



Official Magazine of
**WODEN VALLEY
SUB-BRANCH R.S.L.**



The SERVICEMAN

First Published in January 1962

ANZAC EDITION

APRIL 2023



Special presentation on Tuesday 31 January when ACT Branch CEO
Kimberley Hicks presented Treasurer Jan Properjohn with
Australia Day Medallion for 2023.

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The SERVICEMAN

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE WODEN VALLEY RSL SUB-BRANCH (INC)
RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA

Editor:
Bob Cremer
14/27 Mulley St
Holder ACT 2611



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OFFICE BEARERS 2022-2023

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New Zealand High Commissioner to Australia

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The Sub-Branch meets on the last Tuesday of each month except April and December at the Canberra Southern Cross Club, Corinna St, Woden at 7.00PM. Membership subscription is due on 1st January annually and should be posted to the Grant Cameron Centre, 14/27 Mulley Street, Holder ACT 2611.

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***FROM THE
EDITOR'S DESK***
Bob Cremer



An unfortunate end to 2022 and beginning of 2023 with both Jan and myself Covid positive so we spent Christmas and the New Year in isolation. Our Grandson, with his partner and family were visiting from Queensland with plans to stay with us over the Christmas/New Year period but had to say goodbye and relocate to other accommodation for their time in Canberra so we had a family Christmas via Zoom - so technology helped to keep in contact. A pre-arranged trip to Queensland during that time to sort out my elderly sister's care arrangements had to be cancelled as well. Once again, technology provided an effective solution and saved the day. On reflection, it also saved us a considerable amount of money with petrol and accommodation that would have been required on another Queensland trip.

However, while things have generally improved we still have to be aware that COVID is still around so we have to take care and wait to see what the new 'normal' will be. While this is upsetting when we want to be more active, we should not let it stop us getting out and socialising with family and friends. During my Christmas visits to our over 80s members I also discovered that some of them were at that time, either suffering from, or just recovering from COVID, so take care, especially of yourselves and those around you.

On a sad note, we have been informed by Vicki Munday (Rats of Tobruk Association) that Derek Holyoake died on 9 February, aged 98. It is believed that Derek was the last surviving Navy Rat, and one of the of last surviving Rats of Tobruk. Derek was a crew member of HMAS Hobart (I) and attended the commissioning of the newest HMAS Hobart. He had an amazing life and loved talking about Vespas, Classic cars and amateur Radio.

Derek represented the Rats of Tobruk at the planting of the "No Surrender" Roses at a ceremony with the Rats of Tobruk Association and the Sub-Branch in Eddison Park on 2 July 2020. He will be sadly missed by all those who knew him. The family has advised that there will be no formal service but a special get-together will be arranged when they next visit Canberra.

Lest We Forget.



ANZAC 2023 Edition
RSL Woden Valley Sub-Branch
The President's Message



Welcome to the ANZAC Edition of *The Serviceman* for 2023. Like many of you, I again find it hard to believe that Christmas is over and we're now preparing for ANZAC Day. However, that is what it is and I look forward to enjoying what I hope will be a more normal year as the COVID restrictions ease, albeit in the knowledge the disease is still active in the community. I also look forward to seeing what 'normal' will be and what it might mean to individuals and the community.

Now that we are in the third month of 2023, I report that we continue to be busy with our members and other clients. I also note that the Board has decided to focus our planning and our efforts on a succession plan that will ensure the sustainability of our Sub-Branch. While we plot and scheme how to actually do this without losing momentum, initially we need to confirm the nature and extent of our internal and external workloads, including any options to synergise our efforts and resources to achieve our goals. As this will require some hard decisions as we learn to work within our existing resources, we will continue our never-ending quest to build relationships and find external support.

Firstly, however, I thank everyone for their efforts last year and their commitment to do their best again this year. That noted, I record that several of our volunteers have advised they need to slow down so they can concentrate on their own situations. I also iterate previous comments that recent changes to some policies that affect the training of our advocates and the manner in which these changes have been tied to the major grant system, means it is most unlikely that we will be eligible to successfully apply for any meaningful grant to offset some of our major costs. Thus, having received grants of nearly \$200,000 over two of the past three years, we will have to find those funds from elsewhere; or we will have to learn to do without them. I again thank members who have supported the Board's advice on the use of the AMF funds to help it manage this situation. I hasten to add that our small balance in the fund has been holding its own in the current market and we are in a stable financial situation.

On another positive note, some new volunteers advocates are helping us develop a sustainable induction and training process that we hope will work as closely as we can with the DVA one, but that provides the flexibility we need to make the system work for us. Particularly in the compensation area, our team of accredited advocates and inductees continue to achieve some excellent results with primary claims and appeals. However, these 'wins' are offset by some decisions that stretch our imagination as to the variation in the decision-making process and/or its application.

On the welfare side, we are focussing most of our efforts on our members, many of whom are facing challenges that come to most of us as we age.

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Since we have more than 250 members or dependent widows over the age of eighty this will be a challenge that we must meet head on and that will continue to grow. In this regard, most of the challenges involve finding volunteers to liaise with our members and developing relationships with organisations from which we can access the necessary support. This will mean we will need to refer most of the complex and resource intensive cases that we have dealt with satisfactorily in the past to other organisations as we do not have either the capabilities or the capacities to responsibly assist these veterans and their families. That noted, we already have a good network within the veteran and general ACT community systems and we will continue to access their resources and support as best we can.

On another good note, the GEARS Mental Health Program for which we received a grant in 2021 has just started a 12-week program that has nine two-hour sessions to go. As the aim of this grant was for our Sub-Branch to help introduce the GEARS Program to the ACT, we recently reported to DVA that we achieved that goal within the allocated funds. Hopefully, DVA will accept that advice and our acquittal.

From a social perspective, we had an excellent Christmas party in December when we inducted Lynnda Liversey into the *Order-Of-Whatever-It-Is* in recognition for her untiring work as a staff member in the E&A Team. Two other inductees will be recognised at the AGM in May as they were unable to attend the party. This was a good opportunity to thank all of those present for their efforts during 2022 and to wish them and their families a happy Christmas.

As reported in the Sub-Branch Newsletters, the Coffee Catch-Ups have been growing and they continue to attract at least 15 members on most Fridays. Similarly and, as promised, more than 50 members recently celebrated the 19th Birthday of the Eddison Day Club at a lunch. After some comments by Ian Gollings, who is one of the Day Club's co-founders, attendees were invited to indicate their support for the club to be re-invigorated and their views on what sorts of activities they would like. Having received overwhelming support and useful advice, Ian and the Day Club Convenor, Peter Sutton, will sort out the details, identify any resource requirements and the timings to re-activate this important part of our Sub-Branch as soon as possible.

