



War Veterans Village [Narrabeen] RSL sub-Branch

Through an active membership we keep the ANZAC spirit alive and growing

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DISPATCHES

JULY EDITION

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

This report is, in part, from my report to the June Committee Meeting but it certainly bears sharing with you.

Much has already been said about the impact the Corona Virus and subsequent lockdown is having on us. While we have not been able to meet for some time, we have been able to maintain contact with most of our members, predominantly by telephone. The personal delivery of the newsletters has been very well received and I wish to add my personal thanks to those who have enabled this.

Behind the scenes it has been a hive of activity. The new Committee has been very effective and efficient in fulfilling their tasks. Our thanks to those who have also accepted new responsibilities. After helping to set up our Website Peter Yardley has handed the reins over to Allan Burrows who, along with Doug Smyth (and soon John Sowden) has completed some training.

Jan Slater (with help from Peter Yardley) is learning the membership database and will be conducting a 100% validation.

A lot of work is being done, for which the members will be most thankful.

The District Council is also operating in the background with our President Bill Hardman keeping us informed of the progress being made through the District Presidents Council.

On a brighter note, through Greg Reid SC, President of the Cumberland sub-Branch, we have been able to provide welfare packages to some members. The Cumberland sub-Branch has been most generous in their support of the wider veteran family.

With Village restrictions being eased we look forward to when we can have a full Monthly General Meeting. Until then, remain connected, and most of all, remain positive.

Lest We Forget
Bob Durbin
President

Address Label

READ YOUR EDITION AND ENJOY

Kindly being delivered to members in the "War Vets" Village by sub-Branch Committee members

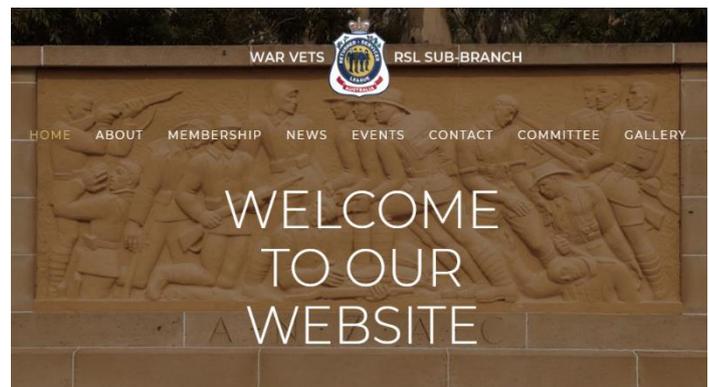
Editor Comment: After issuing our March & April bi-monthly issue of "Dispatches" the Committee made a change to the frequency of publication. With everyone in lock down and isolation, it was decided to issue special, COVID-19 monthly, March, April, May editions. With the slow lifting of restrictions in the "War Vets" Village, we plan to continue monthly editions for July and August and return to our bi-monthly issue – September & October.

Thanks, and appreciation goes to all those people who submitted articles. Not all have been included as yet but the opportunity will be possible in our next few months publications.

More exciting diary dates will also follow as life continues towards normality. Your Committee meets on Tuesday 7th July to plan our way forward. Look forward to our August issue to see the Events and Activities that will return.

DON'T FORGET

We are on the INTERNET with our own website Check it out. GOOGLE - www.warvetsrsl.org.au



You will notice under CONTACT that there are now email addresses for the various committee titles, i.e. secretary@warvetsrsl.org.au. Please use these addresses to communicate with the sub-Branch and the individual committee member in the area of interest.

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

Although the Gallipoli office has been officially closed for the last three months, there has been someone in attendance on the nominated days and times and it has been a great surprise to hear the occasional “knock on the door”. We have been keeping our distance as required but still able to catch up with a few members here and there. It has also been interesting for me to have been involved in the personal delivery of our “Dispatches” as it has given me a chance to meet, often for the first time, members who don't attend our general meetings regularly.

Restrictions are being eased slowly and in various areas of our village. It is clear from news items that the virus is far from conquered with small outbreaks occurring where people are not following the social distancing guidelines. Where facilities are being reopened please take care when catching up with friends. I'm actually really looking forward to going to my first football match of the season – the Swans of course – as I was successful in a ballot to allow 350 members in the 45,000 capacity Sydney Cricket Ground this Thursday night – there is to be hand sanitizer at the gates, name and telephone number required on entry and strict distancing in the Brewongle Stand, where all 350 supporters will be seated well apart from each other. All it will need for a great evening is a win – let's see what happens!!

As you will see elsewhere in this newsletter, your Committee is planning for a General Meeting on Thursday 13th August in the Montgomery Theatre. Please make a note in your diary - it will be a great time to renew old acquaintances again and enjoy a hot cup of tea/coffee afterwards. We look forward to a good roll-up that morning and it will give us all a chance to get updated on everything that's been going on within the RSL organisation since the March meeting – yes that will have been 5 months ago.

