



War Veterans Village [Narrabeen] RSL sub-Branch

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

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Office Hours: Monday to Friday 9.30am – 12pm.

YOUR SUB-BRANCH OFFICE HAS MOVED

**YOU WILL NOW FIND US
IN THE FRONT OFFICE
LOWER GROUND FLOOR
GALLIPOLI BUILDING**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

What a great Christmas lunch we had in The Dardanelles!! Thanks to those who did a great job of organizing the day and all the associated activities. Just shows what we can achieve when we think outside the box. I do hope you had an enjoyable Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

VP Roy and I attended the January meeting of the District Council with some interesting outcomes. The DC will be moving to quarterly meetings commencing in May this year. The Executive does have the power to call for extra ordinary meetings if urgent matters arise between meetings. Some interesting thoughts were also brought forward by Jen Reynolds, RSL NSW Sport and Recreation Program Coordinator. More on this next month.

Our AGM will be held in February and hopefully you will all have received your notification complete with the associated reports. This should be a shorter meeting with more time to socialize! Don't forget to advise Secretary John if you have any questions of any of the reports. These need to be given to him in writing before the meeting.

The issue of Australia Day merchandise being, or not being, sold in major retailers has caused quite a stir this year. Once again, the activists are pushing for the date to be changed but as before, have failed to offer any alternative. Fortunately, there are those, including politicians, who see Australia Day for what it should be, a day of celebration. It is a day to celebrate our diversity; a diversity of culture, of history, of heritage, of ethnicity. Most of all, it is a day when we can, as one peoples celebrate the great country, we live in. A time to recognise both the faults and strengths of our past, and use these lessons to move forward.

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Address Label

READ YOUR EDITION AND ENJOY

Continued from previous column.

In the words of Bruce Woodley in his song "I Am Australian,"

We are one

But we are many

And from all the lands on earth we come

We'll share a dream

And sing with one voice

I am, you are, we are Australian.

My hope for ALL is that you/we are able to live these words, not just on Australia Day, but every day.

Lest We Forget, Bob Durbin, President

Our first Meeting for 2024

Thursday 8th February 2024 at 9.30am in the Montgomery Centre.

This is our AGM (non-election year) followed by a general meeting.

Morning tea and a special celebration follows the meeting.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Total membership – 133

Life Member 3

Life Subscriber 5

Affiliate 65

Service 60

The second get together for 2024

Thursday 14th March 2024 our normal meeting day but there is no meeting.

However, our Guest speaker from The Pittwater House School talking about his sailing experience under the TS Endeavour scholarship will be advertised as a village wide event.

10am in in The Lone Pine Lounge.
Please encourage your friends to come along.
Morning tea follows.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

2023 finished well with our Christmas Lunch - feedback has confirmed the outside caterers did a good job with fine food and presentation, and the great atmosphere in the Dardanelles Lounge was appreciated by all who attended.

Thank you to those who joined President Bob and me for a discussion over coffee or tea on how we can ensure the welfare of our members who are not able or do not attend our meetings and other activities - just how we can keep in touch with everyone. Once we know we can do this effectively we can then resume our reaching out for new members.

Two matters to make a particular note of -

1. Our February meeting is the AGM being held in the Montgomery Theatre on 8th February at 9.30AM - it will be followed with morning tea.
2. Our March meeting is on 14th March and will be in the Lone Pine Lounge at 10.00AM. The student from The Pittwater House School who was awarded our one week sailing scholarship on the TS Endeavour will be our guest speaker. He will report on his experience - do come along and support this fine young man and hear of the sailing he shared with another 20 young people on the Endeavour.

Regarding the Canberra trip May 1-3 advertised in the Village Voice and our Dispatches, the deadline for registering with the RLO desk is the end of February. There is a need to assess total numbers before a final deadline to advise the tour company whether the trip can go ahead.

The Committee looks forward to seeing you at meetings and activities this year.

Additional Notes from the Secretary

PLEASE NOTE – Correction to the published 2024 program.

1. The Canberra Trip dates are correct in May – not March.
2. Meeting time for March Meeting is 10am – NOT 9.30am.
3. The October meeting is a Breakfast gathering start time 9am – NOT 9.30am.
4. Vietnam Veterans' Day is Sunday August 18 (not Saturday).

A huge thank you to affiliate members Margaret Galea, Elaine Ray, Joy Guitry, Bev Ash, Sandra Burrows, Adrienne Brown, Barbra Parkinson, and Elizabeth Sowden (non-member) for producing items for sale at the November Market Day stall – it was very successful thanks to these ladies.

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We acknowledged Lindsay Dufty's 100th Birthday last year – we hope we can now acknowledge Service members Max Marvin and Arthur Johnson who both achieve that wonderful milestone this month.

President Bob will be on leave from his RSL Lifecare responsibilities and absent for our April and May general meetings.

CHAPLAINS CORNER

Don't carry around bricks from your past, you'll just end up building the same house.

Going to church no more makes you a Christian than standing in a garage makes you a car.

No need to worry if you're drowning, our lifeguard walks on water.

Anger is the smelly fruit of rotten roots.



May the comfort and peace of God be with you all. Blessings to all, Bob, Chaplain.

FIRST AND SECOND PRIZE WINNERS OF THE MONSTER CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

VAL NIHILL and BARBARA MOORE



OPERATION AGILA

There was much unrest in Rhodesia in the late 1970's as the majority black population became disenchanted with the minority white government of Prime Minister Ian Smith. There were skirmishes between the Patriotic Front guerillas and the government security forces in the lead up to the planned elections in early 1980 which would determine the future of the country. The insurgency was against the white minority government. A resident of the Dardanelles in our Village was involved in Operation AGILA which was the Commonwealth Monitoring Force (CMF) in Rhodesia from 1 December 1979 till 2 March 1980. Major General John Acland, a senior British Army officer was Commander of the CMF.

