



BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER
SEPTEMBER 2010

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VALE

Herbert (Bert) Ronald FERGUSON passed away on the 5th February 2010. Sadly, I only found out when his son, Greg, telephoned me in late June.

I never met Bert personally but we often had good conversations by phone and it was as though I had always known him as a friend.

Bert was always cheerful even though much sadness befell him with losses in his life, first of his wife Elaine, and then later, his daughter, Denise.

It left only himself and his son, Greg.

Greg came to live with his dad and look after him when he took sick a couple of years ago.

Bert succumbed to prostate cancer and Greg was with him when he passed away peacefully in the John of God Hospital in Subiaco, WA.

Bert joined the Regular Army, number 1685, on the 5th February 1948. He had 2 years service in Japan from 1950 until 1952 and then in Vietnam from May 1966 until April 1967.

Bert had service with the following units:-

- Southern Command Depot of Medical & Dental Stores
- BCOF General Hospital, Japan
- Eastern Command Advance Depot of Medical Stores
- Northern Command Depot of Medical & Dental Stores

Western Command Depot of Medical & Dental Stores
2nd Field Ambulance
5th Field Ambulance.

He discharged from full time service on the 13th February 1970 and started work with Glaxo Pharmaceuticals as their warehouse manager until his retirement in the mid 80's.

Bert also joined the Army Reserves on the 14th February 1970 until discharge on the 13th February 1976.

It struck me as strange that when I was typing Bert's details how the month of February was very prominent in his life –and eventually, in his passing.

Bert's rank on discharge was Warrant Officer Class 11 and he was awarded:-

- AASM 1945-75 with Clasp Vietnam
- ASM 1945-75 with Clasp Japan
- Australian Defence Medal.

Our Association extends its sincere sympathy to his son, Greg.

(If any member knew Bert personally and would like to add to our message, I would be very happy to place it in our next magazine.)

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Deceased * Associate



Message from the President



Derek Cannon

Welcome to the Spring edition of 5 Field Ambulance RAAMC Association Quarterly Magazine.

The Reserve Forces Day (RFD) Parade rehearsal on Sunday, 27 June and Parade on Sunday, 3 July in the Sydney Domain on Sunday, 4 July both went off successfully in excellent weather. Also, our Association, led by Alan Curry, was also represented at the RFD Hunter Region Parade held in Newcastle on 3 July.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Alan Curry and ASM Fred Bell who joined me at the rehearsal and to all of our members who paraded on the main day.

Our Secretary, Alan Curry, who led the Association as Standard Bearer will expand on the two parades and name and thank all for a fine professional turnout including the two cadets who carried our Banner with distinction.

Following the RFD Parade some 16 members retired to the Berkeley Hotel, Chippendale for lunch and refreshments where we were delighted to be joined by Association stalwarts John DeWitt and Steve Baldick.

The RAAMC ASSOCIATION INC. (NSW) meets on the first Friday of each even month. The next meeting is on Friday, 6 August at Victoria Barracks at 1030h. I encourage 5 Field Ambulance Association


members to attend if possible. Further meetings are scheduled for Friday, 1 October and Friday, 3 December.

May I draw your attention to the VP Day Parade. This Parade is to be held on Sunday, 15 August at 2pm, at the Kokoda Memorial Walkway, Killoola Street, Concord. I encourage all who can attend this special day to contact our Secretary, Alan Curry (h) 49824646 (m) 0427824646.

Future activities for your diary include The Battle for Australia commemoration Wednesday 1 September in Martin Place, Sydney and our Annual reunion luncheon proposed for Saturday 27 November 2010 at the Paddington RSL. Please refer to Secretary Alan's announcements.

To all our special members and with thoughts for our number of sick now including our Treasurer Brian Tams recovering from serious heart surgery, Edna and I wish you all well and hope to catch up with you at one of our future planned gatherings.

Derek Cannon



Happy Birthday

JULY: Neil BARRIE, Helen BOYTER, Robert BOYTER, Lee CASTLE, Alan CURRY, John de WITT, Garry FLOOD, John GALLAGHER, Edwin LOWERY, Huss MAHOMET, Sr. Elizabeth SHEARD, George SIP.

AUGUST: Derek CANNON, John DAVIES, Phillip FAGUE, Barry FOSTER, John LAYHE, Brian LINDSAY, John MAIR, David PHILLIPS, Tom PRITCHARD, Robert SHILLINGSWORTH.

SEPTEMBER: Robert BAILEY, Bill CLUTTERBUCK, Victor ("Bluey") DAVIS, Ray GRANT, Norma HUTTON, James JORDAN, John WEAVER, David WILLIAMS, Gordon WRIGHT.

Our Association wishes each of you "All the Best" on your "special" day – have you given me your month of birth?



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Message from the Secretary



Dear Member,

If you are on our "Sick Parade" we are thinking of you.

As you read this, if you have a friend who is not 100% health wise, pick up the phone or send them a card. Let them know you haven't forgotten them.

I had the chance, after our lunch on Reserve Forces Day, to visit our Treasurer, Brian Tams, in the Royal North Shore Hospital. I was with our committeeman, Bill Clutterbuck but thankfully Bill was able to sit in my car and "mind" it, because I was in a "restricted" space and he said he would sit in the car and wait until I came back.

Brian entered hospital in late June to have a quadruple by-pass operation on his heart. It eventuated that he had five by-passes.

Our President, Derek Cannon, had bought a "Get Well" card and asked the members, who came back to the luncheon, to write a few words of encouragement to Brian. I took the card with me and called in to see Brian on our way back up to Tanilba Bay.

Brian was very pleased to see me and to receive the card. He also asked that his thanks be relayed to all who enquired about his well-being.

His wife, Gail, and their daughter, Jane, were by his side.

Just recently he had a "set-back" and had to undergo a second operation to repair a "nicked" aorta.

As of this magazine he is now home and progressing well.

Our thoughts in this issue are for the family and friends of our brave soldiers who were killed or injured on duty in Afghanistan, and later, the tragic helicopter crash in late June which caused the death of three soldiers and injuries to another seven.

The work of our soldiers in discovering and destroying the caches of IED's and other arms and ammunition, must never be underestimated—their lives are on the line each time they leave their compounds.

A portion of our population does not understand that the members of our ADF are fighting in these dangerous places at the request of the United Nation and our Government.

They are trying to make it safe for the peoples of Afghanistan and Iraq, in particular, to have freedom and safety from the "terror tactics" that, if left unchecked, will threaten the safety and freedom of the "Free World" of which we are a part.

On another matter, to all who may have my address as No: 8—please amend this to No: 6. I won't go into the boring details!

Kind Regards to all,


Alan Curry

Khalil

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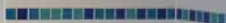
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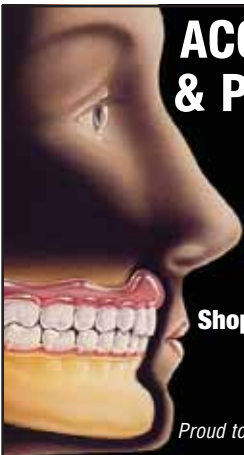
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BATTLE for AUSTRALIA Commemoration Day

(Wednesday, 1st September)

This day is a very important day and will be commemorated around Australia. We invite you to join us in Martin Place, Sydney, to be part of this Ceremony.

It will commence at 11am and we will have some "Reserved" seating for our members. If you are able to be present it would be gratefully appreciated.

Afterwards, we usually proceed to the Gallipoli Legions Club in Barrack Street (about a 5 minute walk).

DRESS: Lounge Suit, Medals and Name Badge.

The very dedicated BFA committee, of whom our good member, David Cooper OAM is a member, is seeking financial support from organisations and individuals to ensure this very important day is NEVER forgotten.

Our own committee was unanimous that our Association join this most worthwhile project for \$25 per year. *(I will be seeking to get the support from my local RSL Sub Branch to also commit to joining in this project.)*

If any individual member would like to join, the BFA Committee would be most delighted to include you as a member for \$10 per year.

Please fill out the Application Form (on page 11) and post it, and your cheque/money order, to the address stated. (I have included a copy of an Application Form for you to fill out.)



(Continued next page)



Those of us old enough to remember the events leading up to the bombings of Darwin in February 1942, and those of us who have later read the frightening accounts of those dark days in early 1942, should never forget the sacrifices of those brave men and women of the Armed Services of Australia. Those who served and those who lost their lives to save Australia being captured by the invading Japanese Imperial Forces.

In the space of a few months, from 7th December 1941 to March 1942, the Japanese Imperial Forces had “smashed” the US Pacific Fleet as it lay at anchor in Pearl Harbour. Then followed quick and bloody battles that saw the victorious Japanese invaders conquer Malaya, Singapore, Philippines and East India.

They entrenched themselves in Rabaul and Lae and attacked our mainland in various places along the west coast of Australia—most especially at Darwin.

We now had to prepare to fight on our own soil—we were not fighting “someone else’s war thousands of miles away”. We had to defend our land, our homes and our families—we had to defend our way of life—our freedom.

We were faced with the most momentous event to ever occur in our nation’s history—pre or post Federation.

Due to the most strict media control at the time, these terrible events were never allowed to be reported. Even today, almost 70 years later, our school curriculums do not cover this very important piece of our history. IT IS SLOWLY CHANGING.

For the first time in our history we saw our Reserve Army (then called the “Militia” and later, the CMF—Citizens’ Military Forces) CONSCRIPTED to go to New Guinea to meet, and stop, the yet unbeaten Japanese Forces.

Their nick-name “The Choccos”, originally derisive, eventually were recognised as a very brave and courageous soldier for their feats and defeats on the Kokoda (Track) Trail from July 1942 to November 1942.

This very intense period saw our troops and our Commanders criticised and admonished for their battle failures.

It saw the very senior Field Commanders, LTGEN Rowell and MAJGEN Allen and BRIG Potts relieved of their commands, and even that noted war correspondent, Chester Wilmot, who covered the events at that time, had his accreditation withdrawn and was not allowed to report officially on this campaign again.

All the while the Kokoda Campaign was being fought the Japanese also felt their invincibility rebuffed at MILNE BAY between 26th August 1942 to 6th September 1942, when Australian troops, supported by units of the RAN and the RAAF, handed the Japanese forces their FIRST DEFEATS.

The tide of battle was turning in favour of Australia and its Allies, the US.

It is, therefore, so important that the Battle for Australia is NEVER forgotten.

The BFA Committee, Australia wide, have THREE main aspects;

(1) To hold Nationwide Commemorative Services in the National and State Capitals, as well as regional cities, on the FIRST WEDNESDAY each SEPTEMBER. The first services were held in 1999 in Sydney and Melbourne. A Kokoda Service had been held in Sydney since 1992 and a Milne Bay Service in Melbourne since 1997.

- (2) To educate the children of Australia and the “not so young”, the true significance of the Battle for Australia, recognising the great sacrifices made by so many, to save Australia from a determined and victorious enemy. Also, to ensure that the events of this critical time of National crisis, are taught in our Nation’s schools.
- (3) To encourage and foster the unique relationship that exists between Australia and Papua New Guinea, highlighting the magnificent contribution made by so many Papua New Guineans, in defeating the Japanese invader and gaining the final victory.

Let us remember the words of the former High Commissioner to PNG, His Excellency, David Irvine, in the speech he gave at the Kokoda Ceremony in 1999 about the significance of the Battle for Australia... “Gallipoli made Australia, Kokoda saved Australia” and in finishing his speech he said... “The sacrifices made and the heroic deeds performed by Australian Servicemen in the defence of our homeland, must always remain part of our National Heritage and History, known by all and never forgotten—LEST WE FORGET”.

V.P. DAY INVITATION

Our Association has been invited to take part in this very important celebration. The day will mark the 65th Anniversary of Victory in the Pacific.

(On the 14 August 1945, Japan unconditionally surrendered to the Allied Forces and the Australian Government, on the 15 August 1945, declared a Public Holiday for Victory in the Pacific—it marked the end of World War Two.

