



THE RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA HIGHGATE SUB BRANCH

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Highgate Happenings NOVEMBER 2023

REMEMBRANCE COMMEMORATIONS & LUNCH

The period around Remembrance Day is a busy one for the Sub-Branch. The major highlight on the Highgate calendar occurs on Sunday 12 November, commencing with a small service at the "Flame" at 1130, followed at 1200 by our annual **Highgate Remembrance Day lunch** at Frasier's, Kings Park. Cost is \$90 per person for a two-course meal and drinks. Guest speaker is CAPT Ken Burleigh ADC RAN, Commanding Officer HMAS Stirling. His bio is on page 3. Reserved parking is available. NOTE: We urgently need three car park attendants from 1000am for the lunch. Please contact Geoff Simpson or Leon Griffiths leon@leongriffiths.com if you can assist.

Lunch Bookings can be made at <https://forms.gle/y6fPHKogM6z2jVjw5>

You can view who is coming at <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1XMu0-qFFBD6V8Ggd9ELPepSZDNUdyOA-TeTXPKBYKqU/edit?usp=sharing>

Bookings close on 6 November.

Prior to this we have **Poppy Day, Friday 3 November**. The Poppy Appeal runs alongside Remembrance Day, where poppies are given in return for a donation. All of these donations go directly into assisting veterans in need; whether that be with financial matters, mental and physical health issues and/or transitioning into the civilian world.

If you haven't already put your name down, Highgate Coordinator, Ray Ward, would love to hear from you to "Rattle a Tin." **Collection sites** are Elizabeth Quay Train AND Bus stations AND Perth Bus-port in Wellington Street. We also have a new collection point, Murray St entrance to Perth Underground Station.

On Remembrance Day, **11 November**, RSLWA will be conducting the normal service at Kings Park at 1100h. Our Sub-Wardens will be assisting.

The new Warden of the State War Memorial, Warrant Officer (RAAF Retired) Jen Riches AM, will also be installed. Jen would be well known to members attending services at Kings Park as pre-COVID she was WOFF Disciplinary at Pearce and organised a number of services at the SWM. Hopefully Jen will be guest speaker at our Anzac Day Gunfire Breakfast.

Thank you to our raffle supporters:



GROVENOR HOTEL

Hay Street, East Perth



Spudshed

President's Reach-Out:



Dear members, sadly since my last communique with you, we have lost two of our esteemed members. Jim Eayrs passed away 23 September. He was a long-serving member of the Sub-Branch and a former State War Memorial Sub-Warden. Jim was 82 years. And on 27 September Lieutenant Colonel David Watson passed away. David was 81 years.

Lest we forget

One of Highgate's initiatives this year is to reach out to our members and particularly those we don't see at our lunches. We will ring each Highgate member we no longer see with an R U OK enquiry between now and the next AGM. Our Welfare Officer Howard Montagu assisted by Alan Shephard have both been tasked by committee to run with this initiative and we look forward to your feedback.

Mateship is very necessary as we all age. Research has shown that to continue mixing with friends and colleagues is good medicine. To that end, Ray Galliot is planning theatre outings and other events in addition to our lunches for members and partners/friends. Ray has already arranged an outing to Phantom of the Opera and the tickets he purchased, at a discount to Highgate Members, sold out within days. I suspect that this will prove to be most popular so be quick when you see the next outing.

November fast approaches and in that month, Highgate supports two major activities: Poppy Day sales and our very popular Memorial Lunch.

Poppy Day is 3rd November. As you know half of the proceeds go straight into our Welfare Account so it's important that we maximise the sale of poppies by maximising the number of volunteers. To date the number of volunteers is disappointingly low and I urge those who can collect to contact Ray Ward and get your name on his list.

Leon Griffiths, our Memorial Lunch coordinator, has booked the lunch at Frasers Kings Park for Sunday 12th November. It will be preceded by our Highgate service at the Flame of Remembrance, State War Memorial at 1120am with lunch 12pm for 1230pm. Details of the lunch and the booking link are provided elsewhere in the Highgate Happenings. Please arrange a table with family and friends and register early.

