



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

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 March 2013

Venue:

Gallipoli Room

Time:

1130 hrs for 1215 hrs

GUEST SPEAKER: Brother Ollie Pickett. Brother Ollie has devoted years of his life to running a Rotary-sponsored group who repair wheel-chairs to be sent to the poor and disabled overseas, especially in Third World countries. They have sent a staggering number—charity in action!

GENTLEMEN, PLEASE NOTE: In deference to Perth's even-warmer-than-usual Summer months - your Committee has voted to allow the wearing of ties and jackets to be optional!

For the next Luncheon (18th March) PLEASE enter your name electronically on the BOOK-IN SHEET (by Friday 15 March, 2013), using web-site (www.highgate-rsl.org.au - click on MARCH LUNCHEON). FOR THOSE NOT on-line, please call Margot Harness on 9293 1076 (or any of the committee listed at left). Please note that the Book-In Sheet allows you to place yourself on a PERMANENT basis. (Just enter "P" after your name).



president's Report

In this edition I intend to focus on the recent change of leadership of the RSL WA and on how we as a Sub Branch can express our opinion on changes required to obtain better outcomes for the RSL in WA.

The State President has indicated that he is seeking change on how State Branch conducts business within the organization and consults, involves and informs its members on State Branch decisions and plans for the future. We have the ideal opportunity to make constructive change through this process.

I will be meeting with the State President in a forum, along with all other Sub Branch Presidents, on the 15th March to discuss the way forward and would like some feedback on our member's views. In particular whether the current level of service at ANZAC House needs review, whether the Listening Post and the Sub Branch Signal are relevant today and whether you would prefer a vote in State elections by members, as opposed to the present system when only delegates vote.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

LUNCHEON - 18 March 2013

(Committee: 10am same day)



(Continued from P.1)

Overall I would like to receive any suggestion you may have on new ways we can increase our membership. You can e-mail your suggestions directly to me: leon@leongriffiths.com All correspondence will be held in confidence and collated for the 15th March meeting.

We also need to consider whether our Sub-Branch is to hold any special event to commemorate the Centenary of ANZAC. If it is left too late we will miss out on funding set aside for the occasion.

What a difference having a membership officer makes. Two new members were welcomed at the last luncheon with more applications in the pipeline. Welcome to Judy Farrell and Joe Cicala. CSM Joe has already indicated a readiness to take on the Sergeant-at-Arms role under the watchful eyes of Bill Wilson, who has done a wonderful job over many years.

Finally, the Committee is tentatively planning a train trip down to Bunbury (possibly in lieu of the May Luncheon). Once there, we hope to lunch at the Bunbury RSL before catching the train home. We are also planning a Bus Trip to the Gravity Centre at Gingin (date to be advised), with Lunch at the Gingin Hotel, and a visit to a Winery on the way home. Partners/wives are welcome to both for a great day out. Full details will be in the next newsletter.

Yours in friendship, Leon

HEAR YE! HEAR YE!!! ...

Our web-site "Hall of Honour": <http://Highgate-rsl.org.au> needs to be up-dated with the details of all our NEWER members (apparently no new photos have been added since 2008). **IF** you have joined Highgate since then, please send a brief CV of your service details (and post-discharge career) to our Web-master: John Cleary (john.cleary@highgate-rsl.org.au) WITH a Service-era PHOTO please. If you are not on-line, a hand-written CV (and small photo) can be sent to the Editor of Highgate News (32 Lenori Rd Gooseberry Hill WA 6076).

URGENT: Do you hold the "Atlantic Star? DVA will be taking EIGHT veterans to London in May to commemorate the Atlantic Convoys. If you ARE an "Atlantic veteran" do ring DVA straight away: (on 13 3254); or www.dva.gov.au - click on "Quick Link", and then "Commemorations". Or ring State HQ on 9287 3799.

SUB-BRANCH SNIPPETS:

Many of **Eli Quartermaine's** mates will be concerned to hear that his health is not too good of late. On top of other woes, Eli's hip surgery was complicated by contracting an infection whilst in hospital. Eli has been a most willing stalwart in Highgate for a long time (always happy to greet members and collect monies at the "Pay In" table at our Luncheons), so he is sorely missed. We all wish you all the very best at this difficult time Eli.

Another long-time hard-working member who hasn't been travelling too well lately is our esteemed baritone: **Ken Bladen**. Ken was recently admitted to HPH for surgical repair of a hernia, but our Hospital Visitor (**Kevin Graham**) reports that things went well, and Ken should be safely home again soon. Hope things continue to heal well Ken!