Britain, the US and New Zealand refer to the day as VJ Day (Victory over Japan)—With kind thanks to Google and Wikipedia for the above)

There will be a small parade and we will bring our Banner which will be carried by the Scouts. All other Banners will also be carried by the Scouting Organisation.

There will be NO marching because there is concern that the distance is too long for the veterans—instead it will take the form of a Parade which will see the Police Band leading, followed by the Mounted Police, Australian Light Horse, WW 2 Motor Cycles, 9 WW 2 jeeps carrying WW 2 veterans, 4 Nurses in WW 2 uniform, Association Banners and the NSW Pipes and Drums at the rear.

DETAILS:

WHEN: Sunday 15 August.

TIME: 2pm (be seated by 1.30pm)

WHERE: Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, Killoola St., CONCORD.

DRESS: Lounge Suit, Medals, Beret and Tie, Name Badge.

PARKING AREAS: Lovedale Place (Paddock), Killoola St., Concord Hospital Car Park (FREE), Concord RSL Nullawarra Ave., Concord.

TRANSPORT: a “Shuttle Service” will operate every 20 minutes from between 12.30pm and 1.30pm—Strathfield Station, Concord RSL and Rhodes Station.

RETURN JOURNEYS will commence from 4pm. Refreshments will be served following the service, and a “sausage sizzle” will be available, courtesy of Rotary.





BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA

Commemoration Committee NSW Inc.

PATRON: Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO
Governor of New South Wales



Please reply to: Battle for Australia (PO Box 6023) Pymble NSW 2073
Phone: 02 9449-6433 Fax: 02 9449-6053 email: brian@playbill.com.au

I / We hereby apply for membership of the
Battle for Australia Commemoration Committee/Association NSW Inc. ABN 52 276 883 255

I / We enclose my / our membership fee as indicated.

Membership will commence July 1, 2010 up to June 30, 2011 and is renewable annually.

Individual	\$10
Service Organisations	\$25
Corporate bodies	\$50
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Please make cheques out to: Battle for Australia

Name:.....

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I authorise you to charge this Membership / donation to my credit card.

Card Type: Visa Mastercard Amex Cheque enclosed

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Signed:.....



Reserve Forces Day

(Summary)

SYDNEY PARADE

What a glorious day it was. A crisp winter's morning but the sun was shining and it turned out to be a great parade.

Our Banner Party was conducted by two members from 202 AACU Blacktown.

They were CPL's Harley Dvorak and Taras Kret. They did a terrific job especially so when they gave up their previous Sunday to attend the RF Day rehearsals.

Our Association has sent a "Letter of Thanks" to their CO, CAP Ken Duncan.

We formed up with other units of 5 Brigade in Art Gallery Road.

We particularly thank BRIG Brian Pezzutti and LTCOL Michael Campion who marched with us, in full uniform.

BRIG Pezzutti almost had the distinction of leading our Association in what we thought was going to be the absence of our President, Derek Cannon!

Derek was held up with the train service at Strathfield and arrived with about 3 minutes to spare.

Derek led our Association with myself carrying our Standard, our ASM, Fred Bell, marched at the side of our troops.

The entire Parade consisted of the RANR, 2 Division, 8 Brigade, RAAF and a very large contingent of the NSSA. In all, there were about 1500 "On Parade".



The grateful assistance of 202 ACU Blacktown. Photo shows the two cadets who carried our Banner – CPL's Harley DVORAK (on left) and Taras KRET



Photo shows (in Civvies) Alan Curry (Standard), COL Ray Hyslop OAM RFD (Patron), COL Derek Cannon RFD (President), COL Bill Molloy RFD ED, COL Frank Lang OAM RFD ED, Anthony Jordan and George Harris (partly obscured). In Uniform--BRIG Brian PEZZUTTI RFD and LTCOL Michael Campion



Photo shows Terry and Annette Irvine, Bill Clutterback (holding Standard)



Group photo "On Parade" Sydney RFD 2010



Group Photo Sydney RFD 2010



BRIG Brian PEZZUTTI, Bill MOLLOY, Frank LANG, COL Michael CAMPION and Suresh BADAMI



Photo of Derek Cannon, Michael Moroney (Standard) and Fred Bell



Photo L/R LTCOL Michael Campion, BRIG Brian Pezzutti, COL Bill Molloy and COL Frank Lang OAM



Photo--Anthony Jordan and Bill Clutterback



We all "Marched off" at 10.45am and marched on to our allotted locations that roughly formed a huge "U" around the edges of the Domain Parade Ground to all face the Official dais.

The Bands do a fantastic job and the concept of having them "massed" in front of the dais is also a wonderful spectacle for the Dignitaries and seated guests and visitors.

The Governor-General, Her Excellency, Ms Quentin Bryce AC, is to be congratulated for walking the entire Domain to inspect, and talk to some Association Representatives (me included, as I was carrying our Standard, and I was honoured). Normally, the Inspecting Party would be in a vehicle. It would have taken Her Excellency about 30 minutes to inspect the Associations. At the end of the Official Speeches the Governor-General was given three hearty "Cheers".

We particularly thank the following members and wives/friends who came to wish us well and either march with us, or another Association, or to watch the proceedings, or meet us later at the Berkeley Hotel for lunch.

Suresh BADAMI, Steve BALDICK, Warren BARNES, Fred BELL, Barry BRADSHAW, LTCOL Michael CAMPION, Bill CLUTTERBUCK, David COOPER, Alan CURRY, John and Peter de WITT, George HARRIS, Ray HYSLOP, Terry and Annette IRVINE, Anthony JORDAN, Jim JORDAN, Frank and Valerie LANG, Robert LOVE, Edwin LOWERY, Bill MOLLOY, Michael MORONEY, Barry O'KEEFE, BRIG Brian PEZZUTTI, John PHILLIPS and, David VERCO. (My sincere apologies if I have omitted your name)

For those who possess a computer, the RF Day website has some wonderful footage of the Parade—go to; www.rfd.org.au/site

NEWCASTLE PARADE

This was held on the Saturday prior to Sydney's Parade. It is well conducted and it is a pity that more Associations don't participate.

The Lord Mayor, Alderman John Tate, has always been involved and encourages the organisers and participants.

It was a very nice morning and the air was crisp, all the marchers "Formed Up" in front of the Art Gallery, which overlooks Civic Park where we were all going to march down to.

We marched about 500 metres behind the Australian Army band—Newcastle and gave an "EYES RIGHT" to the Dignitaries, MAJGEN Warren GLENNY AO RFD ED (Rtd), Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair AC RAN (Rtd) and Lord Mayor Councillor, John Tate.

There would have been about 200 present to hear the wonderful addresses given by the three main Dignitaries.

I must commend the "Re-Enactment Group" for their bearing and dedication, they are a credit to the organisers.

Our Association thanks the following members or friends who greeted us or marched with us.

Mick CARLSON (1st Field Ambulance—he acted as our ASM), Alan CURRY (carried our Standard), George HARRIS (marched with his N SSA Contingent), Kevin HURRELL, Noel MOULDER (marched with his N SSA contingent), Barry O'KEEFE (marched with his N SSA Contingent), Barry and Heather PERIGO, John SMITH.

After the march some of us went back to the Newcastle RSL for a lunch before heading back home.

I thank Heather Perigo for taking some photos.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



NEWCASTLE Reserve Forces Day. Photo shows Barry Perigo, Alan Curry, George Harris and Barry O'Keefe.



Marching past the Saluting Dais (Newcastle). Alan Curry (carrying Standard) followed by L/R Barry Perigo and Mick Carlson (1 Fd Amb Assn) and behind them are Kevin Hurrell and John Smith OAM (partly obscured)



L/R (Front) Noel Moulder, George Harris, Alan Curry, Barry O'Keefe. (Rear) Barry and Heather Perigo.



Members of the Reserve Forces Re-Enactment Guard



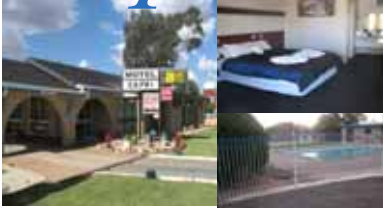
Another photo of the Re-Enactment Guard.



On the Saluting Dais (L/R) MAJGEN Warren Glenny AO RFD ED (Rtd), Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair AC RAN (Rtd) and Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Councillor John Tate.



Capri Motel



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Congratulations

Our Association congratulates our member, **Bill Thompson**, who was recently acknowledged in a Government "Media Release" regarding the invaluable assistance that is given by employers and organisations in allowing their employees to render ADF Reserve Service.

Bill, has been on the Defence Reserves Support Council ACT committee for a number of years and was now retiring, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support, Dr. Mike Kelly, gave Bill a glowing endorsement for all his efforts after many years of support to the Reserves, in a number of capacities.

Dr. Kelly said... *"Bill Thompson has done an incredible amount of work in supporting the Reserves. As a former Regular and Reserve soldier, Bill fought for their rights and for improvements in their conditions of service. Bill was, for many years, the ACTU representative on the Defence Reserves Support Council and, in later times, the Chair of the ACT Committee. During this time Bill demonstrated his commitment and ability to contribute in an ongoing and positive manner. He will be greatly missed."*

Good on you, Bill, we hope you and Denise can now relax a little.

Our Association sincerely congratulates our good friend, **Major John Straskye**, on being a recipient of the "Order of Australia" Medal.

John was named in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in June for services, particularly to the Royal Australian Medical Corps.

John lived in the Penrith district and attended Penrith High School. His service with the Australian Federal Police and with the Australian Defence Force has seen him serve in many parts of the world.

He saw active service in Vietnam as a Rifle Company medical assistant and in this service he, along with his fellow medics, assisted many injured Australian soldiers.

John served 21 years in the Regular Army before transferring to the Active Reserves in 1988.

He has been the driving force behind setting up the Medical Corps web site, this included all the Medical Associations which have registered with John—a huge task to initially undertake, with the blessing of the Medical Corps.

John is also the current (and inaugural) President of the RAAMC Association Inc. which is starting to take shape in every State of our nation.

I previously emailed this good news to our members who are on email and I particularly thank our good member, John de Witt, for bringing it to my attention.

WELL DONE, MAJ JOHN STRASKYE OAM, you deserve it.

I am sure I echo these remarks on behalf of any of our members who know John.



SICK PARADE

John A'QUILINA, Neil BARRIE, Don BOOTH, Derek CANNON, Kevin CARTER, David CAVANAUGH, Barry COLLINS, John DAVIES, Vic ("Bluey") DAVIS, John de WITT, George DONNELLY, Nelson FIORENTINO, Ray GRANT, Kevin HURRELL, Neville JOHNSON, Sir Keith JONES, Anthony JORDAN, Ted KREMER, Bob LEECH, Robert LOVE, Huss MAHOMET, "Roy" McDONALD, Rayda NOBLE, Charles O'MEALLY, Chris O'REILLY, Barry and Heather PERIGO, John PHILLIPS, Maurice PORTER (*Hayfield Court, Baptist Community Village, Carlingford*), Harley RODD, Sr. Elizabeth SHEARD, Rob STEWART, Brian TAMS, Peter ("Tommo") THOMPSON, Sr. Francis ("Sue") THOMPSON (*Big Sister Hostel, Room 216, 2c Kanimbla Road, Miranda*), Arthur WALTON, John WEAVER and John WOODHEAD.

KIND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

(Of monies received since last newsletter of June 2010. Please contact me if your name has been omitted.)

- **Derek CANNON** (Cheque \$20) for Name Badge.
- **Terry IRVINE** (D/D \$140) for Life Membership \$100 and RAAMC Corps Tie \$40.
- **Barry PERRIGO** (Cash \$50) for 2 Name Badges \$40 and 2 Raffle Tickets for Sudan Painting \$10.
- **John ROCHE** (Cash \$35) for Subs \$15 and 4 Raffle Tickets for Sudan Painting \$20.
- **John SMITH** (Cash \$20) for Subs \$15 and 1 Raffle Ticket for Sudan Painting \$5.
- **Alex WILLIAMS** (D/D \$100) for New Member/Life Membership.
- **Worksmart-Interactive** (Cheque \$275) paid to 5th Fld Amb Assn instead of Statewide Publishing Pty Ltd.



