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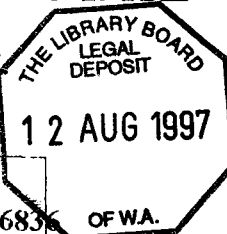
**SURFACE
MAIL**

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

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50th ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON

MONDAY, 18 AUGUST 1997.

VENUE: GALLIPOLI ROOM, ANZAC HOUSE, ST GEORGES TCE., PERTH
TIME: 1145 HOURS FELLOWSHIP - 1230 LUNCHEON.

PROCEEDINGS:-

1. Normal opening - apologies; guests; announcements and admin. matters.
2. Sir Charles Court A.K., K.C.M.G., O.B.E. will propose the toast to the Sub-branch and its foundation members.
3. Cutting of the cake.
4. John Fitzhardinge A.O., M.B.E., E.D., foundation member and fourth President (1953) will lead the response to the toast: the remaining **FOUNDING** members present - Ian Bessel-Browne M.B.E., E.D., R.L.; Roger Fitzhardinge; Alf Pearson, V.R.D.; and Warren Smith will be invited to speak in support.
5. Questions and discussion time.
6. Coffee, cake and port.

Extra rations are ordered and all members are asked to make a special effort to attend and honour those who started us off.

DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER NEWS - FRIDAY 22 AUGUST, 1997

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Phil Loffman's history is now being studied by most of us. His excellent work was commended by a hearty vote of thanks at our July meeting.

In reading it one cannot help being struck by the high number of members, past and present, who have been significant contributors and leaders in the steady progress that our fine city and great state have made since 1945. It should come as no surprise that our sub-branch has made a similar contribution to RSL affairs. This highlights the privilege we all share in being members of Highgate. It also reminds us all of the responsibility and accountability required to earn that privilege and to maintain and build on the reputation established. While it is heartening to see the continuing efforts of sub-branch officers, most in their eighth and ninth decades, still producing good results, reinforcements are sorely required from the younger brigade if we are to continue in strength.

I have repeatedly called for some of our younger members to step forward to act on committee and State Executive. There has been some welcome response but we need more. The request becomes more urgent day by day. You will be surprised by the benefit you can gain in knowledge, friendship and understanding of the excellent work of the RSL if you can spare a little of your time. Please let's hear from you.

I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING ALL MEMBERS AT OUR FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON ON MONDAY 18TH AUGUST.

(DON MEREDITH)

PENSION /WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT:

Remove Interest Penalty for Additional Advance under the Defence Service Homes (DSH) Scheme.

INITIATIVE:

This initiative will reduce the interest rate on new additional advances under the DSH Scheme. The cost of this initiative over four years will be \$730,000.

BACKGROUND:

To date persons who have borrowed less than the maximum loan available of \$25,000 at an interest rate of 6.85% per annum have been disadvantaged if they later seek the balance by way of an additional advance, which has only been available at an interest rate of 10% per annum. In particular elderly clients who use the loan for modification and repairs are penalised. For example if they initially apply for \$15,000 and a year or two later apply for a further amount of, say \$10,000 up to their full entitlement, the latter \$10,000 is at an interest rate of 10% per annum.

The new arrangements would allow clients to utilise their entitlement over time as the need for modifications and repairs become apparent without paying what is, effectively, a penalty interest rate. This measure will assist eligible persons to maintain and remain in their homes for as long as they wish.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES IS AS FOLLOWS:

Single tiered subsidised advances, i.e. those funded on or after 19 December, 1988 at 6.85% per annum will be reduced from 10% to 6.85% per annum. Specified portfolio assets, i.e. those funded prior to 19 December, 1988 and tiered subsidised advances, to a rate which would have resulted in clients not paying more than effective 6.85% per annum on their DSH borrowings had they taken the additional advance at the same time as the current advance/s.

In cases involving tiered specified portfolio assets or subsidised advances where the total additional advance amount is for less than \$10,000, the additional advance interest rate is still set at 10% per annum. The change would affect all new clients and those also seeking an additional advance where the effect of these borrowings would lift the average interest rate to more than 6.85% per annum.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: 1 January, 1997.

