

# RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH ENEWS



July 2021

## OGM Dinner 29 June 2021

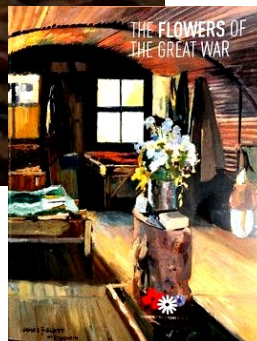
Sixty members and friends attended the June OGM dinner. Our speaker was maestro Chris Latham who spoke of his mission to provide the nation with a musical legacy for commemorative purposes. In particular, he sought to create healing music through the Flowers of War Organisation. Many members had seen the latest in this series – one of

the most moving and memorable concerts in recent memory, the 'Vietnam Requiem'.

In 2017 Chris was appointed Artist in Residence at the Australian War Memorial, their first musician in that role, until 2025. Chris directed the Four Winds Festival (2004-08), the Australian Festival of Chamber Music (2006-2007) and the Canberra International Music Festival (2009-2014). He was Canberra's 'Artist of the Year' during its 2013 centenary, was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Canberra and was made Knight in the order of Arts and Letters by the French Government.



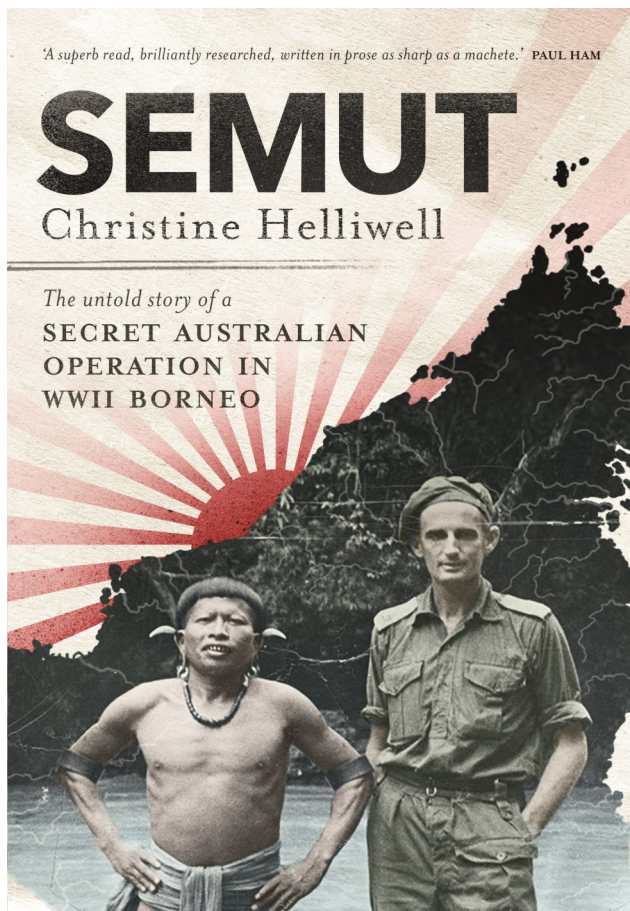
Photo above : Jim Gilchrist with speaker Chris Latham



Chris is pictured with Jim Gilchrist with his musical score for the Vietnam Requiem. He also presented the Sub-Branch with a book about the Flowers of War.

# Photos of OGM Dinner 29 June 2021





All, as previously advised Christine Helliwell will be In Conversation with Garth Pratten on her new book *Semut - The Untold Story of a Secret Australian Operation in WWII Borneo*. Garth is a well-known military historian and is the Deputy Head of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University. (see - [Christine Helliwell In Conversation with Garth Pratten \(harryhartog.com.au\)](http://christinehelliwell.com.au/in-conversation-with-garth-pratten))

When: Thu, 22nd Jul

Time: 12:00 PM to 1:30 AM

Where: 153-11 University Avenue , Australian National University, Acton, 2601

Free event – but ticketed

Tickets: [Reserve your spot](https://kambri.com.au/event/in-conversation-with-christine-helliwell/) online at - <https://kambri.com.au/event/in-conversation-with-christine-helliwell/>

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## Semut

### The Untold Story of a Secret Australian Operation in WWII Borneo

[Christine Helliwell](#)

A remarkable new book about Operation Semut, an Australian secret military operation launched by the organisation popularly known as Z Special Unit in the final months of WWII.