MESSAGES FROM MEMBERS

Joe GATTY enjoys reading our newsletters and recently wrote that he and his wife, Judy, have recently returned home after visiting their son, Glen, and his family, who are residing in England.

Glen took Joe to re-visit some old Western Front battlefields in WW 1, and Joe wrote that no matter how many movies or books you read about the Western Front, and Joe has seen and read many, it did not prepare him for the journey he and Glen experienced when they visited northern France.

Joe said his mind was cast back to those dreadful days, and months—that passed into years—that the soldiers had to endure, during that dreadful war.

He said farmers were killed or injured, years after the WW 1 conflict was over, by ploughing over unexploded shells and bombs. This region was called the “iron harvest”!

Joe included 4 photos of their experience.

Photo on right shows a farm house that was used as a field hospital. Their guide said it was staffed by members of 5 Field Ambulance — it was used during one of the battles for Ypres. (The photo still shows the outline of the Red Cross on the wall of the building.)



Photo on left shows the cemetery at “VC Corner”. The remains of over 240 killed at the battle of Fromelles on 19/20 July 1916 are beautifully kept here, by the locals.

Photo on right shows “Cobber Corner”. The memorial depicts a “digger” being rescued by a comrade after he heard a voice saying... “don’t leave me, cobber”!



Photo on left shows “Pheasant’s Nest”. The buildings on the site are for the excavation of the lost soldiers of Fromelles, which are being re-buried, with dignity, in a beautiful new cemetery on the outskirts of the town. (I wrote about this from a Media Release—see “Items of Interest” 2 (D) in our December 2009 newsletter.)

Joe asked to be remembered to all his friends in the Association. He and Judy have just celebrated their 40th Wedding Anniversary on the 9th May.

When Joe is not out fishing (which he loves with a passion—rain, hail or shine) he spends a lot of his spare time with the Coast Guard, where he is a keen volunteer. He

said they were called out to 125 “assists” in the last calendar year.

(Good on you, Joe, and what a great milestone on your 40th W/A. Thank you for your letter and the details and photos of your trip.)

John ROCHE asked to pass on his good wishes to his friends in the Association. He was sorry he could not join us on ANZAC Day but did commemorate the day down his “neck of the woods” in Sutton Forest.

John met his mates at Reservists’ Park, which is just down the road from his home, and their ANZAC Day March was about 100 metres. He said there would have been about 200 Marchers and the “Theme” was “The Nurses”.

They listened to a “talk” from the local Historian, M/s Linda Emery, who told of the nurses who had gone to WW 1 from the Southern Highlands.

John said he recalled a Miss Maurice, when he first came to live in Moss Vale—“She was one of them”.

John said...“Later, our Laird of Sutton Forest produced a bottle of Scotch and we all drank to the health and memories of those nurses —and then one to our own.”

(The Laird always throws the cork away before the “Toasts”!)

John included a photo with an explanation of the photographer. John said he is an old friend and long time patient when he came off his motor bike many years ago.

He is the local paper’s photographer and “snaps” photos at every opportunity, whether at a “Dinner” or on a tractor in a procession, or in an ANZAC March.

The photo was taken in “Reservists Park” with a few of his mates. He said the one at the back of the photo is our “Padre” and he drives an “old car” with the words “The Truckies’ Chaplain” painted on it.



The photo of the “Toast to the Nurses” was not available at this time, but John said he was so proud of ...“Our Sr, “Sue” Thompson from 5 Field Ambulance and pass on my good wishes to her at Retirement Village in Miranda”.

John enclosed some cuttings taken out of the Stamp Bulletin which included sets of stamps for sale on... *The Bombing of Darwin in 1942, various Kokoda issues, Queen’s Birthday and items available from the Royal Australian Mint.*

(If any member is interested in these Stamps, please contact me and I will give you the information.)

John also included a “simple set of rules” for ANZAC “Two-Up”—I will put these in this or another magazine when space permits.

He was hoping to join us on RF Day but he was hosting a “Berrima Horse Trial” at his place and he was going to be the “gofer” i.e. gofer petrol, gofer ice, put up 5 flags on a flag pole, fill in a rabbit hole etc etc.

He said it was a -4 degrees “frost” for the 290 horse competition. His wife, Kath, was kept busy (bad knee and all) in “Cafe Araluen” (the canteen was in their own horse



trial shed) cooking bacon and egg rolls—they went through 38 dozen eggs!!!

John also made contact with his, and our, our good friend Charles Murray (*it was he who submitted the poems—"The Christ's of Fromelles" (inadvertently shown as Chris Murray and sincere apologies) in our ANZAC Day Magazine 2010 (page 43) and "At the Shrine of Remembrance" 1914-1918, page 29 in our Reserve Forces Day Magazine 2010.*)

He also informed me of a recent Medical (Educational) Seminar he attended at Macquarie University on the last weekend in June. John said there would have been about 300 in attendance.

He "caught up" with a few from 5 Field Ambulance and other friends including Harding Burns, Frank Lang, Sir Keith Jones, Bob McInerney, John Overton, John's brother James and Harry Learoyd.

John included a "handwritten letter" from an old friend, Les Burnett and he mentioned a Dr. Belisario who was in John's mother's year in medicine and he went on to become a "doyen of skin specialists". John feels that when you read Les Burnett's letter some of our members will remember the names.

John also spoke about Mick Susman (*I wrote an article on his brother, Eric, in our APRIL 2009 Magazine*) and said he was his wife's (Kath) godfather.

He also mentioned a Ben Jones who was a Pathologist from Prince Henry Hospital and he blood-grouped the whole of the 6th Division in between Christmas and the New Year, as their convoy was to leave Sydney in the New Year.

Les had also told John that he played Bridge on Crete with (later Sir) Lorimer Dodds, Mick Susman and others—as they had no equipment for their CCS (it was left behind in Greece). They also sang "bawdy" versions of hymns!

John mentioned about a "Gunner Peck"? when he was RMO at 5 Field Regiment at Marrickville (*in Eastern Command Personnel Depot in Addison Road*).

It was part of 5 Brigade in 2 Division under the command of Brigadier John Broadbent (Dec.) and they also used the name of Gunner Peck because... *we were "descendants of the 2/5th Field Regiment"*—he enclosed the interesting story of "Gunner Peck" which I will place in this (or a future) magazine.

He closed by writing that he now has to take a jar of "Peck's Paste" to the North Head Artillery Museum... *"because they haven't got one!"*

John has been kept busy "looking after" Kathy, after she had a bad fall a few weeks back, in June, and fractured her patella.

(Thank you, John, for your letters and thoughts. Please pass on our good wishes to Kath as we wish her a speedy recovery. We look forward to "catching up" soon.)

John PHILLIPS sends his good wishes to his friends in the Association and enjoys reading all the news.

John, as many of our members are aware, is involved with the Battle for Australia Day Ceremony in that he is responsible for "looking after" the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels on this day.

He sent me a lot of information pertaining to this Commemorative Day and I am sure it is all our fervent hope

that this Day will always be Commemorated and never be forgotten.

The Governor-General (at the time), Philip Michael Jeffery, proclaimed (acting with the advice of the Federal Executive Council) on the 19 June 2008, that the FIRST Wednesday in SEPTEMBER be declared a NATIONAL DAY OF OBSERVANCE and be known as BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA DAY.

John kindly enclosed a number of pertinent leaflets relating to the war that came very close to the invasion of our mainland by the Japanese.

Among the leaflets was a story on the Kokoda Memorial Project commenced by Rotary International and the RSL of Australia (*I have included it in this magazine*).

He also enclosed some "clippings" from Peter Brune's book "GONA'S GONE! The Battle for the Beach-head 1942".

I haven't read Peter's book but it seems like one to read.

Another article was on the Kokoda "Track" or "Trail" controversy.

I did write a small piece in our Newsletter of Christmas 2005 (*Page 23*) regarding the term "Track" or "Trail" and I followed this up with a very interesting reply from our good member, Dr. Phillip Yuile, in our ANZAC Day Newsletter of 2006.

(Thank you, John, for all your information. We look forward to greeting you and our PNG representatives on the first Wednesday in September in Martin Place.)

George HARRIS enjoys reading our magazines and passes on his good wishes to his friends in the Association.

He wrote to tell me of the memorable tour he went on in April this year. It was a Historic Military Tour of Belgium and France, with the main purpose of commemorating ANZAC Day at the Menin Gates and to visit some of the major battle fields of the Western Front during WW 1.

He had a wonderful group to "tour" with and one in particular who came to mind was a lady by the name of Leith MacMillan.

Leith is a director of "Day Hospital Consulting" , a company which is based in Queensland, and it was probably because of her medical background and the fact that George was a member of a medical unit, that they struck up a good friendship.

George said he could tell how interested she was in reading all the history and the visits to the war cemeteries.

There was a genuine feeling of humility and sincerity about her that seemed to permeate those on tour with her.

George has adopted Leith to 5 Field Ambulance Association and he is hoping he can persuade her to join us as an Associate Member. He is hopeful that she can meet us

one ANZAC Day march, if she is able to make it down south from her home State.

George sent a photo of some of the group taken in front of the 2 Division Monument. (*Leith and George are on the right of the photo*)



(The plaque on the Monument reads...)

"When the Australians came to France, the French people expected a great deal of you...we knew that you would fight a real fight, but we did not know that from the very beginning you would astonish the whole continent...I shall go back tomorrow and say to my countrymen I have seen the Australians, I have looked in their faces and I know that these men will fight alongside of us again until the cause for which we are all fighting is safe for us and for our children."

French Prime Minister—Georges Clemenceau. JULY 1918.

(Thank you, George, for your letter and resume` of your trip. Leith would be a most welcome Member.)

Terry IRVINE enjoys reading all our news and sent me an email to say he and his wife, Annette, were planning to come to Sydney to join us on Reserve Forces Day.

Terry has now "semi-retired" having sold their pharmacy at Cobargo but is planning to obtain an extra pharmacy qualification that will allow him to enter people's homes and perform Home Medicine Reviews.

They recently returned from a trip where they visited Darwin, Jakarta, Singapore and Tasmania.

Terry and Annette did attend the RF Day Parade and Terry appreciated the RAAMC Tie I brought with me for him to wear. He emailed recently to say what a lovely time they had in our company and with the camaraderie afterwards at the lunch in the Berkeley Hotel. *(Thank you, Terry and Annette, for making the journey from the South Coast to be with us. Your presence was much appreciated. Our Association also thanks you for your generous donation of Life Membership.)*

John McKEOWN was saddened to read about the death of Ray Harrington and wrote to me that he was a good friend of Ray and was sorry he did not attend his funeral. He asked that his condolences be passed on to Pattie and her family.

John and Ray served together at 1 General Hospital where Ray was the QM and John was the pharmacist. John said they worked closely together on the logistics for the unit and were always heavily involved in planning for week-end activities and annual camps.

John said past members of the unit will all remember Ray and will probably have particular memories of AFX 85, held in Uffington State Forest, near Clarencetown, when LTCOL Michael Dally was the acting CO.

John, along with Ray and Scotty Boyd (?) and a few others were nearly tearing their hair out trying to organise the camp "extraction plan".

(John thinks LTCOL Dally learned a few lessons from this exercise).

The following year, at Captain's Flat, he was far more effective as acting CO.

A few of his senior Officers and NCO's (who shall remain nameless) caused him some grief when they "stirred up" the unit, by driving onto the site with a siren blaring, as they returned from a visit with the Director of the National Disaster Organisation in Canberra.

Their idea was to see how the unit would react to an unannounced casualty arriving, but what they did not know was that the RSM of the Army was on site. He was not impressed and said so.

Officially, the unit personnel reacted professionally... exactly as expected.



The photo above was taken during an amphibious deployment exercise on Broken Bay and Coal and Candle Creek in October 1984. It shows Ray, Scotty Boyd and Chris DeLuca.

John said this exercise was a bit of a shock for some of the 1 General Hospital personnel because the new CO, LTCOL John Vonwiller (Dec.) set himself up in a "hoochie" for the weekend.

