



THE RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA HIGHGATE SUB BRANCH

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Highgate Happenings MAY 2022

Gunfire Breakfast

Sixty-five members of Highgate Sub-Branch enjoyed an excellent Gunfire Breakfast at the Weld Club on Anzac morning. A particular thank you to the Weld Club, it's staff and our host Immediate Past President Bill Munro. The venue as usual was excellent, the food tops and the Highgate tea moreish. The guest speaker, Nigel Rogers, President of the Naval Historical Society of Australia - WA Chapter, entertained us with a very interesting presentation on HMAS Sydney (D48), the mutually destructive battle with the German raider Kormoran (HSK-8) and the wonderful HMAS Sydney memorial at Geraldton.

We look forward to returning next year.



May Lunch- Our May guest speaker is Brendan Cook, author of "To Their Credit: The Australian Army Pay Corps of the First World War."

On the 21st of September 1914 the Australian Government approved the raising of the Australian Army Pay Corps. Its task; the implementation and management of the largest and most complex system of financial and pay administration ever seen at that time in Australia. Overwhelmed and under-resourced from the start, this is the story of an AIF unit that, in its own quiet but distinguished way, provided essential service, not least to Soldiers and their dependents throughout the terrible conflict of 1914-

1918.

Brendan Cook is an Accountant and Taxation Advisor with Chevron and the father of three boys who lives in Perth, Western Australia. Brendan has always been interested in history, particularly military, economic and commercial history. In addition to his work and writing, Brendan volunteers his time with his son's basketball team, as President of the Boer War Memorial Society of WA, as Treasurer of the Claremont RSL Sub-Branch, and as a Committee Member and regular speaker at the Military History Society of Western Australia.

The May lunch will be on Monday 16 May, 1200 for 1230 h, Anzac House, Perth. Cost is \$40 per head. Bookings can be made at

<https://forms.gle/uwceDkc2eouu72Vm7>

You can see who is coming at:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1OZXC2hkQFYzgXb1tr7gainmf_cmoz0h9WDPwXEJU-m0/edit?usp=sharing

Happy Birthday to

Wayne Banks, Chris Brooks, Louisa Chamarette, Bob Colligan, Oliver Lovelle, Dean Smith, Bill Wilson (91), Tom James (96), Les Herbert, John Blylevens, Neil Anderson (91), John Cleary, Sandra Cross, Peter Read.

A special mention to Abe Sher, 104 this month. Grandson Jeremy advises Grandpa Abe is alive and well. He is not as mobile as he used to be and fairly deaf, but he is engaged with family activities. Grandpa is celebrating his 104th next Sunday at the Montefiore Home in Sydney. Sunday is the 77th anniversary of his liberation from his POW camp near Dresden, Germany. Grandpa will be with his children, grandchildren and increasing number of great-grandchildren. He sends his best wishes to his dear friends at Highgate RSL.

Members haven't seen Lynn Lovell-Durant for several years as she has been a F/T carer for her ex-WW2 Commando husband, Harold (2/5th Independent Company) – but she and Harold recently celebrated his 100th Birthday – complete with messages from the Queen, Governor General, PM Morrison, Governor of WA and our Premier: Mark McGowan

Please note that for catering purposes the booking sheet will close on Thursday 12 May.

Anyone who was a junior Army officer pre-mid 1970's will recall the dread of being appointed the Pay Officer for their company or sub-unit, assisted by a Pay Sergeant (who was not permitted to handle the cash, but watch while you and the recipient counted it). First breaking up the cash, then packing it for each individual soldier and hoping like hell you hadn't stuffed up and finish with leftovers, or worse, a shortfall, before the pay parade commenced. Reading Brendan's book I discovered this cruel and unusual punishment of subbies originated during WW1. Greg

Highgate Calendar

As we plummet towards another Christmas, what's happening at Highgate for the rest of the year:

20 June – Premier Mark McGowan. Bookings for this lunch will open late May. If you have members from other Sub-Branches who wish to attend, please extend an invitation to them.

18 July Mr Toru Suzuki Consul- General of Japan.

15 August AGM and OBE/OBN

19 September - the COO of Austal Ships, Ian McMillan

17 October – CMDRE Ivan Ingham AM RAN Senior ADF Officer WA

*November – Poppy Day – coordinator Ray Ward

*6 November – Remembrance Day lunch Frasers, *Date TBC

12 December (**second Monday**) – Christmas lunch with the 2UP Bush Band.

May in Military History (Years ending in 2) (courtesy AWM).

4 May 1942 Battle of Coral Sea begins This was the first naval engagement fought by aircraft alone. Although neither side won a clear victory, the Japanese were forced to attempt to capture Port Moresby in a ground campaign, rather than by

15 May 1942 Movement of prisoners of war (A Force) to Thailand from Singapore begins for work on the Burma–Thailand Railway.

Welcome new members

Ben Blake, Tony Fragomini, Derek Scott.

Sick Parade

Rodney Willox is resting at home after an operation in March, Don Blair had a stroke on Anzac Day and is recovering well in hospital; Peter Garside and Howard Montagu had to withdraw from the Gunfire Breakfast due Covid. Both have now recovered.

23 May 1942 Kanga Force moved to Wau; New Guinea Kanga Force was formed in April 1942 to reinforce the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles. Kanga force was primarily involved in reconnaissance work, but did stage some raids against Japanese positions in the Wau–Bulolo area.