Q. How do I find out whether or not I am entitled to an additional advance?

A. Contact any office of the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

(BOB SMITH).

SUB-WARDENS' DUTIES

Saturday	9 August, 1997	0930 hours for 1000 hours	HMAS Canberra & Shropshire Assoc.
Friday	15 August, 1997	1030 hours for 1100 hours	AVADSC
Sunday	24 August, 1997	1130 hours for 1200 hours	Malaya/ Merdeka Vets' Assoc.
Sunday	7 September, 1997	0915 hours for 0950 hours	39ers' Assoc.
Sunday	14 September, 1997	1445 hours for 1515 hours	Royal Air Forces Assoc. B of B Comm.

(NB In future Sub-Wardens' Duties will be published as received to help with your diaries).

HIGHGATE SUB-BRANCH HONOUR AVENUE COMMITTEE.

Three years after the first dedication ceremony in 1919, the RSL WA Branch accepted responsibility for the care, preservation and maintenance of the memorial plaques in Kings Park. Members of the then West Perth Sub-branch provided committee members. A name change to the Public Service Sub-branch, an amalgamation with the Press Sub-branch in 1973 and a further amalgamation with Highgate in 1976 brought a long held duty of care for the memorial plaques in the Kings Park Honour Avenues to our Sub-branch.

The Highgate Honour Avenue Committee comprises a small group of dedicated members who work closely with the Kings Park Board to ensure that the 1135 memorial plaques and posts remain for perpetuity as a highly visible commemoration of the individual sacrifices of Western Australian servicemen and women and a reminder of the terrible loss incurred by their family and friends. The current members of the committee are:- "Bish" Kwiecinski; Don Meredith; Len Ikin; Les Stewart; Ken Wood; Basil Sprenger; Jock Geldart; Robert Mitchell and Chris Brooks. Although not on the committee, Peter Hummerston prepares and paints all the new posts, which makes the maintenance task much easier.

Over the past 78 years the contribution of time and effort by the members of the RSL is no better exemplified than that of the 50 years years of continuous service to the committee by our late member Max Brice.

(CHRIS BROOKS)

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MEMORIAL SERVICE: BATTLES OF GREECE AND CRETE.

Monday 19 May, 1997. Representatives from the undermentioned organisations, and wives or lady friends, assembled at the Greek Orthodox Church at the corner of Charles and Carr streets at 0730 hours to board a coach for the journey to Margaret River. Some 47 people comprising the Perth contingent.

2/3rd Field Regiment - 10; 11th and 2/11 -12; 2/7 Field Ambulance - 4; 39ers' Association - 4; Highgate Sub-branch - 3; Greek Australian RSL - 7; Mr & Mrs Ken Johnson - 2; Mr Theo Econonou Greek Press - 1- ; Cretan Brotherhood - 2; Archbishop Stylianos - 2.

Highgate members Peter Hummerston RFD and John Lowe represented the Warden, Deputy Warden and Sub-Wardens of the Kings Park Memorial.

Responsible for the Memorial Service were the Greek Consul, Mr Theodore Tsakiris and the Cretan Brotherhood. Overall organiser was Mr Mexis, the Greek Vice Consul.

The beautiful little Chapel and adjoining hall are situated some kilometres west of Margaret River township. The land was donated by E.G. (Geoff) Edwards of the 2/11 Battalion. Geoff and his wife, Beryl, were responsible for the funding and building of the Chapel and donating it to the organisation. Margaret River Sub-branch helps with the care and maintenance.

Upon arrival the party was shown through the Chapel and hall and then assembled in the Chapel for the dedication service conducted by Archbishop Stylianos. At the completion of the service all adjourned to the hall where a delightful hot meal was served. The Greek Consul and party travelled down by car and Margaret River RSL members joined the congregation. The Consul welcomed all those present and thanked them, and the volunteer helpers, for their attendance. Further speeches were made by the representatives from the various organisations. It was unfortunate that, due to ill health, Geoff Edwards was unable to attend.

After the completion of all the formalities the Perth contingent boarded the coach at 1600 hours for return to Perth. A very memorable day!