From a National perspective, we continue to distribute a range of media releases in our weekly *Items of Interest* and monthly newsletters. We will continue to do so, generally without comment. As some of these items seek feedback from the Veteran Community, I leave it up to individuals to comment as they wish. As I have reported previously, our priorities are on doing the work, rather than writing reports for others to review. That noted, on behalf of our members and our volunteers, I respond as best I can to some questions and occasionally to offer unsolicited advice. In that regard, during his recent visit to the Sub-Branch, Ross Thomas, Peter Sutton and I briefed the Repatriation Commissioner on matters of interest and/or concern to us. He graciously accepted our comments and assured us that he values that sort of opportunity to engage with us and other organisations that operate at a grass-roots level. When I thanked the former DVA Secretary, Liz Cosson, on her retirement in January, Liz also acknowledged the nature and level of support that our Sub-Branch provides to the Veteran Community. I look forward to meeting the current Secretary, Ms Alison Frame, soon.

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I invite readers to refer to our newsletters for more detailed comments on some of key issues that are being considered in various forums now, especially those coming from the *Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans' Suicide*. These matters are also generally discussed at Sub-Branch meetings and less formal gatherings such as the Coffee Catch-Ups. You might also watch for announcements about the Veterans Wellbeing Hub that is proposed for Queanbeyan.

While the proposal for this hub is in its infancy, I look forward to seeing how this Federal Government decision to build a network of hubs that will be staffed by paid staff evolves. I expect that the RSL NSW Branch and RSL LifeCare will submit a joint bid for this grant as part of their existing network across NSW. I am then hopeful that whatever occurs will ease some of the pressure within the Veteran Community in the ACT and region even though this hub will not be located in the ACT.

The key issue from the ACT Branch is that, late last year, at an EGM, members amended the Branch Constitution to better reflect recent changes to the size and composition of the Branch as sub-branches merge. The main amendment is that each Sub-Branch will have two delegates at General Meetings rather than the maximum of six, that was based on the number of members in the respective sub-branches. Other changes related to the quorums applicable to Branch Council and General meetings, respectively.

In closing, please look out for notices about ANZAC Day services and related activities at both the War Memorial and within the Sub-Branch.

In again thanking our staff and volunteers who provide the services we offer to our members and the Veteran community. I iterate the dependence we have on our volunteers, without whom we could do nothing. I look forward to the evolution of our succession and sustainment plans, and doing our best to keep up the momentum required to meet our daily challenges. I remind anyone who is struggling with their health or wellbeing, to call us for advice, assistance or just a chat and where possible, I ask you to stay alert to notices about the Day Club, the Coffee Catch-Ups and other social gatherings and events.

HMS Revenge, an ancient battleship with a maximum speed of 22 knots, was steaming in convoy in the Indian Ocean. Because Japanese ships were known to be in the area all ships were using flags for all ship-to-ship communications.

Our young signalman was told to hoist speed flags to denote 16 knots. He made a mistake and the Revenge's message indicated "61 knots".

From the flagship, an Aldis lamp returned the brisk command:
"Circle the entire fleet twice and take off".

*From Honour in Uniform
Anecdotes from the War Years*

The Eddison Day Club

Peter Sutton



The COVID pandemic has greatly affected the operation and continuance of the Eddison Day Club, as it has also affected all aspects of our lives. At the outbreak of the virus, we had to suspend meetings in early March 2020.

We began meeting again in late July, only for a lunch, and with greatly reduced numbers - no self-service coffee and no guest speakers or entertainers. We had a Christmas lunch in December 2020, before meetings were cancelled until early in 2021. The year 2021 was a roller-coaster due to several lockdowns and dealing with new restrictions. This eroded the confidence of both members and volunteers. We persevered with the lunches and the opportunity for people to come out and interact with others that they know. We had a small Christmas lunch at the end of the that year, again with only limited numbers.

We have only had small numbers attending the lunches. Our 18th birthday on 4 February 2022 was attended by our patron, Mrs Sue Sarantos and several others, including Mrs Mary Collier, the President of the Canberra Irish Club, who supplied and cut our birthday cake.

We were determined to continue meeting for lunch to keep the Eddison Day Club viable as an outlet for members and volunteers. We realise it remains a challenge with the number of COVID cases still in the community, but unless the option is there for people to socialise, the Day Club will cease to operate as so many other Day Clubs and community groups that have failed in the past couple of years.

Out of a total of 70 Day Clubs in NSW, and ours, the only surviving Day Club in the ACT before COVID, the numbers still viable is now only 40. This reduction can also be attributed to the advancing age of members, guests and including the fall-off of willing and able volunteers to return or take on tasks within the Day Club. Without several volunteers, we will not remain a meaningful Club.

With this in mind, we have been advertising in various Sub-Branch publications, the combined luncheon at the Canberra Irish Club in Friday 3 March. This luncheon replaces what was to be the planned Sub-Branch OGM dinner for February and is also to celebrate the 19th birthday of the Day Club.

By the time you read this, we will have had the lunch. With your help and support, the Eddison Day Club can remain a vital functioning section of the Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH & THE END OF 2022

On Wednesday December 7, we celebrated the end of 2022 with a Christmas lunch in the Orion Room at the Canberra Southern Cross Club with 83 members and invited guests. An excellent event, with good company, good food and a very pleasant afternoon.

MC Jack Aaron maintained order and control and even provided a true story or two. This year two new members were inducted into the very special Order-Of-Whatever-It-Is (OOWII) with Lynnda Livesey and Ken Neil the new members - congratulations for a job well done. Naturally, on an event such as this we had a visit from the 'as advertised Mystery Santa' - looking quite trim this year, assisted by our Patron, Dame Annette King to pick the winners for the customary raffle.

A change this year when past President, Peter Dinham asked everyone to be upstanding when he proposed the Royal Toast, this year to The King.



Special guests this year were Terry Colhoun, who celebrated his 98th Birthday the day before, on December 6, and Les Cook who will be 100 in early January 2023. A remarkable milestone for both these gentlemen. I might also add that they are both regular contributors with stories for our magazine.



Coffee Catchups restarted in 2023

A good roll-up of members for the initial coffee catch-up on Friday 27 January 2023. It would seem that most people survived the Christmas/New Year break and are ready to resume activities in the new year. Ever reliable, and with camera handy, Alex remained in the background and provided a few photos of the event.



Australia Day Medallion Presentation 2023

A visit by ACT Branch CEO, Kimberley Hicks on Tuesday 31 January surprised our long serving Treasurer, Jan Properjoh with a Citation and Australia Day Medallion for her services to the RSL and the Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch.



NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH

OF THE RETURNED AND SERVICES LEAGUE WILL BE HELD ON

TUESDAY 30th MAY 2023

The Corey Room, Grant Cameron Community Centre

commencing at 2:00PM



**The Returned and Services League of Australia
Woden Valley Sub-Branch Inc.**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Tuesday 30th May 2023
AGENDA**

1. Roll Call
2. Minutes of previous AGM [31st May 2022] – Read and Confirmed
3. Annual Report – President
4. Financial Statements – Treasurer
5. Welfare Report
6. Finance Committee
7. Motions on Notice
8. Declare all office positions vacant
9. Election of Board of Management in accordance with Section 3 of the Sub-Branch Constitution
10. Installation of Sub-Branch President and Executive
11. Closure of Annual General Meeting
12. Ordinary General Meeting for May 2023
13. Closure
14. Ode

THE SPIRIT OF ANZAC

Dedicated to my cobbers of two wars

Across a thousand memories
With a million bitter tears,
We live again with Anzacs,
Looming misty through the years.
We still remember how you loved
And joked and laughed and died,
We'll always pay you homage,
With a nation's humble pride.

