



## THE RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA HIGHGATE SUB BRANCH

[www.highgate-rsl.org.au](http://www.highgate-rsl.org.au)

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# Highgate Happenings SEPTEMBER 2023

## NEW COMMITTEE TAKES OFFICE – Incoming President Report

At the AGM held on 19 August, a new President and Committee were elected to serve for the next twelve months. Some members are ongoing, and we welcome five new members. New President



Incoming President John Cleary presented a Certificate of Appreciation to outgoing President Geoff Simpson following the AGM.

John Cleary is assisted by the following:

Ray Galliot – VP – (New Member),  
Bruce Taylor – JNR VP, Greg Wilson – Secretary, Ray Ward – Treasurer,  
Barry Cooke – Membership, Veronica Connaughton – Pensions and Veterans Affairs - (New Member), Howard Montagu – Hospitals and Welfare,  
Lindsay Morrison (New Member), Alan Shephard (New Member), Greg Smith (New Member) Wardens are Geoff Simpson (also IPP) and Bill Munro.

Ian Petkoff will remain Highgate Website editor but has elected not to be on the committee. Ian is undertaking some excellent work to the website and I encourage all to check out what

Ian has done. *Continued on page 2*

## September Lunch

Highgate RSL Sub-Branch next lunch will take place on Monday 18 September at 1200h for 1230h. Cost \$40, plus \$5 for a raffle ticket if you wish to indulge. Dress jacket and tie, ladies equivalent. Guest speaker is John Van Den Hurk from the Water Corporation. His details are on Page 2.

Bookings can be made at- <https://forms.gle/Qo2KF9M1Q5mgJ25B6>

You can see who is attending at [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1\\_vZ0hpuUW-GiwioUaQX5fH2JRjL6oMDRn1vWSee6L5c/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1_vZ0hpuUW-GiwioUaQX5fH2JRjL6oMDRn1vWSee6L5c/edit?usp=sharing)

Thanks to our raffle supporters:



**GROVENOR HOTEL**

Hay Street, East Perth



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## September Guest Speaker – John Van Den Hurk

John is head of Water Corporation's Asset Investment Planning team, planning and managing Western Australia's existing and future water assets to ensure they have the capability to meet customers' current and future expectations. Water Corporation is the principal supplier of water, wastewater and drainage services to over 2 million people throughout Perth and Western Australia. John is a Professional Engineer with more than 35 years of Asset Management Leadership experience, having worked in government organisations at both Federal and State levels as well as in the private sector.

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## Incoming President's Report *continued from page 1*



Farewell to those leaving the committee and thank you for your strong commitment – they are:

- Geoff Hourn
- Steve Chamarette
- Margot Harness
- Paul Salpietro

I wish to acknowledge the hard work by those who make our lunch meetings function without fuss. They are Peter Garside, John Arco, Mike Harness, Leon Griffiths, Peter Heeney and recently retired from the front desk, Robert Campbell.

And a very special thank you to Immediate Past President Geoff Simpson for his dedication and steady hand on the tiller during his term as President.

At our first committee meeting we will plan for the year ahead. Our focus will be on **Mateship, Membership, Advocacy, Welfare and Commemoration**. We will continue with our lunch format and provide high calibre guest speakers. Fund raising from Red Poppy sales and from other means will also be a focus. One of our greatest challenges will be **cost management** in terms of our functions' costs in an inflationary environment.

We are here to support you and I look forward to your ongoing participation at each of our future functions and especially the Memorial Lunch at Fraser's Restaurant Kings Park on Sunday the 12th November 2023. More detail on that lunch to follow.

John Cleary  
President



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## Happy Birthday September Babies

Joan Gravelle, Richard Jones, Barry Long, Basil Twine, Richard Birch, Jock Geldart, Kim Doherty, David Scott, Peter Gilkinson, Jeffrey Moorcroft, Eric McDonald, Sean L'Estrange, Bob Farrelly, Brett Dowsing, Wayne Gardiner, Geoff Hourn, Clive Smith, James Shackelton, Fay Duda, Tony Howes, Guy Burton, Lindsay Morrison.

Apologies to anyone accidentally omitted

## ***What's Happening***

18 September 23 - John Van Den Hurk Head of Asset Planning at Water Corporation

Please note the change of day for OCTOBER:

9 October 23 (**second Monday**) Dr Andrew Miller (note his availability is only 9th October).

12 November 23 – Highgate Remembrance Day service and lunch, Frasers Restaurant. Further details TBA. CAPT Ken Burleigh ADC RAN, Commanding Officer HMAS Stirling has been invited to be guest speaker.