At that time, wrote John, sleeping in "hoochies" was almost unheard of for hospital staff... Things were soon to change!

During this exercise, John's son and some of his mates from St Aloysius College acted as casualties. They thoroughly enjoyed the "sail" in the LCM 8.

(Thank you, John, for your personal insight into some of the time you spent with Ray. Pattie will enjoy reading this little "snippet" and some of our readers will have their memories jogged.)

Steve BALDICK wrote to pass on his good wishes to his friends in the Association. He sent me some "nostalgic" photos and a copy of his National Service Magazine for the 13th NS 6th Intake. Steve was in the 2nd Intake of 1953.

Two of the photos show the Guard at the main entrance to Balikpapan Barracks and then the troops marching in. Did you "spot the error"?

Steve remembers that "D" Company had "mounted the Guard" and had been supervised for some time by the Battalion RSM with "shunning" and "unshunning", "Slope Arms", "Present Arms", "Order Arms" ad infinitum—right down to the smallest detail.

The Battalion photographer arrived to record the "big" moment as the troops were "forming up" nearby.

The Guard was ordered—"PRESENT ARMS" –then it hit the fan!

The photographer said that as the troops were marching through at "The Slope" it would "neater" and "more regular" if the Guard was also at "The Slope"?

A blazing row then erupted; the RSM (who could have been heard at Liverpool Town Hall) advised them in words of one syllable that the correct drill was "THE PRESENT".

The shouting to and fro got louder.



The order of "QUICK MARCH" was heard and tramping feet were getting closer.

We (the Guard) stood transfixed! The Armed troops rounded the corner in clear sight!

At the last minute "neat and regular" won the day—the Guard "SLOPED ARMS".

The RSM, crimson of face and fury, stalked off and the photo was taken.

Although it was 57 years ago, Steve remembers it as though it was yesterday because he was the Sentry at the Guard Box on the right of the photo.

The other photo is Steve's 13th Platoon "D" Company and to save you trying to work out which one is Steve—he is in the 4th Row and 2nd from the Left.



The group Sergeant's photo was taken at Moore Park Barracks about 1955 and shows;



Front Row (L/R): Barry Collins, Len Boothman, Gerry Clinch, Steve Baldick and Dave Williams.

Back Row (L/R): Dave Parsons, John Graham, Jim Zorbas and ?? (who is this please).

(Thank you, Steve, for your letter and photos. I have sent copies to the NS Association for their newsletters.)

Rayda NOBLE wrote to pass on her sincere thanks for the article we wrote about her friend's son, Bradleigh Marshall (*June 2010 Magazine, page 17*).

She gave the article to his mum, Christine, so she can pass it on the Bradleigh.

Rayda said our soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq need to read that their efforts are appreciated (*and which they most certainly are*).

Rayda is endeavouring to have the descendants of the "Rats of Tobruk" Association (Vic. Branch) be allowed to become "Associate Members".

She was "forwarded" an email (about "Suicide Bombers") from a friend who is the son of a "Rat of Tobruk"—he never got to meet his dad because he was killed in action in PNG in the New Guinea campaign. She said her friend gets his dad's Banner out each ANZAC Day and, together with his two sons, they proudly march in memory of his dad and their grandfather.

Rayda enclosed a "clipping" from the Cairns Post newspaper (29/5/10) depicting three widows (and herself) of three deceased "Rats of Tobruk" (Mrs Ivy Williams, Mrs Dorothy Moody and Mrs Thora Gardiner). The picture shows them all holding a "hand made" flag and one of the 350 Medals from the "Siege".

They all had lunch at the David Williams Memorial Park at Trinity Park. The park was named after Ivy's late husband, David.

(Thank you, Rayda, for all your letters and emails. I think the idea of trying to start an "Association" of the descendants is a very commendable one and our Association wishes you "Good Luck" and hopes it comes to fruition.)

Peter PAISLEY passes on his good wishes to his friends in the Association.

He sent me an email and asked me to correct a "misunderstanding" regarding what I had written in relation Duntroon and "Micscape" (an "on-line" magazine).

Peter said Micscape had probably never heard of Duntroon and would be astonished to read an article about it.

He did say might write an appropriate article about the retired head of the Psych. Corps—Arthur Craig—and how he and Arthur's budgerigar saved them both from a Court Marshall, when they were living in the Duntroon Mess.

Then again, wrote Peter, an equally astonishing article could be written on the military aspects of "old microscope slides"!

(Thank you, Peter, for your follow-up email. I do apologise if I have misled our readers, or Micscape, regarding what I wrote in our last issue (June 2010, p 17.)

Laurie FARRUGIA sends his kind regards to his friends in the Association and enjoys reading all the news.

He has written to advise us that he is embarking on a "sea-change" of employment and location. His job with Sai-Global Ltd will see him and his family transferred to Queensland.

He is doubtful when the occasion will arise for him to see his old friends from the Association.

Laurie's new address from early September 2010 will be: 12 Matipo Pl., Palm Beach QLD 4221.

(Thank you, Laurie, for your email. We, your friends in the Association, wish you and your family all the very best –both with your job and your new location. Those of us who know you, know you will do good.)

Ruth VAUDIN (nee Corbet) wrote to say she enjoys reading all the news and to pass on her good wishes to all her friends in the Association.

As all of Ruth's friends know, she and her husband, Ian, and their family reside on the Isle of Guernsey in the Channel Islands (I wrote an article about Ruth and her family and where they live, in our newsletter of p???)

Ruth and Ian and their two daughters, Erin 6 and Millie 4 are, all well and enjoyed their summertime in Guernsey. Ruth said it is a busy time, with the school holidays due to start and then Millie will start her schooling in September.

There have been sports days, assemblies, graduation parties, "dress-up" days, outings and a whole lot of "fun things" happening at school and kindergarten.

Ruth said the whether has also been great which has seen them out fishing in Ruth's boss's small fishing boat – not catching much with the rods but his crab and lobster pots yielded a nice meal!

Ruth said that with the good whether, the children have enjoyed the beach and also the bar-b-q's are going good.



At the time of writing (mid July), Ruth said the family intended going over to the Isle of Sark for the day "to take the kids to see sheep racing".

(Ruth put a website for our readers with access to the internet – www.welcometosark.com/79.html).

After this adventure they will all be going on a fortnight's holiday when they will take their car on the ferry to St Malo in France and then driving down to Spain to visit Ian's parents, who own a "holiday house" there.

(Thank you, Ruth, for your welcome e-mail. We wish you, Ian and the girls a very happy and safe holiday in Spain and hope to read what your impressions were, in due course).

Bruce WHITTET sent me a "return email" to a message I sent to all our email members regarding articles etc required for the Victorian Branch of the RAAMC Association Inc. (See "Items of Interest"—RAAMC Association Inc. Vic Branch.)

Bruce said that years ago when he was at HMAS Penguin "they" had an internal newsletter, which originated by "us rogues" in Pathology, called "KAOMAG". He said it turned out to be real "knock-out" magazine which listed events, happenings and personal columns.

Bruce said their superiors congratulated them but in the end had "it" banned as some articles could have been called as "contrary to the good order and naval discipline" but, wrote Bruce, we had fun anyway and no one ended up being "Charged" despite being threatened.

In those days, wrote Bruce, we thought Officers had no sense of humour ("Oh, how times change" he said).

The name was quite original as Kaomagma was given as a treatment for the shits, diarrhoea and associated bowel problems.

(Good on you, Bruce, and thank you for that little "snippet"—perhaps you might have a suggestion for Kevin "Bat" Andrews.)

NEW MEMBER

Alex WILLIAMS is warmly welcomed to our Association. He is a good friend of our President, Derek Cannon, Stu' Jones and Fred Bell to name a few.

Alex was an OC of 2 Prev Med Coy as well as service with 5 Field Ambulance and 8 Field Ambulance. His service in the Reserves spans some 20 years.

Alex is employed by the pharmaceutical company — Scherin-Plough — as the Site Service Support Manager in the Animal and Health Division.

He is a very contented husband, father and grandfather and enjoys his game of golf.

I thank Alex for a small insight into his life and we look forward to meeting Alex in the not too distant future.

I take this opportunity to thank Alex, on behalf of our Association, for his Life Membership donation.

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5 CSSB Health Company NEWS

I thank the CO of 5 CSSB, LTCOL Phillip Moses, for allowing the Training SGT of the Health Company, SGT David Grace, to send us an "UPDATE" from the last magazine.

SGT Grace wrote that June and July were busy months for the members of the Health Company.

The unit conducted a CATA (*Combined Arms Training Activity*) at Singleton Camp, which was very successful.

The unit also had the opportunity to put the whole of the Company in the field and support a "Brigade activity". The unit had RESUS, a Field RAP, Dental, Psych, Environmental Health and a Medium

Dependency Unit (MDU).

On a personal note, PTE Peggy McGlashan was promoted to Corporal. She is also a part of the Psych Support Team. (*Congratulations, Peggy, from the members of our Association.*)

SGT Grace said the second half of the year looks like being as busy as the first.

(I thank SGT Grace for the "update". If any reader of this section is interested in joining the reserves and being part of this very good Company, please contact either the RSM of the unit, WO 1 Geoff Frew on (02) 9316.0132, or the Training Sergeant of the Health Company, SGT David Grace on (02) 9316.0190)



PLEASE – JUST STAY

(With kind thanks to member, James Jordan—by email)

A nurse took a tired, anxious serviceman to a hospital bedside... "your son is here" she whispered to the sick old man in the bed. She had to repeat the words several times before the patient's eyes slowly opened.

Heavily sedated, because of the pain of his heart attack, he dimly saw the young uniformed soldier standing outside the oxygen tent. He reached out his hand.

The soldier wrapped his toughened fingers around the old man's limp ones, squeezing a message of love and encouragement.

The nurse brought a chair so that the soldier could sit beside the bed. All through the night the young soldier sat there in the poorly lighted ward, holding the old man's hand and offering him words of love and strength.

Occasionally the nurse suggested that the soldier move away and rest a while. He refused.

Whenever the nurse came into the ward, the soldier was oblivious of her, and of the night noises of the hospital—the clanking of the oxygen tank, the laughter of the night staff members exchanging greetings, the cries and moans of the other patients. Now and then the nurse would hear the soldier say a few gentle words.

The dying man said nothing, only held tightly to his son all

through the night.

Along towards dawn, the old man died. The soldier released the now lifeless hand he had been holding and went to tell the nurse. While she did what she had to do, he waited outside the room.

Finally, she returned. She started to offer words of sympathy but the soldier interrupted her.

"Who was that man?" he asked.

"He was your father." She answered.

"No, he wasn't, said the soldier, I've never seen him before in my life!"

"Then why didn't you say something to me when I first took you to him?" said the nurse.

The soldier replied... "I knew right away there had been some mistake but I also knew he needed his son, and his son just wasn't here. When I realised that he was too sick to tell whether or not I was his son, knowing how much he needed me, I stayed.

I came here to find a Mr. William Grey. His son was killed in Iraq yesterday and I was sent here to inform him. What was this gentleman's name?"

The nurse, with tears in her eyes, replied... "Mr. William Grey."

The next time someone needs you—just be there—stay.



The Kokoda Memorial Project

(with kind thanks for this edited article from COL John Phillips OAM – Chairman, Rotary/RSL Kokoda Memorial Committee)

The Rotary International/RSL commenced the Kokoda Memorial Project in March 1995 with the erection of the first Aid Post (AP) at Buna and a Memorial Cairn built by a team from Gosford North (NSW).

It was officially opened on 7th July 1995.

On the 16th September 1995, Prime Minister Paul Keating officially opened the Kokoda Memorial Hospital. This was the flagship of the project. It was a 24 bed hospital and fully completed in December 1995, with the first patients being admitted in February 1996.

Over 300 Rotarian volunteers contributed to this project.

Only one Kokoda veteran was present at the official Opening Ceremony and later in September 1995 another Central Coast (NSW) team built a 3rd AP at Sairope Village, about 8kms off the Popondetta/Kokoda Road on the slopes of Mt. Lamington. The village people were delighted. It was officially opened in March 1996.