You cherished life, like most of us,
Yet did not seem to care,
You gave Australia all you had,
One day at Sari Bair.
Against the line of Hindenburg,
The World knows how you fought
Your deeds will live forever,
From Lone Pine to Bullecourt.

You lie beneath the poppy fields,
Your resting place a shrine,
In shifting sand or grassy fell,
Or 'neath the ocean's brine;
And now you share Valhalla
With the souls of younger ones,
The spirit of Anzac lives again
In yours and others' sons.

In paths that once you proudly trod,
They followed on with pride;
In places you once hallowed,
They also fought and died;
In vast expanse of ocean,
On the soil of Crete and Greece,
In Libya or Syria,
They died to bring us peace.

On battle-fields much nearer home
They died as heroes shall,
In the jungles of Papua
And the lava of Rabaul;
In the Isles of Indonesia
And the rice-fields of Malay,
Their names will always be with yours,
Forever and for aye.

*Written on ANZAC Day, 1943 at
the 102nd Aust. Con, Depot, Warwick.*

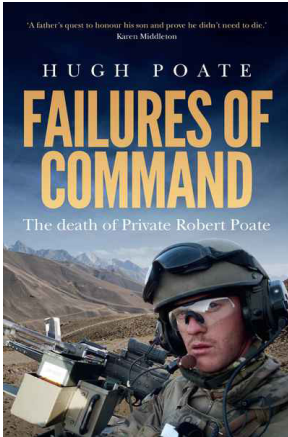
*by Sapper Bert Beros from,
The Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels,
and other verses.*

In January 1941, the troopship Franconia was sailing in convoy in the wild North Atlantic, carrying Australian soldiers to the Middle East. On the deck one bitterly cold morning I stood next to two privates huddled deep in greatcoats.

Above the screech of the wind, I overheard one shivering digger say to the other: "Cripes, how would it be if we were torpedoed right now?"

"I've got it all worked out," his mate replied, "I'd head straight for the Captain's bathroom, fill a tub with hot water, and drown myself in comfort".

*From Humour in Uniform
Anecdotes from the War Years*



Book Review

Mick O'Donnell

FAILURES OF COMMAND, Author Hugh Poate,
365 pages, NEWSOUTH 2021.

A compilation of thoughts of a number of readers, who because of their diverse backgrounds, interests, gender and age were able to bring a range of informed thought to this Review.

Summary: This is a book that needed to be written as an important part of the history of Australia's involvement in Afghanistan. It is simply written and illustrated, well explained for those not familiar with the ways of Defence, military and legal parlance. Poate's style invites the reader to share his and his wife's emotional roller-coaster as they attempt to validate their son's tragic death. The author states that the title of the book, *Failures of Command*, is intended to reflect the Coroner's findings from the subsequent inquest.

Background: Private Robert Poate, enlisted in the Australian Army in 2009. His home base was the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (6RAR), based in Brisbane, Queensland. He deployed on Operation *Slipper* (Afghanistan) in June-August 2012 with the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment Task Group. This was the last Australian Mentoring Task Force to deploy to Afghanistan. His parents, Hugh and Janny, and his sister Nicola live in Canberra where Robert was born and educated.

Introduction: *FAILURES OF COMMAND* is an emotionally disturbing book to read, particularly for military personnel who served in Afghanistan during the period covered by the book (2002-2014), during which 41 soldiers (Appendix 1) were killed by IEDs, firefights, helicopter crashes and in this specific case, 'insider attacks'. Seven Australians had been killed by 'green on blue', as these insider attacks are called, since May 2011 and to this point, all the perpetrators had been killed, except for the perpetrator of this attack who escaped but was captured 13 months later.

The Premise: Private Robert Poate, then aged 23 and two of his soldier mates (Sapper James Martin and Lance Corporal 'Rick' Milosevic) were murdered on 29 August 2012 at Patrol Base Wahab in the Dorafshan region of Afghanistan by an 'insider attacker'. The three soldiers were shot dead by a Taliban 'sleeper', and several others badly injured as they played cards at a Patrol Base called Wahab in the Baluchi Valley, 23km from Tarin Kowt. The perpetrator was quickly identified as a Sergeant Hakmatullah of the Afghan National Army (ANA). Hakmatullah was apprehended in Pakistan. He admitted guilt and was sentenced to death by the Afghan Supreme Court. Hakmatullah was released when America negotiated a prisoner swap deal with the Taliban.

The Inquest: Hugh Poate is tenacious as he pursues a response from the Australian authorities. The reader doesn't need to have a military background to follow the legal battle that sought an inquest, 'to discover what happened, not to ascribe guilt, attribute blame or apportion liability'.

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The families sought to discover what actually happened, in Poate's words, 'without ascribing guilt, doggedly pursuing justice and an explanation from the Defence Department.' The inquest continued until late 2014 and remains the only Coronial Inquest into combat deaths in the 120 year history of the Australian Army.

Their course of action seems quite understandable under the circumstances and the mix of emotions they must have felt at the time, and it is not surprising that Hugh and Janny Poate (and the other two families) were, and probably are still angry at their treatment, as told in detail in the book. As Poate relates it, the families of the three murdered soldiers were 'treated with discourtesy and kept at arm's length in the lead-up to and during the official internal enquiry' which found no systemic failures. The official inquest found five systemic failures associated with the deaths.

Poate tells of his frustration when access to documents on previous combat operations in Afghanistan, and similar insider attacks, were only available at certain secure locations or when received, were often heavily redacted. The author perceived this as 'a strategy to thwart or at least discourage the families and their legal teams from determining if there had been any similar events with similar motivation perpetrated by the ANA, and what lessons had been learnt, if any, to prevent further 'insider attacks.'

Conclusions: This is a well-researched and readable book, and it had to be written by someone like Hugh Poate, with the support of his family and many friends because:

- a.. he and his wife sought logical justice for their son's tragic death;
- b.. he was motivated/driven by the pain of losing his only son;
- c.. his observations are independent (and sometimes eye-opening and provocative) as they come from outside the influential defence/legal circles;
- d.. reaction to the book's release indicate that Defence has been put on notice to improve their processing of casualties, and their 'bedside manner' for the next of kin in light of the high rate of suicides of Defence personnel, and;
- e.. to readers with an interest in honesty and good governance, it highlights and strengthens the overall need for a National Integrity Commission to 'investigate and report on' .. 'holders of public office, individuals and entities contracted to perform public functions and people responsible for spending public money'.

In the end, Poate concludes that investigations like this do become infected by political motivation that verge on covering up evidence to protect the system, and can carry a whiff of dishonesty under the guise that the authorities are 'doing this to protect you.' Some of the narrative illustrates Poate's emotional frustration and anger, and perhaps at time seems vindictive, but the reader cannot but conclude that the response could have been more expediently handled by the government. The internal enquiry report and the brief of evidence by Defence did expose some potentially incriminating facts which diverted the focus in its search for truth and justice - in 'contrived secrecy,' as Poate names it, and he names some he feels have a case to answer for their attitude and behaviour in taking the high ground to defend their actions and decisions.