(PETER HUMMERSTON)

Transcript of an address by Air Marshall JW Newham, AC (RAAF Retd), given to the biennial dinner for the RAAF Beaufort Squadrons Association held at the MCG, Melbourne on Wednesday, 23 April, 1997.

President Charles, Chairman Leo, Ladies and members of the Beaufort Squadrons Association.

Thank you for remembering me from our last encounter which Leo and I reckon to be 1979, and by honouring me by asking me to speak on this important occasion. A few days back I spoke with AM Sir Valston Hancock on the 'phone and he asked that I pass on to you his best wishes and warmest regards; he said that he was most disappointed that he could not be with you.

It is a special pleasure, too, for me to share the atmosphere of this revered institution. I recall well made made, here I think, by Sir Donald Bradman on the history of cricket; it contained two anecdotes that I feel are worth repeating. In covering the success of our arguably greatest Test Team 1948, Bradman told of a invitation to visit the King at Balmoral. At the onset of winter he was photographed with the King in the gardens - Don with his hands in his pockets! The picture was published in most every newspaper in the land with very stern rebukes from the editors. In his own defence Sir Donald said that given the weather he didn't think that the King regarded it as impolite, and indeed, he opined that the King would have had his hands in his pockets too, had he not been wearing a kilt. It appeared that only one newspaper gave the matter some independent thought. The Canberra Times said that it didn't see much wrong in having one's hands in one's own pockets; indeed by law only the Taxman could put his hands in another's pocket.

Sir Donald spoke also of the disruption to the game by WWII and of the supreme sacrifice of a number of great cricketers. He went on to relate the assessment of Lord Birkett at the end of the Nuremberg trials who said that abandonment of law and codes of behaviour rendered the pitch unfit for play. Yet play on it we did, for there was no acceptable alternative; which brings me to the first of two themes I wish to address this evening. (I would like to declare that I will make a couple of assertions without their substantiation, because I do not have the time to talk them through. However if any of you would like to speak with me later, I'll be happy to elaborate.)

I raise the issue of resort to international crime and crimes against humanity because there has been a resurgence of comment lately and fresh information hitherto unrevealed crimes, horrifying events and a revision upwards of casualty figures, especially among civilian populations. More evading warcrimals have been exposed and many ask if it is not time to let these matters rest, that it seems ruthless to pursue these people for so long, so relentlessly. I wonder about this because the crimes were so terrible and cruel. Not long back I re-read the two volumes by Lord Russel of Liverpool: *The Scourge of the Swastika* and *The Knights of Bushido*. Neither is pleasant reading. In one Lord Russell states, in the midst of the most sickening events, "...and what happened next is too horrifying to commit to print." So I have no qualms about bringing alleged criminals of this ilk to account.

I would observe that the Germans have faced up to the history of the NAZI regime; not so the Japanese, and I say this not to inflame the hurts or fan the embers of war, because I believe we have been honourable in victory and generous in forgiveness. It is a basic tenet of our way of life that we do not punish children for the sins of their parents, nor type a nation or group by the actions of some members of society. Nevertheless a flaw remains: the crimes of the ruling military class have not been openly acknowledged by Japanese leadership; indeed I put it to you that the Japanese people still do not know about them. There remains a gaping hole in their home consumption history.

At the 50th anniversary commemoration of the POW outbreak at Cowra NSW, I sat at lunch with two ex-POWs. Both had taken part in the event and one even apologised to me for having followed the escape leadership (the WOFF Pilot who was captured at Melville Island, I think, during the early raids on Darwin). I mentioned to him that we had no objections on that score because we regarded escape as a soldier's duty. Mr Takamura implied that he regarded the event as a breach given our very fair treatment. He was still rather amazed that there had been no resultant punishment or deprivation after the event... there only discomfort after recapture was that they had had to sleep rough because they themselves had destroyed their bedding in scaling the barbed wire. His enduring memory is the lack of cruelty cruelty, and good food (he enjoys lamb to this day). He told me also that when he returned to his home, he didn't speak of the war, or of what he had done, and that no one in his village asked or commented.

