



THE RETURNED AND SERVICES LEAGUE of AUSTRALIA
FORESTVILLE RSL SUB-BRANCH
NEWSLETTER for OCTOBER 2016

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

October is upon us, spring has arrived and there is plenty of colour in the garden following the good winter rains. The sub-Branch office is back to full strength, with the members of the committee returning from holidays. Their timings perfect as always, as we head into the start of the festive season, which seems to come around more quickly each year.

Invitations will be going out to the widows, inviting them to attend the annual widow's luncheon to be held at the Club on Monday 17th October. The sub-Branch Women's Auxiliary and sub-Branch will again be hosting War Vets on 16th November for the annual Christmas Luncheon. Finally, on Sunday 4th December we hold our annual Christmas Dinner, which is normally attended by approx. 200 members and partners. The Committee is looking forward to seeing many of you over the next few months.

Remembrance Day is approaching with the annual service to be held again on 11th November at the Cenotaph at the Club. Be there around 1030am, and following the Service which will finish just after 11.00am, refreshments will be provided in the Club.

Bob Connors has organised another Bus Trip in October, so watch the Newsletter for further details. I am sure everyone will be happy with what Bob has planned. It should bring back a few memories.

Nominations to fill all positions on State Council have been called for the Congressional Term 2017-2020. Nominations must be lodged at ANZAC House by the closing date of 6th January 2017, with elections in May 2017.

Nominations for your sub-Branch Committee at Forestville for the Term 2017-2020 will open on 1st December 2016 and close on 31st January 2017. We are looking for new Committee Members so don't be shy. Check with Tony Mooney who will provide nomination forms. If you are interested spend a work day with us to see how we operate.

The Cenotaph and Memorial Walkway volunteers need a boost with numbers also. The team have done a great job over several years, now it has come to that time where we need to look at a succession plan. New Volunteers need only apply.

We are now entering into spring, a wonderful period in Sydney, enjoy.

Check for the coming events in this Newsletter and on the sub Branch website: www.forestvillersl.org.au

Bill Hardman...President

OPERATION RIMAU 'The Tragic Sequel to JAYWICK'



A Sleeping Beauty: a motorised submersible canoe similar to those intended to be used on the RIMAU raid.

The 2009 Defence White Paper noted the need for the ADF to maintain a strategic strike capability to carry out 'operations against various strategic and operational military targets'. The ADF has been training for, and conducting, such operations for more than 70 years. A previous issue of Semaphore related one such successful operation, *Operation JAYWICK*, in which Japanese shipping in Singapore Harbour was successfully attacked in 1943. The sequel to JAYWICK, *Operation RIMAU*, is an example of how such operations can go tragically wrong. The success of JAYWICK had emboldened the operation's commanding officer, Major Ivan Lyon, subsequently promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, into planning a larger-scale attack in Singapore. The raiding party would consist of 22 operatives with an additional 2 performing the duties of 'conducting officers'. They would use 15 one-man, motorised, submersible canoes known as 'Sleeping Beauties' (SBs) to make their attack after which the SBs would be scuttled before making their escape in folding kayaks known as 'folboats'.

Six JAWICK veterans formed part of the RIMAU party; Lyon; Lieutenant Commander Donald Davidson, RNVR; Captain Robert Page and three Australian able seamen; Walter Falls, Frederick Marsh and Andrew Huston. The majority of the others were drawn from the 2nd AIF but also included Lieutenant Bruno Raymond, RANR; Sub-Lieutenant Gregor Riggs, RNVR; and Major Reginald Ingleton, RM.

The party departed Fremantle on 11 September 1944 in the submarine HMS *Porpoise* and arrived at Pulau Merapas on 23 September. The plan was to establish a base on the island with enough provisions to sustain the operatives for three months. Merapas is a tiny island off the east coast of Pulau Bintan and was believed to be uninhabited. A periscope reconnaissance the following day, however, spotted three Malays beside a canoe on the beach and Lyon decided to depart from the original plan; one of the conducting officers, Lieutenant Walter Carey, would remain on the island to guard the supplies.

The rest of the party re-embarked in *Porpoise* on the evening of 24 September for the next phase of the operation: the capture of a native boat, such as a junk, to sail the operatives towards Singapore. In the afternoon of 28 September, the junk *Mustika* was sighted off the west coast of Borneo and was boarded by seven of the RIMAU party. Twelve minutes later, *Porpoise* submerged with both vessels making their way back west. The RIMAU party SBs, folboats and other stores were transferred from *Porpoise* to *Mustika* on the evenings of 29 and 30 September in the vicinity of Pulau Pejantan. Once completed, the second conducting officer, Major Walter Chapman and *Mustika's* Malayan crew returned to Australia in *Porpoise*. *Mustika* continued on to Merapas.