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Poate states that ‘writing this book has been the most depressing thing that I have ever done,’ and he hopes that telling his story will lead to ‘genuine institutional reforms within Defence’ to prevent the same fate as his son and the two other soldiers who were killed with him, and the consequential trauma that followed for their families and the wider community.

We have to accept that there is no tangible recognition of third parties in the commitment to individual servicemen and women who are placed in danger by whatever means when serving in an operational role.

FAILURES OF COMMAND left the reader with the question that rather than change the system, could the current system be fairer, more caring, more transparent and more humane in its response to the loss of one who has volunteered to serve our country?

Royal Visit to Darwin - 1963

Mike Taylor

As HMAS Melville’s SLJO from 1962-1964, young Lieutenant Taylor was directed to supervise all naval matters concerning the Darwin visit of HMY Britannia from 16-18 March 1963.

Fortunately, the Harbour Master/Port Superintendent was a good bloke with whom to liaise. The most terrible matter would be if the gangway was ever above or below 15 degrees, despite the usual high and low tides. Royal high heels to be considered, you know.

Her Majesty’s official bodyguard was a very pompous overweight plummy speaking, Scotland Yard Detective Inspector who favoured a suit with waistcoat at all times, no matter the humidity. After dinner onboard on the first evening alongside, about 8:30PM, he decided to “take the airs” along Stokes Hill Wharf. Without his suit coat but waistcoat buttoned - though his tie was loosened - he strolled to the entrance to the wharf, manned by a young NT Policeman in charge as sentry. As the Scotland Yard supremo approached the sentry asked for identification. Alas, that was onboard.

“Don’t you know who I am?” resulted in the sentry apprehending the Inspector until clarification was obtained. The Police contacted Melville’s SLJO and the contretemps between the miffed and enraged Inspector, NT Police, Britannia’s OOD, the local Special Branch - and the media - rather spoilt my evening. Compensation next evening was to join Darwin’s local big wigs at a CTP onboard Britannia. Meeting and speaking with the very cheerful and delightful Queen and Consort remains a most happy naval memory. Later, I received a signed photo of the Royal couple, distributed to all involved in the Tour arrangements in the Northern Territory.



FALL IN

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

Barry Tonks, Jason Claridge,
Michael Alves, Mark Campbell



LEST WE FORGET

“The price of liberty is eternal vigilance”

*“They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old,
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn,
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning
We will remember them”.*



WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

The following was written by Pericles well over two thousand years ago, long before the first ANZAC Day, but only a stone’s throw from Gallipoli:

Each has won a glorious grave - not that sepulchre of earth wherein they lie, but the living tomb of everlasting remembrance wherein their glory is enshrined. For the whole earth is the sepulchre of heroes. Monuments may rise and tablets be set up to them in their own land, but on far-off shores there is an abiding memorial that no pen or chisel has traced; it is graven not on stone or brass, but on the living hearts of humanity. Take these men for your example. Like them, remember that prosperity can be only for the free, that freedom is the sure possession of those alone who have the courage to defend it.

Engraved forever at ANZAC Cove are these words from Kemal Ataturk, the Commander of the Turkish 19th Division during the Gallipoli Campaign and the first President of the Turkish Republic from 1924-1938:

“Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives. You are now living in the soil of a friendly country therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmetts to us where they lie side by side here in this country of ours. You, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.”



Trevor Williams, Raymond Aitchison, Ross White



Some things in life are better together.

Nominate **Woden Valley RSL** as your Community Rewards group and **7.5% of your spend** on food and beverages will be donated to them when you dine at selected Canberra Southern Cross Club venues.

Find out more visit
csc.com.au/rewards



Award of an Australia Day Achievement Medallion 2023

On 31 January 2023, the CEO of RSL ACT Branch, Kimberley Hicks, presented the Sub-Branch Treasurer, Jan Properjohn with an Australia Day Achievement Medal as part of the 2023 Australia Day celebrations. The presentation was made in *The Corey Room* of the Sub-Branch office and attended by several Sub-Branch members.

Following is the citation for Jan's award, submitted by the Sub-Branch President, Jim Gilchrist:

Jan Properjohn joined the Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch as an Affiliate Member in May 2014 and was soon thereafter elected Sub-Branch Treasurer. For more than eight years since then, Jan has met all the responsibilities and tasks required of this critical role with focus, competence and integrity. From the beginning, Jan applied her knowledge and experience as a bookkeeper to build and enhance the Sub-Branch financial accounting systems. Particularly as the Sub-Branch established its Veteran Support Centre Jan developed, in concert with our auditors, a system where-by all financial transactions are linked clearly to specific functional elements within the Sub-Branch.

Concurrently, and as the ACT Branch revamped its membership system, Jan monitors all membership applications and transfers, renewals and those who qualify for an subsequently transition to membership categories such as Life Members and Members for Life.

Jan's role as Treasurer includes her being a member of the Sub-Branch executive in which capacity she contributes to all Sub-Branch proposals, contracts and activities and oversees the value-for-money aspects of each. This work has been particularly valuable in our dealings with the ACT Government from which we rent the Sub-Branch facilities, and in relation to the evolving information and technology requirements of our work. Jan is an ex-officio member of the management committee for the Sub-Branch's Asset Management Fund and liaises extensively with the Fund Manager in carrying out that role. Jan also drafts and monitors the annual financial budget.

For some years, Jan has organised each of the two major annual Sub-Branch appeals, ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day, that have been particularly difficult as we dealt with the effects of the COVID pandemic during the past three years. This has involved arranging volunteer rosters, overseeing the probity of the process, and the safe banking and reporting of the funds raised.

I have pleasure in recommending Jan Properjohn for the award of an Australia Day Achievement Medallion.

On behalf of the Board and members of the Sub-Branch, I congratulate Jan on her well-deserved award.

Greg Kennett
Secretary

The Mysterious Ammunition Shell

Mick O'Donnell

The mystery of the pictured artillery shell continues. Several military types from Duntroon have looked at it and many theories abound.

This started some months ago when member Roy Machan produced the shell at the usual Friday Morning Coffee Catch-ups with a 'show and tell'. He stated that the shell was given to his wife Gillian, and her story is that her father and grandfather both served but not in any capacity that would relate to the shell, so we assume that it was a gift to one of them (probably her father because it is of modern design, with oriental inscriptions on its base).

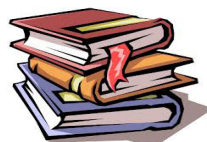
Suggestions that it is Chinese origin as they used three types of 75mm field gun during World War II, so it could be one of these - 75mm type 13 liao, 75mm type 14 and 17 field gun or possibly a 75mm 46 Gin Mountain gun while others think it could be from pyrotechnics?

We await advice from one of our knowledgeable readers for a definitive resolution?



