interest is to help research into Rett Syndrome in children, as well as some childhood cancers. Both men's "reason" is to help bridge the Generation Gap.

Donations to either man can be made online at:
www.hbfrun2015.everydayhero.com/au/peter-kennedy

LET'S GET BEHIND 'EM!!

Another member about to get a new pair of "knobbly knees" is HAG stalwart: **Barry Campbell**. Barry has booked to do the wonderful Rhine-Main-Danube Rivers trip in a few months time, and was determined to ensure he could handle walking on the cobbled streets. Good luck for successful surgery Baz!

Our best wishes go out to **Ken Bladen** - he of the fine tenor voice, who is due to go into hospital this month for surgery. Know that you are in our thoughts and prayers Ken.

And last, but not least, **Mike Harness** has finally finished (he hopes!) with chemotherapy, and seems to be "on-the-up". Mike thanks everyone who has sent caring good wishes and supported him over the past months.



God creates the first Mum

**MAY is the
Month of
MOTHER'S
DAY!**

**You knew
your
Mum was
"MADE IN
HEAVEN"
didn't you?!**



“The Way We Were” Gallery Our Golden Oldies

Although Leon Griffiths has the rare distinction of having served in all *THREE* arms of the ADF in one role or another, all he ever wanted to do as a youngster was to join the Army. Born in Tambellup he started school just a month after he turned the tender age of five, so was always the youngest in his class at school. The family moved to Albany not long afterwards, and he did the remainder of his schooling there.

His home was at the top of Mt Clarence, and the family watched the Suez memorial whilst it was being built. As a kid, he explored the gun emplacements at the Forts, so knew the vicinity well - never knowing it would become the historically important landmark it is today. His great aim then was to join the School Cadets - which he did; and straight after leaving school he joined the CMF (16 RWAR) in Albany. In almost miraculous time, he was fully qualified for Sergeant.

Although first employed at the ES&A Bank and then as an engineering draftsman for the Main Roads department (drew up all the drafting for the dual carriageway leading into Albany!) - his yen to join the Army full-time led to him joining up for real in 1967. He “Corps enlisted” as he particularly wanted to go into surveying to earn a qualification that would stand him in good stead later in life. His CV is long and impressive - and one interesting note from these early Army days that jumps out is that he got the prize for “Outstanding soldier” of 9 Platoon, B Coy IRTB Kapooka during Recruit training! As a soldier in the Survey Corps, he was sent to Borneo in 1970 as part of an Indonesian aid programme. This was an extraordinary experience for Leon as it was so primitive and untouched - and local villagers walked for miles just to see and watch these strangers at work. Forbidden to carry weapons, he had several “hairy” nights in the jungle by himself without protection from the threat of snakes and wild animals that are prevalent in those forests. We’re guessing you didn’t get much sleep in your hammock on those nights Leon!

The following year (1971) Leon was posted to Vietnam with 1 Topographical Survey Troop (RASvy), which was an interesting experience - but after several years back in Australia, he left the “Regulars” and switched to the Reserves where he joined the Engineers for awhile, before returning to Survey (5 Fd Svy Sqn) and the Active Reserve in 1982 - serving in that unit until 1994. Leon was commissioned in 1987, and promoted to Captain in early 1991. He was the unit OC when he left the Army Reserves in 1994.

Throughout the years in the CMF/Reserves, Leon didn’t let the grass grow under his feet in his civilian life. He undertook part-time university studies over 14 years to complete a degree in Social Science, majoring in Cartography and Geography, and has since added a Diploma in Business to the list. He wished he had done this years previously. Nonetheless, for 26 years he toiled for the WA Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) - a rewarding part of his life as it entailed helping to set up Regional Parks. He still derives a great deal of satisfaction and pleasure to see how these have developed so wonderfully to what they are today.

As mentioned above however, a new chapter of his tri-service life opened up when he committed to the Cadets. He switched to a blue uniform and enlisted into the Air Training Cadets in 1994. Rising through the ranks, he held a number of senior Cadet appointments until 2004. After a short break, he moved into the Naval Cadets, serving over four years (2006-2010) with them. Life wasn’t without its trials during these cadet years - he was diagnosed with Leukaemia in 1997 which, fortunately, responded to treatment. But it was a harrowing time for him.