On the subject of our Hospital Visitor: **Kevin Graham** is happy to visit any of our members who find themselves in HPH or hospitals North of the River; but due to Privacy laws, he has no way of knowing who these people are unless he is notified. If you learn of someone in the Sub-Branch having a spell in hospital, please let Kevin know (Phone) 9389 1406 or via e-mail: ktgraham@iinet.net.au

Long-time member, **Bob Elliott** is our South of the River Hospital Visitor, who can be contacted on 9312 2732 or rel43208@bigpond.net.au

Our grateful thanks to both these men who carry out this important role.

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A "Pun can be Fun" Corner

A 92 year-old man went to the doctor for his six-monthly physical check-up. Just a few days later the doctor saw the smiling man walking down the street with a gorgeous young lady on his arm.

At a follow up visit shortly afterwards, he doctor spoke with his patient remarking: "You're really doing great, aren't you?"

The man replied, "I'm just doing what you said Doctor: "Get a hot mamma and be cheerful"."

The Doctor said, "I didn't say that at all. I said you've got a heart murmur. Be careful."

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

If so please contact me personally on 9244 8072

Ken Bladen



SUB WARDENS DUTIES

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

Saturday, 23 March, 2013 : 0915 for 0945 hrs - RAAF Association - Anniversary of formation of the RAAF
 Sunday, 24 March, 2013 : 1200 for 1230 hrs - Consul of Greece: National Day of Greece

"The Way We Were" Gallery Our Golden Oldies

Abe Sher is known to most of us: a modest, ex-South African, quiet chap who served in WW2. But I wonder how many of us know that he was captured at Tobruk in June 1942 and spent the rest of the war as a POW? That pre-war he was a Native Commissioner? And that after WW2 he became a solicitor, and then, for about 18 years in total, a municipal Councillor and Mayor - in which role he negotiated with the South African government to construct a well-built nuclear power station in his municipality? Our Abe in his quiet way has been a real "action man", who has a swag of exploits under his belt.

Abe joined the 2nd Natal Mounted Rifles in April 1940 having several postings before appointment to the 3rd Field Regiment of the Transvaal Horse Artillery, in North Africa in 1941. Shortly after Rommel's breakthrough at Bir Hakim and the Allied defeat at Fort Acroma, Abe's troop formed part of the composite force to strengthen the perimeter of Tobruk. Alas, they were cut off and captured, as was his brother, Bennett, who was with the Capetown Highlanders. Abe was sent to Italy; initially near Lucca, but shortly afterwards he found himself as a field labourer at Susegana in the Italian Alps, where regular Red Cross parcels made life easier. At that point, Abe's captivity generally wasn't too bad. But in mid-1942 word came through ordering all Jewish POWs to another camp, which was, to quote Abe: "disconcerting". Despite various rail journeys (once in cattle trucks) and several long forced marches, the POWs were fairly well treated by the Italians. Indeed, in hindsight, Abe believes that the Italian authorities did what they could to protect Jewish POWs from the Nazis, where possible.

However, it wasn't to last, and Abe ended up at Camp Tschausch in Bohemia (Czechoslovakia) as a forced labourer at the Hermann Goring Petro-chemical works which used brown coal to produce the petrol the Germans needed for the Russian front. In the heart of a huge industrial region, sustained bombing was a regular hazard, night and day. In about May 1944, working with a mostly British gang, excavating at the Brown Coal site, he witnessed an extraordinary raid in broad daylight. After Pathfinders had laid out the target area (the nearby Benzine factory), using four white phosphorus smoke pointers, approx 1,000 US Liberators and Flying Fortress bombers, in formation, came over and dropped their bombs. The raid lasted a full 45 minutes, setting the whole Benzine complex so ablaze, it would be three months before it could resume making fuel. There were about 300 Anti-aircraft guns in the area, each with a crew of about 30. Imagine the noise of incessant bomb explosions plus Ack-Ack! The risks from "friendly bombing" were ever-present. Twice the camp barracks were hit, with a near-miss for Abe. Eventually, on 8 May 1945, Camp Tschausch was liberated by the advancing Russian Army. Abe was taken to Rheims (France) before being flown to the UK in a Lancaster Bomber. Offered two university courses in Scotland, he accepted both: 'International Affairs' at St Andrews and 'Agriculture' at Aberdeen.



In the meantime, his brother, Bennett, detained in different camps, escaped and was recaptured three times, but eventually escaped and lived for months behind the German lines—leading a group of other ex-POW escapees. For his bravery and ingenuity, he was awarded the Military Medal. Post-war, Abe was with him and their mother, when the Governor-General in Pretoria, pinned it on his uniform. *(Photo at left shows Abe (L) and Bennett, in his kilt, early WW2).*

On his return to South Africa, Abe resumed his civil occupation for a while, but then married and became a solicitor before being elected as a Councillor in a new local authority near Capetown. He and his wife eventually decided to emigrate to Australia. On his departure, a written testimony from a senior colleague stated in part: "Your service to the community constitutes an absolute beacon which is characterised by commitment, fairness and a gentle touch as only you know how It has been a great pleasure for us to know Abe Sher the man and Abe Sher the gentleman".