Porpoise arrived safely back in Fremantle on 11 October 1944 and just four days later Chapman, along with Corporal Ronald Croton, embarked in the submarine HMS *Tantalus* for the rendezvous with the RIMAU party on 8 November. *Tantalus*, under

due to conduct an offensive patrol in the South China Sea.

Mackenzie's orders gave him considerable scope to exercise his own judgement in the execution of the operation. His orders stated explicitly, 'The Commanding Officer HMS *Tantulus* is responsible for the safety of the submarine which is to be his first consideration and has discretion to cancel or postpone the operation at any time.' His orders further stated, 'Subject to patrol requirements HMS *Tantulus* will leave her patrol at dark on 7 November and proceed to the vicinity of Merapas Island. 'Upon arrival at Merapas, Chapman and Croton were to go ashore on the night of 8/9 November to make contact with the RIMAU party before re-embarking in *Tantulus* the following evening. The orders further stated 'In the event of the pick-up party and the RIMAU party failing to keep the rendezvous for the embarkation, the greatest caution is to be exercised by *Tantulus*, who should not hesitate to abandon the operation if contact is not re-established, or if he has some reason to suspect that the operation is compromised.'

Mackenzie, in consultation with Chapman, decided to remain on patrol and make the rendezvous on the evening of 21/22 November. *Tantulus*' main objective was offensive action against the Japanese and the orders to the RIMAU party were that they might expect to be picked up at any time within a month of the initial rendezvous date. *Tantulus* arrived at Merapas on 21 November and Chapman and Croton were landed at around 0200 on 22 November. They made their way towards the rendezvous site during the night and at first light began searching for signs of the RIMAU party. What they found was not encouraging.

The evidence suggested that the RIMAU party had been on the island, and had apparently left in some haste. Chapman and Croton discovered the beginnings of a large lean-to shelter in a clearing at the top of a hill, away from the original base site, with evidence that the party had been there. Empty rations tins were found scattered about; half-cooked food on 'Commando Cookers', fires seemingly kicked out; a few pieces of silver foil; empty cigarette cartons; among other items. Chapman and Croton estimated that the site had been abandoned about two weeks earlier. Upon returning to *Tantulus* that evening, Chapman and Mackenzie agreed that the operation had likely been a failure and that no purpose could be served in returning to Merapas. *Tantulus* arrived back in Fremantle on 6 December 1944.

But what had happened to the RIMAU party? Had the delay in making the rendezvous contributed to their loss? Mackenzie conceded that was possible when he wrote in his report: 'It is to be hoped that the delay in carrying out the operation was not the cause for the loss of this gallant party, but it is, unfortunately, very possible.'

Knowledge of the fate of the RIMAU party is primarily from Japanese sources, and many of the sources can, at best, be described as self-serving.

Following the requisitioning of *Mustika*, the RIMAU party returned to Merapas where three operatives were disembarked to assist Carey before continuing on towards Singapore. On or around 6 October 1944, *Mustika* was off the west coast of Pulau Batam, and in sight of Singapore Harbour. Whilst waiting for nightfall and preparing to launch the SBs, *Mustika* was approached by what was thought to be a Japanese patrol boat but was actually a Malayan Police vessel. Although there was, apparently, no order to do so, the operatives opened fire killing around four crew members while at least one escaped.

With the element of surprise lost, Lyon decided to abandon the operation and scuttled *Mustika* and the SBs. The operatives launched their folboats and divided into four groups to make their way back to Merapas. What ensued was a series of skirmishes with Japanese troops as the operatives island hopped their way back to Merapas.

At least three of the groups met up again on Pulau Asore, a small island just off Pulau Mapur. There, on 16 October, they encountered a Japanese patrol for the first time. In the subsequent fire fight, Lyon and Lieutenant Robert Ross were killed along with eight Japanese troops. The rest of the group

escaped but Davidson and Corporal Archie Campbell had apparently been severely injured.

Their bodies were discovered by the Japanese following another fire fight on Pulau Mapur. On 4 November, four days before the scheduled rendezvous, the Japanese found the operatives on Merapas. Another fire fight ensued and there were more losses on both sides; Riggs and Sergeant Colin Cameron were both killed.

For the next few weeks the remaining RIMAU operatives were either captured or died trying to make their escape. Eleven were eventually captured, of which one, Marsh, died in captivity from malaria. The remaining ten were held at Outram Road Gaol and tried before a military court on 3 July 1945. Their Malayan disguises, the use of Japanese identifiers aboard *Mustika*, and sketches and descriptions of islands and Japanese armaments all worked against them according to Japanese records of proceedings, and all ten were sentenced to death. The sentence was carried out at an execution ground near Passir Panjang on 7 July 1945.