11 December 23 (**second Monday**) – Christmas Lunch, entertainment by Rick Steele.

*Below: OBN Lou Halvorson RFD cuts the official OBE/OBN birthday cake at our August lunch.*



## **THE ARMY MUSEUM OF WEST AUSTRALIA**

**GARBETT LIGHT RAIL ART DISPLAY – A curated exhibition featuring the First World War illustrations of Edwin Garbett. Now on at the Army Museum of Western Australia**

Edwin Charles Garbett

15 March 1889 to 13 January 1932

Edwin Charles Garbett was born in Melbourne, Victoria on the 15th of March 1889. He came to Western Australia by cattle ship in 1897 and disembarked in Bunbury. He moved around the southwest before settling in Midland in 1904. He attended Chidlow Wells School and in 1907 he won a Midland Junction Technical Education scholarship in mechanical drawing, forming part of his apprenticeship in diesel engineering with the railways.

After Edwin completed his apprenticeship, he moved to Sydney to work on ships, before sailing on a steamer to England. Edwin documented this trip in detail, drawing the workings of the ship's engine in pencil on various scraps of paper. On arrival in England, he found work as a fitter with a railway company and again, describes their locomotives, illustrating them and recording information. According to his family, Edwin was very passionate about his chosen career.

Edwin returned to Western Australia and continued his work as a fitter at the Midland Railway Workshops before enlisting with the 2nd Light Railway Co on the 24th of March 1917, his service number was 1909. He was living in Bayly Street, West Midland at the time with his parents, Fannie and Alfred Bates.



Edwin undertook further training as a blacksmith and fitter at Broadmeadows in Melbourne before sailing aboard the "Ascanius" in May 1917. He was stationed at St Lucia Barracks, Borden in Hampshire and promoted to 2nd Corporal where he was paid 8/- per day as a fitter. He sailed from Southampton to France in September 1917.

His military records show his various movements from the field to Paris for leave between March and December 1918, where he recovered from illnesses and had several stays in hospitals.

Edwin sent postcards home, stating he was "somewhere in Belgium" in 1917 and from December 1918 until February 1919, he was stationed at Courtrai near the French border where he wrote "town not damaged like some places, but ample evidence there has been a war on."

Edwin was granted leave from June to August 1919 to do a design course at A.H Clarkson Ltd, advertising specialists located in Fleet Street, London. Following this, he returned to Western Australia and his job at the Midland Workshops.

In November 1919, he married Ellen Bates at the Church of Ascension, Midland Junction and they had a daughter, Daphne in August 1920. Shortly after Daphne's birth, Ellen passed away from septicaemia and heart failure, Daphne was only 5 weeks old. She was left in the care of her grandparents, and adopted by her mother's brother, Alfred, and his wife Dorrie but she never lived with them. Records show that the formal adoption may have taken place after Edwin's death in 1932, Daphne never knew she was adopted, only finding out when she requested a copy of her birth certificate almost sixty years later.

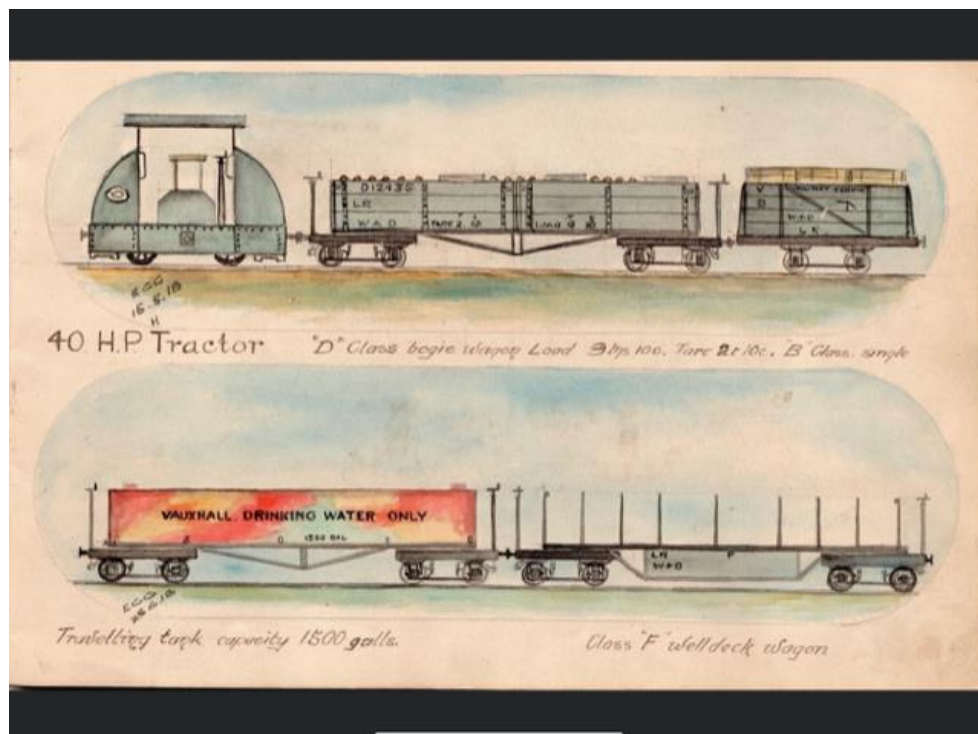
Edwin lived with his parents in the 1920s and continued to study at night school and the Technical School. He married Amy Hadrill in 1924 and they had two children, his son Gwynne also went on to work at the Midland Railways.