2023

Notes for the Diary



ANZAC Fundraising Appeal	21 st -24 th April	Volunteers required
ANZAC Eve Dinner	Orion Room CSCC	Mon 24 Apr 2023
ANZAC Day Service	Tue 25 Apr - 8:00AM	Eddison Park
ANZAC Day Veterans' March	Assemble - 9:30AM	Limestone Avenue on the Western side of the AWM
AGM/OGM	Tue 30 th May	Corey Room - 2PM
Poppy Appeal	4 th -11 th November	Volunteers required

Irish Club Celebration

A good roll-up attended the special event on Friday 3 March 2023 to celebrate the 19th Birthday of the Eddison Day Club. This lunch was also an opportunity to gauge members thoughts and suggestions on the format and direction of the Day Club into the future.

Speeches by Ian Gollings, Peter Sutton and Sub-Branch President Jim Gilchrist invited those attending to consider the important role that the Day Club performs in providing an outlet for people to socialise and enjoy the company of others with some gentle exercises and a meal. This will however require more volunteers to help run the various events that the Club provides.

A special birthday cake to mark the occasion was cut by Patron, Sue Sarantos and Judith Young.



Home via Burma

Les Cook

When Japan entered the war in December 1941, the AIF had four divisions in the field. The 6th, 7th and 9th in the Middle East and the 8th in Malaya. A start was made almost immediately to move the 6th and 7th Divisions from the Middle East to the South-West-Pacific area to combat the Japanese advance towards Australia. By arrangement between the governments of Australia and Great Britain, the 9th Division was to stay in the Middle East to assist in driving the Axis armies out of Egypt and, hopefully, out of Africa altogether.

The 6th and 7th Divisions were stationed in Syria and Lebanon at the time. The German armies in North Africa and in the Soviet Union were sweeping all before them, and it was expected that they would strike at the Canal in a pincer movement from east and west. The eastern movement was expected to be through Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. We were there to prevent this movement.

It was late in January 1942, just two months after Japan entered the war, that we started to move by train from our various areas to El Kantara on the Canal, and from there to Port Tewfiq. It was a masterpiece of organization to arrange all this and to have ships available in such a short time, particularly as it was necessary simultaneously to bring British troops into Syria to replace us.

We sailed from Port Tewfiq to Bombay on the French passenger liner, *Isle de France*, which was the largest and most luxurious ship I have ever seen, and reached Bombay about the end of the first week in February. I can't remember how we made the change at Bombay, but we left the floating palace to board a small, rusty old freighter bearing the most ill-fitting name "Eastern Prince".

We left Bombay on Friday 13 February sailing south. As usual, we had not been told where we were going, but it seemed to us that Singapore was the likely destination. Singapore fell to the Japanese on 15 February and we headed further south where the 2/3rd Machinegun Battalion and the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion and some other units were put ashore at Java. Fortunately no other troops were put ashore at Java as the Japanese took prisoner those who arrived there almost as soon as they landed.

To everyone's joy we continued to sail south, and there was no doubt in our minds that we were going home. The Southern Cross rose higher in the night sky and I think that we all made a check on the position of the sun each morning to satisfy ourselves that we were still on a southerly course.

There was a piano on the ship that was taken out onto the forward well-deck at night if the weather was kind. One evening after tea we were sitting or lying around the piano singing songs - we were going home and were happy. It was a bright moonlight night, the moonlight strong enough for the masts to throw shadows across the deck. It must have been before 10PM because the bugle call "Last Post" had not sounded when, without the usual siren signal from the lead-ship of the convoy, our ship suddenly began to change course. >>>

We were accustomed to the minor course changes of a few degrees which took place continuously as the convoy zig-zagged. At night, these changes were signalled by the lead-ship of the convoy sounding its siren, one whistle signifying a change to port, two whistles to starboard.

Zig-zagging was a ruse to frustrate the intentions of enemy submarines. A submarine could not approach an escorted convoy on the surface because it was no match for the guns of the escorting warships. Having sighted a convoy, its tactics usually would be to note the course the convoy was on and its speed, then to move submerged on a course which would bring it ahead of the convoy in the most advantageous position for firing its torpedoes. This would take some hours at least, during which the submarine would mostly be running blind. The erratic course of the convoy as it zig-zagged made it very difficult for the submarine crew to predict where the convoy would be.

On this occasion however the ship continued to turn past its normal zig-zagging deviation until it was heading in the opposite direction. The shadow of the masts which had lain across the deck on the starboard side now lay on the port side. When it was apparent that the ship was not going to turn back to a southerly course, the singing stopped, men looked at each other in silence, and everyone went to bed. There was a rush on deck at first-light next morning, and great disappointment to find from the position of the sun that we were still sailing north.

In due course we entered Columbo harbour in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). We were not allowed ashore, although some units were landed to strengthen the Ceylon defences and stayed there for several months before going home. It was long after the war that we found out what happened. Churchill had turned the convoy around with the intention of sending us to Burma. It is clear that, in Churchill's mind, it was more important to stop the Japanese thrust through Burma to India which, if successful, would enable them to link up with the Axis forces in the Middle-East, than it was to halt their southward march towards Australia. I believe Churchill is recorded as saying that, by the time the Australian government became aware of what he had done, we would have landed in Burma, the ships would have gone, and it would then be too late for the Australian government to do anything about it.

Such a view, of course, would have been consistent with the policy of "beat Germany first" agreed between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin, but it did not have much regard for the people of Australia. In the event, it appears that General Blamey, who was in the Middle East, somehow got wind of what was happening and alerted Prime Minister Curtin who spoke immediately with Churchill by telephone and had the decision reversed before it was too late. This must have been going on while we were in Columbo harbour. Whatever went on behind the scenes, we eventually sailed from Columbo and told that we were going home. The fact is, of course, that by this time there was hardly any other place we could have gone that was not already occupied by the Japanese. We reached Fremantle on 15 March, then sailed for Adelaide arriving on 24 March. Apart from a submarine scare just after we rounded Cape Leeuwin, during which many depth charges were dropped by escorting warships, it was an uneventful trip. It had taken 54 days for the convoy to get from Port Tewfiq to Adelaide - a trip which ordinarily, at a convoy speed of about 10 knots, would take about 21 days.

Centenary Birthday Event

Along with the birthday list reported in Peter Sutton's Day Club report, we also had a special Centenary Birthday to celebrate this year. Long serving member Les Cook celebrated his 100th Birthday on Tuesday January 10, with Past President Bill Smith celebrating his 90th on the same day. Congratulations Les, Bill and to all the others listed.

As Editor of this publication, I would also like to say a special thanks to Les for his continued contribution of articles for this publication with stories of his wartime exploits. Readers are advised that my remaining collection of Les's articles is fast diminishing so this is an appeal to our members to provide articles for the interest of our members.



Les with AWM Director Matt Anderson, and below with Rania Kalimeris and in party mode.



A German leaflet, found in Tobruk urging defenders to surrender.