In May 1996, a Rotary Club team, mainly from Mosman (Sydney area) built another AP at Kebara Village.

In August 1996, a 5th AP was built at Hanau Village, home of the famous Fuzzy, Wuzzy Angel, Raphael Oembari OBE, who sadly, had passed away the previous month.

This AP will be a fitting Memorial to him and his fellow Fuzzy Wuzzy's.

Saturday, November 2nd 1996, was an appropriate Anniversary of the



John Phillips and Benjamin Ijumi at Raphael Oembaris' grave near Hanau Village.

re-taking of Kokoda in 1942 to commemorate and dedicate the Kebara AP.

March 1997 saw the refurbishment and upgrading of the Gona Health Centre. This was a joint initiative of the 12th Battalion and other ex-Service units.

It included a Memorial Cairn to commemorate those killed in the battle for Gona.

The work was undertaken by a team of 8 volunteers from the Central Coast and Galston (NSW) areas, and this saw the Hanau AP also completed with the "Opening" held on the 5th September.

This was the time where 12 veterans, aged between 75 and 86 years of age (our own Neil Barrie was among these veterans) made a special pilgrimage to PNG for the occasion.

They represented their comrades who had supported the Gona Memorial Medical Centre and Cairn Project.

They also visited Kokoda, Buna and Sanananda and on each occasion were warmly welcomed in the traditional manner and given special recognition.

The Gona and Buna facilities and Memorials are a fitting tribute and a significant recognition of the bloody battles fought there and at Sanananda, which saw the end of the momentous Kokoda Campaign.

1998 saw a year of challenge especially involving the Asafa AP. The plan to link Asafa with Bagou AP which is near Soputo, Gewoto (the site of Huggins Road block) and Cape Killerton – all had close association with the Sanananda Battle (Nov. '42 – Jan. '43).

The teams from the Central Coast and Galston Rotary Club also assisted the Asafa team.

The teams lived with the village people and shared their simple accommodation, food and lifestyle.

They mixed freely with young and old and worked alongside each other – a most rewarding experience for the Rotarians and the PNG peoples.

The Asafa Project was a big project, logistics wise, because it is a 12 ½ kmls

trek from Sairope, rising to 1000ft and crossing three streams with near vertical sections!

Due to the difficulties of the Caribou take-offs and landings, only four loads could be delivered.

Villagers had to haul two truck loads (approx. 2 ton each) the 12 ½ kmls, this allowed the Asafa AP to be completed to lock-up stage.

Bulky items like rainwater tanks and sink units had to be delayed until a later date.

Later, in April 1999, the Gosford team of 3, who had worked in the previous year, went back to Asafa AP to complete the installation of the rainwater tanks.

July 1999 saw the "Opening Dedication" of Asafa and Bagou AP's, as well as another wing of the Kokoda Hospital, now making this a 40 bed hospital.

With "leftover funds" a new library was built for the Kokoda Primary School. This brought the total of Aid Posts built to 7, plus the Gona Health Centre and the 2 Memorial Cairns.

Another AP was built at Kagi Village, on the "Track" in September 1999.

This AP, together with those previously built at Menari and Sogeri are all in the Central Province and, like the Kokoda Hospital, have been funded by the Australian Government.

In 2000, a commitment was made to build an AP in Wairope Village, on the Kumusi River. Investigations were also undertaken about the possibilities for an AP to service the villages of Isurava and Alola and also Abuari on the eastern side of Eora Creek.

A further trek was taken to Hagutava Village, which is part of a separate clan known as Upper Biage.

In July 2001, a team of 10 Rotarians from Galston, Gosford, Tamworth and Forster/Tuncurry built the Wairope AP and then down to Buna AP for some repair work.

In March 2002, agreement was achieved to have Abuari as the location for the AP and school, as the only access was by foot or helicopter.





John Phillips on the track to Isurava village

Planning was undertaken for August 2002 for a suspension bridge to give permanent access to the 4 villages of the Isurava/Alola areas, 2 on either side of the Eora Creek valley.

A new Isurava Memorial was also unveiled by the then Prime Minister John Howard and Sir Michael Somare.

Back in Popondetta, an optometrical team of two conducted 8 clinics at the Kokoda Hospital and village AP's. They attended over 600 patients and dispensed over 500 pairs of glasses.

2003 saw further planning for the Upper Biage AP and school. The two-bridge site inspected in 2002 saw a new bridge site which resulted in only having to cross one stream.

In late 2004, the Australian Army's 5th Aviation Regt. carried out a high altitude exercise to Abuari and with the help from volunteers from Tunccurry/Wingham Rotary and the locals, loaded and unloaded stores and equipment.

Some was stores for later use and others were arduously carried 4-5 hours hard trekking and climbing to some 3500ft.

2005 saw a Rotary team from Tumbarumba start construction in Abuari. These were followed by teams from Taree, Kincumber and Wingham and by June, two buildings were basically completed.

A final team went back in October to "tidy-up" a few minor matters and to be present at the Opening and Dedication of the two buildings.

So far, the Rotary/RSL Kokoda Memorial Project has seen 12 Aid Posts, the Kokoda Hospital, the upgrade of the Gona Health Centre and two Memorial Cairns constructed as "Living Memorials to the Australians and Papua New Guineans" who fought

and died defending their countries during these momentous days of WW 2 in 1942 and 1943 – Today these facilities serve the children and grandchildren of those brave men.

2006 saw a survey team visit all AP's to assess maintenance needs with much needed repair work started in November.

In 2007, a "team" carried out repair work on water tanks, guttering and installed new LED strip lights.

A survey was also made of the partially completed Health Centre at loma District HQ.

This is a well-populated area and accessed after a 2 hour banana boat trip up the coast from Gona and then a 3 hour trip up the Mambare River. This area also possesses an overgrown and unused airstrip.

In November, Cyclone Guba unleashed 12ft of rain in six days causing incredible damage in Oro Province. All the major bridges over the Kumusi River including Double Cross and Girua were completely destroyed.

Over 200 village people were drowned, with villages and gardens washed away and destroyed.

Amazingly, although some medical facilities were affected, no Rotary AP's were lost. Over 60 schools were either damaged or destroyed.

In 2008 in April, a team of ten was led by Mr Harley Newham, a past president of Rotary and one of the volunteers who had been to PNG on many occasions. They finished much needed work, left unfinished by contractors in the mid 1990's, to the loma Health Centre.

Harvey travelled by banana boat from Popondetta/Gona with the PNG Health Adviser, Mr Copland Ihove.

The team transformed the Health Centre from basically one functioning room to a completed unit serving the community.

In November, a team of Rotary volunteers from Newcastle and led by a past president Mr Tony Rhodes spent several days at Embogo undertaking urgent repairs including plumbing and painting and general clean-up work.

\$7,000 of Rotary funds was spent on materials.

When the team returned back home, arrangements were made for replacement of water tanks, a generator and pump as well as books, writing material and school desks.

A survey conducted in June 2009 with a detailed submission to the Australian Government for a request for funding of \$3-4 million be made to Rotary/RSL has not yet been successful.

There are still over 50 schools in need of urgent attention.

There are four high schools in the Oro Province and two, Embogo and Bareji, are still in urgent need of attention in the aftermath of Cyclone Guba in late 2007.

2010 saw these items packed into shipping containers through the Rotary Ranfurley Organisation and were available for the 2010 school year.

The challenge facing Rotary/RSL is funding to achieve school restoration in the Oro Province.

Funding from any source is greatly appreciated to rebuild damaged AP's, schools and health centres.

It is a rather sad indictment of organisations, especially our Federal Governments, that after three years since the tragic loss of life and the destruction of many villages, schools, health centres etc, to see villagers still living in "care centres".

Remember, these people are direct descendants of those very caring Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels who cared for our soldiers and saved very many lives during the Kokoda campaign in WW 2.

In saying the above, we do thank the Australian and PNG Governments for all the assistance given to date, we also thank the invaluable assistance given by the ADF in various forms, and also the unstinting time given by the various Rotary groups volunteers who also pay for all their own expenses including air fares and transit accommodation.

Are you able to help? Either financially or practically?

Please call either past Presidents – John Phillips (h) (02) 4324.4904 (wk) (02) 4325.2365 or

Ray Southeren (02) 4365.1922 (mob) 0418.409.509

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.



Stems of Interest

(1) Media Releases (With kind thanks to the Dept. of Defence—
edited for space and in no particular date order.)

(A) Establishment of Mental Health, Psychology and Rehabilitation Branch:

The Government announced in February 2010, the appointment of Mr David Morton as the ADF's Director General of Mental Health, Psychology and Rehabilitation.

This appointment comes as a result of a study on mental health by Professor David Dunt. The Government will support Defence with an additional \$83 million over the next four years to implement recommendations.

Mr Morton has done previous work with the Department of Veteran Affairs and Veterans and Veteran's Families Counselling Service and will work with Joint Health Command.

The ADF's Surgeon General and Chief of Joint Health Command, MAJGEN Paul Alexander said.....*"defence is bringing the concept of health and wellbeing together as a complete package and it is critical to understand that physical and emotional injuries require support to mend long-after visible scars are healed. This is vital for the ADF to meet our commitment to providing best practice health care. The success of our rehabilitation program is remarkable – last year 87% of all personnel who undertook rehabilitation returned to duties. One of the major aims of the ADF's Mental Health Strategy is to de-stigmatise mental health problems and to encourage our personnel to come forward for treatment, sooner rather than later. Early treatment is one of the keys to successful treatment. David will work with me and the rest of the Command to make sure those who are diagnosed with injury, including mental health conditions, access the extensive rehabilitation programs available"*.

The Government (Mr Greg Combet) said the ADF has one of the largest workplace mental health support systems in Australia, with a range of mental health and counselling services available to ADF personnel.

(B) Operation Astute -- Townsville Soldiers return from East Timor

72 soldiers from the Townsville based 2nd Bn RAR. returned home in February after a successful deployment to East Timor as part of Operation Astute. That same afternoon the first group of 78 soldiers from 8/9th Bn RAR, which is based in Brisbane, arrived in Dili – the capital of East Timor.

Over the coming weeks, a further 180 soldiers serving in the ISF (International Stabilisation Force) will return back to Australia. They will be replaced by more groups from the 8/9th Bn.

The deployments are seeing more improved security conditions and the soldiers are performing fewer direct security tasks but with increasing focus on the capacity-building and training of the East Timorese

Defence Force. The capacity-building activities include military skills training such as First Aid and Communications, Military Police work and community-based construction projects – all to do with the East Timorese Defence Force.

The rotation of deployments also coincides with a further reduction of troop numbers for Operation Astute. The numbers of troops involved in this Operation was 650 in December and now it is down to 400.

The ISF is comprised of Defence Forces members from Australia and New Zealand and operates at the request of the Government of East Timor and the United Nations.

The Minister of Defence (Senator John Faulkner) welcomed and congratulated the returning troops on the success of their mission and applauded the work they carried out in assisting one of Australia's closest neighbours.

(C) DEFENCE HONOURS AND AWARDS TRIBUNAL

(i) --Is to inquire into *"Recognition of Service with the Commonwealth Monitoring Force—RHODESIA 1979-80"*.

This Service is currently recognised with the Rhodesia Medal but a number of people have raised the issue of Australian recognition for this service.

SUBMISSIONS will CLOSE 13 August 2010, if applicable, please write to;
Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal, Locked Bag 7765, Canberra Business Centre, ACT 2610.

(ii) --Is to inquire *"Recognition of Service with the Task Group Medical Support Element during the Gulf War—1990-91"*.

This Service is currently recognised with the Australian Service Medal with Clasp "Kuwait". The issue of recognition by way of the Australian Active Service Medal has been raised with the Government and the Tribunal.

SUBMISSIONS will CLOSE 23 August 2010, if applicable, please write to: (As Above (i))

(iii) --inquired into the recognition for members of the ADF for service in PNG after 1975. The Report recommended...*"That no general medallic recognition should be given to ADF members who served in PNG after 16 September 1975."*

(iv) --is inquiring into the recognition of service with Rifle Company Butterworth, 1970-89.