Edwin passed away in 1932, from pneumonia and pleurisy, he was 42 years old.

Edwin Garbett possessed an artistic talent and during his WW1 service spent time drawing and illustrating the rail system he worked in and its nuances for his diaries and records.

The Army Museum of WA in Aug is launching a display of his works with drawings and coloured works drawn by him.

This display covers several areas of rail operations including the supply system, casualty evacuation, maintenance and the technical aspects of the equipment being used in the light rail operations.





## Australians at War – September

(Courtesy AWM)

4 September 1943 - 9th Division land at Lae, New Guinea- Lae was the focus of a major land, sea, and air operation by Australian and American forces. Fighting lasted until 16 September, when the encircled Japanese garrison were either killed, captured, or escaped

6 September 1951 - HMAS Anzac bombs targets near Haeju, Korea. The HMAS Anzac was detached from HMS Glory's screen to bombard targets near Haeju, Korea. The Anzac was one of 11 Australian ships to serve in Korea.

7 September 1943 - Liberator crash kills 59 Australians. A liberator crashed on take-off at Port Moresby hitting five trucks carrying men of the 2/33rd Battalion; 15 were killed instantly, 44 died of their injuries, and 92 were injured but survived.

8 September 1943. Italy announces unconditional surrender to the Allies. Prior to this the Italians had been fighting with the Germans. Despite the Italian surrender the Allies faced more than a year of difficult fighting against the Germans in Italy.

8 September 1951 - Peace treaty (Second World War) signed with Japan. The peace treaty signalled the formal end of hostilities with Japan, though the fighting had ended some six years before.

11 September 1914. Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force lands at Rabaul. The Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force landed at Rabaul and went into action at Bitapaka. This was the only major New Guinea action of the First World War.

16 September 1943. Japanese abandon Lae after heavy fighting. Lae was the focus of a major land, sea, and air operation by Australian and American forces. Fighting lasted until 16 September when the encircled Japanese garrison were either killed, captured, or escaped.

19 September 1943. 2/6th Independent Company capture Kaiapit, New Guinea. Kaiapit was needed for the airstrip that was to be constructed there once the Japanese had been driven from the area. Kaiapit became a base for the 7th Division's advance up the Markham Valley.

26 – 27 September 1943. Operation Jaywick destroys Japanese shipping. An Australian Special Operations Australia Unit operating from the former fishing vessel, Krait, mines Japanese ships in Singapore Harbour. Seven ships were sunk or badly damaged.

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### **Why is the U.S. losing the war in Ukraine?**



A Russian wife turned to her husband and asked, "What's this special military operation our glorious leader keeps talking about?" Her husband replied, "It's a war to stop America and NATO." "Oh, right" she says "How's it going?"

"Well" he replied "so far we have lost over 20 generals, 100,000 troops killed, countless injured, 3000 tanks, 300 aircraft, hundreds of helicopters, countless armoured vehicles, artillery and trucks, our flagship along with other naval ships, our army is being defeated in most areas and we have had to resort to conscripting 500,000 Russians including murders and rapists to replace our losses".

"Wow" replied the wife "what about America and NATO"?

"They haven't turned up yet"



AUGUST 16, 2023

## The General Remembers

The third week of August saw the gathering of veterans to honour those who valiantly served during the Vietnam War, marking the 50th anniversary of Australia's withdrawal from this pivotal historical conflict.