From Illustrated stories of WWII

AUSSIES

AFTER CRETE DISASTER ANZAC TROOPS ARE NOW BEING RUTHLESSLY SACRIFICED BY ENGLAND IN TOBRUCH AND SYRIA. TURKEY HAS CONCLUDED A PACT OF FRIENDSHIP WITH GERMANY. ENGLAND WILL SHORTLY BE DRIVEN OUT OF THE MEDITERRANEAN. OFFENSIVE FROM EGYPT TO RELIEVE YOU TOTALLY SMASHED.

**YOU CANNOT ESCAPE
OUR DIVE BOMBERS ARE WAITING TO SINK
YOUR TRANSPORTS. THINK OF YOUR FUTURE
AND YOUR PEOPLE AT HOME.
COME FORWARD - SHOW 'WHITE FLAGS'
AND YOU WILL BE OUT OF DANGER!!**

SURRENDER

Memorial Honours Fallen Airman

*Karyn Markwell, Flight Lieutenant
History and Heritage - Air Force*

A commemorative service was recently held at the Aviation Heritage Museum in Perth for the family members of Flight Sergeant Richard Hobbs, who died in a World War II air crash.

Flight Sergeant Hobbs was a crew member of No. 11 Squadron Catalina A24-50, which was lost in September 1943 during a wartime mission. The crash site of Catalina A24-50 was found near Fakfak in Indonesia in 2018, and a commemorative service was held in Cairns in July 2021 for the 10 crew members on board who lost their lives.

However, due to Covid-19 restrictions, the family of Flight Sergeant Hobbs - who served as Catalina A24-50's wireless operator/air gunner - was unable to travel to the event. Air Commodore Robert Lawson, Director-General of History and Heritage - Air Force, delivered the keynote address at the service. "It is a great privilege to be here today as we commemorate the crew of Catalina A24-50 and, in particular, Flight Sergeant Richard Hobbs," Air Commodore Lawson said. "We hope today offers you the chance to commemorate his service and sacrifice."

Air Commodore Lawson presented Flight Sergeant Hobbs' family with four medals and his Certificate of Service, along with an artefact preserved from the crash site. The service also included a wreath-laying ceremony at the museum's Catalina. Catalina A24-50 failed to return from a mine-laying sortie to Sorong in occupied Dutch New Guinea on 2 September, 1943. It was not until 2018 that locals from Fakfak located its wreckage on the top of a small mountain in a rainforest. Historic Unrecovered War Casualties - Air Force (HUWC-AF) sent a team to investigate the wreck. While HUWC-AF could not recover any remains from Catalina A24-50, they did recover a wide variety of artefacts, including a portion of the aircraft's tail painted with its serial number, the aircraft's anchor, the master clock from the pilot's instrumental panel and a US-made M9 flare pistol.



Director of HUWC-AF Group Captain Grant Kelly said some of the artefacts recovered from Catalina A24-50 were gifted to the Australian War Memorial for future display.

"The story of Catalina A24-50 will now be known and honoured, in reflecting on that sacrifice, we honour our past and use it to guide our future," Group Captain Kelly said.

HMAS Voyager - D04

Memories of 10 February 1964

Mick O'Donnell



While I was a Radio Operator (me on the flag deck in Darwin) on HMAS Quiberon (Q Class Frigate commissioned in 1943 - skipper Lieutenant Commander Peter Rees - FO3), we were in company with HMAS Vendetta - D08 (below) sailing north through the Lombok Straits, Indonesia, on our way to a 9-month deployment on the Far East Strategic Reserve (FESR).



At 14:30 on Monday 22 July 1963, HMA Ships Vampire and Voyager were sighted heading south enroute to Darwin having served for 8-months on the FESR. This had been Voyager's sixth deployment 'up top' with the FESR. It was one of those rare occasions when all three Daring Class Destroyers were at sea and in company. For literally a fleeting moment, all three 'V' ships of the 10th Destroyer Squadron were together.

Little did we realise that this would be the last time we would ever see Voyager. Ironically, it was right here, in the Lombok Straits, after a 9-month deployment in South East Asia, and on our way home on 10 February 1964, when we heard on Radio Australia that she had been cut in two after a collision with HMAS Melbourne 20 nautical miles off Jervis Bay.

Both ships had just completed refits over the Christmas period, and this was the first time they had been involved in close quarters manoeuvring for almost six months.

The Lead Up.

On 6 February 1964, HMAS Voyager embarked ammunition in Sydney Harbour, before sailing for the Jervis Bay exercise area. Voyager and Melbourne anchored in Jervis Bay at midday, Sunday 9 February, allowing the sportsmen in their ship's companies to enjoy the facilities provided by HMAS Creswell.

Both ships sailed from Jervis Bay early on Monday 10 February for trials and exercises. For Voyager, these included a shore bombardment exercise (08:30-10:30), and an anti-submarine exercise with HMS Tabard (13:30-18:00). Following this latter exercise, Voyager closed on Melbourne for the first time that day, for transfer of mail by heaving line. This was followed by radio sea trials between the two ships. On the night of Monday 10 February 1964, Melbourne was engaged in night flying exercises off the NSW coast. Voyager's role was that of plane guard, involving the rescue, if necessary, of aircrew personnel from the sea. >>>

Both the carrier and destroyer were ‘darkened’ with only navigational/operational lighting in use. At approximately 20:56, some twenty miles south east of Jervis Bay, the two ships were in collision. Melbourne struck Voyager at the aft end of her bridge, heeling her over to an angle of about 50 degrees. A flash appeared to come from Voyager’s ‘A’ Boiler, and she emitted high pressure steam and black smoke. Debris, including the revolution table from Voyager’s bridge, and a pair of binoculars, was thrown onto Melbourne’s flight deck.

The impact pushed Voyager bodily through the water for a few seconds, and then she broke in two. Her forward section passed down Melbourne’s port side, the stern section down the starboard side. The forward section sank soon afterwards and the after section about three hours later. The disaster resulted in the loss of 82 lives (14 officers, including the Commanding Officer, 67 sailors and one civilian dockyard employee).

There were 232 survivors. Melbourne was damaged, but sustained no casualties.



HMAS Voyager Memorial in Voyager Park, Huskisson NSW.

‘LEST WE FORGET’



ANZAC DAY MEMORIES

Terry Colhoun

At school we always remembered ANZAC Day, standing outside the classrooms, hearing about Gallipoli from a World One soldier, saluting the flag and singing God Save the King. As primary school kids we soon moved on to other things, but in high school it was more meaningful because World War Two had started, and the possibility of our being 'called up' became personal.

During my four years in the RAAF (1942-46), I suppose there was some difference to the event on ANZAC Day, but strangely, I have no memory of it happening, if it did.

While I was working in New York (1979-1984), I remember a service on top of a building high above the Rockefeller Centre, where I had my office. It was arranged jointly by the Australian and New Zealand consulates, and was attended by a dozen or so people, some wearing medals. The service was just like the one we all know, and was followed by a non-alcoholic morning tea. I believe it was organised by someone from the New Zealand consulate.