War crimes investigator's adjudged that no war crime had been committed as 'By being dressed in non-military attire, these intrepid Australians voluntarily deprived themselves of the right to be treated as prisoners according to the custom and usage of war. Technically, therefore, the Japanese did not commit a war crime and, accordingly, there is no means of bringing them to justice in this particular case.' In spite of this, many of the Japanese involved in the imprisonment, trial and execution of the ten were convicted of other war crimes.

The 23 members of Operation RIMAU were: Major Reginald Ingleton, Captain Robert Page, Lieutenant Albert Sargent, Lieutenant Walter Carey, Warrant Officer Alfred Warren, Sergeant David Gooley, Corporal Clair Stewart, Corporal Ronald Fletcher, Able Seaman Walter Falls, and Lance Corporal John Hardy (all executed); Able Seaman Frederick Marsh (died after capture); Lieutenant Colonel Ivan Lyon, Lieutenant Commander Donald Davidson, Lieutenant Robert Ross, Lieutenant Bruno Reymond, Sub-Lieutenant Gregor Riggs, Warrant Officer Jeffrey Willersdorf, Sergeant Colin Cameron, Able Seaman Andrew Huston, Corporal Archie Campbell, Corporal Colin Craft, Corporal Hugo Pace and Private Douglas Warne (all presumed killed in action).

Note: Although the party had quit the camp sixteen days before Chapman arrived, it had not gone far. For thirty anxious days, the remaining survivors of Operation RIMAU had watched and waited for the submarine to come.

On 5 May 1964, not long after this fact became known to him, and shortly after being interviewed by an historian about his part in the operation, Walter Chapman, aged forty-nine, was found dead in his car on the road outside the Amersham Hospital in Buckinghamshire, England. In his pocket was a small, black, Bakelite capsule, of a type not seen since the Second World War? It was quite empty. Even to a layman, the cause of death was obvious, for, permeating the corpse, was the unmistakable smell of bitter almonds. *Twenty years on, RIMAU had claimed its final victim.*

'The Heroes of Rimau'

*"hey 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".*

Mervyn Whiting...editor

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'FAIRGROUND FOLLIES'
TUESDAY 25th OCTOBER 2016

Enjoy the "Happiest Music On Earth" at Fairground Follies—sing, dance or reminisce amongst the greatest indoor collection of self-playing instruments in the Southern Hemisphere. You'll marvel at the sight and sounds of -

- Antique Street Organs
- European Dance Hall Organs
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- The original Luna Park Organ
- The 100 year old Steam Merry-go-round
- The self playing violins
- The Grand Taj Mahjal—one of the world's largest, most elaborate self playing instruments.

Hidden amongst these treasures you may also be surprised to find an "African Queen" steam launch and even an original 1904 Gypsy Vardo on display. We will spend an interesting 2 and 1/2 hours with our hosts, as they operate the various instruments and tell of their interesting and fascinating history. Morning tea is included in the tour. After the tour we will enjoy lunch (a two course menu at the Newmarket Hotel in Mascot).

Our afternoon continues with our tour of the Southern Beaches. We will commence from La Perouse and then enjoy the beaches along the way back towards the city. We will travel through Maroubra, Coogee, Bronte and Bondi Beaches before taking in Watson Bay, Vaucluse and Double Bay.

Cost per person \$35.00 includes the tour with morning tea (lamingtons and cupcakes), two course lunch with tea or coffee (choice of Rump Steak, Tempura Fish Fillets, Chicken Schnitzel—all served with chips & salad or Linguini with vegetables, rocket, tomato, basil, mild chilli, dessert—Brownie and tea or coffee)

Departs at 8.45 am and returns at approximately 4.00 pm.

Tickets sales open 0900 Tuesday 4th October in the office, and then Club Reception after that.

Tony Mooney...Hon Secretary

WOMEN'S AUXILIARY



Our Birthday Lunch was a great success, with about 54 ladies attending.

Our thanks to the sub-Branch, the club and catering staff. We had an added attraction, as some of the fellows from the sub-Branch joined us for a fun afternoon.

If this newsletter arrives early in October, you still may have time to book a place for **The Fashion Parade, on the 10th October, by phoning Carol on 9975 3759.**

Our **Next General Meeting** is on **Monday 7th November at 1.00pm**, with a Guest Speaker to follow the meeting. At this meeting we will be asking for ladies to sell poppies in the Club Foyer on **Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 8th, 9th & 10th**, from around **5.30 pm to 6.30 pm.**

Remembrance Day on Friday 11th November at 10.40 am, where we will also be selling poppies.