And so say all of us Abe!!



LAST POST

Let us all remember Sub-Branch friends who have passed away. May they Rest in Peace

Lest We Forget

**NEW LEADERSHIP SEEKS GRASS-ROOTS INPUT**

As we all now know, distinguished Vietnam veteran and former politician (both Federal and State), Graham Edwards AM, won the election for a new RSL State President in December, and is already making his impressive presence felt.

He promised a “new broom” from the outset—and has already taken decisive steps to implement some changes. A Survey has been sent out to all Sub-Branches in the state, seeking responses from the membership on TEN key issues, which he believes are highly relevant to the way the RSL operates in this State, and how it might be improved. More may be sought at a later date, but for the moment these are perceived as at least a “starting point” in assessing what changes, if any, might better enhance the way the organisation is administered and its services delivered.

Your Highgate Committee has drafted a response, but invites your view or comment(s). Please send a brief note to the Secretary: Ray Galliot. (Address and e-mail details on front page).

The TEN Survey Questions are:

1. Is your Sub-Branch satisfied with the level of service received from State Office including
 - Consultation over major issues?
 - Level of Communication and value of information sent?
 - Access to advice, services and promptness of response on queries?
2. Do members of your Sub-Branch access the ANZAC House dining room (mainly for Metro Sub-Branches)? What services at ANZAC House would your Sub-Branch members change?
4. Does your Sub-Branch believe “*The Listening Post*” is relevant?
5. Do the members of your Sub-Branch like the current format of “*The Listening Post*”?
6. Does your Sub-Branch think *The Sub-Branch Signal* is relevant?

NOTE: Q7. and Q8. concern the December RSL State elections, and don’t require general feedback.

9. Would your members support the election of State President, and members of the State Executive by direct postal vote in which all members participate, rather than just Sub-Branch delegates?

10. What do members of your Sub-Branch suggest to increase membership state wide?

ALL of these questions provided boxed options for the Survey to be ticked as either ‘YES’, ‘NO’ or ‘N/A’ - as well as providing space for COMMENTS.

Your Committee will submit all responses and recommendations as a Sub-Branch. In general terms, the Highgate Committee welcomes the chance for improved levels of communication throughout the organisation—recommending, for instance, that abbreviated Minutes of State Executive meetings (ie: in dot point format—without all the detail) should be circulated to Sub-Branch Presidents, to help inform the “grassroots” membership of decisions made “at the top”.

In response to the questions focussing on *The Listening Post*, Highgate would like to see a better quality product, especially in relation to photographs. Highgate also encourages a “Letters to the Editor” page, which should generate discussion and debate and allow for robust comments.

Highgate also believes that open and all-encompassing voting for State representatives is the most democratic method and should replace the current practice of leaving the voting process to Congress Delegates only.

WATCH FOR THESE IMPORTANT SOCIAL EVENTS COMING UP

Train trip to Bunbury: Sorry we don’t yet have a date. Some of you will have the chance to use your annual “free rail voucher” (courtesy of the government). A bus will meet the train at the Bunbury end and take travellers to the Bunbury RSL for a nice lunch. The bus will return everyone to the train for the return journey home. Partners/wives welcome. Modest Cost at Bunbury end: Further details to be advised in April Newsletter.

**Bus Trip to Gravity Centre Gingin - including Pub Lunch and a Winery tippie!**

This outing to be in **April** or **May**, will give members a chance to see this scientific Discovery Centre at first hand. Dedicated to furthering our knowledge of cosmology, astronomy and physics—it is really worth seeing. A bus (to and fro) being organised. Partners/wives welcome. Full details next issue.



SALUTING THE MEN OF THE HONOUR AVENUES MAINTENANCE GROUP

There are 1,500 stories behind the plaques and trees that line the main avenues in Perth's Kings Park. These are, in effect, the "spiritual graves" of men—some of them only boys—who were born or enlisted in WA, but never came home. Who died in the trenches and saps of the Dardenelles, or the mud of Belgium and France during WWI; or who later faced off against Germany and Japan in WW2, all of them solidly committed to sparing Australia from enslavement and harm. All of them have lain since somewhere in foreign places: the mud, the desert, the jungles or the waters of the world. The families have no grave in Australia to visit, or to mourn for the man they lost.