The first ANZAC Day I remember was about 1950 to 1960 when I was working in Newcastle, and invited by a friend, an AIF WWII veteran, to join him in a march and Dawn Service at Blacksmiths, which is on Lake Macquarie. He lived at Belmont, which is south of Newcastle city and I lived at Belmont South, halfway between his house and Blacksmiths.

I accepted the invitation, found my medals, dressed up and at 04:30 was waiting at my front gate for him to pick me up. I was glad of an overcoat because a chilly breeze was blowing off the lake just across the road. A few cars passed, then one stopped and pulled over. But it wasn't my friend, it was the police. We chatted for a moment or two and they told me they were searching for a prisoner who had escaped from Maitland Jail. Satisfied I wasn't the bloke they wanted they moved on.

My friend arrived and a few minutes later we were at Blacksmiths, where we joined about 50 other marchers. It was a relatively silent march in the cold darkness, a little bit of chatter but no band or even a drum. When we reached the Cenotaph local RSL officials led us in the normal Dawn Service. It was a new and moving experience for me.

Duty done we moved into the clubrooms for breakfast, which was large bowls of hot soup. I had never tasted anything like it and asked my friend what it was. He wasn't sure what it was called but it was mainly vegetable, and he said he had seen a couple of bottles of rum poured into the pot. It was very warming but when I got home I needed to sleep it off.

I knew better next time.

Morning Tea Presentation Friday 10 March, 2023

At the regular coffee catch-up on 10 March, a presentation arranged by Mick O'Donnell, guest presenter, Michael (Mike) Crane DSC and Bar, AM (Retd) gave us an illustrated presentation on the history and protocol behind the various Australian honours and awards.

Mike, originally from Tasmania attended St Virgil's College, Hobart and St Brendan's College, Devonport. Among his many academic qualifications, Mike holds an MA in Strategic Studies from the ANU, a Graduate Diploma in Defence Studies Public Policy Analysis and a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Organic Chemistry.

He served with distinction in the Australian Army from 1977 for almost 38 years achieving the rank of Major General - 2 Star, leading and managing ADF assets in the Middle East, and later as a Principal Advisor to the Chief of Defence Force on Australia's Military commitments. He was awarded the DSC in 2008 for Distinguished Command and Leadership on Warlike Operations as Commander of Joint Task Force 633. He is presently a consultant in the field of Defence and National Security. He has been very active as the previous chair of the Order of Australia Association, since 2014. This organisation is a Non-Profit organisation that aims to foster love and pride in Australian citizenship.



He was appointed a Member in the Order of Australia for his service as Commanding Officer 4th Field Regiment and Commandant Army Recruit Training Centre.

He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and Bar for service in the Middle East, and was also awarded the United States Legion of Merit (Degree of Officer) for his service at Central Command.



Amberley Caribou looks good as new

*Karyn Markwell Flight Lieutenant
History & Heritage - Air Force*

A newly refurbished DHC-4 Caribou transport aircraft will preserve an important part of Defence history at RAAF Base Amberley.

Following a seven-month restoration process, the Caribou (serial A4-236) was ‘unveiled’ on April 6 at Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre, (AAHC), where it will be on static display during public open days.



Air Force operated a fleet of 29 Caribou from 1964 to 2009, with the aircraft - popularly known as ‘The Gravel Truck’ renowned for its ability to operate from improvised runways and playing fields. Caribou were a common site at RAAF Base Amberley when No.38 Squadron’s fleet was based there from 1993 to 2007.

When the last remaining aircraft were retired in 2009, many surviving Caribou made their way into museums and heritage centres, including the Australian War Memorial and RAAF Museum at Point Cook. Caribou A4-236 was handed over to the AAHC.

Warrant Officer Mike Downs led the team to refurbish A4-236, having worked on the Caribou at No.38 Squadron in 2009. “For a number of years the aircraft was left unattended before being transferred to the custody of the AAHC,” Warrant Officer Downs said.

Caribou A4-236 began its Air Force service with a marathon journey in August 1965 from the de Havilland Canada factory in Toronto to its new home at RAAF Base Richmond. The 16,500km journey was completed in several legs at a stately cruise speed of 290km/h, with a few tense moments between Hawaii and Kiribati when a propeller fault forced the crew to shut down an engine.

In Air Force service, it provided airlift during the 1990 New South Wales floods, peacekeeping in Timor-Leste (East Timor) and the Solomon Islands. When A4-236 arrived at RAAF Base Amberley in November 2009, only cursory effort was made to preserve or protect the aircraft while it was parked in the elements. In recent years, Air Force’s History & Heritage Branch has initiated a project to restore many of the retired aircraft at RAAF bases around Australia. The Branch’s static display aircraft support section (SDASS) works to bring the aircraft to a display standard.

“Work on A4-236 commenced on August 30, 2021, with the removal of the wing-mounted fight controls,” Warrant Officer Downs said.

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“Following this task, a civilian contractor erected a complex scaffolding assembly that allowed SDASS personnel to safely access every part of the aircraft exterior from the nose ‘bonnet’ to the tip of the tail about 10 metres high. The next task was arguably the most arduous of the entire project - stripping the existing paint from the aircraft’s upper surface.”

The SDASS team is comprised of Air Force reservists with a technical background, with an average age of 57 years and average service career of 32 years for each member. Bringing a wealth of experience and nostalgia for the Caribou, the SDASS team was only too pleased to be working on the aircraft. It spent five weeks chemically and mechanically removing the old paint, sanding the newly exposed surface and removing all remnants of oils, grease and dirt. Using environmentally safe products, the SDASS team removed the existing paint on the Caribou and disposed of it using an approved contractor.

“This process was necessary to ensure paint adhesion for the new livery, and from mid-October to Christmas 2021, the team was fully engaged in masking, priming and painting of the aircraft olive green gloss finish and applying No.38 Squadron markings. About 200 individual paint stencils and decals were also applied to the aircraft,” Warrant Officer Downs said.

Throughout its 44-year career, A4-236 wore many liveries and markings, including an all white United Nations scheme in the early 1990s, and a planned deployment to Cambodia that didn’t eventuate for the Caribou.

In the 1990s, it received a green and black ‘lizard scheme’ that was carried through operations in East Timor and the Solomon Islands until its retirement.



Air Force aviator Sergeant Jon Oppelaar applied coloured paint to de Havilland DHC-4 Caribou A4-236 during the restoration at RAAF Base Amberley.

Bagpipes on the Moon

A life story of RSL member William (Bill) Rudd

By Rev Mick O'Donnell



In 1937 I started school at Crossgates, Fife, Scotland.

I took an early dislike to bullying, so throughout my life I set out to prevent it happening. I was later elected school captain and carried this anti-bullying philosophy throughout my career.

From the age of 10-17 years I was a member of the local boys' club. We performed in all sports including boxing and gymnastic displays. At 16, our instructor invited me to lead the displays.

Aged 18, I was called up into the RAF as a National Serviceman for 2 years and I have many happy memories of being around

Lancaster bombers and made many good friends there. I was later posted to Uxbridge (London) for a six-week course, which I passed and promoted to Corporal and posted to Hednesford, Staffordshire where I met the love of my life, Mary.