Service is currently recognised with the Australian Service Medal 1945-75 and Australian Service Medal with Clasp "SE Asia".

A number of people have raised with the Government and the Tribunal, the issue of additional recognition for Service with Rifle Company Butterworth.

Submissions closed on 7 June 2010.



(D) RIMPAC 10

Stands for "EXERCISE Rim-of-the-Pacific" and will test the interoperability with the 14 Pacific Rim Nations, which will include the US, South Korea, Indonesia and Canada.

This year marks the 22nd RIMPAC and will commence late June/early July.

Our participation will include HMAS Kanimbla, Newcastle and Warramunga; Navy Clearance Divers; Soldiers from the Townsville-based 2nd Bn RAR; Members of 11 Squadron and 92 Wing RAAF Base in Edinburgh, SA.

The Commander of the Australian contingent, Commodore Stuart Mayer said...*"The biannual Exercise will be the ultimate test of how we operate with our Pacific Partners. This is an exciting new capability the ADF is taking on, and the Navy, Army and Air Force will have a role to play."*

This Exercise will see the last of the Navy's 817 Sea King Squadron as they are due to be decommissioned in 2011.

RIMPAC 10 will conclude on the 1st August 2010.

(E) REPUBLIC OF KOREA JOINS ISAF

The Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshall Angus Houston, has acknowledged that the NATO Secretary General has formally welcomed the Republic of Korea (ROK) as the 46th contributor to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

The ROK is now officially recognised as a non-NATO ISAF Contributing Nation.

The ROK will now deploy a Provincial Reconstruction Team to Parwan Province, consisting of 50-70 civilians, 30-50 Police Officers and 200-400 Infantry Troops. The troops will be tasked with the protection of the PRT and will not play a combat role.

Australia has 1550 troops deployed in Afghanistan and is the largest non-NATO Contributor to the ISAF Mission in Afghanistan.

The military contribution is part of a whole-of-Government effort to;

- * deny Afghanistan as a training ground and operating base for global terrorist organisations;
- * stabilise the Nation through a combination of military, police and civilian efforts;
- * and to train the Afghan National Security Forces to a level where they can take security responsibility for Oruzgan Province themselves.

(F) COMBINED TASK FORCE 635 DONATE TO SALI SCHOOL

The Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) has been boosted with an invaluable donation to the Ria Sali Primary School.

Rosalie Primary School in Perth, WA, formed a special relationship with Ria Sali Primary School in 2007 with students, teachers and parents in helping to raise money and awareness.

Ria Sali is deep in the tropical jungle, an hour from Honiara. Some students have to walk for 2 hours just to get an education.

When CTF 635 CO, LTCOL David Thompson and Rosalie Primary School Principal, Sue Goddard,

presented the Ria Sali school staff and students with stationery, 10 lap top computers as well as a monetary donation, the School Principal of Ria Sali, Karel Kennedy, said... *"There are no words to express how thankful we are towards what you have done for us. To the Principal and Dave Thompson and all of you who have helped our school, we much appreciate it."*

LTCOL Thompson said... *"there was a personal satisfaction in giving to the school, and to see the faces of the kids that have so little, and to give them a few gifts, can make their day, their week and potentially, their future."*

Sue Goddard said...*"It's been a good two years that the children of Rosalie have been hearing about the needs of Sali school children and doing their best to support them as best they can. I can go back now and share my experience with Rosalie and re-assure them that their efforts and money is being put to good use."*

The relationship between CTF and learning facilities in the Solomon Islands strengthen ties between Military Personnel and the Community.

(G) ANZAC DAY 2010 IN GIZAB

A few days before ANZAC Day, the CO of the Special Operations Task Group, (name withheld) responded to a call for help from community leaders in the remote Oruzgan town of Gizab, after locals staged an uprising against Taliban using the area as a safe haven.

After concluding a successful battle to rescue the town from the Taliban, the CO of the SOTG, addressed his troops at the Dawn Service in the town of Gizab in Oruzgan Province.

He said...*"It was a proud moment for Australian soldiers to conduct an ANZAC Service on the battlefields just as their forefathers did 95 years ago. To be standing on ground recently taken from the enemy by Australian soldiers supporting local Afghans, who have risen against the Taliban, is a great privilege."*

What happened during the battle for Gizab over the past few days is a clear example that there are good people who refuse to be intimidated by the Taliban and have taken action to stand up for their rights and freedoms.

It is also an example for other Afghan communities to follow and demonstrates that with the support of the Government of Afghanistan, we can succeed in making this country a better place. I will be telling the soldiers in Gizab that the ANZAC spirit is about courage, boldness and perseverance, bound together by the ties of mateship. The SOTG has demonstrated these values through their actions, under fire, at Gizab."

Some days after ANZAC Day, the SOTG and their partnered Afghan colleagues arranged and coordinated a shura (consultation), flying in representatives of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, including Oruzgan's Governor, Khoday Rahim, to meet with the community leaders of Gizab.

(H) AUSTRALIA COMPLETES PARTNERSHIP MISSION IN VIETNAM

22 ADF Members have completed (mid June) a 2 week Humanitarian Assistance Mission (known as PP 10—which is a US-led Pacific Partnership) in Quy Nhon, Vietnam.



They were part of a 900 strong team led by the USN Mission Commander, Commodore Lisa Franchetti, aboard the USNS Mercy.

The annual US Pacific Fleet sponsored humanitarian mission has given the ADF personnel a unique opportunity to work alongside US Military personnel, partner nations, host nation civilians and non-government organisations.

A Navy Ophthalmologist conducted 13 eye-saving cataract surgeries and an Army Medical Officer provided medical care to approximately 300 patients in conjunction with Defence Nurses, in the conduct of 132 operations aboard the ship.

An Australian Army Dentist (born in Vietnam and moved to Australia at age 2) provided dental care to hundreds of patients at various clinics in the Binh Dinh Province, Vietnam.

As well, Australian Army Engineers from the 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment, based in Brisbane, contributed to the re-construction of a school for disabled children; fitting electrical and plumbing services as well as assisting local Vietnamese contractors improve the aesthetics of the building.

Commodore Franchetti said she...*"was very proud of the efforts of the entire ADF team as they very much contributed to the success of the mission in Vietnam and was grateful for all their assistance."*

The Commander of the Australian National Command Element, LTCOL Helen Murphy said...*"The chance to work with so many different military personnel was a unique experience and all 22 Australians have enjoyed the opportunity to work alongside the US military personnel and the personnel from the other five partner nations. Each ADF member has been integrated into the multi-national teams and the personal and professional development is already evident, after only 2 weeks."*

This year PP 10 will also visit Cambodia, Indonesia and East Timor.

For the first time since the inception of the mission, HMAS Tobruk will be used as the Command platform when the mission visits PNG.

As well, HMAS Labuan and Brunei (Two Heavy Landing Craft), will provide "ship to shore" support in Indonesia, East Timor and PNG.

(I) ROBOT (MAGIC) CHALLENGE—FINALS RACE (See also June 2010, P 22)

Out of 23 teams from 5 countries, the FINAL 6 have now been chosen to develop fully autonomous robots that could undertake dangerous missions on future battlefields.

(The term MAGIC is derived from; Multi-Autonomous Ground Robot)

The six remaining teams are from Cappadocia (Turkey), Chiba (Japan), Magician (Australia), RASR (USA), Team Michigan (USA) and the University of Pennsylvania (USA).

The Teams now have a few more months to "fine tune" their concepts for the Grand Final Challenge.

They are required to field at least 3 robots and accomplish a complex task involving mapping and identification of threats while demonstrating a high level of autonomy between the robots.

Australia's Acting Chief Defence Scientist, Dr. William Harch, said...*"We want to move from the current*

paradigm of "one man-one robot" to one man and many robots."

(J) EXERCISE PITCH BLACK

This is the RAAF's largest and most complex air exercise that enables the ADF to train with international air forces in the Northern Territory, every 2 years.

The exercise also involves participants from the Australian Army and elements of the Singapore, New Zealand and Thailand Air Forces that will participate in the tasking, planning and execution of Offensive Counter Air and Offensive Air Support operations in a coalition environment.

22 leaders of Industry and Business will get a taste of military life in the Northern Territory, when they are given the opportunity to participate in the Cadet, Reserve and Employer Support Division's Boss Lift to Exercise Pitch Black.

Head of the Division, MAJGEN Greg Melick, said he believes the participants would gain a valuable insight into the benefits that Reservists can bring back to their civilian workplace. The aim is to highlight the skills the Reservists gain from being in the ADF and how those skills can benefit civilian employers.

(K) EXERCISE PIRAP JABIRU

This exercise commenced in 1998 and was expanded in 2006.

Now in 2010, Australia and Thailand will co-host the multilateral Peacekeeping Exercise in Bangkok from late July to early August.

A total of 14 countries are sending military and police participants to obtain a greater understanding of the planning processes of individual countries and those of the United Nations. It will highlight the commitment of both Australia and Thailand in promoting regional peacekeeping efforts.

The "exercise" also provides an opportunity to develop shared approaches to resolving the complex problems inherent in peacekeeping operations and will enable regional countries to work together better on peacekeeping operations.

(L) GOVERNOR-GENERAL VISITS TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN

A few days before ANZAC Day our Governor-General, M/s Quentin Bryce AC, mad a "surprise" visit to our troops deployed in Taren Kowt and Kandahar Airfield in southern Afghanistan.

She had lunch with the soldiers from the First Mentoring Task Force and later shown an equipment display.

She later addressed the soldiers and said it means a lot to her and she is so proud of them and what they are doing and this comes from all Australians.

CPL Andrew Lawrence was spoken to by the Governor-General who asked about his work and the tasks he performs.

CPL Lawrence said it was an honour to have her come over here and greet us and address us.

The Governor-General later visited Kandahar Airfield where she met with personnel from the Rotary Wing Group who operate the two CH-47 Chinook helicopters as well as the Australian Heron



Detachment, which operate the Heron unmanned surveillance aircraft.

This is the 2nd time M/s Bryce has visited our troops in the Middle East. She previously visited troops prior to Australia Day 2009, also at Taren Kowt (in Oruzgan Province).

(M) MAJGEN Ash Power AM CSC

MAJGEN Power has been appointed Senior Military Advisor to the Afghan Defence Minister, Abdul Rahim Wardak.

General Power will be the first Officer to serve in this capacity to support the Afghan Government decision-making and policy development for long term Afghan National Army development.

Australia was invited by ISAF to fill this new position. MAJGEN Power said he looks forward to the challenges and opportunities this role will present. MAJGEN Angus Campbell will replace MAJGEN Power as the Head of Military Strategic Commitments from 29 March 2010.

(2) U.S. MAJGEN Richard MILLS CO Camp Pendleton—Afghanistan

(Edited--Source- Mark Walker, North County Times, May 16, 2010)

As the war in Afghanistan enters its 9th year, the new commander of the 1st Marine Division, MAJ GEN Richard Mills said a new regional command he is overseeing will now include Helmand Province, as well as Nimruz and Farrah Provinces.

The expansion roughly triples the size of the Marine's combat territory.

Nearly 20,000 Marines are now serving in Afghanistan—about twice the number from a few months ago.

The Helmand River Valley is a key strategic area for insurgent Taliban forces and one of the primary poppy production areas and General Mills said the post poppy harvest fighting season will exact a toll.

Commanders such as General Mills are facing a 2011 timeline outlined by the President, Barack Obama, to begin bringing troops home.

There is pressure to speed the development of the Afghan National Army and Police Forces as well as create a more effective and less corrupt central government.

(Many military experts have said that the US and NATO Forces will need 5 more years to defeat the Taliban.)

