

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 15th June 2015

Venue: Gallipoli Room

Time: 1130 hrs for 1215 hrs



GUEST SPEAKER: John Schnaars:

John is an Indigenous Vietnam Veteran, who established 'Honouring Indigenous War Graves Inc' (H.I.W.G) in June 2005. This non-profit organisation has enabled the acknowledgement of over 100 indigenous veterans throughout WA, and done much to ensure that the contributions of indigenous servicemen in various conflicts have been recognised and respected.

For the Monthly LUNCHEON (15th June) PLEASE enter your name electronically on the BOOK-IN SHEET (by 1400 hrs Thursday 11th June) - using the web-site. Cost is \$30 a head.

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

President's Report

Our committee is experiencing some leg problems lately. Junior Vice, Geoff Hourn, managed to come a cropper off his bike on a trip to Bunnings and finished up needing surgery and with a leg full of screws (not those he purchased!) Not to be outdone, our Secretary, John Cleary, also doing some DIY, fell off a ladder, severely damaging his Achilles tendon. He too required surgery. John is currently immobilised and unable to drive for three months. Recovery time could be up to 18 months.

We thus desperately need a volunteer to take over the role of Secretary. Please contact one of the committee if you are able to help. John will continue to look

Continued P.2

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

LUNCHEON: 15 June, 2015 (Committee meeting at 11.00am that day)



(Continued from p.1)

after the web site. We wish him a speedy recovery.

As usual the beginning of winter with the cold season is traditionally a time when our lunch numbers are reduced. At our last luncheon, we had a problem with a much higher number attending than had booked. This meant the staff had to quickly set up another table. It would be preferable to book, as, even if it is necessary to cancel on the day, it is much easier to simply remove plates than have to physically carry in extra tables and chairs. If you find it necessary to cancel, please advise the ANZAC Club on 9281 3714 as a matter of courtesy.

Fred Brown, the Honorary Consul for Nepal, raised the plight of the Nepalese following the recent earthquakes and appealed for assistance. It was suggested that we pass the hat around. Margot organised this collection, which raised \$565. Thank you members for your generosity.

We are all extremely happy to hear that Mike Harness, after much extensive and intensive treatment for liver cancer, is making steady progress and is recovering well.

Remember, please, to **book** for the June luncheon on 15th June. No charge will be made for non-attendance.

Regretfully, bookings for our planned Sunday Lunch at "Swan Yacht Club, on 28th June, were below the minimum required, so we have cancelled.

Yours in fellowship, **Peter**

Sub-Branch Snippets

Popular member, **Ken Bladen**, is recuperating well after surgery for kidney cancer. We all join in wishing you a full, successful recovery Ken - and look forward to your melodic tenor voice leading us in the National Anthem once again!

Ian Mulholland, one of our Past Presidents - indeed, he was prepared to do it twice! - was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation at our May Luncheon. Ian resides in Denmark these days, but it is always a pleasure to see his cheerful face whenever he makes a rare trip to Perth. Nice to catch up with you "Mo"!

Our hearts go out to our well-loved, long-time member: **Tom Horton**, who lost his beloved wife, Patricia on 25th May - after 60 very happy years. Her death came only a week after Tom was fitted with a pace-maker. Our sympathy and condolences to you and your four wonderful children Tom.

Honour Avenue Group's stalwart: **Barry Campbell**, is another to undergo bilateral (that means BOTH!) knee replacement surgery in recent days. He has braced himself to be hobbling around on his new "knobbles" for a little while, but know we are all with you and supporting you in spirit Baz!

Another member with two brand spanking new knees is **Kevin Graham** - and, although walking with great care, he has healed well and been able to discard his elbow crutches. Great news Kevin - good on you!

Beaut to see our lone Arnhem veteran, **John Hately**, again at our last Luncheon. He loves to come, and we love to see him. Although now in a Nursing home, John's carer for the day was grandson-in-law, Glen Quartermain. Glen is Sports Editor for the "Sunday Times". Hopefully we can inveigle him to be our Guest Speaker in the not-so-distant future.



TEE-HEEs and Fiddle-Dee-Dees Corner

A man bought a donkey from a preacher. The preacher told the man that this donkey had been trained in a very unique way, (being the donkey of a preacher).