Stay safe and healthy and I look forward to saying hello again when delivering our next issue of “Dispatches”.

John Sowden
Secretary

JULY IN HISTORY

- > 1550: July 7th. Chocolate introduced.
- > 1698: July 2nd. Thomas Savery patented the steam engine.
- > 1852: July 10th. Sydney incorporated as a city.
- > 1865: July 5th. Salvation Army founded.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

As at the 23rd June 2020 – Total = 90

All members are financial.

Life Member	2
Life Subscriber	3
Service	43
Affiliate	24
Associate	18

RSL NSW has approved the following membership applications:

Dale F Misfeld – Service
Pamela LG Dodd – Service
Grace J Lane – Affiliate

We look forward to their induction at our next General Meeting proposed for August.

In the mean time I am continuing to familiarise myself with the Membership Data Base – using Microsoft Access Software.

Jan Slater
Membership Officer

Editor: The following article was submitted by Nancy French (Kokoda Hostel). Nancy is the wife of Brian French. The story that follows is about Nancy's Uncle Frank Doull who became a Prisoner of War at the Changi P.O.W Camp.

Thank you, Nancy. (Article written 20.9.2015)

A PRISONER OF WAR - FRANK DOULL

Frank had an interesting upbringing. He was born in Sydney, where he lived until he was eleven years old, then went with his parents and sisters to live in America, where his father became a Baptist minister. Frank lived in various states of the U.S.A from the west to the east until he was 23 years old and came home to Australia.

When WWII started in 1939, Frank volunteered, joining the Australian Army Medical Corps and was trained as a Medical Orderly. His number was NX25369, which my mother never forgot.

Eight months after he enlisted, Frank sailed from Sydney on the cruise ship Queen Mary, which had been converted to carry the troops to Singapore.

Frank started working in the hospital in Singapore and it was here that he acquired the habit of smoking, by lighting cigarettes for sick soldiers. He never did manage to beat the habit.

The Japanese Army came down the Malay Peninsula where they first encountered Australian troops in mid-January 1942. In February, the Japanese assaulted Singapore Island itself and on 15th February, 100,000 troops, including 16,000 Australians, surrendered in the Commonwealth's

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greatest disaster of the war. The Japanese soldiers were expert jungle fighters and were underestimated by the British Commanders.

Frank was reported missing, along with thousands of other soldiers, on 1st April 1942 and was not listed as a prisoner-of-war in Malaya until 3rd April 1943. We, his family at home, had to wonder if he was dead or alive all that time. Telegrams were sent to homes when the news was available and the telegram boy was dreaded, in case he brought bad news. We received four telegrams during the war period.

Frank spent three and a half years in Changi Prison Camp in Singapore, working in the make-shift thatched roof hospital, looking after sick and wounded soldiers on bamboo beds, treating them with their small supply of medicines and equipment. Red Cross parcels did not get through to the prisoners, so doctors improvised with anything they could find to make instruments and equipment. Teeth were often knocked out by the Japanese guards and false teeth were made out of pieces of corrugated iron, shaped to fit.

Food was very scarce and soldiers became very thin and weak. They ate anything they could get their hands on, including cockroaches and rats. The soldiers sold anything of value that they had, to get money to buy food from the local people.

Because of the poor and scarce food, most soldiers suffered from malnutrition and tropical ulcers, which ate into their flesh and would not heal. They had to be lanced (cut and drained) regularly – an awful job. Frank had them on his feet and legs.

In one-way Frank was fortunate in being a Medical Orderly, working in the hospital, as he was shielded from most of the brutality of the Japanese guards, who bashed and killed soldiers ‘on a whim’. He did not have to go on ‘work’ parties and work until he dropped, like many. It was not long before malnutrition set in and when he finally came home Frank was like a walking skeleton, with his ribs sticking out and with ulcers on his body.

There were some light moments, though. Frank used to talk about concerts, put on by talented prisoners. They were held at night, when permitted, our soldiers making up songs, in English, poking fun at the Japanese guards. Fortunately, they couldn’t understand the language, but the prisoners laughed, and they laughed too, not knowing the joke was on them.

The war went on well into 1945, and it was not until 8th September 1945 that Frank was ‘recovered’ from the Japanese at Changi P.O.W.

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Camp (Prisoner of War) and transferred to Labuan, an Island off the coast of Borneo, on the ship “Manundra” where he was treated for malnutrition and tropical ulcers.

There was great rejoicing when Frank was greeted at Concord Repatriation Hospital by his sisters, Alma and Irene and nieces Mary and Nancy. Only two relatives were supposed to meet each returning soldier, but as Irene worked as a volunteer at the hospital, she was able to get four of the family in.