John Cleary

Happy Birthday November babies



Michael Darby, Kevin Barrett, Robert Bunney, Doug Farmer, Clare Curtis, Graham Reynolds, Peter Farrell, Allan Downs, Dale Reynolds, John Evert, Jonathan Huston, Elizabeth Jeal, Kym MacCormac.

Apologies to any member omitted.

Thanks to Leon Griffiths efforts we welcome Woolworths as a raffle prize sponsor



What's Happening

12 November 23 – Highgate Remembrance Day service and lunch, Frasers Restaurant. CAPT Ken Burleigh ADC RAN, Commanding Officer HMAS Stirling is the guest speaker. Cost \$90 pp.

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

2024 – January meeting subject to opening date of Anzac Club

19 February – speaker TBA.

15 January 24 – Member Richard Offen. The availability of the Anzac Club is uncertain at this time.

19 February – Ashley Morrison, freelance broadcaster and commentator.

18 March 24 – Jonathon Langer - Chiropractic and Soft Tissue Therapist.



Captain Ken Burleigh ADC RAN

Ken Burleigh joined the Royal Australian Navy from his home town of Perth in September 1984. He trained as a Seaman Officer and was awarded his Bridge Watchkeeping Certificate in HMAS Swan in May 1987. He served in a series of ships including Destroyers, Destroyer Escorts, Frigates and Patrol Boats, before specialising in navigation and completing the RAN's premier Long Navigation Course in 1991. He undertook Principal Warfare Officer training in 1995 and was awarded the Sydney Emden Prize and AWA Sword of Excellence as the dux of the year. Ken completed several staff appointments in operations, training and capability roles as well as a period of time in the Department for the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Ken's sea time was highlighted by command of the Fremantle Class Patrol Boat HMAS Launceston and the Guided Missile Frigate HMAS *Darwin*.

He transitioned to the Navy Reserve in 2007 and took up the position of Pilot and Deputy Harbourmaster of the Port of Broome. He was appointed Harbourmaster in 2009. Ken left Broome in 2011 to take up a position as Senior Pilot with Argonaut Marine Group to set up their Dampier operation. He remained with Argonaut Marine Group until 2019 when he transitioned back to permanent Naval service. During his time in the civil sector, Ken achieved unrestricted pilot licenses in Broome, Dampier, Cape Preston and Port Melville in the NT.

After Navy re-entry, he took up positions in Navy People Group, Navy Capability Division and Defence Marine Support Services Group, prior to being appointed as the inaugural Capability Manager Representative Offshore Patrol Vessels, where he oversaw preparations for the introduction of the Arafura Class Offshore Patrol Vessel. Captain Burleigh assumed command of [HMAS Stirling](#) on 19 May 2023.

He holds a Master's Degree in Management and a Graduate Certificate in Maritime Studies. He enjoys walking, cycling, reading military history and is a tragic cricket and AFL supporter.

Just Joking - Father Murphy walks into a pub in Donegal, and asks the first man he meets, 'Do you want to go to heaven?'

The man said, 'I do, Father.' The priest said, 'Then stand over there against the wall.'

Then the priest asked the second man, 'Do you want to go to heaven?' 'Certainly, Father,' the man replied.

'Then stand over there against the wall,' said the priest. Then Father Murphy walked up to O'Toole and asked, 'Do you want to go to heaven?' O'Toole said, 'No, I don't Father.'

The priest said, 'I don't believe this. You mean to tell me that when you die you don't want to go to heaven?'

O'Toole said, 'Oh, when I die, yes. I thought you were getting a group together to go right now.'



Australians at War – November

1 November 1914 - The first Australian and New Zealand contingent sails from Albany, Western Australia, bound for Egypt. Only one in three of those who sailed in the first convoy would return physically un-

scathed at the end of the First World War.