The only way to make the donkey go, was to say, "Hallelujah!" And the only way to make the donkey stop, was to say, "Amen!" The man was pleased with his purchase and immediately got on the animal to try out the preacher's instructions.

"Hallelujah," said the man. The donkey began to trot. "Amen!" shouted the man. The donkey stopped immediately. "This is great!" said the man, and with a cheery "Hallelujah," he rode off - very proud of his new purchase.

The man had travelled for quite some time through some mountains when he saw he was heading toward a cliff. Alas, he could not remember the word to make the donkey stop.

"STOP!" said the man. "Halt!" he cried. The donkey just kept going. "Oh, No!Bible!....Church! Please S-T-O-P!" begged the man.

But the donkey began to trot faster. They were getting closer and closer to the cliff edge. Finally, in desperation, the man said a prayer: "Please, dear Lord. Please make this donkey stop before I go off the edge of this mountain, In Jesus' name, AMEN."

The donkey came to an abrupt stop, just one step from the edge of the cliff.

Wiping his brow, the man whispered: "Hallelujah."



SUB WARDENS DUTIES

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

Thursday 4 June 2015 : 1600 for 1630 hrs - Consulate General of India, Perth

PLEASE NOTE: CANCELLATION!! Regretfully, we had to **CANCEL** our planned Sunday, 28th June LUNCHEON at Swan Yacht Club, due to insufficient numbers. Our apologies for any disappointment.

“The Way We Were” Gallery Our Golden Oldies

Young-at-heart Richard Savage is another of our members who hails originally from “the Olde Dart!” Born in Northampton, England in 1932, he did well at his local Grammar School, and was something of a swift-footed athlete. He joined the School Sea Cadet Corps at school - which sparked a love affair with the sea; and also became a Wolf Cub at age 7 - remaining in the scouting movement until aged 21, which saw him as an assistant Scoutmaster.

From 1949 to 1953, he became an “Articled Pupil” in the surveying/town planning department of Northamptonshire County Council before call-up into “nashos” in 1954, and - although he’d have preferred the Navy - found himself doing Army basic training on the snow covered moors of Catterick (Yorkshire). His talents were quickly spotted however, and he attended Mons Officer Cadet School at Aldershot (the NS equivalent of Sandhurst), before being commissioned into the Royal Army Service Corps as a 2nd Lieutenant. His remaining 18 months was spent in a Water Transport Training unit at the west end of the Isle of Wight, not far from the Needles Lighthouse. This area featured several Forts, built as defences against French attacks), but Richard’s overriding memory of these happy days is that the place was “crawling with sun seeking beauties on holiday”.

He welcomed the tang of the ‘briny’ in his nostrils though and there were seamanship experiences aplenty, including manoeuvring under the English Channel in RN submarines, sailing across the Channel to France, and taking part in the 1955 Round the Island Race. Rough and tough work, but somebody had to do it!

Richard married at the end of his service and resumed his career as a surveyor with Ministry of Transport M1 consultants: Sir Owen Williams and Partners. (Sir Owen was knighted for Wembley Stadium in 1924). He remained in the Army Emergency Reserve for the next ten years, in which time he was promoted to Captain.

With his wife and three children (aged 8, 7 and 5) the family (Ten Pound Poms) emigrated in early 1967, flying out to WA in a four engine Bristol Britannia. He quickly obtained employment as a mineral exploration surveyor (ALCOA), and later as Assistant mine surveyor at the Jarrahdale mine site. He held a variety of very responsible mining/engineering surveyor positions in various places in WA over the next 33 years, acquiring further qualifications and experience along the way.

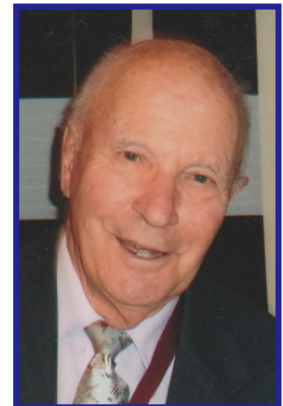
In tandem with his many years of full-time employment in Australia, Richard has contributed to our WA communities in a quite phenomenal number of roles. After settling his family into Byford in 1968, he reformed the Scout Group there, finally being appointed District Commissioner, Canning Ranges. He qualified as a St John Ambulance First Aider, going on to instruct and train others before becoming an Industrial Paramedic - who “loved abseiling down the sides of open pits”. He’s been in Lions; played Golden Oldies Rugby Union; joined many associations/clubs; and been on a myriad of Boards and committees. He is a Life Member of some of these organisations. The man’s energy makes Popeye look pedestrian!

