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

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President's Report

THE 54TH ANNUAL GUNFIRE BREAKFAST

There are a little under forty seats left for this always popular occasion so I suggest you get your reply slip in now and state who you wish to be seated with.

It is only \$30 for a full breakfast and a tot of rum to go with your coffee and being at the Western Australian Club in St Georges Terrace you are close to your stepping off point in the march.

This year, instead of having a guest speaker it has been decided to choose four of our members to reveal some of their stories whilst in uniform. My lips are sealed as to who these chaps are but I can tell you that their stories will not be dull.

VANDALS STRIKE IN KINGS PARK HONOUR AVENUES

Some of you may recall that I brought to your attention, at the last monthly luncheon, that vandals had struck in Marri Walk, ripping battalion and regimental colour patches from the posts bearing the plaques of Western Australians killed overseas in time of war.

Well, there is always a bright light where there is darkness and it came in the form of donations from several of our members who did not want to be mentioned. The men of the Highgate Honour Avenue's Group wish to express their gratitude to these Highgate members for their kind and prompt gesture. It enabled us to have remade most of the patches damaged and stolen in time for a dedication ceremony in Marri Walk on the 24 March. Many were being attached to posts on the night before the arrival of official guests and some 300 relatives and friends of ten servicemen killed in either WW1 or WW11. Three plaques were dedicated to the three Dorizzi brothers who died on the infamous Sandakan Death March.

The Botanical Gardens & Parks Authority Rangers are keeping a special eye on the plaques for us.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

At the recent Annual General Meeting of the Highgate RSL Honour Avenues Group the following officers were installed:

Norman Manners.....Chairman
Alf Till.....Deputy Chairman and Acting Treasurer
Ken Jones.....Secretary
Robin Slater.....Assistant Secretary

AN ANZAC PAYS TRIBUTE

It was very cold that morning and very dark as we moved towards the shore, then all hell opened up and I could hear a tearing sound going past my head and some of the boys shouted out as they were hit while others just grunted and fell back into the boat. Someone up front yelled we were there and those of us who were left bundled out of the boat and took

(Continued on Page 2)



THE BEGINNING OF THE END

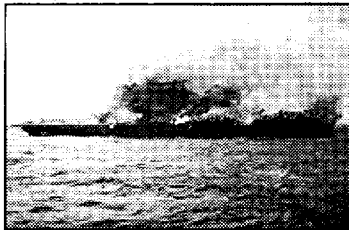
(With thanks to Richard Adams)

The battle for control of the Pacific came to a head in June 1942 with the Battle of Midway. And it was a time when Australia breathed a big sigh of relief.

The Japanese had enjoyed spectacular successes on land and sea until then. In fact, their previous skirmish in the Battle of the Coral Sea in May '42 was seen by them as a great victory.

The Battle of the Coral Sea was a victory for the Japanese in as much that they, themselves had only lost one aircraft carrier. The US on the other hand, had lost two large carriers— or so they thought. USS Lexington was destroyed but the USS Yorktown, although badly damaged, managed to limp back to Pearl.

It was refitted in a record time of three weeks and was immediately sent to sea to face the enemy once again at the Battle at Midway in June '42. Needless to say, the Japanese had not counted on it being there.



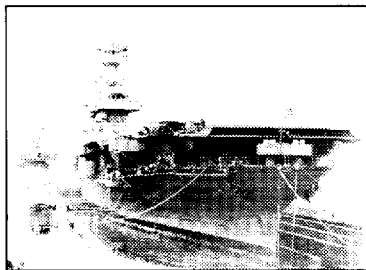
The catalyst for Japanese push into the Coral Sea was the Japanese Imperial Navy's thirst for oil. They also needed to secure their access to raw materials from Malaya, the Philippines and Burma. Their continued occupation of the Dutch East Indies was as important as their plan to take Australia.

Ironically the Japanese were on the same erroneous path as Hitler. Their forces were way too stretched. While continuing their long drawn out battle (since 1937) in China, the Imperial forces were tied up in raging battles right across East Asia.



Unbeknown to the Japanese, the US had broken the Imperial force's radio codes and knew their every move. The Battle of Midway

stopped the Japanese abruptly in their tracks. It was a battle they were not expecting and it was the beginning of the end for the Japanese navy and one from which their navy would never fully recover. It was the abrupt end of their supreme goal to take Australia yet only the beginning of yet another slow three years of war in halting a relentless and formidable foe.