I found it interesting also that the Japanese Embassy officer who acted as interpreter told me that whilst completing post-graduate study at Oxford he had taken the trouble to research the war. He seemed to have had little trouble in squaring away the record that was not available to him in Japan. I put it to you that the Japanese people did not know the truth, and most still don't.

When I went to Japan on the way to Korea in the early 50s, I carried with me all the prejudice of a young Australian of the day. I found a courteous, clean and scrupulously honest people. All of which caused me to look at them afresh. I am prepared to accept that until the truth of the war is more widely known, the fire storms that raged after the B29 bombing raids were the acts of a cruel aggressor in their eyes. Likewise, the atom bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the ultimate acts of inhumanity and injustice. To this day the annual Hiroshima commemoration carries with it implicit propaganda of a monstrous crime against the Japanese citizens of the two cities. The events, terrible though they were and properly attracting sympathy, are not put into the total context of the war, or what the effects might have been of other options open to the Allies, or the realities of extant military rule of Japan in 1945. This deceit is not worthy of a great people; it gets me steaming.

During my stewardship as Chief of the Air Staff I formed a friendship with Leonard Cheshire. We had many conversations and I found a few myths had attached themselves to the man. I would like to dispel a major misconception: that witnessing the second atom bomb explode over Nagasaki drove him to pacifism, Christianity and an anti nuclear stance. To the day he died Leonard Cheshire saw the necessity for armed action in extreme circumstances; he had been thinking about his faith and the existence of God some time before he was assigned as Churchill's personal representative at the bombing; although he had expressed concerns about nuclear weapon controls, he had concluded that their existence had forestalled major war over the past 50 years in a more effective way than more traditional methods. He told me of being invited to a Hiroshima commemoration and having participation rescinded after he had arrived in Japan and had revealed his stance in preliminary conversations with his hosts.

I believe we should be concerned that Japanese leadership refuses to openly acknowledge the truth and implies an annual criticism of the Allies at Hiroshima. I am concerned also that a number in this country believe that dropping the bomb was indefensible and that another route should have been taken. What were the other routes:

- * a demonstration drop?
- * blockade? Japan was already beaten
- * invade?

The first option was canvassed thoroughly by Truman. All his advisers, including the scientists, recognised that the whole of the country must experience this new force to trigger a surrender. An order had been promulgated for the execution of POWs; their lives had to be saved and allied casualties minimised. For me the decision was correct; it was not the time for speculation or taking risks.

There is little doubt that adoption of the second option would have cost not only the POWs lives but those of perhaps millions of Japanese women, children and indeed anyone not in the military. Japan had been ruled by a mad military clique for nearly two decades. The nation was already approaching starvation. Civilian casualties would have been enormous.

Invasion would have produced a bloody battle. Macarthur estimated a million casualties. Later estimates put the figures much higher, given the Japanese track record, its ethics and the homeland factor..

To me the moral issue is clear. Japan surrendered. Even as the Emperor's voice went out to people, who had never before heard him speak, young officers searched the Palace for the wire recording of the speech. Prolongation of the war was out of the question; too many allies would have died; few of allied POWs would have survived; the net loss of Japanese lives was less than otherwise.

Let me now turn to the second theme I wish to address. Strike operations.

When I was young and knew more than now, I thought that fighter operations were the beginning and the end of success in the air; indeed, they remain important, if not essential. However, as one gets wiser the paramount virtues of offensive action, especially within defensive strategy, mesh with the cardinal principle of war - concentration of force. Without an air strike component the prosecution of war on land and sea is overly costly if not futile. When WWII started the RAAF had no real strike capability. Our substantial contribution to Europe soon brought home the full cost of and reality; events in our own area pressed the need. We were the junior partner in a theatre that suffered the lowest priority for the supply of weapons and munitions. Our political leaders agitated every avenue and still we ended low on both quantity and quality aircraft. Eventually the strike element was equipped with the Bristol Beaufort. 700 were built in Australia fitted with P&W engines.