1 November 1951 - No. 77 Squadron, RAAF, is awarded a Republic of South Korea Presidential Citation. No. 77 Squadron was awarded this citation for its early service in Korea as an effective ground-support unit.

1 November 1989 - Dedication of the National Army Memorial in Anzac Parade, Canberra, by the Governor General, The Hon. Bill Hayden. The memorial commemorates the service of Australians as members of the Australian Army in all wars.

2 November 1942 - The capture of Kokoda, New Guinea, and its airstrip enabled the Australian advance across the Owen Stanley Range to continue.

5 November 1950 - The 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, successfully assault and hold crucial hill features overlooking Pakchon in the face of heavy North Korean and Chinese resistance.

9 November 1942 - HMAS Sydney destroys the German cruiser Emden, off the Cocos-Keeling Islands. The Emden had delayed the first convoy carrying Australian troops to Egypt, but was driven ashore by Sydney in a brief but bloody action.

12 November 1940 - HMAS Sydney in action at the Strait of Otranto in a diversion for the British attack on Taranto. The Australian cruiser became the most celebrated ship in the RAN after its performance in the Mediterranean against the Italian navy in 1940.

12 November 1943 – Last Japanese air raid on Darwin. This, the 64th raid since February 1942, was the last air raid made on Australia during the war.

13 November 1942 - Warrant Officer Class 2 Kevin "Dasher" Wheatley, Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, is awarded the first Victoria Cross of the Vietnam War posthumously in the Tra Bong Valley, Quang Ngai province.

19 November 1942 – HMAS Sydney sunk. Sydney was lost with its entire crew of 645 men in a sudden and disastrous encounter with the German raider, Kormoran, off the Western Australian coast. The circumstances surrounding its loss remain controversial to this day.

21 November 1943 – Japanese attack at Scarlet Beach. The Japanese surprise raid at Scarlet Beach, near Lae, Papua New Guinea, was narrowly held by Australian and American defenders.

23 November 1948 - Formation of the Australian Regiment, which became the Royal Australian Regiment (RAR) in March 1949. The Royal Australian Regiment has taken a prominent role in Australia's wars and peacekeeping operations since its formation.

27 November 1941 - HMAS Parramatta was sunk by a German submarine in the Mediterranean near Tobruk. The Parramatta was part of the navy's "Tobruk ferry service", whose destroyers and sloops kept the besieged port supplied.

29 November 1950 – Teadong River crossing secured. The 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, secures the Teadong River ferry crossing, Korea. This was one of only two north-south roads available for the US Eighth Army's retreat in the face of Chinese forces. 3RAR secured the crossing and protected it from Chinese and North Korean infiltrators

Battle of Maryang-San

It is often said that the events of the Korean War have been largely forgotten by the Australian public. The anniversary of the Battle of Maryang-San is an opportunity to highlight an important episode of our wartime history.

In early October 1951, the Battle for Maryang San, also known as "Operation Commando," took place during the Korean War. The operation, led by 3RAR (3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment) in collaboration with British Commonwealth forces, aimed to secure a group of hills near the Imjin River.

The Australian forces launched a surprise attack on Hill 317 (Maryang San) on October 5, 1951, following an initial assault by British troops on Hill 355 (Kowang San or "Little Gibraltar"). Despite facing numerically superior enemy forces and challenging terrain, 3RAR managed to capture Hill 317, a strategically vital position.

In the words of the late Professor Robert O'Neil:

"In this action 3RAR had won one of the most impressive victories achieved by any Australian battalion The victory of Maryang San is probably the greatest single feat of the Australian Army during the Korean War."

3 RAR lost 20 killed and 104 wounded in the battle, while the Chinese casualties on Hill 317 had been severe, with 283 killed (determined by body count) and another 50 captured. Later, it was estimated that the Australians had destroyed at least two Chinese battalions during the five-day battle.

