



THE RETURNED AND SERVICES LEAGUE of AUSTRALIA FORESTVILLE RSL SUB-BRANCH

NEWSLETTER for MARCH 2017

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On Wednesday 1st March we hold our 63rd AGM. We have seen many developments in the life of the sub-Branch since that inaugural AGM at the Memorial Hall in Starkey Street back in 1954. The members of the committee are all looking forward to seeing many of you at this year's Annual Meeting.

This is my final newsletter message as President. I have been on the committee since 2002 and President since 2004. I have enjoyed it immensely and have made many friends over the years, but sadly also many of them have passed on. It has been my pleasure to serve you, and I am sure the new committee will keep up the strong Forestville traditions established over many years. I will still be available to assist the incoming committee as required.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have served on the committees over those 15 years. Their company has made the job all the more enjoyable. Also, to those intrepid volunteers who assist us when required. What would we do without volunteers? To the members, I thank you for your support.

Planning is well underway for the ANZAC Services in April. We will be calling for volunteers to assist again. Please advise Tony Mooney if you are willing to assist at the ANZAC Sunday or ANZAC Dawn Services.

ANZAC Sunday will be on Sunday 23rd April this year. We have decided on that date, as the previous week will clash with Easter Sunday. The timings will remain the same with the street march commencing at the Memorial Hall in Starkey Street with march-off at 2.40pm (form up at 2.30pm). The service will commence at 3.00pm and conclude at 4.00pm, when we will move into the Club for refreshments.

The Australia My Country Competition is underway with all the entry forms delivered to the schools. The competition will conclude prior to the end of the school term with judging to follow. The presentation this year will be in May with the continuing problem of clashing with school holidays and rushing to complete printing of the ANZAC Sunday Programs.

At the end of May there will be the Annual State Congress. The Congress will be held in Albury. When the Congress Agenda is received your Committee will make recommendations on voting and these recommendations will be presented for approval at the May General Meeting. Agenda Motions should also be published in Reveille along with details of the 2017 Congress.

A very interesting Bus trip is organised for March with Bob Connors at the helm (hint). Details will be in this Newsletter.

I wish you all continuing good health. Check for the coming events in this newsletter and the sub-Branch website www.forestvillersl.org.au. Remember, if you require any assistance, do not hesitate to contact us.

Bill Hardman OAM
President

FAIRWELL FROM THE EDITOR



By the time you read this edition of our newsletter, most local members will be aware that I will not be re-nominating for election in the forthcoming committee elections. Therefore, I will no longer be on the Forestville RSL sub-Branch Committee.

Actually, on the 16th December 2016, I gave myself a birthday present by resigning from the Committee of the Forestville RSL sub-Branch. In effect I am no longer a Committee Member, Pensions Officer, Newsletter Editor or Librarian, and earlier as Hon. Secretary and at various times Acting Secretary.

I have enjoyed serving in these positions over the past years and, have attempted to faithfully carry on my allotted duties without glory, as you members would expect. I have also enjoyed presenting your monthly newsletter, and I hope that you have enjoyed the reading.

I choose to give a special thank you to the Forestville RSL Women's Auxiliary and President Annie for all the assistance given to me as editor of the newsletter and wish them continued success.

What comes next for me? That remains open for now! Perhaps I may return to private practice as a Psychotherapist/Personal Counsellor! Do you know anyone with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder or Narcissistic Personality Disorder, that you may recommend to start me off?

My best wishes to you all,

Mervyn Whiting

UNDERSTANDING "CRITIQUE v CRITICIZE"

A **critique** is a detailed evaluation of something. The formal way to request one is "give me your **critique**," though people often say informally "**critique this**" - meaning "evaluate it thoroughly." But "**critique**" as a verb is not synonymous with "**criticize**" and should not be routinely substituted for it.

When I was studying at University, I would never have survived if I took offence to my professors "Critique" of my papers and also we were continually required to do self-critique.

Perhaps as sub-Branch Committee Members, we could take heed of the above, and not take "critique," as negative comment, but rather helpful comment.