Among the remarkable individuals who were part of the 60,000-strong contingent that served in those years is

former Governor-General of Australia, Sir Peter Cosgrove.

In a recent interview on Today, he shared details about the special commemorative event which took place in Canberra on Friday 18 August., with an attendance of thousands.

Sir Peter Cosgrove expressed the profound significance of this occasion, stating, "We will collectively pause to reflect upon and pay homage to those who have passed on. Furthermore, we will contemplate the broader impact of the war on Australia, considering the controversies, suffering, and the exceptional courage exhibited by those who served with such distinction."

The ceremony was presided over by the current Governor-General of Australia, David Hurley AC, DSC, FTSE.

The event was conducted in the presence of numerous veterans, government officials, along with thousands of ordinary citizens and families of those who are no longer with us, all gathering to show their respect.

A notable aspect of the commemoration is the introduction of a memorial medallion, an item that has been made available for veterans or their descendants to acquire and cherish as a keepsake of this momentous event, acknowledging their service and sacrifice. Beyond the central event in Canberra, similar gatherings took place across Australia, providing surviving veterans of the Vietnam War with opportunities to come together and reminisce about their comradeship and shared experiences.

During his interview, Sir Peter Cosgrove took a moment to pay tribute to the late Sir Phillip Bennett, an accomplished Australian Army General and former Governor of Tasmania. He commemorated Bennett's legacy and his role in commanding a battalion during the Battle of Coral-Balmoral on May 12, 1968, praising his leadership and the contribution he made. Cosgrove expressed his sorrow at Bennett's passing, describing it as a loss for the nation.

Reflecting on his own time in service, Sir Peter Cosgrove conveyed his profound sense of privilege in leading the courageous soldiers who, over time, became not only his comrades but also his life-long friends. "Being among them was an honour," he recounted, highlighting the overwhelmingly positive nature of his personal experience. In conclusion, this commemoration stands as a poignant tribute to the veterans of the Vietnam War, a moment for reflection on their sacrifices and the lasting impact of their service.

As we honour their contributions, we remember their resilience, dedication, and the enduring bonds forged in the crucible of conflict.

*Courtesy VeteranWeb*

# When Australia went to War in China



*Photo: Australian troops of the British Military Mission 204 march to the front in Jiangxi province. Source: Australian War Memorial (AWM); Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons*

Australia has experienced major power competition in the Indo-Pacific before. When we last experienced this environment, we deployed forces into south-western China under the little-known Mission 204 in 1941. This mission was expressly intended to deter Japan from aggression; a purpose that still resonates today in the context of the 2023 Defence Strategic Review which establishes a need for ‘asymmetry’ against a more powerful competitor, to affect ‘a strategy of denial.’ Mission 204 thus highlights capacity-building lessons pertinent to the Australian Army that resonate in the contemporary environment of major power competition.

Mission 204 was raised by the British in February 1941 in response to a request for support from Chinese President, Chiang Kai-shek, to grow ten Chinese guerrilla warfare battalions that would be used against the Japanese Kwantung Army. Mission 204 envisioned a contingent of 250-300 advisers, of whom about 40 were Australian soldiers, commanded by Major D. MacDougal, drawn from the 8th Division in Malaya on 27 July 1941. This commitment was made *prior* to war with Japan, in other words, during *competition*.

Despite its support to China, the British cabinet did not wish to incite direct conflict with Japan. Accordingly, with a force of 300 Commonwealth troops, Mission 204 was directed to undertake action that would force ‘the Japanese to lock up the maximum forces.’ As such, it would ‘have as its primary object the strengthening of our defensive position on our own frontiers [i.e. Commonwealth colonies].’ To achieve its purpose, Mission 204 was to raise six Chinese guerrilla battalions to each of which a demolition squad of Commonwealth officers and other ranks would be attached.

From an Australian government perspective, it was believed that such quiet assistance to the Chinese would be ‘a means of absorbing Japanese energy and aggression.’ Australian policy rationale can be discerned from the strategic argument made by the Australian High Commissioner in London that points toward a belief in ‘unconventional deterrence’:

The alternatives before us as I can see them are:

- (1) To pursue the idea of negotiating a wide settlement.
- (2) To abandon the idea of a wide settlement and concentrate on *keeping alive and increasing* Chinese resistance, and *at the same time intensifying financial and economic pressure* on Japan *so as to deter* her from outside adventures and to bring her into a more reasonable frame of mind (emphasis added).