However, by November 5, 1951, the Chinese had recaptured Maryang San, which remained in their hands for the remainder of the conflict, dealing a significant blow to UN forces' morale. The battle was crucial for pushing Chinese forces back from the Imjin salient and positioning troops before ceasefire and armistice negotiations.

VALE 55213 LTCOL DAVID WATSON – memorial/celebration of life for David Watson - location Swanbourne Beach 1000h/10am on 18 November 2023

Please note below information from Tony Watson on a memorial gathering for his father, former Highgate member and past WA Deputy Commissioner DVA, David Watson.

Committee member Veronica Connaughton will represent the Sub-Branch at this event.

After a number of enquires with RSLs, yacht clubs and similar, we are going to hold the memorial / celebration of my Dad's life at 1000h/10 am on 18 November at Swanbourne beach.

We will have a couple of gazebos or shelters to keep people out of the heat if needed and will have food and cold drinks for those that wish to attend. The link below is to the location that we hold the gathering. [Dropped Pin](#)

I have a plan for inclement weather which I will send out closer to the date if the weather looks like it won't be suitable on the day (alternatively location at Cottesloe Beach where I will be staying).

Tony Watson (Son)

80 Years Since an A9 -317 Beaufort Bomber disappeared from Busselton by Pamela Harrison (reprinted from RSLWA website)

There were at least 160 military aircraft crashes or mishaps in WA during WWII.

Planes were shot down by enemy fire, crashed during training exercises, and some disappeared over the ocean while protecting WA's coastline from enemy ships.



Busselton airbase. Image supplied by Peter Dunn.

One aircraft that disappeared was a Beaufort Bomber A9-317, it took off on September 9, 1943 from the RAAF Base in Busselton with five crew on-board and never returned.

Eighty years after the plane vanished, its whereabouts still remains a mystery to this day, and it is the only documented casualty connected to the Busselton base.

Busselton RAAF Base was constructed in 1941, providing landing, service and refuelling facilities for seaward reconnaissance aircraft. In 1943, Busselton was made an Operational Base Unit, its main function was to fuel and service Beaufort

Bombers and Tiger Moths that staged through or operated in the Busselton area, along with other aircraft and civilian planes that also used the base.

In Western Australia, Beauforts belonged to 14 Squadron which formed at Pearce airbase in 1939 as a General Reconnaissance-Bomber Squadron. These planes flew hundreds of patrols from Pearce.

One flew around the coast to Albany via Cape Leeuwin and another flew around the coastline from Albany to Pearce. They looked out for enemy ships, as well as reported shipping movements in and out of Fremantle, the Eastern States and around the South-West. Other Beauforts patrolled the coastline from Pearce to Geraldton, and further onto Exmouth.

The Beaufort A9-317 was on patrol when it disappeared with four crew and one passenger.

The crew consisted of two Western Australian lads, Flying Officer Arthur Matthew Aitken who was born in Narrogin on January 6, 1920 and Flight Sergeant Peter Douglas Hastie who was born in Pinjarra on January 27, 1922.

Also on board were Flying Officer Cedric Sutton Richards and Flight Sergeant Alexander Emerson who were both from Victoria, along with a passenger, Army temporary Captain Harry Donald Kolbig who was from SA and with Unit 5 of the Australian Air Liaison Section.

The aircraft, piloted by Aitken, left the Busselton Base at 11.50am to carry out Patrol 'N' on a seaward clearing scan from D'Entrecasteaux Point to Rottnest Island before it went onto Pearce, where it was due to land at 4.30pm.