Frank needed time to heal and spent six months recuperating at Lady Gowrie Convalescent Home in Sydney and was finally discharged six years after he joined up.

Frank died early at age 62. I feel that his time in Changi helped him on “his way”.

A DIGGER

He was getting old and paunchy
And his hair was falling fast,
And he sat around the R.S.L.,
Telling stories of the past.

Of a war that he once fought in
And the deeds that he had done,
In his exploits with his mates;
They were heroes, everyone.

And ‘tho sometimes to his neighbours
His tales became a joke,
All his mates listened quietly
For they knew where of he spoke.

But we’ll hear his tales no longer,
For ol’ Jack has passed away,
And the world’s a little poorer
For a Digger died today.

He won’t be mourned by many,
Just his children and his wife.
For he lived an ordinary,
Very quiet sort of life.

He held a job and raised a family,
Going quietly on his way;
And the world won’t note his passing,
‘Tho a Digger died today.

When politicians leave this earth,
Their bodies lie in state,
While thousands note their passing,
And proclaim that they were great.

The media tell of their life stories
From the time that they were young,
But the passing of a Digger
Goes unnoticed, and unsung

Is the greatest contribution
To the welfare of our land,
Some smoothie who breaks his promise
And cons his fellow man?

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Or the ordinary fellow
Who in times of war and strife,
Goes to serve his country
And offers up his life?
The politician's stipend
And the style in which they live,
Are often disproportionate,
To the service that they give.
While the ordinary Digger,
Who offered up his all,
Is paid off with a medal
And perhaps a pension, small.
It is not the politicians
With their compromise and ploys,
Who won for us the freedom,
That our country now enjoys.
Should you find yourself in danger,
With your enemies at hand,
Would you really want some cop-out?
With his ever-waffling stand?
Or would you want a Digger
His home, his country, his kin,
Just a common Digger,
Who would fight until the end?
He was just a common Digger,
And his ranks are growing thin,
But his presence should remind us
We may need his likes again
For when countries are in conflict,
We find the Digger's part,
Is to clean up all the troubles
That the politicians start.
If we cannot do him honour
While he's here to hear the praise,
Then at least let's give him homage
At the ending of his days.
Perhaps just a simple headline
In the paper that might say:
"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING,
A DIGGER DIED TODAY."

Editor: Thanks go to Ian Masters who forwarded this poem for publication.

SIGNIFICANT ANNIVERSARIES

- 10 July 1940: Battle of Britain commences
- 19 July 1940: HMAS Sydney sinks Italian cruiser "Bartolemeo Colleoni" off Crete
- 27 July 1942: Japanese capture Kokoda
- 28 July 1942: Australians recapture Kokoda
- 01 July 1945: 7th Division land in Balikpapan
- 14 July 1945: Australian destroyers on Allied attack on Japanese Islands
- 05 July 1945: Death of Prime Minister John Curtin
- 02 July 1950: 77SQN RAAF and RAN units enter the Korean War

CHAPLAINS CORNER

What a challenging year we have had - droughts, fires, floods and now Corona Virus. Individually each has had a significant and devastating effect on our country, but no one was expecting the effects of a virus which started so far away from our shores. The impact on the world as a whole has been incredible. From the loss of life to the loss of economy, the world is suffering more than it ever has.

As difficult as it is to be in lockdown, (practicing our social distancing and not being able to interact as we normally would), statistics show that we have been doing the right thing. Compared with other countries, Australia has managed to have significantly less numbers of known cases of infection and even more, less fatalities, not just in numbers but also by percentage of population.

One of the keys to how well we are working through this pandemic is that, in the main, Australians are caring for each other. In the gospel of John 15:12, Jesus commanded that we love one another as He loves us. Fortunately, we have seen this in the way the majority of Australians have been treating each other.

Jesus showed that treating each other with the compassion and respect we would like to receive ourselves leads us to a better life – an eternal life with Him.

As you continue to live through this difficult time, know that as you are there for others, so too are they there for you.

We are blessed to live in the Great Southland of The Holy Spirit!

Grace & Peace

Bob Durbin, Chaplain

Diary Dates to Remember

- ** Tuesday, 7th July, 9am, Committee Meeting, in the Lone Pine Lounge.
- ** Thursday, 9th July, 9.30am, Monthly General Meeting in the Montgomery Centre.

CANCELLED

- ** Tuesday, 11th August 9am, Committee Meeting, in the Lone Pine Lounge.
- ** Thursday, 13th August, 9.30am, Monthly General Meeting in the Montgomery Centre.

TO BE CONFIRMED

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

- ** A newborn Kangaroo is about 1" tall.
- ** The most sung song is "HAPPY BIRTHDAY".
- ** The first product produced by SONY was a rice cooker.