These days Leon still conducts his small business in swords and is semi-retired - but he still invests a lot of time with the cadets, believing “they are our future”. He is a previous President of Highgate, and still holds, or has held, a variety of positions on various Trusts and Associations. He clearly has enjoyed his many years associating with so many ADF and cadet units, but retains a soft spot for his Survey roots. “Twenty-two years with the ARA and Reserves and another 15 years with the cadets - and continuing ... I have always maintained that if you throw my Army, Air Force and Navy uniforms into the wash, they’ll come out purple - the Survey Corps colours,” he reckons.

Sounds to us that you are nevertheless still “True Blue” Leon!



LAST POST

Peter Salmon

Lest We Forget



A SPECIAL EVENT on the horizon! Only eight weeks away. MARK IT IN YOUR DIARIES!

This is our **ANNUAL, Winter-time, Sunday Luncheon**; this year at

Swan Yacht Club - on **Sunday 28th June, 2015**

Cost will be \$45 a head (Bar Drinks extra). Bring your wives, partners, guests.

SUB WARDENS DUTIES

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

Monday **4 May 2015** : 1030 for 1130 hrs - Australian American Association WA Division (73rd Commemoration of The Battle of the Coral Sea)
Sunday **9 May 2015** : 0830 for 0900 hrs - Russian Australian Representative Council - FLAME
Saturday **16 May 2015** : 1020 for 1100 hrs - 2/16th Bn 75th Anniversary - FLAME
Monday **25 May, 2016** : 10.20 for 10.50 hrs - North American Veterans' Unit
Tuesday (?) May - 1100 for 1130 hrs - RSL Women's Auxiliaries of WA (TBC). Will be their last, as they are winding up.
Wednesday **27 May 2015**: 0930 for 1000 hrs - Indigenous War Graves Committee - FLAME

VALE - Peter Salmon

Highgate mourns the loss of member, Peter Salmon, aged 90 years, who passed away several weeks ago.

Peter was a "Rat of Tobruk". He enlisted in the WA's 2/28th Battalion during WW2 and saw service not only in the siege of Tobruk but also the battles of El Alamein in the north African western desert. He was wounded there in July 1942, but was later able to rejoin his Battalion for action in New Guinea and Borneo. He ended the war with the rank of Lieutenant.

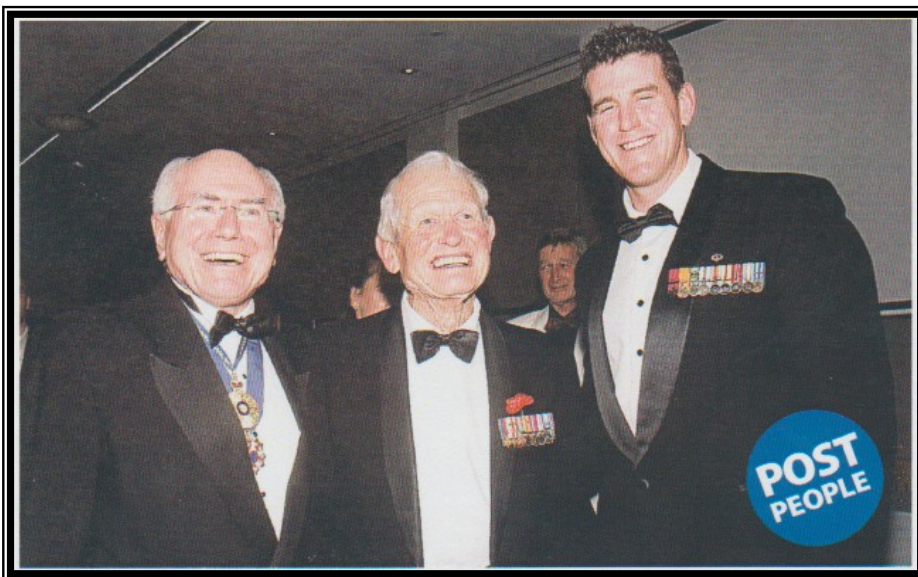
Peter's friend and instigator/organiser of the annual SAS Dinners, Highgate member and businessman: Allan Downs, sent in this photo and other information about Peter's war service and a "surprise Award" presented to Peter the night of the 2011 Dinner.