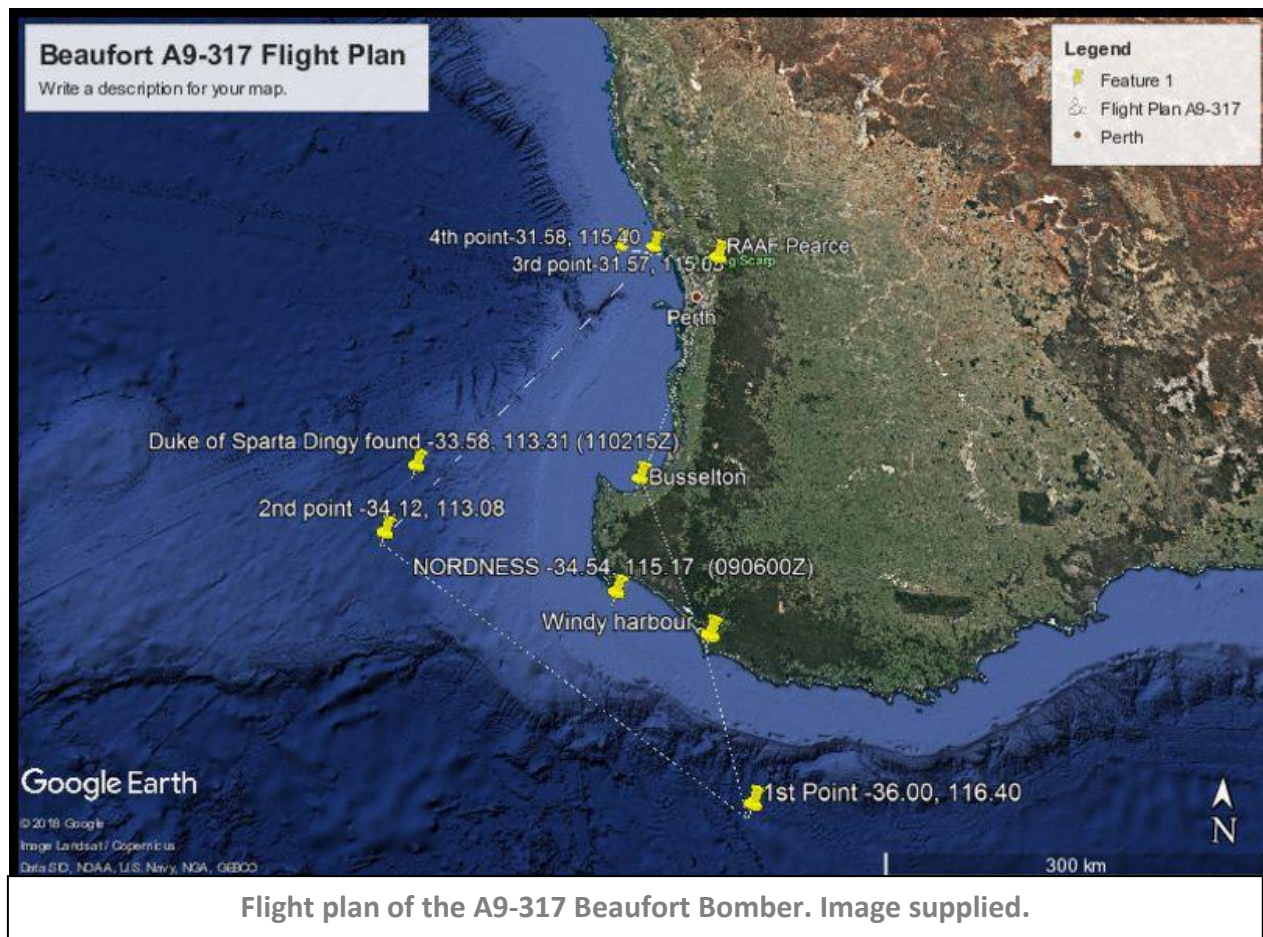
The plane was sighted at 12.02pm from a Volunteer Air Observer Post at Darradup.

At 2.30pm, the radio officer reported sighting motor vessel Nordnes approximately 45 nautical miles due west of D'Entrecasteaux Point. She was on-route from Melbourne to Fremantle.

When the plane was overdue at 5.30pm, attempts were made to contact it but were unsuccessful.

