

# THE HIGHGATE R.S.L. NEWS

No. 251

JUNE 1989

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MONTHLY LUNCHEON

MONDAY, 19th JUNE, 1989

VENUE: Gallipoli Room, Anzac House, Perth

TIME: Fellowship 1200 hours  
Luncheon 1250 hours

SPEAKER: Peter C. Firkins

SUBJECT: "R.S.L. Defence Policy"

THE SPEAKER

Peter C. Firkins attended Guildford Grammar School and enlisted in the Royal Australian Airforce at 17 years of age, and went overseas when 17½ years, serving in operations of 460 RAAF Heavy Bomber Squadron, RAF Bomber Command. He completed tour of operations (29 raids) when he was 18½ years. He held the rank of commissioned Pilot Officer and was discharged as Flying Officer.

He later became the Executive Director of the Perth Chamber of Commerce 1963-1982 and held among others the following functions: President of the 460 Squadron Association, Director of the Perth Rotary Club, Vice President of the Australia Defence Association, State Chairman of the Committee for Employer Support of Reserve Forces W.A., State President of the National Heart Foundation. He also formed part of the Australian Delegations to the Hong Kong Conference of the Commonwealth Chambers of Commerce and attended several similar conferences held in other cities in South East Asia (1961-1981). He was awarded 'Citizen of the Year for Industry and Commerce (W.A.)' in 1981. He is Director of Parry Corporation Ltd, and Chairman of Directors of 'Value Engineering Australasia Pty Ltd'.

He is regarded as one of Australia's foremost military historians and is the author of, among others: 'The Golden Eagles' (1980) and 'From Hell to Eternity' (1979).

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SPEAKER MAY

Dr Douglas Sutherland-Bruce described to us the unique place Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle secured in literary history by his creation of the great detective Sherlock Holmes. Not only are the works excellent examples of the use of the English language but were written at the time of the evolution of periodical magazines making them available for large international circulation. He also described how Sherlock Holmes Societies were formed in many countries and told of some of the activities of the Society here in Perth. It was an entertaining talk much enjoyed by those present and thanks to the warm reception he received the good Doctor has agreed to return at a later date to speak on the subject of HERALDRY.

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A WARM WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

P. EDDY                      B. GIBSON                      N. BREWER  
H. JEFFRIS                      C. RICHARDSON

A sad farewell to Dudley Napier who died recently. A letter of condolence on behalf of the President and Members has been sent to his daughter.

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The following is an extract from The West Australian which may be of interest to some members:

"A reunion of members of 13th Field Engineers and 16th Bn. Cameron Highlanders who camped on Rottneest Island during the week of September 4, 1939 is being planned. Contact Bill Willi on 446 7569 or Len De Grussa on 276 7253".

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A pat on the back to the sub branch member who while having a pre-lunch drink at the club bar at Anzac House on Monday, 15th May, made conversation with an elderly gentleman from Victoria (he must be elderly because he was 39 when he enlisted in the 39-45 conflict) Finding he was alone our member invited the visitor to join us upstairs for lunch. A nice gesture.

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The committee meeting which is normally held on the first Monday of each month has had to be put back one week because the first Monday in June is a public holiday. President Sam extends an invitation to any sub branch member who may be interested to come along and "sit in". A good idea, particularly if you may consider nominating for the committee in the future.

VENUE:                      Annex to the Gallipoli Room, 1st Floor, Anzac House  
TIME/DATE:                      1 pm 12th June (Normally 1st Monday in each month)

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NATIONAL MILITARY SERVICE

It is proposed that the RSL National Defence Committee examine in some detail the introduction of a National Service Training Scheme.

No Government proposes such a scheme because, despite the opinion polls giving majority support, the opposing minority of some 20% is enough to lose an election.

However, if one is able to establish the cost of the various youth training schemes, State & Federal, as well as savings on unemployment benefits (the dole) it may be possible to dismiss the non-adoption of National Service training, on cost grounds. Migrant support schemes also incur costs, part of which may be able to be directed to funding National Service training. The transformation of national sub-groups into elements of a multi-cultural society, is the keystone to the successful embracing of all migrants, new and old, into a homogenous multicultural nation. That national service training would help enormously in the creation of a homogenous Australia has never been seriously questioned. While a 100% National Service Training Scheme would be the ideal, its practicability is in doubt, requiring the induction and training of some 80,000 fit young men (out of 120,000) per year, and this of course does not include the involvement of women in a scheme.

It has never been asserted that, because previous National Service Training Schemes have not had 100% cover, they have been ineffective. In fact it is believed that a percentage scheme, from the social point of view, can achieve an overall national unifying effect.

Would State Branches please consider this matter and provide comments for consideration by the National Defence Committee.

State Branches are also to provide the costs of various youth schemes funded by their State Governments, or by the Commonwealth Government in their States, with the aim of providing some basic substance in support of the introduction of a National Service Training Scheme of, say, 90 or 120 days.

The National Defence Adviser has suggested that females have been excluded from consideration so far for no reason other than the numbers. The Defence Committee believes that a civilian training structure would have to be constructed, using such assets as may be available from existing youth schemes.

When replies are received from all State Branches, the National Defence Committee will be able to start putting together a paper.

Yours sincerely,

IAN GOLLINGS

National Secretary

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