(Continued from Page 1) PRESIDENT'S REPORT

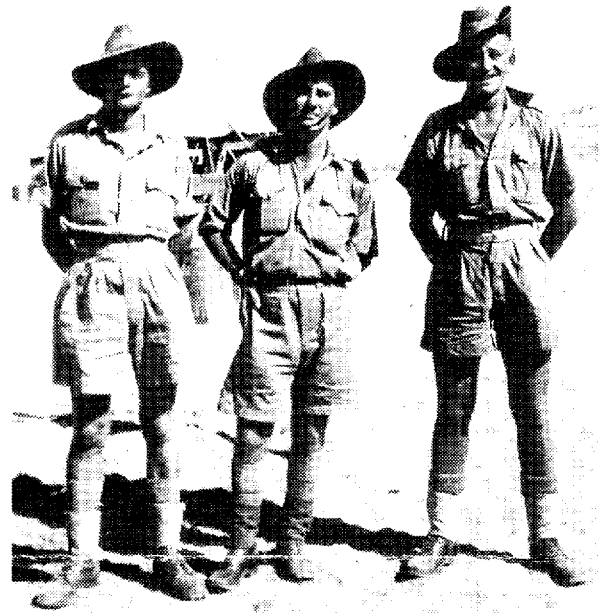
off up the beach to try and find some cover.

The sun was coming up over the cliffs above us and we headed for the cliff face and hugged it. We couldn't see the Turks at the top because of the sun, so there was nothing to shoot at, so instead we started on up towards them. I could see that our blokes were copping it on the beach as they came in to land, but the bravest men on that day were only boys, young boys of fifteen and sixteen, the boys of the Royal Navy.

We could get out of the boats, they couldn't they had to keep on going back for more troops and bring them ashore amongst all of that slaughter, they had guts those lads and they must have lost a lot of them. Yes, they were the bravest that day"

W167 Pte Arthur White G Coy 12 Btn AIF (WA, SA, Tas.)

LEST WE FORGET



THREE 39-45 STALWARTS

Arthur Curtis, Tom Horton and Phil Loffman

Tom.... "STAND At Ease"

Highgate News via Email

Would you like to save the Sub Branch a few bob. Receiving the newsletter by email will do that. If you are on email and are happy to receive your newsletter electronically would you please let me have your email address.

Editor.



COMING EVENTS

MONTHLY LUNCHEON

Please note that because of the Gunfire Breakfast the monthly luncheon is not held in April. The next luncheon is scheduled for Monday 21st May 2007.

SUB WARDENS DUTIES

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

Sunday	8 April 2007— 1045 hrs for 1100 hrs — RNZ Navy Reunion
Tuesday	24 April 2007— TBA — Schools ANZAC Day Service (4 Flag Orderlies Only)
Tuesday	24 April 2007— 1645 hrs for 1700 hrs — 13 Brigade Swearing In service (4 Flag Orderlies Only)
Wednesday	25 April 2007— Bus at 0500 hrs — 0530 hrs for 0550 hrs — ANZAC Day Dawn Service
Saturday	28 April 2007 — 1045 hrs for 1100 hrs — BCOF Association
Monday	7 May 2007 — 1030 hrs for 1100 hrs — Australian American Association (Battle of Coral Sea)

FUTURE GUEST SPEAKERS

Monthly Luncheon Guest Speakers scheduled for the next six months are as follows:

- May Mr John O'Mahony, Victims of Crime — Child Witness Programme.
- June Brig (Retd) R A Lawler AM, Ex Comd 13 Bde — Corps of Commissionaires
- July OBE Luncheon — No Guest Speaker
- August Mr Ron Manners, Chairman of Mannwest Group, Author "The Wild West" - Early days in WA mining
- September Dr Karl O'Callaghan APM, Commissioner for Police Western Australia
- October His Excellency Dr Ken Michael AC, Governor of Western Australia

They May Say that "We have reached our Used By Date"

NOT SO

Already is, or is to be, 80 this year:

Laurence Connolly
Gerald York
Geoff Stevens
Robert Klein
Rev Arthur Harrison

And 90

Arthur Masterton
Jack Bensky
Les Ingram
Jack Boon
Leon Zeitlin
Robert Smyth OAM
Harold Hunt

We congratulate you all on reaching these milestones and sincerely hope that you can be with us at lunch in July

LAST POST



Joseph Slattery
Lest We Forget



ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY—SAVING LIVES IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

When it comes to knee reconstructions and hip replacements, Hollywood Private Hospital orthopaedic surgeon Professor David Wood is a leader in his field. The successful Perth Orthopaedic Institute director is also busy growing tissue cartilage in the labs at the Perth Bone and Tissue Bank but Professor Wood is now also gaining recognition for his amazing work with the less fortunate of Papua New Guinea.

Far from Hollywood Private Hospital's state-of-the-art operating theatres and pristine offices is the harsh reality of Papua New Guinea. When it comes to life expectancy and poverty, Papua New Guinea is the bottom of the league table. The average life expectancy is just 55-years of age, which is more than twenty years less than the average Australian life expectancy.

The leading cause of death in Port Moresby is HIV Aids, followed by tuberculosis. Tragically, many babies and children are at risk and the infant mortality rate is high - one in ten children doesn't reach the age of five.

Papua New Guinea sits only 130 kilometres from the tip of the Australian mainland but when you look at medical care, PNG is a world away. Changing the shocking medical conditions for the people of PNG has become a mission for Professor Wood. "I do the work because to ignore the plight of people in a country only 130kms from our border would, in my view, be inhumane," Professor Wood said.