At this meeting we will also be asking for donations to go towards our Christmas Hamper Raffle, which we sell at the sub-Branch Christmas Dinner, and our Christmas Lunch. It will be drawn at our Christmas Lunch on **Monday 5th December.**

The War Vets Lunch will be on **Wednesday, 16th November at 11.00 am**, with the lovely residents coming from Life Care at Narrabeen, so we look forward to seeing some familiar faces.

We will have a very busy afternoon, as we will also be taking names down for those wishing to attend our **Christmas Lunch to be held on Monday 5th December.**

Wishing those on the sick list a speedy recovery.

Regards,

President Annie

THIS IS BRILLIANT?

"Need to remember the question when next I meet an atheist?"

An atheist was seated next to a little girl on an airplane and he turned to her and said, "Do you want to talk? Flights go quicker if you strike up a conversation with your fellow passenger."

The little girl who had just started to read her book, replied to the total Stranger, "What would you want to talk about?"

"Oh, I don't know," said the atheist. "How about why there is no God or no Heaven or Hell, or no life after death?" as he smiled smugly.

"Okay," she said. "Those could be interesting topics but let me ask you a question first. A horse, a cow and a deer all eat the same stuff—grass. Yet a deer excretes little pellets, while a cow turns out a flat patty, but a horse produces clumps. Why do you suppose that is?"

The atheist, visibly surprised by the little girl's intelligence, thinks about it and says:

"Hmmm, I have no idea." To which the little girl replies, "Do you really feel qualified to discuss God, Heaven and Hell, or life after death, when you don't know shit?"

And then she went back to reading.

Mervyn Whiting...editor

MEMBERSHIP.

Sadly, we report the passing of our dear members during the last month;

THORPE, John Maiden RAAF
PIERSON, Ronald Alec ARMY
DYKES, Norman Graham ARMY

Our sincere condolences are passed onto family and friends.

Current membership totals **465**

Introductions from our members, family and mates for new membership are always welcome.

CHANGES TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP DETAILS.

THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT!!!

To ensure that our records are maintained up to date we would appreciate your advices of any **change** as soon as possible including new address, phone number, e-Mail address, **next of kin and any other personal information.**

Failure to advise current details may affect the bereavement payment privilege.

NB.

For your information our sub-Branch MEMBERSHIP has a new e-Mail address; membership@forestvillersl.org.au.

Geoff Brown, Membership Officer.

OUR CENOTAPH and MEMORIAL WALKWAY

The three man crew (normally four) with Jim, Norm and myself are still looking for one more volunteer worker. Jim regrettably has advised her will not be continuing as a volunteer after the end of year. He will indeed be truly missed.

During the month the big hedge was trimmed, one cubic metre of garden bark was spread, lawn sprayed on three occasions for weed, and shrubs fertilized.

MEMORIAL PAVERS:

Paver orders will close on **Friday 30th September 2016.**

Cost of pavers for sub-Branch Members is **\$35.**

Geoff Brown, Cenotaph and Memorial Walkway Coordinator.

SPECIAL REQUEST TO MEMBERS

For those of us who are interested in receiving this Newsletter each month, we are able to send it to you electronically (via e-Mail)!

If you would like to provide your e-Mail address we can send the newsletter to you via e-Mail. This would save us the rising cost of postage and time spent with the preparation of envelopes and use of other resources.

To provide your details please contact;
membership@forestvillersl.org.au

Mervyn Whiting...editor

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(All non-urgent enquiries should be directed to the Office during normal office hours.)

OFFICE HOURS

Monday.....0900 to 1200 and 1245 to 1400

Friday.....0900 to 1200

(Except for public holidays and special occasions, or by special appointment.)

Tony Mooney, Hon. Secretary.



DATES TO REMEMBER IN 2016

Wednesday, 5 October 1930 General Meeting

Monday, 17 October 1200 sub-Branch Widow's Lunch

Wednesday, 2 November..... 1930 General Meeting

Friday, 11 November 1030 Remembrance Day Service

Wednesday, 16 November ... 1200 Narrabeen War Vets Lunch

Sunday, 4 December 1800 sub-Branch Xmas Dinner

Wednesday, 7 December 1930 General Meeting

SPECIAL NOTICE



The Forestville RSL REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE will be held on FRIDAY 11 November, 2016 at 1030.

Tony Mooney. Honorary Secretary

'And the world is a little poorer, for a soldier died today'.

LEST WE FORGET