Mervyn Whiting...retiring editor & ex-committee member

THE LOSS OF HMAS Perth (I) 'Sunk in Sunda Strait 1 March 1942' 75 years on



HMAS Perth (I) was built at Portsmouth Naval Dockyard and commissioned into the Royal Navy as HMS *Amphion* on 15 June 1936. Purchased by the Australian Government, she was commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) on 29 June 1939. The light cruiser displaced 6,830 tons, was 169 metres long, and had a beam of 17.3 metres. Her armament consisted of eight 6-inch guns, eight 4-inch dual purpose guns, a number of automatic anti-aircraft weapons and eight 21-inch torpedo tubes. She also carried a Seagull V aircraft for reconnaissance and spotting duties. Her speed was 32 knots and she carried a complement of 681.

Her early war service was in the Caribbean and the Pacific and she did not reach Australia until 31 March 1940. Until November 1940, the ship was engaged on patrol and escort duties in Australian waters. She then departed for the Mediterranean where she played a minor part in the battle of Matapan. She was involved in the evacuations of Crete and Greece in April and May 1941, in the course of which she was badly damaged by bombing. After repairs, the cruiser was engaged in operations off the coast of Syria before proceeding to Australia for an extended refit. She arrived in Sydney on 12 August.

While the ship was refitting, Captain H. M. L. Waller, DSO and bar, RAN, took command on 24 October 1941. After completion of her refit, *Perth* operated off eastern Australia on patrol and escort work, visiting New Caledonia and New Guinea. On 14 February 1942 *Perth* sailed for the Netherlands East Indies, arriving at Batavia (now Jakarta) on 24 February, where she was attacked by Japanese aircraft that day and the next without sustaining any damage. The *Perth* sailed for Surabaya on 25 February, in company with four Royal Navy ships. On 26 February the ship departed Surabaya in company with the Dutch light cruisers *DeRuyter* and *Java*, the heavy cruisers USS *Houston* and HMS *Exeter*, and two Dutch, three British and four US destroyers. The squadron, under the command of the Dutch Rear Admiral Karel Doorman, proceeded along the north coast of Madura Island, searching for a Japanese invasion convoy.

The cruise was unsuccessful but, as the ships were preparing to enter Surabaya and refuel, Admiral Doorman received information that the Japanese forces had been sighted to the north. Accordingly, he steamed to intercept. In the ensuing battle of the Java Sea, fought over the night of 27-28 February the Allied force was soundly defeated by a Japanese force which was able to exploit its superiority over the four-nation Allied force in terms of long-range gunnery, torpedoes, night fighting, the freshness of its crews, and its homogeneity. The Dutch cruisers were sunk and *Exeter* badly damaged, while most of the destroyers were sunk or withdrew as their torpedoes were exhausted. *Perth* and *Houston* were able to break off the action with the Japanese and sailed to Tandjung Priok, where they refuelled.

Orders were received for the cruisers to sail through the

Sunda Strait for Tjilitjap on Java's south coast. They sailed at 7.00 pm on 28 February and set a course to the west for the Strait, *Perth* leading, with *Houston* five cables astern. At 11.06 a vessel was sighted at about five miles range, close to St Nicholas Point. When challenged she proved to be a Japanese destroyer and was immediately engaged. The two cruisers had met the Japanese invasion force assigned to western Java.

Shortly afterwards, other destroyers were sighted to the north and the armament shifted to divided control to allow more than one target to be engaged. Despite this, the enemy destroyers attacked from all directions during the action; it was impossible to engage all targets simultaneously, and so some were able to close to short range. Nevertheless, *Perth* was to suffer only superficial damage in this phase of the action.

At about midnight it was reported that the cruiser had little ammunition left, so Captain Waller decided to attempt to force a passage through Sunda Strait. He ordered full speed and turned the ship south for Toppers Island. *Perth* had barely steadied on her new course when a torpedo struck her in the starboard side. The captain ordered the crew to prepare to abandon ship. A few moments later, another torpedo struck just forward of the first hit and Captain Waller gave the order to abandon ship. After five or ten minutes, a third hit torpedo struck well aft on the starboard side, followed shortly after by another on the port. *Perth*, which had been heeling to starboard, righted herself, then heeled to port and sank at about 12.25 am on 1 March.