I fitted in well and made senior corporal as the senior corporal there was called away. A new group of conscripts were due in. Now in charge, I told the other three corporals, no bullying. The men must be encouraged to want to be the best. We were No12 flight - "We are the best", our war cry. Our former senior corporal was back, now as a sergeant. He was so pleased with how well we had performed that he gave us plenty of scope to improve. We were now ready for the next intake.

Guard of Honour.

I remember Deryk Vane, a Londoner, and a drum major of our camp band. He could do many tricks with his drill staff. We practiced together and eventually I was invited to do a RAF regiment course for six weeks. In that time, I also passed the rifle course and qualified as a "Marksman", wearing the badge on my sleeve with much pride.

Thanks to that course, I was selected to train with the Guard of Honour who went to London for the funeral of George VI who died on 6 February 1952 at Sandringham House.

I was demobbed (discharged) on 29 June 1952.

Mary and I were engaged on my 20th birthday, 16 March, and we married on 28 March 1953. Mary returned with me to Crossgates and I returned to the railways where I had worked prior to joining the RAF, mainly working on the generators in the power house. In August 1953 we transferred to Carlisle where I worked as a fireman on the main line between Scotland and England.

>>>

I joined Carlisle pipe band and was invited to be drum major, stating that I could only do the tricks that Deryk Vane had taught me. However, the former drum major of the regiment, the King's own Scottish Borderers came to my rescue and became my tutor. He was very regimental.

My old band had an engagement at Crossgates and I was asked to be the drum major catching up with many of my old school pals as well as playing with them again in Edinburgh and to lead the massed pipe band from the Castle, down the Royal mile. The BBC had a program called 'Barn Dance'. The John Peel dancers were the highlight and I was invited to join them for the 1963-64 series.

In 1964 we moved to Australia and I joined the Canberra Burns Club pipe band, eventually becoming drum major and going on to win the Australian Championship. I competed many times and went on to win many competitions.

The Moon Landing.

I worked at the Tidbinbilla Tracking Station for some time, mainly on the power generators. The most memorable - and mostly true story, is of a phone call from the control room that was intercepted with me playing the bagpipes in the background on 20 July 1969, while millions of people gathered around their televisions.

A comment was made on air that someone could hear bagpipes. At that time, I had been practicing in the background. My claim is that this was the first time bagpipes were heard on the Moon during that very historic occasion. I tell this story with due respect to Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin who became the first humans to walk on the moon, perhaps accompanied by the skirl o' the pipes.

Mary and I had three wonderful children, now adults, Moira, Andrew and Janette.



In 1978 we all relocated to the coast for a quiet life, the highlight of those times was introducing pipe music to students at local schools. This formed the book-ends of my time with my life. In my youth someone sowed the seed of a life-long interest with bagpipes - not an easy instrument to play, and requiring lots of practice to stay competent. You don't just play them for fun, you fall in love with the distinctive skirl and call of the sound. I hope that some of those students pick up the enthusiasm that I showed over all those years.

Mary passed away in October 2017 and I cherish those almost 65 years of our life journey with so many wonderful memories and experiences.

SUB-BRANCH SERVICES

Sub-Branch Office Opening Hours. The office is open from 9:00AM until 3:00PM Monday to Friday, except public holidays. The services of the Sub-Branch are available to all Sub-Branch members, and all serving and former members of the Australian Defence Force and overseas defence forces. **Office Manager.** Alex Solecka administers the Sub-Branch Office and is responsible to the Executive for the efficient day-to-day routine of the office. Alex will supervise all Sub-Branch matters including membership, correspondence, functions and access to Sub-Branch services.

Veterans' Support Centre (VSC). The office is open from 9:00AM until 3:00PM Monday to Friday, except public holidays, and at other times by appointment. The services of the VSC are available to all Sub-Branch members, and all serving and former members of the Australian Defence Force and overseas defence forces.

Entitlements and Advocacy (E&A). A team of trained advocates and entitlements/pension officers, both male and female, is available to provide assistance with claims under the Veterans' Entitlement Act 1986 (VEA), the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (SRCA), and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA). We also provide support and advice to war widows and widowers with regards to pensions. Andrew Properjohn, the E&A Administrator, will assist you with your enquiries.

Community Support. The provision of welfare to Sub-Branch members and their families can be arranged through Community Support. Advice is available on a case by case basis to access services through DVA, My Aged Care, Centrelink and the ACT Government. Contact the Sub-Branch office on 6285 1931 for details.

Hospital Visiting. We no longer visit the three Southside hospitals automatically but, working with the Veteran Liaison Officers (VLOs) in these hospitals, visit patients on a case-by-case basis.

Hospice Visiting. Visits can be arranged for Sub-Branch members in Clare Holland House.

Christmas Visits. In December each year, all Sub-Branch members 80 years of age and over, and all Sub-Branch widows and widowers receive a home visit and a gift.

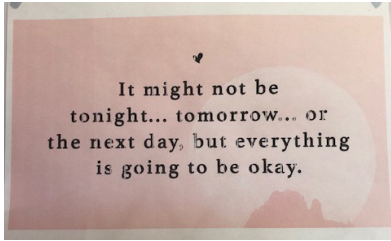
Health and Fitness Program. Arrangements between the Southern Cross Health Club (SCHC) and the Sub-Branch relating to gym use have changed. For details call the office on 6285 1931.

Sub-Branch Publication. The Sub-Branch publication, *'The Serviceman'* is published three times per year and distributed free to all Sub-Branch members, widows and widowers. A special edition is also published for schoolchildren attending the annual ANZAC and Peace Ceremony held at Eddison Park.

Eddison Day Club. Sponsored by the Sub-Branch, the Day Club caters for members, their spouses, widows, widowers and the general community. It meets every Friday from 10:00AM to 2:00PM (except Good Friday) from mid-January to mid-December at the Irish Club, Parkinson Street, Weston.

Carers Friendship Group. The Carers Friendship Group meets on the first Tuesday of each month for a coffee catch-up in The Corey Room. Details on 6285 1931.

If you know of any member who would benefit from any of these services, but is reluctant to apply, please let the office know.



The Importance of Learning.

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This is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the word as a wlohe.


Azanmig?, and I awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt.


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PROUDLY SUPPORTING THE VETERAN COMMUNITY

ANZAC COMMEMORATIONS 2023

ANZAC APPEAL

Volunteers are require for ANZAC Appeal Week
This is a very important fund raising event from 21-24 April.
Names to Sub-Branch Office 6285 1931

ANZAC DAY SERVICES

Dawn Service: The Dawn Service commences at 05:30AM at the Western forecourt of the Australian War Memorial.
It is suggested that visitors should arrive from 4:30AM onwards.

Eddison Park Service: A Service by Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch will be conducted at 8:00AM at the Obelisk in Eddison Park.

Relocation of the RSL Veterans' March: Due to the ongoing construction work at the Australian War Memorial the march is a Non-ticketed event with attendees assembling on the Western side of the AWM in Limestone Avenue with overflow in Reid Oval.

ANZAC Day Last Post Ceremony - 4.45pm
<https://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac-day>