Professor Wood's affinity with Papua New Guinea began in 1979. Back then he was a student on a medical research council fellowship and spent three months in PNG researching infectious diseases. Then, four years ago, he was asked to return to assess the bone and soft tissue tumour services.

Professor Wood admits that working in PNG is a far cry from the privileged conditions we have here in Australia. "One of the challenges is triaging patients into those who can or cannot be helped. Many of those who we cannot help would be treatable in Australia. The first time you go there, it affects you more because it is then you realise there are people you just cannot treat," he said.

Professor Wood's work in PNG often involves tumour surgery. In PNG the main problem with tumour surgery is that the patient does not visit a doctor until the disease has progressed. "Often massive tumours are dealt with in a palliative way, which you know could have been dealt with in a curative fashion if they were diagnosed a little earlier," he said.

Professor Wood explains that any doctor would find this situation difficult, if not heart-wrenching. "You have to be professional and it involves discipline. In general the patients are very trusting and simply grateful to have medical care. It is a very pure doctor/patient relationship."

If there was ever a success story for Professor Wood's work in PNG, it is patient Andrew Boyap. Professor Wood first met Andrew in 2005 when he had a 20 centimetre tumour of the sternum. While doctors asked Andrew to return with the team to Perth for treatment, he was unable to do so. A year later his employer agreed to fund his airfare and SCGH and the Health Department kindly agreed to fund his medical expenses. Crawford Lodge helped to subsidise accommodation for Andrew and his wife. He underwent six hours of surgery, which involved six surgeons and four specialists.

"He has subsequently had three operations to reconstruct the whole front of his chest, which has now been successful. Without this surgery he would not have survived, now his outlook is good," Professor Wood said. Andrew returned home to Papua New Guinea in late December last year. Professor Wood said that the biggest challenge working in PNG had been trying to support the health services developing into

proper tertiary services. Many of the hospitals in the regional centres of PNG have no x-ray imaging facilities at all. It is hoped that the machines will hopefully set them up to have a fully operational x-ray facility in nearly all of the regional centres.

"Four years ago there were no imaging facilities other than x-ray. (There were) no facilities for radiation therapy and limited chemotherapy," Professor Wood said. "Over the last three years we have managed to secure two CT scanning machines for Port Moresby donated by Perth Radiological Clinic and SKG radiology. The PNG Government has secured funding for a radiotherapy machine, largely because of the new Health Minister, Sir Peter Barter, and his drive in this direction," he said.

Professor Wood's right-hand woman, Hollywood anaesthetic nurse Kara Garratt, has also secured the donation of chemotherapy drugs from different multi-national pharmaceutical firms. SKG radiology and Hollywood Private Hospital donated a fluoroscope machine to Port Moresby Hospital, which was crucial to the development of their services. Hollywood also supplied two defibrillator machines and various other medical supplies.

Professor Wood's team is now trying to negotiate with World Vision to assist in the shipment of donated machinery from SCGH. Nevertheless, Professor Wood said he enjoyed the work, even with all the challenges. "Probably the most rewarding aspect of our work is teaching, because this has a flow-on effect in terms of the patient care," Professor Wood said. "In October (2006) we did a trauma course with orthopaedic surgeon John Croser, who is an internationally registered teacher in trauma. We go up with the Ausaid sponsored team including John, Kara, another surgeon, Mr Piers Yates and trainee, Dr Grant Booth.

"The courses are all about two way interaction. Most of the PNG surgeons come along to the course. Some are less qualified than us but some are more qualified as they have to have broad skills. You may get a heart surgeon that can do orthopaedics or urology. We teach them and they teach us a bit too."

While Professor Wood continues to work on orthopaedics here in Perth, he does have a dream for the people of Papua New Guinea. He is desperately trying to organise a vaccine program for the Human Papilloma Virus or cervical cancer. "Our long term hope is that we can build an effective cancer service in the two main centres Port Moresby and Lae and that these centres will provide surgery, radiation therapy and chemotherapy for cancer patients in Papua New Guinea," Professor Wood said.

"We are also working on an effective immunisation program against cervical cancer. It is the most common fatal cancer in women in PNG and because cervical cancer is such a huge killer, getting Gardasil (the new immunisation drug) up there could save a thousand lives a year.

"We are certainly very lucky to be living here (in Australia) with a much more sophisticated health service. In PNG about \$25 per person per year is spent on health by the PNG government, a tiny fraction of the amount spent on health in our country."

Professor Wood will travel to Papua New Guinea again in September this year. The staff at Professor Wood's clinic are always on the lookout for useful medical equipment and donations of cash to help fund the program. Donations can be made out to Orthopaedic Outreach - PNG Fund and sent to the Perth Orthopaedic Institute, Hollywood Private Hospital, Monash Avenue, Nedlands WA 6009.

(With thanks to Ashlea Hatcher)