General Mills said steady gains are being made in clearing and holding of more areas of the expansive Helmand Province...*"We are occupying many of the population centres and within these centres we are making progress in governance, economic development and security. The towns of Marjah and Zad are examples of where Marines have rooted out the Taliban in recent months and established rapport with tribal elders. This leads to tips on where Taliban fighters are located and where roadside bombs, the weapons responsible for about 2/3rds of all troop deaths and injuries, are buried."*

General Mills had particular praise for the female Marines, who make up about 7% of his troops, who, as well as gathering much needed intelligence information, perform many tasks such as piloting aircraft, driving trucks in convoys and a variety of support tasks.

US policy forbids women from direct combat assignments.

General Mills said that the poppy cultivation that expanded greatly when the Taliban controlled the Afghan Government, continues to provide the insurgency with money to pay its fighters and purchase arms and bomb materials.

The Marines recently seized 5 tons of raw opium and this has seen the coalition forces cut poppy production roughly in half.

Farmers have said they will switch crops, such as wheat rather than poppy.

(3) Andrew ELLIS article. *(With kind thanks to Sunday Telegraph 26/6/10)*

The below article was emailed to me by our good member, John Smith. It shows us a small window into a part of a dedicated life of another of our Association members.



Double life of top Sydney surgeon in world's trouble spots

Front-line lifesaver

By Barclay Crawford

Andrew Ellis lives a double life as an orthopedic surgeon, performing hip replacements for north shore pensioners in Sydney one week and life-saving operations in war and disaster zones the next.

Dr Ellis has served as a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve's 1st Health Support Battalion on Australian peacekeeping missions in Bougainville, the Solomon Islands, East Timor and, most recently, the war in Afghanistan.

He's also been called to disaster scenes, including Aceh in Indonesia during the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami which killed 165,000 people in the province.

And even after 16 years, the challenge of moving between leafy suburban Sydney and lifesaving surgery amid such turmoil doesn't get any easier.

"It's hard to come back from the tsunami or Afghanistan and go to work the next day," he said.

"It's hard to listen to a relatively minor complaint in the rich world after dealing with life-or-death situations.

"It's very challenging to do that. Each of those big missions takes a few months to get over."

Dr Ellis interrupts his career dealing with non-life threatening conditions at Royal North Shore Hospital with stints of up to three months, often working around the clock, in a war or disaster zone.

Family is left behind. Events such as birthdays are missed.

"The tsunami was at Christmas and we had two weeks booked on the (NSW) South Coast, but all that flies out the window," he said.

Dr Ellis said his double life would be impossible without the support of his wife, who holds the home front and runs his practice at St Leonards in his absence.

He said he hoped his example would make others consider making



such a sacrifice to help Australian troops who were spending more and more of their careers in foreign theatres of war.

"If a young man or woman is injured by supporting the good intentions of the Government through military service, they deserve the same surgical support as a person who is cleaned up by a car on the Pacific Highway," he said.

"And that won't happen unless individuals give up some of their time to go with them.

"I enjoy it, I learn from it and I benefit from it, especially working with good people in adverse circumstances."

(4) **Frank OLIVER** is a friend of our Association and recently went on an ANZAC Tour with his wife, Mary, and their eldest son, Mark and his partner, Julie.

He kindly sent me a resume of their trip. I have "edited" his story, as a "Feature", for your enjoyment.

(5) **RAAMC Association Inc (Vic. Branch)**

Our Association sincerely congratulates Kevin ("Bat") Andrews on being elected as the Inaugural President.

Kevin sent me an email to say he will be starting a newsletter and was asking any interested persons to come up with a suitable name for it.

He was keen to get any stories, jokes, cooking tips etc etc. Unfortunately, Kevin's deadline was the 30th July, our readers who don't have the internet will not be able to respond but if you would like to contribute any type of article (providing it is not offensive) to a future issue of their new newsletter, I am sure it would be welcome.

Kevin also said if you wish to "advertise" your business it will cost \$5 for a quarter page.

He also advised that if any reader is interested in purchasing an "Artist Proof" copy of the Sudan to

Afghanistan paintings by the artist Martin Campbell, he has FOUR left. Each copy has been signed by the remaining RAAMC Major Generals and the artist.

The original painting now hangs, temporarily, in the SGT's Mess, Army Logistics Training Centre, Bandiana, but will soon be moved to a PERMANENT public display in a premier location, which will add to the interest and desirability of these prints.

COST will be a tax deductible donation of \$2,200 plus \$300 for framing will go to the RAAMC Fund. Members will be given PRIORITY.

(Kevin's details are; Mobile 0425.785.598)

(What is an Artist's Proof?—thank you to "Bat" and Wikipedia)

Art historians, curators and collectors view working proofs as especially desirable because of their rarity, the insight they may give into the progress of the work, and because they may well have belonged to the artist.

Especially in the case of dead artists, they can be the only evidence of the artist's incremental development of an image, something not usually available with drawings.

Collectors also prefer final artists proofs even when they are identical to the main edition, if nothing else the print may have been presented to a friend by the artist. Prints are generally sold as Limited Editions, with a print being cheaper than a drawing or painting, because the artist/gallery makes more money by selling multiples.

(6) **John O'BRIEN** is the secretary of the NSW Branch of the RAAMC Association Inc. and he sent me an email saying he saw my name in the (NSW Branch) RSL's "Reveille" magazine as winning a Jack Thompson CD (which I did).

John remarked that he and Jack Thompson served as young soldiers at 3 CCS at Ingleburn in 1961 and used to "haunt" the streets of Liverpool trying to pick up sheilas!! John remembers many a time "emu bobbing" and picking out weeds from the Officer's Mess gardens.

"FEATURE"

(With kind thanks to a friend of our Association—Frank Oliver. Frank's dad served in WW 1 in 5 Field Ambulance, which I mentioned in our June 2010 magazine, and this story is a recall of three memorable days of the ANZAC Commemoration at Zonnebeke, Paschendaele and Ypres on the 24th, 25th and 26th April 2010).

An ANZAC Trip memory

I had previously made contact with the Paschendaele Memorial Museum 1917, which is situated in the Chateau Zonnebeke, and was very pleased to be informed that not only was a Dawn Service to be held on ANZAC Day but also a 3 day Commemorative week-end—dedicated to ANZAC – was to be centred at the Zonnebeke Chateau.

Unfortunately, we had missed the "Remember Me" Exhibition Official Opening which was held on the Friday, 23rd April, at the Town Hall. The exhibition highlighted the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission from 1917 to 2010.

So, myself and my wife, Mary, together with our eldest son, Mark, and his partner, Julie arrived in Lille (France) on Saturday 24th April.

We then proceeded to Zonnebeke where a "Living History Exhibition" was on display throughout the grounds of the Chateau, which had been transposed into a "war behind the front" scene. This included an army camp of Belgium Army personnel, a border crossing, a Field Dressing Station, a

Charity Stall for "Men at the Front" and other exhibitions.

In the evening we attended an ANZAC Concert which was also in the Chateau grounds. All items were performed by Australian, New Zealand and Belgium artists.

On ANZAC Day we departed by coach from the Chateau at 5am to proceed to the Buttes New British War Cemetery, near Polygon Wood, for the Dawn Service. This cemetery is the site of the 5th Australian Memorial and where the Dawn Service was conducted.

A most sombre and sincere service was conducted. The Guard was from a detachment of the Belgium Army, together with a Flag Party comprised of former Belgium Servicemen and the Bugler was from the Belgium "Last Post Society".

M/s Wendy Quinlan (who was a "Lead Flautist" with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and the World Youth Orchestra) played her own composition—"Digger's Salute".

Following the "Last Post and Reveille", the National Anthems of the three countries were played and then the "Blessing".



On the coach back to the Chateau no one spoke. It was obvious everyone's thoughts were on past sacrifices made by very brave servicemen.

When we returned to the Chateau our breakfasts included "Tommie Cakes and Pastries".

Later, we had a conducted tour of the 1917 Paschendaele Memorial Museum.

This included underground dug-outs that were used as "work places", command centres, dormitories, dressing stations etc, as everything above ground had been blown apart by continual bombardment.

Other areas depicted certain "individual" history's of 100 men of various sections of the Allied Forces who made the supreme sacrifice—quite a number are Australian.

The number 100 represents the 100 days of the Battle of Paschendaele.

We then proceeded to the Australian Delegation where we shared refreshments with Wendy Quinlan, John Paul Van Gothem (the Leader of the Belgium Flag Party) and Dr. Brendon Nelson (the Australian Ambassador to European Countries).

Dr. Nelson showed keen interest in my late father's Medals and Decorations and I informed him my father's Military Medal was awarded for action at the southern end of Zonnebeke Lake—which is within the Chateau grounds immediately behind the Chateau.

We then visited a local Memorial outside the village church, where a brief Ceremony was held and then proceeded by coach to Tyne Cot Cemetery.

Tyne Cot is the largest Commonwealth Cemetery in the world and contains 12,000 graves, many unknown.

The new Visitor's Centre here, records the names of 35,000 Missing Allied Servicemen—these are additional names to the 54,000 names recorded on the walls at Menin Gate—before 16th August 1917.

Other names of "Missing" are recorded at Messines Ridge British Cemetery and 11,000 names at the Ploegstreert Memorial, which stands in the Royal Berks Cemetery Extension.

The 3rd Australian Division Memorial is situated at the Tyne Cot Cemetery and we attended a Memorial Ceremony here—similar to the Dawn service at "Buttes" and again a most poignant and sombre Ceremony.

At the conclusion of this Ceremony, Dr. Nelson introduced me to Mr. Dick Cardoen, the Mayor of Zonnebeke and Mr. Frankie Byron, a First Alderman.

Dr. Nelson informed them that my father had been at Zonnebeke Lake and was decorated for his actions there.

The Mayor was very interested to get my father's Service Records and details of the events.

During the afternoon of the 25th we joined the tour of other battlefields in the vicinity and then to Armentieres to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's extensive "work depot", where recycled cemetery materials, including grass clippings, are re-distributed to various sections.

In the evening we arrived at Ypres for the Menin Gate Ceremony.

The Last Post is sounded here every night at 8pm and has been so since the end of WW 1—it ceased during the German occupation of WW 2.

Dr. Nelson kindly introduced me to other members of the Delegation and informed them of my father's involvement at Zonnebeke.

We were informed of the finding of the mass grave at Fromelles and the subsequent identification of many Australian remains.

Those brave soldier's names have now been removed from the "Missing Rolls" on the Menin Gate.

The last visit was on the Monday, 26th April. We were taken to the Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres.

When you enter the museum you are handed the name of an Allied serviceman and you trace his history through a series of "Information Stations".

The museum is dedicated to the actions that occurred on the Ypres salient and it also includes a number of audio-visual displays, a historical kiosk, a people kiosk and many other features.

My attention was drawn to the last photo on the left, before the exit—it was of Zonnebeke Lake and showed the southern end—this is where my father was awarded the Military Medal. I had very mixed emotions and a tear or two as I proceeded through the exit.

The trip we undertook was because of my interest in the third battle of Ypres—referred generally as the Battle of Paschendaele. My father was a stretcher-bearer with the 5th Field Ambulance in that theatre of war.

This battle was commenced on the 31st July 1917 at Pilkim Ridge and concluded on the 10th November 1917 at Paschendaele.

It spanned 102 days of intense fighting and yet only saw the gain of a couple of thousand yards, but the cost of dead and wounded alone was in the vicinity of one million souls.

History records a devastated landscape with not a tree or building in existence.

There were troops dying in the deep Belgium clay, being unable to free themselves from its sucking, thick clutches.

The injured and dying soldiers would take about 4 hours for the stretcher-bearers to carry a clobber maybe 300 yards—all through thick, oozing mud and shell craters and even sniper and machine gun fire—to get life-saving medical attention.

On some occasions, stretchers would be carried some thousands of yards with the patient's only care being the battlefield dressings he was applied with, until expert medical assistance was provided.

All these thoughts came to me as I tried to envisage the horror of what these brave souls went through.

I felt very proud for my father, when, in 1968, the New Year's Honours List showed he was bestowed with the "Medal of the British Empire (MBE) for services rendered to Ex-Service personnel..

It was only after my father passed away and I was going through his possessions that I came across his Military Medal Award and read the Citation that was carefully preserved.