March 1945. A handful of young Allied operatives are parachuted into the remote jungled heart of the Japanese-occupied island of Borneo, east of Singapore, there to recruit the island's indigenous Dayak peoples to fight the Japanese. Yet most have barely encountered Asian or indigenous people before, speak next to no Borneo languages, and know little about Dayaks, other than that they have been – and may still be – headhunters. They fear that on arrival the Dayaks will kill them or hand them over to the Japanese. For their part, some Dayaks have never before seen a white face.

So begins the story of Operation Semut, an Australian secret operation launched by the organisation codenamed Services Reconnaissance Department – popularly known as Z Special Unit – in the final months of WWII. Anthropologist Christine Helliwell has called on her years of first-hand knowledge of Borneo, interviewed more than one hundred Dayak people and all the remaining Semut operatives, and consulted thousands of military and other documents to piece together this astonishing story. Focusing on the operation's activities along two of Borneo's great rivers – the Baram and Rejang – the book provides a detailed military history of Semut II's and Semut III's brutal guerrilla campaign against the Japanese, and reveals the decisive but long-overlooked Dayak role in the operation.

But this is no ordinary history. Helliwell captures vividly the sounds, smells and tastes of the jungles into which the operatives are plunged, an environment so terrifying that many are unsure whether jungle or Japanese is the greater enemy. And she takes us into the lives and cavernous longhouses of the Dayaks on whom their survival depends. The result is a truly unique account of the encounter between two very different cultures amidst the savagery of the Pacific War.



**Mr Matt Anderson PSM**  
Director



Dear Supporters,

It has been some time since we have welcomed many of you in person to the Australian War Memorial.

I am pleased that travel restrictions have eased across most of the country and we have welcomed visitors in strong numbers during the April Easter period. We certainly hope this continues, and with school students also returning, it is a welcome sight.

Anzac Day 2021 commemorations were held in accordance with a COVID-19 safe plan and the exemption granted by ACT Health. The ticketed Dawn Service and National Ceremony with veteran's banner march saw us welcome some 6,600 attendees. A welcome increase on 2020!

The Memorial's large scale digitisation project of national collection materials continues with collections such as Second World War official diaries, film and photographic negatives as well as private and official archival records now digitised and further collections to be completed over the coming 13 months.

The planning of three touring exhibitions is underway, to be displayed at galleries and museums around Australia. *Art in Conflict*, showcasing the contemporary official war art and commissions, will commence touring in Sydney in August. *Ink in the Lines - Tattoos in the Australian Military* will be on display in Wagga Wagga this November, the first of eight venues. Further, the engaging exhibition *Action! Film & War* will tour to four venues commencing in late 2022.

The Memorial's Development Project continues to attract strong media interest. The last but important approval process is for early works commencement with the National Capital Authority, which has recently been granted. The onsite changes this brings will be communicated soon.

A number of early approvals have supported enabling project works to prepare us for the Development. This has included the extended Poppy's Café carpark, installation of construction site sheds and temporary relocation or storage of some sculptures and other National Collection gallery displays including Anzac Hall prior to the forecast construction schedule.

Gallery Development within the expanded gallery space is the crucial aspect of the project to tell the stories of our modern veterans. Extensive national consultation on the approach to the galleries has been completed in recent months. The appointment of representatives to five advisory groups has commenced, to inform and advise the project in the months and years ahead.

A Development Project of this scale is all consuming, but our sights are firmly on why we are doing it. The Memorial is for all veterans of all generations, and those from more recent conflicts have earned the right to have their stories told here at the centre of the nation's commemoration of Australian sacrifice. We will continue to lead remembrance and understanding of our wartime experience – *Our Continuing Story*.