Ten squadrons carried out the brunt of strike operations in a theatre vastly different from Europe; no concentration of cities and road systems; no defined front line; every bay, every island and the expanses of water between them all potentially hostile; a hundred or so front lines. Difficult and dangerous terrain with destructive weather rarely seen in Europe, but the norm in the SW Pacific area. Elusive targets and fighters of superior performance were quickly deployed between the islands. Natural hazards abounded that made the avoidance of enemy generated hazards more difficult. Concomitantly you "enjoyed" appalling living conditions and near impossible maintenance environment. While I pay tribute to the aircrews who operated in this toughest of environments I pay special tribute to the groundcrews who put the Beauforts on the start line. For, without their skill, dedication and ingenuity the squadrons would not have been so effective.

Oft times effectiveness is challenged. If in doubt ask your enemy. Their assessments leave no doubt that the greatest factor leading to their defeat was our relentless and determined prosecution of air strikes. Your feats are enshrined in history. Well done!

I wish to conclude by reading Churchill's oft quoted "Few" statement. You may think it odd in this context but it has been quoted only in part since. The reference is a paragraph of Churchill's speech to the nation in the Commons 20 Aug 40 - a sitrep after nearly a year of war. The relevant paragraph places Bomber Command squarely in the Battle of Britain. It is odd indeed that the focus on Fighter Command should cause the proper span of the tribute to be ignored. Churchill said: "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few. All our hearts go out to the fighter pilots, whose brilliant actions we see with our own eyes day after day; but we must never forget that all the time, night after night, month after month, our bomber squadrons travel far into Germany, find their targets in the darkness by the highest navigational skill, aim their attacks, often under the heaviest fire with serious loss, with deliberate, careful discrimination and inflict shattering blows on the whole of the technical and war making structure of the Nazi power. On no part of the Royal Air Force does the weight of the war fall more heavily than on the daylight bombers who will play an invaluable

part in the case of invasion and whose unflinching zeal it has been necessary in the meantime on numerous occasions to restrain."

An interesting illustration of the glamour element of the day stealing the thunder of the tribute. The tribute to Fighter Command was deserved, no doubt. Churchill was too great a man to omit those who shouldered the load of taking the war to Germany in those desperate days.

So I conclude by dispelling another myth. For those interested in reading the whole of Churchill's sitrep, it is available in the records of British parliamentary proceedings (Hansard) held in the National Library in Canberra.

Thank you for having me to a most enjoyable reunion. I am most grateful.

(Reproduced with the kind permission of Air Marshall J W Newham AC, (RAAF Retd.)

(TOM SCULLY).

SPECIAL NOTICE:

Forthcoming meetings:

Committee - 1 September - 1215 hours Anzac House.

Luncheon - 15 September - 1150 hours for 1230 hours Anzac House.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Members are again reminded that when paying annual subscriptions these should be made payable to the Sub-branch!

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RETURNED AND SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA
W.A. BRANCH (INCORPORATED)

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Highgate Sub-Branch

ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY, HIGHGATE SUB - BRANCH

5th August 1997

Mr. Jock Geldart,
State Secretary,
RSL WA Branch,
ANZAC HOUSE, PERTH WA.

Dear Jock;


Proposal for a Republic

Whilst it would not be surprising to find that, among the membership of the RSL there would be a substantial number totally opposed to a republic, there would undoubtedly be many in favour. After all bullets totally disregarded colour, religion, political leanings, virtue and wickedness, rich and poor.

The unfortunate thing is that there is a considerable amount of ignorance as to the real issues. At a recent luncheon meeting we had the benefit of an address by Sir Francis Burt in which he carefully avoided voicing any opinion for or against the proposal but gave a full and most interesting account of the constitutional issues involved. Knowledge of these and appreciation thereof must be a prerequisite for anyone called upon to voice an opinion by referendum or in general discussion. I would be more than surprised if more than a minority of the electorate are aware of these issues. If they are not then they are incapable of making a considered decision.

Accordingly it was resolved at our last committee meeting that it should be recommended to State Branch that the RSL should reproduce the text of his address in full, in easily read print, and have it distributed to all sub-branches to ensure that our members are fully briefed and assisted to make properly considered decisions as and when the need occurs.

Would you please accept this as a formal recommendation.


President.