30 May 1942 RAAF participates in first 1,000-bomber raid launched by the RAF. The target was Cologne, Germany. To make up the numbers, crews were taken from operational training units to participate in the raid.

31 May 1902 Boers surrender, ending the Boer War. Over 16,000 Australians served in South Africa, of whom nearly 600 died.

31 May 1942 Japanese midget submarines raid Sydney Harbour. Of the three Japanese submarines that attacked Sydney Harbour, two were destroyed or disabled during the raid; the third disappeared and was located off Sydney's northern beaches by a group of amateur divers in November 2006. Little material damage was caused by the attack, but 21 sailors were killed when the depot ship HMAS Kuttabul was torpedoed.

Highgate's own: "Who's that?" SOoooo

"LET'S GET TO KNOW":



Margot Harness, born in Melbourne, was raised as a Victorian railwayman's daughter - descendant of an Irish convict transported to Hobart on HMS "Hyderabad" (for theft of two shawls!) in 1848 on a one-way ticket: among the first of the "boat people" one might say! She was the eldest of six children, which pretty much was nature's way of naturally ensuring that she became a "bossy boot" – as the staunch Irish-Catholic family moved regularly from one small country Victorian town to another for Dad's work; and "big sisters" held sway.

Her father was a share-farmer in Gippsland and playing saxophone in local dance bands when WW2 broke out. He joined the 2nd AIF straight away: 2/5th Infantry Battalion, Sixth Division. He saw action in numerous Middle Eastern battles and Greece before being evacuated to Alexandria and subsequently transferring to Signals. He later served in New Guinea with a small group of signallers: the Air Raid Warning Wireless Company – always 'on the move' to evade Japanese detection. His "patch" was in the Western Highlands among the Chimbu nation – for whom he developed great affection and gratitude.

Margot's folks could never afford to provide the education she'd have liked, but at age 17, she persuaded them to let her join the WRANS. She learned Morse and coding, became a Radio Operator, and served four years, successively, at HMA shore establishments "Cerberus", "Harman", "Kuttabul" and back to "Harman". One particular memory is being the sole rating on duty in the Crypto Office at Navy HQ in Sydney one night when she heard 'bells' coming from the teleprinter; tore off the message to decrypt and was one of the first in the nation to learn of the collision between HMAS "Melbourne" and HMAS "Voyager". A tragic event.

Women were so poorly paid in the mid-1960s that despite several jobs, and a wonderful five months living and working in Auckland, NZ – she returned to Australia to seek selection to the Army (WRAAC) Officer Cadet School. Fortunately, she got in, graduated as a Lieutenant, and although assuming she'd be snapped up by RA Sigs – not so. Her role was to be "Admin and Welfare"; which turned out

to be a blessing, as - as she tells it herself: “my true skill lay with my tendency to be more interested in people’s problems than THEY were!” Postings that followed were as Asst Adjutant 2RTB Puckapunyal; SO(A) 1RTB Kapooka; and at CARO (Melbourne).

Whilst at Kapooka, Cupid struck: she met dashing young Flying Officer Mike Harness – on a blind date. Both ADF bases being close to Wagga Wagga – they married in the Cathedral there.

Friends of the couple marvelled that two “know alls” could have a long-term future ahead of them and took bets that the marriage wouldn’t last three weeks. M & M however, were committed. Deciding against the outrageous rents charged in Wagga, they pooled their money, bought a third-hand, 22.5ft caravan to live in and parked it near the RAAF Base – proud of the fact: “Not many young couples can pay cash for their first home!” (The built-in furniture was THE bonus attraction and got them off to a flying start).

Their 53 years of marriage have brought a wealth of experiences: family of two girls; living on RAAF Bases; exhilarating travel; P/T uni studies for Margot; running small businesses; volunteering here and there; worrying illnesses; many joys; wonderful range of friends; the RSL; tragedies and laugh-filled days and ALWAYS, the mutual trust, respect and affection of two great “mates”.



CHUCKLE CORNER



(St Patrick’s Day is behind us now, but there’s always room for a wee Irish chortle ...)

Paddy McAvoy, an elderly Irish farmer, received a letter from the Department for Work & Pensions stating that they suspected he was not paying his employees the statutory minimum wage and they would send an inspector to interview them.

On the appointed day, the inspector turned up. "Tell me about your staff," he asked Paddy. "Well," said Paddy, "there's the farm hand, I pay him £240 a week, and he has a free cottage.

Then there's the housekeeper. She gets £190 a week, along with free board and lodging.

There's also the half-wit. He works a 16-hour day, does 90% of the work, earns about £25 a week along with a bottle of whisky and, as a special treat, occasionally gets to sleep with my wife."

"That's disgraceful!" said the inspector, "I need to interview the half-wit."

"That'll be me then," said Paddy!



Your Anzac Club Upcoming Events

29 May 22 Stella Bella Wine Dinner– Sold Out

9 Jul 22 Xanadu Wine Dinner five courses and selected wines, \$115 per head

23 September 2022 Howard Park and Marchant Burch Premium Wine Dinner 6 courses inc. canapes, plus selected wines, \$125

16 Dec 22 Gatsby Jazz Dinner Dance 3 courses \$95.

Check them out at <https://anzacclub.org.au/club-events>

The Secretary will be absent interstate from 15 to 24 May and largely uncontactable except mid-afternoon. Urgent matters please email. - Greg

Thanks to Margot Harness for her assistance in producing this newsletter