Everyone had been sworn to secrecy, but in 2011 - the 70th anniversary of the Siege of Tobruk, all concerned (in the SAS Resources Trust) believed Peter deserved to be especially honoured.

Peter was reportedly "in shock" when the former PM, John Howard, and the 202cm figure of Ben Roberts-Smith unexpectedly appeared at his side to congratulate him for his WW2 contributions and present him with a special Award Certificate, signed by them both.

Typically modest, Peter responded by asserting "I'm no hero - I was just there, with thousands of others". He recalled that he had been ".... thirsty for six months - there was a terrible shortage of water. Dust got into everything and your food was full of dirt. Being under siege we couldn't afford to lose water carriers - everything had to be carried to the front in jerry cans". On meeting Ben Roberts-Smith face-to-face he commented: "By golly, you make me feel like a pygmy!" - going on to remark "But he was a very nice lad and we had a good chat".

May you Rest in Peace Peter - and thanks to his friend, Allan Downs, for this lovely obituary.



Our esteemed member, the late Peter Salmon - flanked by former PM John Howard and Ben Roberts-Smith VC MG at the 2011 SAS Fundraiser Dinner at which he was honoured

(Photo Courtesy of POST Newspapers)



HOLLYWOOD DEDICATES NEW WING TO ANNE LEACH, FNM OAM

Hollywood Private Hospital announced on 23rd April, that the new wing which is part of its \$74.1 million infrastructure project, will be named after World War II nurse: Mrs Anne Leach.

Mrs Leach, a nurse with the Australian Army, has a long association with Hollywood, commencing during World War II and continuing to the present day. From 1943 to 1945, Mrs Leach was on the staff of the then named 110th Australian General Hospital (Hollywood Private Hospital since 1994), as senior sister in charge of the orthopaedic ward, acting also as night superintendent.

As a result of her army nursing and community service work with the Red Cross and other organisations, Mrs Leach received the Florence Nightingale Medal (1983) and the Order of Australia Medal (2000).

Today, Mrs Leach maintains a close relationship with the hospital, having been involved in Hollywood's Remembrance Day service for more than 10 years. Mrs Leach is the widow of the late Mr Vernon Leach, who fought in the 2/16th Battalion in World War II and joined Legacy soon afterwards.

On hearing the announcement, Mrs Leach - who will be 101 years old in June - was overwhelmed.

"To hear that Hollywood wants to honour my service in this way is very touching. I loved my hospital nursing and Hollywood holds a special place in my heart," she said.

Hollywood Chief Executive Officer, Peter Mott, said: "In a special year in which we commemorate 100 years of ANZAC, it's an exceptional moment for Hollywood being able to pay tribute to Mrs Leach and her contribution and service to the community."



Mrs Anne Leach (L) with CEO Peter Mott and Karen Gullick DCS

The Anne Leach Wing, due for completion later this year, will house six additional state-of-the-art operating theatres, two new wards and a new kitchen.

Hollywood has a distinguished history. As noted above, the then-named 110 Australian General Hospital was built during WW2 as a 100 bed hospital to care for sick and wounded service men and women. In 1947, it became "Repatriation General Hospital, Hollywood"; and in 1994, the Commonwealth Government sold the now-300 bed hospital to Australian-owned Ramsay Health Care.

Under the auspices of Ramsay Health Care Group, (the nation's largest private hospital operator), it developed into a modern 660-bed, acute care hospital in Nedlands - and has over 800 accredited doctors working across a wide range of disciplines including cardiology, gastroenterology, general medicine, general surgery, oncology, orthopaedics, palliative care, psychiatry, rehabilitation and urology. HPH employs over 1,800 people and has over 60,000 patient admissions each year.

Further expansion is underway, and when finally completed, with over 700 beds, will be WA's largest private hospital.

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

**HOLLYWOOD
PRIVATE HOSPITAL**



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FEDERAL MEMBER FOR PERTH**