Houston, still fighting but ablaze, was also hit by torpedoes and sank shortly afterwards. The Japanese losses were light with one transport and one minesweeper sunk and several vessels seriously damaged.

Perth's crew abandoned ship between the second and third torpedoes, but it is doubtful if any boats were successfully launched, although many rafts and Carley floats were. During the abandon ship operation the *Perth* was under fire from many destroyers at close range and many hits were sustained and casualties caused. Many were killed or wounded in the water by the explosion of the last two torpedoes and by shells exploding in the water.

Of the *Perth's* company of 686, which included four civilian canteen staff and six RAAF personnel for operating and servicing her aircraft, only 218 (including one civilian and two RAAF) were eventually repatriated; the remainder were killed during, or soon after, the action, or died as prisoners of war. Captain Waller was lost with the ship.

Mervyn Whiting...editor

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?

I was counselling a woman who was being cheated on by her boyfriend. Understandably, she was heartbroken that he cheated, but she was even more hurt that he wanted to be with someone else, not her.

She just kept repeating ... "what's wrong with me, what's wrong with me." I helped her to see that the only thing wrong with her was that she kept chasing him and accepting less than she deserved.

When someone cheats on us, it's more about what's wrong with them, not what's wrong with us. Don't confuse being cheated on with your value.

Mervyn Whiting ... psychotherapist

BRISBANE WATERS CRUISE THURSDAY 23rd MARCH 2017

Our day begins with a pleasant drive to the Central Coast and Gosford where we board the Lady Kendall for a scenic cruise on the beautiful Brisbane Waters. The Lady Kendall is rich in history being the oldest working boat in Australia. It started its life as a sailing ship plying Bass Strait before it was converted to a ferry and remains undefeated in the Sydney Harbour Ferry Boat Races. The skipper of the Lady Kendall is Alan Draper and he gives an excellent commentary as we cruise through the many bays and inlets of this picturesque waterway.

Our four hour cruise takes us past Woy Woy, St Huberts Island, Hardy's Bay, Pretty Beach and Ettalong to the edge of Broken Bay. This is a unique area where the waters of Pittwater, The Hawkesbury River and Brisbane Waters converge on Broken Bay and the Tasman. The cruise offers constantly changing scenery, from unspoilt Nature Reserves to waterfront mansions, oyster leases and pelican breeding grounds. Morning tea will be served on the cruise, followed by pre-lunch nibbles and a delicious 2 course buffet lunch.

Following the cruise we will have a brief tour of the Gosford district before returning to Forestville at approximately 4:30pm.

Cost per person based on a minimum of 80 people will be \$35.00 Per Person. This includes morning tea, luncheon cruise and luxury coach travel. The tour Departs Club at 8:45am and Returns approximately 4:30pm.

Tickets on Sale 9:00 am Monday 27th February 2017.

Tony Mooney...Hon Secretary

**From Former Assistant Commissioner NSW Police E.R
(Ross) Nixon, Forestville RSL sub-Branch Member**

"Dear Mervyn,

As I discussed with you I had fond memories of **Major Peter Badcoe** who I knew reasonably well before his second trip to Vietnam. He was a dedicated capable intelligent officer who at all times was willing to assist in training of the then NSW Police Emergency Squad which at times of 1950 to the middle sixties mainly consisted ex WWII veterans. They were a tough squad with their considerable WWII experiences. It is now called the riot squad and consists of some hundreds of members.

I was an instructor and member of this squad and struck a good liaison with Peter Badcoe when given permission to use the army rifle ranges at Ingleburn. He was always willing to assist us as I have described some of the help he gave us in the early sixties in Chapter 11 of my memoirs called "Surviving the 20th Century" unpublished, now attached.

There is a vehicle rest stop right alongside Lake George on the way to Canberra. I stopped there many times on the way to Canberra in the latter half of the 21st Century, for a cup of tea, with my late wife Betty.

I am the holder of the Australian Police Medal (APM), Distinguished Service, British Empire Medal (BEM) Gallantry, Queens Commendation (QC) Brave Conduct, from police service. I served in the RAN from 1945 to 1947 as an AB and ASDIC operator. I am now one of the 16,000 to about 18,000 still alive of the over 950,000 Australians who served in WWII. I have included this as I am fully aware how carefully some ex servicemen examine qualifications looking for fraud.