On 10 November 1941, Australian troops began to be dispatched to China as tensions increased with Japan. Australia’s commitment to Mission 204, however, was largely overtaken by events with Japan’s 7 December 1941 commencement of hostilities. In response, some military elements of Mission 204 were

quickly re-directed against Japanese targets on the Thai-Burma border. During this period, pre-mission training was conducted at the Bush Warfare School, Maymyo, Burma. Ultimately, it wasn't until 16 February 1942 that the Australian component of Mission 204 finally arrived at the Chinese Nationalist training areas, after travelling some 3360 kilometres to Ch'i-yang (Qiyang) overland from Burma.

Luck was not on the Commonwealth's side. On 16 March 1942, the mission's British commander, Major-General Dennys was killed in an air crash at Kunming. The mission was also beset by logistic and health problems, with some thirty-five per cent of the Australian contingent becoming non-battle casualties over the first three months. The mission had aimed to hamper the southward movement of the Japanese army using the Chinese guerrillas, a mission rendered purposeless, from a British perspective, following the fall of Singapore.

It took until 9 September 1942, before General Wavell, Commander-in-Chief India Command, cabled Britain with the recommendation that the mission be withdrawn. On 29 October, the Australian component of the mission was returned to Australia, a decision likely influenced by the medical state of the force. The Chinese Commando Groups, now termed 'Surprise' battalions, were retained by the Chinese Nationalists in the form of ten, 1,000-men formations under General Li Mo An.

The dilemma that Mission 204 exposes is that of political discretion versus military effectiveness. To be effective in competition, which might deter or complicate an adversary's considerations about escalating into conflict, some risk must be borne. To transition into being effective in conflict, an advisor force must be logistically supportable and geographically proximal to where it is needed, having built the intelligence and support networks ('the underground') that serve to protect and sustain the advisors. It should be tailored to what the partnered force needs, having built the skills and trust with the partnered force to be operationally employable at the time required. Mission 204 was unlikely to have ever been tactically successful due to deficiencies in these characteristics. Importantly, however, it was able to contribute to the defence of Burma due to being forward deployed to conduct pre-mission training at the Bush Warfare School. This example illustrates that strategic flexibility can be derived from pre-conflict engagement.

The lessons of Mission 204 are pertinent today, in the development of resistance strategy, and external 'support to resistance' doctrine when training aims to build up a whole-of-society capacity to resist an aggressor's offensive military actions, as has recently been demonstrated in Ukraine. What is particularly intriguing about Mission 204 is the asymmetry inherent in a mission of only 300 Commonwealth soldiers, intended to mobilise ten battalions of Chinese Nationalist combat power, to impose costs that might prevent the use of military force elsewhere. Modern counter-insurgency maxim posits that manpower in the order of 20:1 is required by the counter-insurgency force to establish control over an area. As such, Mission 204 had the potential to divert several Divisions of Japanese combat power. Had it been more effectively executed; it may have had a significant impact on the closely fought Japanese offensives of Malaya and Burma.

Ultimately, Japan had made the decision to commit to a southern advance long before Mission 204 had begun its intended pre-conflict mission. Nonetheless, the belief among Commonwealth policymakers that the imposition of costs might serve to deter adventurous policy is the most relevant lesson to derive from the history of when Australia last went to war in China.

***This article is a submission to the Winter Series 2023 Short Writing Competition, 'Army's Role in Train, Advise and Assist Missions'.***

*Courtesy VeteranWeb*

## HIGHGATE HALL OF HONOUR

The Highgate Hall of Honour recognises the service and civilian histories of current and past members of the RSL Highgate Sub-Branch. It is managed by Highgate member Ian Petkoff. It can be viewed at <https://highgate-rsl.org.au/hall-of-honour/>

Are you listed yet?

All members are invited to submit a head and shoulders photograph along with a CV of your military and civilian career for inclusion. The length is at your discretion. An easy link is at

<https://forms.gle/hr3mBZGLTpW7WV8A>





AUSTRALIAN ARMY MUSEUM OF WA *Presents*

# ***SUNSET CONCERT***

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Royal Australian Navy Band WA

## *Including*

Pipes and Drums



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and Terms & Conditions

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*Booking fees apply.*

- This price includes free museum visit prior to the concert
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- Plastic drinking glasses ONLY
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[www.armymuseumwa.com.au](http://www.armymuseumwa.com.au)  

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