Yours sincerely,



Matt Anderson

*Here is their spirit, in the heart of the land they loved; and here we guard the record which they themselves made.* C.E.W. Bean

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Canberra ACT 2601  
tel: (02) 6243 4262  
web: [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au)



Good afternoon all,

As you will all be aware, Greater Sydney and surrounds has entered a two-week lockdown period in response to increasing numbers of cases of COVID-19 in the community.

Information on the restrictions is available from the [NSW Government Health website](#).

In response, DVA staff will be working from home wherever possible during this period and our face-to-face Veteran Access Network (VAN) services in Surry Hills will not be available until Friday 9 July.

The VAN continues to otherwise remain open and can be contacted via phone: 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) or via our website: [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au).

Our focus remains on continuing to provide services to veterans and their families during this time. Should you, or any veteran, have an essential need to visit our office, then you must comply with local health orders in place. This includes: wearing a mask, checking-in using the Service NSW app, and maintaining physical distance of at least 1.5m. We encourage that you first telephone DVA to see if your query can be answered before travelling to our office.

Some face-to-face services provided by Open Arms will continue during this time, and staff and veterans will need to adhere to these rules.

Thank you for your continued assistance and support to veterans, especially during such times.

Stay safe and well,

Victoria

**Victoria Benz**

Deputy Commissioner, NSW & ACT

**Department of Veterans' Affairs**

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01 Jul 2021 6:21 PM AEST - DVA Media Release - Honouring Australia's Reserve Forces

## MEDIA RELEASE

1 July 2021

### HONOURING AUSTRALIA'S RESERVE FORCES

TODAY is Reserve Forces Day, a day to recognise the vital role of those who have served our nation in the Navy, Army and Air Force through the Australian Defence Force Reserves.

Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs Liz Cosson AM CSC said that these brave men and women have given selflessly to serve our nation, in times of war, conflict, peacekeeping operations, national disasters and emergencies.

"Reserve Forces have long been an integral part of our Australian Defence Force. They have proudly served alongside our full-time members and continue to do so when called upon," Ms Cosson said.

"Over the last 12 months, reservists have been involved in 18 operations both domestically and overseas which saw around 2,500 deployed on domestic operations, including Operation COVID-19 Assist and Operation NSW Flood Assist."

Reserve Forces Day has been marked annually since it was first officially recognised in 1998. It is important to acknowledge the efforts of Reservists, who when serving, put their lives and often careers on hold to ensure the safety of our nation.

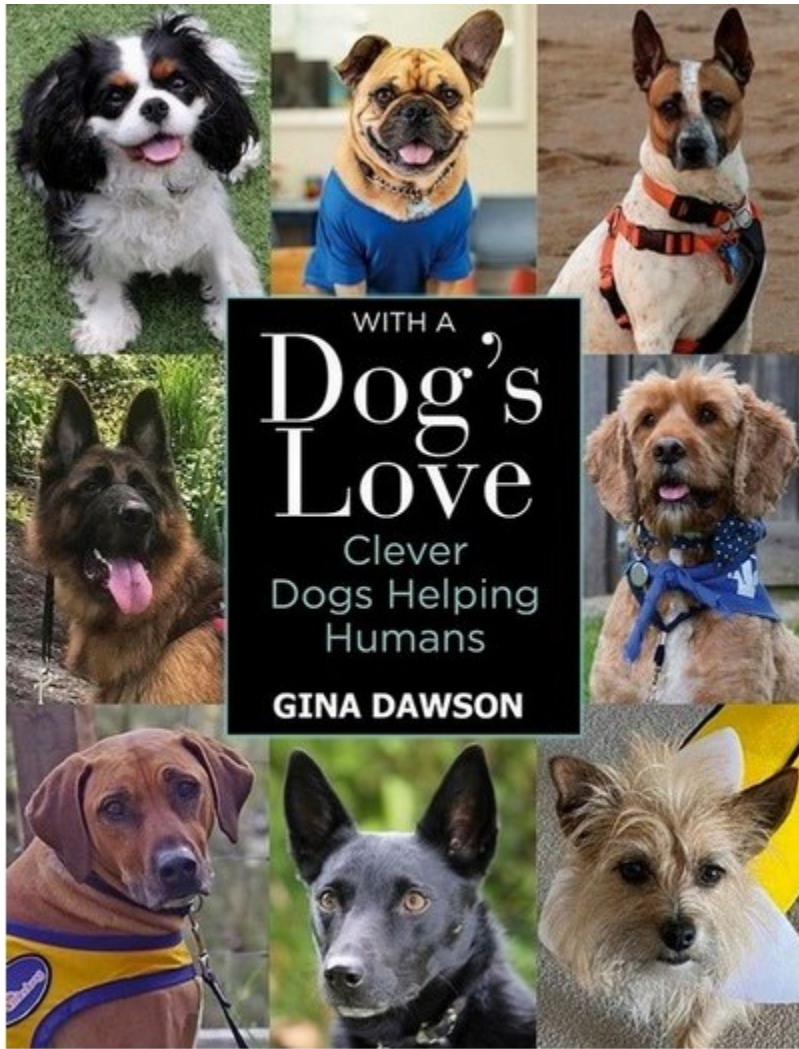
"Our Reservists should be thanked for their dedication, along with their families and employers, as they often find themselves answering the call to serve at very short notice, as has been evident with the COVID-19 response," Ms Cosson said.