All the best,

Ross Nixon"

WOMEN'S AUXILIARY



Our Next Meeting is on **Monday 6th March, 2017 at 11.30 am**. It is our **A.G.M** so there is still time to fill out a nomination form as all positions will become vacant. This is followed by our very popular BBQ with our special chefs. Cost is \$15 if you haven't put your name down already just ring me on 9402 0882.

So come along and join the fun.

The April Meeting will be on Monday 3rd at 1.00pm. It is a General Meeting followed by a Guest **a Guest Speaker**.

Our **Anzac March** will be on **Sunday 23rd April 2017 at 2.30pm-3.00pm**.

Thursday 20th, Friday 21st, Saturday 22nd & Sunday 23rd April 2017 we will be selling ANZAC Badges at the Club, so please buy from us as all the money goes to Life Care. We will be asking Ladies to help on those nights starting from **6.00pm**.

The **ANZAC Dawn Service** will be on **Tuesday 25th April starting at 5.30am**.

Our **May Meeting is on Monday 1st at 1.00pm**. Again, we will have an interesting Guest Speaker so make a note in your Diary.

New Members are always welcome. Just come along on the first Monday of the Month around 1.00pm.

For those on the sick list we wish you a speedy recovery.

President
Annie

'ONE OF THE SPECIAL CHEFS AT WORK'



DONATING TO DEFENCE CARE

Defence Care relies on donations to continue providing services to young veterans and older ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force and their families. Anyone, including sub-Branches and Women's Auxiliaries, can make a donation.

Defence Care is a Tier 1 RSL NSW recognised charity and is a Deductive Gift Recipient.

Mervyn Whiting...editor

MEMBERSHIP

We have pleasure in welcoming the following new members to our sub-Branch; **Warren Richard MCCOY, ARMY, Denis Christopher WALSH, ARMY,** and Affiliates; **Jeffrey Gordon ORTMANN, William James SHIELDS, and Susan Jennette DUCHESNE.**

Current membership totals **457.**

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

CHANGES TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP DETAILS.

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.**

Also please call us if you wish to check any of your information.

e-mail address is membership@forestvillersl.org.au.

Geoff Brown, Membership Officer.

OUR CENOTAPH and MEMORIAL WALKWAY

Our new Team commenced work in the cenotaph and memorial walkway and did an excellent job, notwithstanding the heat and adverse weather conditions. As everyone is saying we need rain.

MEMORIAL PAVERS;

Don't forget to think about your paver order for a past friend or relative.

Orders close on the 24th March.

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

Geoff Brown,
Cenotaph and Memorial Walkway Coordinator.

FORESTVILLE RSL MEMORIAL



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 you e-Mail address we can send the newsletter to you via e-Mail. This would save 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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Bob Connors.....(02) 9451 9494

(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.)



DATES TO REMEMBER 2017

Wednesday 1 March 1930 Annual General Meeting
Tuesday 14 March 1900 District Council Meeting
Wednesday 5 April 1930 Monthly General Meeting
Sunday 23 April 1440 ANZAC Sunday Street March
Sunday 23 April 1500 ANZAC Service at RSL Club
Tuesday 25 April 0530 ANZAC Dawn Service
Wednesday 3 May 1930 Monthly General Meeting
Saturday 13 May 1100 AMC Presentation
Wednesday 7 June 1930 Monthly General Meeting
Wednesday 5 July 1930 Monthly General Meeting
Wednesday 2 August 1930 Monthly General Meeting
Sunday 13 August 1200 VP Day Luncheon
Wednesday 6 September 1930 Monthly General Meeting
Wednesday 4 October 1930 Monthly General Meeting
Monday 23 October 1200 sub-Branch Widow's Luncheon
Wednesday 1 November 1930 Monthly General Meeting
Saturday 11 November 1030 Remembrance Day Service
Wednesday 15 Nov 1200 Narrabeen War Vets Luncheon
Sunday 3 December 1800 Sub-Branch Christmas Dinner
Wednesday 6 December 1930 Monthly General Meeting

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

LEST WE FORGET