An emergency procedure was initiated, extensive searches were carried out that evening by 14 and 25 Squadrons RAAF and 52 Squadron US Navy aircraft, which continued on September 10 and 11, covering the coast from Fremantle to Albany extending 20 miles to seaward.

A more intensive search was carried out 120 miles west of Cape Leeuwin and Cape Naturaliste, and further south to Albany and the American Navy instructed all seaward patrols in the area to keep a look out for the aircraft but nothing was found.



When the Nordnes arrived in Fremantle the next day, the captain was interrogated. He advised that he saw the plane carry out a normal approach procedure, and having identified him, turned north climbing, and was last seen heading south which would have brought him back on to Patrol 'N' track. The captain said the aircraft gave no indication of being in any difficulties and appeared to be flying normally. Nothing more was seen or heard of the aircraft again.

As there was strict radio silence at the time, no further communication was received from A9-317.

At 12.15pm on September 11, 1943, the freighter Duke of Sparta spotted an empty yellow rubber dinghy approximately 85 nautical miles off the southwest coast of WA and slightly off course of the patrol.

Having circled the area for an hour, and finding there were no bodies in or around the dinghy, the Duke of Sparta continued on her way, failing to pick up the dinghy which would have had identification of some sort. It is considered this dinghy was in all probability from A9-317.

On the day the aircraft disappeared, there was a report of a possible submerged enemy submarine in the area 20 miles from Rottnest Island, despite an extensive search by naval vessels and aircraft, nothing was found. The idea of the crew being picked up by an enemy submarine was too remote.

The Australian Beauforts had been plagued with a mysterious problem and no-one would listen to those who reported problems with their planes, which resulted in more than 90 aircraft crashing and the avoidable deaths of many of its crews. The planes were nicknamed "flying coffins."

It wasn't until Captain Learmonth was on patrol with two other Bristol Beauforts' and US naval ships off Rottneest, that an answer was found.

When his plane began to shake violently Learmonth realised that the shaking was driven by the tail of his aircraft and despite facing possible death, he broke radio silence calling the pilot of one of the other Beauforts to fly closer and observe the tail.

The pilot could see the control rod to the elevator trim tab on Learmonth's plane was hanging down. It had separated from the tab, allowing the tab and elevator to oscillate and drive the violent shaking of the whole aircraft. Learmonth advised the crews of the other Beauforts by radio what was happening.

Shortly after, the trim tab flicked to the extreme up position overpowering Learmonth and forcing the aircraft to descend rapidly. Less than a minute later Learmonth's plane crashed into the sea killing him and his three crew members.

As a result of Learmonth's radio commentary, a problem with the Australian built Beauforts was traced to a component in the elevator trim actuating unit.

All RAAF Beauforts were grounded until the problem was eliminated and Learmonth was given credit for supplying vital information that solved the problem.

The Beaufort Bomber, also known as a Bristol Beaufort, was designed in the UK as a torpedo-bomber but flew more often as a level bomber. Because of Japan's involvement in the war, and close proximity to Australia, these planes were being assembled in Melbourne.

It was reported that the Melbourne-based engineers who assembled the planes were misreading the plans and had assembled part of the controls incorrectly.

Is this the answer to the disappearance of A9-317?

Could those on board have endured the same terrifying and horrific ordeal that Learmonth and his crew suffered? As did many others in other planes that crashed because of the fault. Were all their lives unnecessarily wasted?

Just Joking –

An attorney, cross-examining a Town Coroner, queried, "Before you signed the death certificate had you taken the man's pulse?"

"No," the coroner replied.

"Well, then, did you listen for a heartbeat?"

The coroner answered, "No."

"Did you check for respiration? Breathing?", asked the attorney.

Again, the coroner replied, "No."

"Ah," the attorney said, "So when you signed the Death Certificate you had not taken any steps to make sure the man was dead, had you?"

The coroner rolled his eyes, and shot back "Counsellor, at the time I signed the Death Certificate the man's brain was sitting in a jar on my desk. But I can see your point. For all I know he could be out there practicing law somewhere."