"On Reserve Forces Day, I encourage all Australians to take the time to remember the service and sacrifice of these dedicated men and women."

The Department of Veterans' Affairs provides support and compensation to Reservists for all service related injuries and illnesses. Reservists with one day of continuous full-time service or who have been involved in hazardous service may be eligible for support through Open Arms - Veterans & Families Counselling. For further information, please visit [www.openarms.gov.au](http://www.openarms.gov.au) or call 1800 011 046.

**ENDS**

**Contact:** DVA Media [media.team@dva.gov.au](mailto:media.team@dva.gov.au)



Good afternoon,

I am writing to let you know about 2021 picture book re-release, *Next Door's Dog is a Veteran's Dog*, the fourth in the *Next Door's Dog* series. I know that many RSL clubs and veterans share my interest in educating children about mental health by donating books to schools and libraries. If you are interested in ordering this new title, please see attached order form.

The first two of the beautifully illustrated books, *Next Door's Dog has a Job* and *Next Door's Dog goes to School*, were so well received that they have sold out twice. I am trying to convince the publisher to keep these worthwhile titles going and to re-print again. As a small conservative publisher, they are still considering this, but would proceed if I can convince them there is sufficient interest.

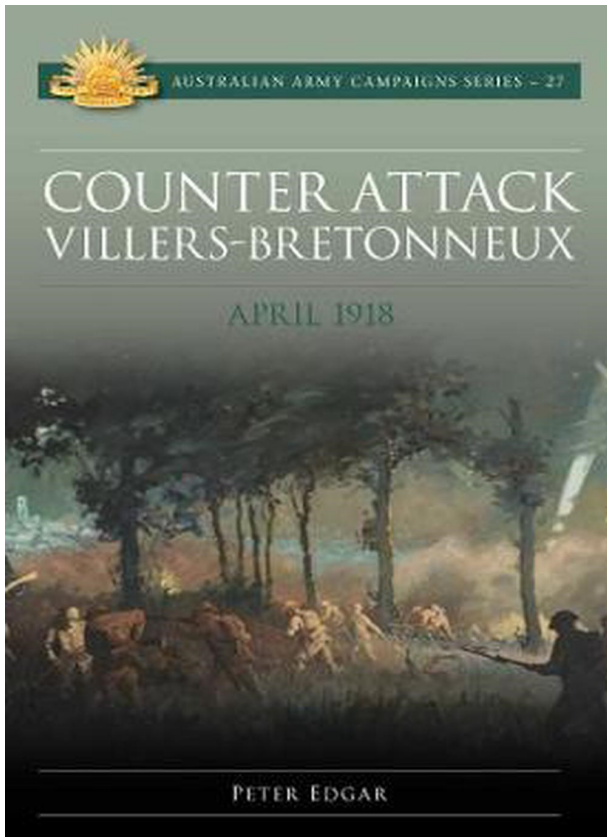


*Next Door's Dog has a Job* is about invisible (unspecified mental health) disability and assistance dog etiquette. *Next Door's Dog goes to School* is about a child who, with the aid of her assistance dog, can now do everything other children do. With her dog she feels safe. I am asking anyone that is interested in helping me on my quest to educate children about mental health and/or assistance dogs to spread the word. Every potential order is one step closer to a reprint. If you would like to register interest in ordering these titles if reprinted, please either return the attached form or reply to this email.