Sixteen of our Highgate members comprise the Highgate RSL Honour Avenues Group, and meet each Tuesday at Kings Park to manufacture, install, maintain and repair all the plaques. To quote the Chairman of this group: Norm Manners: "These plaques are their spiritual graves and the reason why the volunteers of Highgate RSL Sub-Branch's Honour Avenues Group tend them with great respect and deep humility".

The first dedication ceremony took place in August 1919. Even after all these years, the Group manufactures over 50 new plaques each year, which are requested by relatives and presented to them at four ceremonies spaced throughout the year. Each ceremony, held in May Circle at Kings Park, includes a reading of each late person's life, prayers conducted by a senior Army Chaplain and the sounding of the Last Post by an Army bugler. The most recent Dedication was on 16th February 2013 - the next will be in May. Relatives, when applying for a plaque, must meet the criteria set by the State RSL. Interested people wanting more details are encouraged to contact the Secretary of the Honour Avenues Group: Ken Jones 9448 2415 (Email: honour.avenue@bgpa.wa.gov.au) A database of each named plaque is maintained.

It is HAG policy to place relative's plaques together. Father and son, brothers, mates of the same battalion, ship, squadron or service, go side by side on the same tree. All posts are individually numbered to the front of the post directly under the plaque. It is hoped that an Honour Plaques website will be operational shortly that will enable the general public to pinpoint the position and number of the plaque they are seeking.

Norm Manners encourages people to visit these memorial avenues and ponder. As he has eloquently expressed it: "When you next take a stroll through Kings Park, pause at some of these plaques; read them, note the stated age, think of where and how they died and why. Then in all humbleness, make a pledge to remember them. Lest We Forget".

Highgate acknowledges the value of the work done by all the HAG volunteers on our behalf, and we say: "Thank You".



Norm Manners and MOST of his "HAG Band of Merry Men" following the November 2012 Dedication Ceremony: (L to R): Barry Eather, Peter Hummerston, Barry Campbell, John Homer, Mike Harness, Dick Jones, Alf Till, Ken Jones (Sec), Ron Adams, Norm Manners (Skipper), Norm Coleman, Robin Slater

**HOLLYWOOD PRIVATE HOSPITAL AGAIN SHOWS THE WAY**

Hollywood Private Hospital remains at the forefront of urology care and therapy in WA with the acquisition of a new 180 Watt GreenLight XPS Laser machine which commenced service on 30 January, successfully treating two patients with benign prostate hyperplasia (BPH).

This new machine succeeds a less powerful 120 Watt model that from 2010 treated over 250 men with urinary problems caused by benign enlargement of the prostate gland. It is the only hospital in the state, to date, to offer this state-of-the-art surgical treatment. This newer XPS machine has fifty percent more power than its predecessor, significantly reducing treatment times.

Mr Syd Weinstein, one of three Urology specialist at Hollywood trained in the use of this technology names several clear advantages with this latest 180 Watt XPS model. Patients with larger prostate glands can be treated in a shorter period of time; there are fewer post-operative bleeding complications, less fluid absorption during surgery, and shorter hospital stays. It can be used with patients on blood thinners.

Men suffering from BPH typically experience at least one of a number of symptoms, which can disrupt their lifestyle and interfere with daily activities. BPH symptoms include frequent urination, urgent urination, a weakened urinary stream, the need to get up often at night to pass urine and a feeling that the bladder has not been completely emptied.

Historically, BPH has been treated with medication in the early stages or by having an operation known as transurethral resection of the prostate (or TURP) if the condition becomes more severe.

The unique properties of the GreenLight Laser, compared to other lasers is that it allows tissue to be vaporised and coagulated at the same time whilst causing minimal deep burning or disruption.

"The acquisition of the new GreenLight XPS not only reinforces Hollywood Private Hospital's reputation as a leader in urological care in the state, but also allows patients access to treatment that is available anywhere else in the world," said Mr Weinstein.



Utmost concentration is apparent as surgeons perform delicate laser therapy at Hollywood Private Hospital

Director of Medical Services, Dr Margaret Sturdy, said Hollywood Private Hospital is committed to remaining at the forefront of urological expertise and technology in this state.

"Hollywood Private Hospital is proud to provide a robust urological service. Providing GreenLight Laser Therapy means we are able to offer our patients who suffer benign prostatic hyperplasia a less invasive surgical alternative that is just as effective but has fewer side affects," Dr Sturdy said.

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

HOLLYWOOD**PRIVATE HOSPITAL**

**THIS NEWSLETTER IS PRINTED AS A SERVICE TO THE VETERAN COMMUNITY
BY THE OFFICE OF THE HON STEPHEN SMITH, MEMBER FOR PERTH**