Major General Acland acted as military advisor to both the Governor of Rhodesia and the Ceasefire Commission which had been set up to create a reasonably stable environment in the immediate period before the elections.

The CMF also had to supervise the ceasefire arrangements and any transfer of power following the elections.

The CMF comprised troops from Australia, New Zealand, Britain, Kenya, and Fiji. This was not a peace keeping force. Rather it had a monitoring role over the operations of the security forces and the Patriotic Front forces during the run-up to the elections to be held between 14 February and 4 March 1980. These elections would establish the governance of a new independent state. The two major parties comprising the opposition Patriotic Front were the Zimbabwe African National Union led by Robert Mugabe and the Zimbabwe National Peoples Union led by Joshua Nkomo.

The Australian deployment code named 'Operation Damon' comprised 152 Army personnel all officers or NCO's. The advance party arrived on 23 December 1979 with the bulk of the contingent arriving on Christmas Day. The duty of the Australians was to monitor the sixteen assembly points scattered throughout the country where the Patriotic Front guerillas had agreed to gather, and to observe and report on the ceasefire between them and the Rhodesian security forces. There were some minor skirmishes but no major incidents.

Robert Mugabe's party won the majority of seats in the newly established House of Assembly and Rhodesia was officially renamed Zimbabwe on 18 April 1980.

Editor: Thanks to John Sowden who provided this article.

The Official Portrait of HM King Charles III



Editor: Many thanks to Arthur Skene for passing this on.

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT WORLD WAR ONE

Over the next several months, enjoy and reflect more than 100 years ago when a young Australian soldier writes home describing his life at that time. He had enlisted in Sydney as a 22-year-old in October 1916 and after initial training spent eight weeks on the high seas aboard a troop ship heading for England arriving there in April 1917. The words are so beautifully crafted, the sentences so well put together and the language so cleverly constructed that the descriptions almost allow you, the reader, to feel you are there participating in the daily activities with him. We are indeed privileged to have had access to these letters and it is with respect that he remains anonymous so please call him Jack, Tom, Fred or perhaps someone you may know in your family who served in the First World War.

PART 1

We said, or shouted, our final goodbyes to the ship that had safely brought us from home over the last 8 weeks. Our crowd filled three trains and we were soon on our way. At a small station a few miles from Exeter, the train pulled up. On the platform was a rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed, Devonshire lad about ten. All heads poked out of the train windows – Australia – “Say Sonny! Where do get something to eat?” Back comes the quaint Devon dialect “next station (eyes sparkling and all excitement) you can get cakes and tea and pasties.” “Tea and what Sonny?” “Pasties!” After that almost every soldier asked the same question – of course the young country boy did not for a moment drop we asked simply to hear his dialect and see his excitement. He appeared to think pasties the last word in delicacies.

After arriving at our destination, it was now 10pm, and we found a four mile walk in front of us to the particular Camp we were to temporarily occupy. Not long after starting off it commenced to snow – Jove! Just imagine that! Some romantic, eh? We went through a village, the boys were singing – up would go the windows, and we get a “good-night boys” from almost every window. When the Camp was reached our hats and overcoats were covered with snow which I quite enjoyed as a novelty. By midnight we were settled in our respective huts which were quite commodious affairs with stoves, etc. made of iron and lined with wood, this of course is absolutely necessary in such a rigorous climate. We were provided with six blankets very old though and much the worse for wear, about as thick as an ordinary tablecloth.

Before leaving the ship, we were provided with two absolutely new blankets of thick Australian wool so you can imagine how cold it was when I tell you that, with their six and our two blankets and

overcoats in addition, it was some time before we could get properly warm. And you can judge our resentment when next morning our two Australian blankets were taken from us, but cooled down considerably on learning that the new blankets were going across to France. I suppose the boys over there require them more than we do.

It was still snowing next morning when we vacated the hut, and you can imagine the pretty and novel sight it appeared – everything covered with an inch of snow and what fun we had after breakfast snowballing each other.

Well, I have met the King face to face. Last Tuesday a big review was held at a village not far from here, of all the Australian troops in England, about an army corps (about 60,000 of all ranks). We were drawn up in the same way as you remember we were at Moore Park on the Friday before leaving Sydney and marched past the saluting base in similar fashion BUT in this case the Officer taking the salute was the King himself. I was on the inside and as we swung past had a good “screw”. He is the kind of man that if you passed him in the street in civilian clothes, you would never have the inclination to look twice. On horseback beside the big General, he looked like a jockey in stature.

PART 2 in the Next edition of Dispatches.

Compiled by John Sowden.

This joke seals it !!!

An elderly man rear-ended a guy driving an expensive European sports car. Enraged the guy hops out and confronts the old man. He yells, “Look what you did to my car! You are going to give me \$10,000 or I am going to beat you to a pulp!”

‘Oh my...’ the old man said nervously. “I don’t have that kind of money. Let me call my son” he said with hope. “He trains dolphins and he will know what to do”

“Dolphins!” the other driver huffed, while rolling his eyes.

The old man pulled out his phone. Dialed his son, and just as his son answered, the irate man snatched the phone away from the old man.

“So, YOU’RE a dolphin trainer, huh?” The irate man yelled “Well, your old man here just rear-ended my car and I need TEN GRAND right now, or I’m going to beat you AND your old man up.

“I’ll be there in 10 minutes,” says the voice calmly on the other end.

Exactly 10 minutes later, a jeep pulls up and a guy hops out and proceeds to beat up the bully, leaving him in a heap on the side of the road. When he finished, he walked over to his father and said, “For the last time dad. I train Seals...Navy Seals. NOT dolphins!”