The other news is that my latest title, *With a Dog's Love*, is due for release on September 7<sup>th</sup>. (Cover image attached.) This title contains sixteen stories about how dogs help humans, and three of those stories are about mental health. Indeed one is about a veteran and her dog, another a former first responder. This new title is aimed at older children and teens, although I have had amazing interest from adults as well. Should you wish to pre-order, please do so via my website [www.ginadawson.com](http://www.ginadawson.com) or reply to this email.

Best regards,  
Gina Dawson

Dip Teach, Dip Prof Counselling, Adv Dip of the Arts (Professional Writing)  
[www.ginadawson.com](http://www.ginadawson.com)

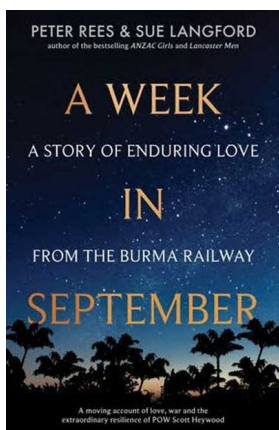


Author Peter Edgar will appear at Paperchain Manuka. Picture: Supplied

## Meet the Author Paperchain Manuka

**July 15:** At 5pm, Peter Edgar will be discussing his latest book, *Counter Attack Villers-Bretonneux, April 1918*, with Nigel Webster, president of the Military Historical Society of Australia. RSVP [books@paperchainbookstore.com.au](mailto:books@paperchainbookstore.com.au) or phone 62956723.

## Muse



**July 18:** Join bestselling author Peter Rees and Sue Langford as they discuss the extraordinary tale of Doug Heywood and his internment as a POW on the infamous Burma Railway. Their book, *A Week in September*, reflects on the power of love and optimism. In conversation with *Canberra Times* features editor Sally Pryor. From 3pm. [musecanberra.com.au](http://musecanberra.com.au)



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RSL Woden Valley Sub-Branch can assist with your IT needs. Call the office 6285 1931 to make a booking



Australian Government

**Be Connected**  
Every Australian online.

**Network Partners**

RSL Woden Valley Sub-Branch has joined the national network of community organisations helping older Australians thrive in a digital world. We know it's not easy keeping up with new devices, new services, and new applications.

As a Be Connected Network Partner, we are able to access resources, grants and collaborative opportunities to help improve your digital skills.



So far, around 30 Sub-Branch members have benefitted from attending classes led by member and tutor Scott Powers, assisted by Marion Kossatz.

You are invited to attend these classes, held fortnightly from noon to 2pm in our new training room at the Sub-Branch. Bring your own device if you have one, or borrow one of ours. Call the office on 62851931 to enrol.



**Be Connected -  
IT sessions with  
knowledgeable  
volunteer tutor,  
Scott Powers.**

**Don't forget our Coffee Catch Up is open again from 10-12 every Friday in The Corey Room, Level 2A, of the Grant Cameron Community Centre, 27 Mulley Street, Holder.**



**Members and guests are welcome to join us for a chat and enjoy freshly brewed coffee with former service mates.**

**◆ Eddison Day Club meetings  
with Peter Sutton**

**Active again**

**Carers Friendship Groups are  
back in business**

**For details call  
Rania Kalimeris 6285 1931**

**Did you know?**

**E-News and *The Serviceman* are also readily available to read on our website [www.rslwoden.org.au](http://www.rslwoden.org.au)**



#### **Contact Us**

Give us a call for more information or access to our services

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Visit us on the web at  
[www.rslwoden.org.au](http://www.rslwoden.org.au)

Or drop in for a coffee Fridays  
from 10.00am

Our office hours are  
9am-3pm Mon-Fri