He has known sorrow and trauma. His wife broke her spinal cord in a fall from her horse “Monty” in 1967, confining her to a wheelchair for 35 years until her death from cancer in 2002. A feisty lady, she was able to drive a hand-controlled car.

Richard is close to his children and has four grandchildren. He still loves bush-walking, cycling, swimming and keeping up with his many interests.

He recently became engaged to Gillian Mead, and it goes without saying that everyone in the Sub-Branch wishes them well.

We only hope she can keep up with you Richard!



LAST POST

Laurence Connolly (ex-British Army)

Lest We Forget





CAPTAIN Reginald Walter “REG” SAUNDERS MBE - Aboriginal Warrior

With our June Guest Speaker being an indigenous veteran, who will focus on earlier generations of Aboriginal Australians who served in our nation’s past conflicts and armed services, it seemed timely and appropriate to tell the story of the wonderful and capable Reg Saunders: the first indigenous Australian to be commissioned as an officer in the Australian army.

The son of a WWI veteran, Reg was born in Purnim (western Victoria) on 7 August, 1920. He was mainly brought up by his grandmother. Having attended school only sporadically, he found work as a sawmillier, but always saw himself as sticking up for the poor and oppressed, with whom he felt a kinship.

Very conscious of the service of Aboriginal men during the First World War, Reg enlisted on 24 April 1940, and was sent to the Middle East as a reinforcement for the 2/7th battalion. Surviving several encounters with German aircraft in North Africa, Saunders embarked on the ill-fated Greek campaign, which he - along with many others, considered a mistake. After Greece, his unit fought on Crete where Reg experienced his first close combat and was forced to remain hidden on the island for 12 months after the German victory. He escaped from Crete in May 1942 - returning to Australia before rejoining his battalion in New Guinea. By now a Sergeant, he fought through the Salamaua campaign, remaining in action with the 2/7th until mid-1944, when his CO nominated him for officer training. Reg was commissioned in November, 1944 and returned to New Guinea - as a platoon commander. At war’s end he was in Wewak, but sad for his younger brother who had been KIA.

Taking discharge, Reg spent the next five years in civvy jobs, but re-enlisted when the Korean War began. Here he served as a captain in the 3rd Battalion, RAR, and fought at Kapyong. After Korea and back in Australia, he was posted to then-National Service training, but, dissatisfied with that life, left the Army in 1954, and became a logging contractor in Gippsland (Vic). He later moved to Sydney, where he worked for years with the Austral Bronze Company and later, as a PR officer with the Office of Aboriginal Affairs.

He was awarded the MBE in 1971. A well-respected soldier and leader, Reg Saunders died on 2 March 1990.

(Editor’s Acknowledgement: *Distilled from info on the AWM web-site*)
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Editor’s Note: *In a previous life (!) I was privileged to be an Advocate with RSLWA. I heard many wonderful, personal accounts of veterans’ experiences at firsthand. I remember a man (first-name: Noel - now deceased) who recounted to me his first meeting with Reg, after being sent to Korea as a Sergeant, and told to report to his new OC.*

“I’d heard of Reg, and knew he was Aboriginal. I entered the tent, ready to salute, and saw him sitting on the floor, cleaning and oiling a Bren gun, which was in pieces around him. “What the heck?” I asked myself - thinking: “This is no way for an officer to act and behave”. I was quite disapproving. He looked up at me - as though reading my thoughts. Wryly he said: “We’ll be leaving at daybreak. The Bren bloke has just had some disturbing news from his wife. I’ve told him to leave this to me, and get on and write back to his wife **tonight**. When we go out in the morning, I want to BE SURE that I have a gunner AND a Bren we can rely on!”

Noel went on: “I knew instinctively that this was a man who was caring, shrewd and able - who I could trust, respect and rely on. I got down beside him and gave him a hand to finish stripping down the Bren. We became, and remained, firm friends for the rest of his life. I still visit his family regularly. He was a man in a million”.



Newly commissioned Lt Reg Saunders (L) and Tom Derrick VC congratulate each other after graduating as officers together in 1944

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

HOLLYWOOD
PRIVATE HOSPITAL



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