His Citation read...*"About 7am on October 9th, a heavy H.E. and shrapnel barrage was put down over the lower levels at the southern end of Zonnebeke Lake. Many casualties occurred in this area, which is totally devoid of shelter and in many parts deep in mud. Pte Oliver repeatedly called for and led parties of volunteers into the area of heaviest shelling, held the men together by the force of his example and a cheery devotion to a high conception of duty, and undoubtedly saved many lives. His bravery in continuing to dress in the open without shelter inviting almost certain casualty, was a splendid example."* Recommended by—ADMS 2nd Australian Division.





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Our Association has purchased one of the paintings "Sudan to Afghanistan" by noted artist Martin Campbell and we intend to make this our major prize.

It is "Special Number" 55 of 200. The print overall measurement is 33½ inches x 23½ inches and the actual painting is 22 inches x 16½ inches. It is unframed.

The tickets will be \$5 each and we will draw the winner ONLY after we recover the cost. May we count on your support?

We will still run our raffle at \$1 per ticket. The winner will receive half of what we sell and this will be drawn at our Annual "Mixed" Re-Union in November. Your dollar is very valuable to us.

2010 Reunion Venue

This is the last "reminder" to enter **Saturday, the 27th November (12 noon)** in your diaries, or on your calendars, for our **2010 Annual "Mixed" Reunion.**

We will be holding it at the **Paddington RSL Club** on Oxford Street, Sydney (nearly opposite Victoria Barracks).

Buses from Circular Quay (No: 380 from Stand "E" depart about every 15 minutes on a Saturday) and Eddy Avenue at Central (No: 378 depart about every 15 minutes also) will drop you off at the door of the Club.

We have secured a "private room" to seat up to 40 people, so bring your partner and/or friends for a very relaxed and informal lunch.

Dress is neat casual (Jacket and Tie is optional).

The cost will be \$35 per head (\$30 for non drinkers of alcohol) for a buffet meal and all drinks

Your President and committee members look forward to greeting you.

Thank You

(From your Committee)

Thank you Members, for your yearly dues, donations and **LIFE MEMBERSHIPS**, they are so very much appreciated.

...for giving your "unwanted Magazine" to your local doctors/hospital waiting rooms/Nursing Home/local chemist/etc "Reading Rooms" for their enjoyment.

...To all the businesses that have paid our publishers to have their advertisement placed in our magazine.

...To our members who pay by EFT, thank you for identifying yourself. (There are some members who are a little behind with their Subs—any little effort is much appreciated.)

Your contributions, letters and emails are enjoyed by us all and are an encouragement.

Members on the Internet—don't forget our own site (see Front Cover of our magazine) and also "surf" the RAAMC web site:-
www.raamc.com

If you do visit our web site, please feel free to write a comment in our "Guest Book".

5 Field Ambulance RAAMC Association is also a proud member of the RAAMC Association Inc.

NB: Some of you reading this magazine may decide you may now wish to discontinue to be on our Mailing List. We hope this is not so, but if it is please let me know and your wishes will be respected.



The “Carved” figures of Legerwood

(My kind thanks to page 24 “Entrée”—not sure of the publication but around 20th December 2009.

Also to “Google” for the information on Mr. Eddie Freeman—he did a wonderful job.)

During the Christmas period, Ruth and I drove down to Melbourne and then boarded the “Spirit of Tasmania” to stay for 3 glorious weeks, in West Launceston (What a beautiful city), with our daughter, Julie.

I was relaxing one day, reading one of the local newspapers, when a story caught my imagination.

When World War One started and the call went out around Australia for volunteers to fight the enemy of England, a group of young men, husbands and sons, from around the district of Ringarooma (near Scottsdale, in Tasmania) heeded the call.

Sadly, seven did not return.

On October 15, 1918, family and friends attended a solemn ceremony at the railway reserve at Ringarooma Road.

As each name of the fallen was called out, a relative of the soldier came forward to hold the tree before planting. Nine pine trees were planted. One for each of the fallen, one for Gallipoli and one for the ANZACS.

It was determined never to let them be forgotten.

In 1936 this small hamlet was officially named Legerwood. As time went on the memorials grew and then wartime residents died or moved on until the reason why these pine trees were there remained with only a few remaining residents.

Then, in 1999, the Dorset Council had to declare that the pine trees were a “safety risk” and recommended that they be cut down.

The Legerwood community were devastated and rallied. In 2004, permission was granted to secure the services of a local chain-saw carver to “bring the soldiers back to life” in sculpture.

Eddie Freeman, a chain-saw carver from nearby Ross, was commissioned by the Legerwood Hall and Reserves Committee to sculpt the soldier figures and other various scenes depicting WW 1.

Ruth, Julie and I drove to Legerwood to see these “pine trees”—Words fail me.

We drove about ½ hour from Scottsdale, meandering along narrow, winding country roads through some of the most beautiful rural scenery.

Then we came to “T” intersection and as I looked along to my left and straight across the road I could barely contain my emotions.

There were these beautiful pine tree stumps. Each one carved and oiled—they stretched for about 80 metres along this road. I just sat in the car in awe and took it all in.

We got out and walked along each “tree”. At the base of each tree was a plaque which depicted the scene or the “fallen” soldier’s name and occupation. I took a photo of each of the trees and the plaques. I hope they come out ok in our magazine.

I would like to suggest to our readers that if you visit Tasmania and have not seen these “trees”—please drive off the beaten track and be amazed.







Gunner Peck!

(Edited from an article written by Tony Stephens in the SMH 18/4/90 with kind thanks.)

(Also to member, John Roche for mailing it to me.)

Harry Peck is the soldier who never was! He appeared on Australian Army Charge Sheets—he was named, for various reasons, by the British, French, Germans and Arabs and even at Milne Bay—all during WW 2. Yet he never existed!

When questioned at the time, Sir Roden Cutler, who earned the VC during the Syrian Campaign whilst fighting with the 2/5th Australian Field Regiment of the 7th Divisional Artillery said... *"No, there was no actual Harry Peck—and yet there were many Harry Pecks. He was a pivotal point for our esprit de corps. He was a rallying point. He replaced the Standard Bearer of old."*

Then after 50 years (in 1995) the true story of Gunner Harry Peck emerged.

Terry McGurran was 19 when he was recruited into the 2/5th at Ingleburn in 1940.

During training in May, Terry's hut was inspected this particular morning by the CO together with SGT W.J. (Bill) Mahony.

The CO demanded to know who slept in one untidy bed.

McGurran, who did not know, answered .. *"Harry, Sir"*

"Harry who?" asked the CO.

"Harry Peck, Sir." Replied McGurran.

Gunner Peck was duly charged under section 40 of the Army Act... *"conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline"*.

Rolls were searched, in vain, for his army number! Harry's fame grew from here.

Some of his achievements are recorded in the official diaries and papers of the 2/5th held at the Australian War Memorial.

On the way to the Middle East on board the Queen Mary, Australian soldiers complained that their eggs were "off", and began throwing them—Gunner Peck was blamed.

In Mersa Matruh, Egypt, a British Army Ordnance Store supplied a variety of equipment to the 2/5th with Harry Peck signing for most of it!

Sir Roden said... *"I don't know how they got away with it. It was a con job, but there was nothing selfish about it. The Regiment was short of supplies and the men could see the supplies were available—the Officers turned a blind eye."*

In Tel Aviv a sports goods dealer sold football boots to an Australian officer who signed himself Heinrich Pfeck—without paying for the boots.

In Syria, 10 tons of building stone was carted away by Australian Military vehicles. The bill received by AIF HQ referred to... *"goods taken away by soldat Henri Pecque of the 31st Anchovy Division of the Army Australienne."*

On Radio Cairo, a program called "Calling the Forces" sent birthday calls... *"To wounded hero Herollary Peck"*.

An Australian, calling himself Lieutenant H. Peck, gave a 5-minute talk, through Radio Jerusalem, on *"Mohammedanism in Australia"*.

In the history – "Guns and Gunners" – John W. O'Brien wrote regarding Harry Peck... *"The benefits of his useful signature were soon manifest in securing forbidden goods at Ordnance Depots throughout the Middle East. The yield included pistols, tools and even a motor truck."*

The rapid promotions and demotions of Harry Peck, between Gunner and Lieutenant Colonel suited the moment's need and added to the trail of confusion left in his path."

When the Customs House canteen at Milne Bay was deserted in the face of an expected Japanese advance, Harry Peck had a field day.

O'Brien wrote... *"It was Harry Peck who died on that hot summer's day on the red bluff at Merdjayoun (Lebanon); Harry Peck who was killed while passing fire orders to the guns at Ibeles Saki (Syria); Harry Peck was by that crude native hut, in the tiny, steamy clearing of K.B. Mission (Milne Bay). Whatever the name on the records, whether its owner be living or dead—his is the one name that covers all."*

Back in Australia, a bridge near Kilcoy, north of Brisbane, was called Harry Peck's Bridge.

At the time of this story, Terry was 69 years of age, a retired miner and living in the Camden (NSW) area. When asked how he came up with "Harry Peck" he said he remembered *"Harry Peck's fish paste" because we ate it at home. Terry said he got a bit embarrassed when the name became popular, but it seemed like a good idea at the time."*

Gunner Terry McGurran was going to attend his 2/5th's 50 Anniversary and also present would most probably be "Harry Peck"!



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A letter (1998) from Les Burnett to his good friend, John Roche

(Les Burnett wrote the story of the 2/3rd CCS, who were in Greece and Crete with 6th Division in WW 2.

I am unsure of date of Les's death.)

(With kind thanks to both Les (Dec) and John)

Dear John,

Thank you for your long, bright letter re "The Premier CCS of the AIF". I was surprised and very pleased to read the RAAMC's interest in recording history and I hope I can help.

Yes, I have lots of spare copies of my little efforts so I'll send a couple more. I had some feedback from unit members. Several were glad to be reminded of some incidents that they had forgotten.

A few others commented that I should have included more names of personnel, but I was limited by lack of knowledge of many happenings.

One nursing sister complained that I should have written more about the nurses (female).

I was a clerk in the Orderly Room and I was insulated from the "goings on" in the wards. I could only give general praise for their work.

I can see that you are particularly interested in the medical personnel, so I am digging into my memory bank for information.

Lt Col (later Colonel) Belisario—a most impressive person—tall and outstanding. He was noted for his noisy laugh, which at times appeared to be used to cover nervousness.

His pre-war experience in a militia Field Ambulance (the 4th, I think) was a great help and he was able to set up a unit which performed creditably. Of course, he was always interested in skin conditions and he was never without his little notebook of prescriptions.

Colonel Rex Money. We saw a fair bit of Rex as the 2/6th AGH was near us on several occasions and he and our medics often met.

John Cobley – Likeable chap—always bright—lots of fun in the Officer's Mess I believe. He was a "tower of strength" up 'till Beirut when he was transferred.

I had heard, much later, that he disagreed with the second CO—Lt Col Gillespie, a Victorian.

Post war he lived at Leura and was highly regarded, not only for his medical work but also for his publications about Australia's early

history.

Sr. Deane—was the senior Sister from the start to entry into Beirut. (The new CO had her moved to the 2/1st AGH to be replaced by **Sr. Vines**, another Victorian, perhaps more mature than "our Sally" as we called her.)

Sr. Deane later managed a Ward, for most of her post war career, at Prince Henry Hospital (on the Coast) when I was an RMO there in 1953.

She remained single and kept in contact with the CCS personnel through the 2/3rd CCS Association which only folded up about 3 years ago.

I attended her funeral—she had a breast cancer. "Sally" was like a sister to "her boys".

Major Bruce Hall – yes, a wonderful man!

His work in the M.E. was outstanding. Firstly, he prepared blueprints for the arrangements of the various sections of the unit when in action.

We used his "lay-out" twice in Greece, very successfully.

In Beirut we had to set up a Typhoid Ward, Sister Nellie Luke was In-Charge and Bruce Hall was medico I.C.

I was required to type out multiple copies of his observations and recommendations and I am sure his research was outstanding.

He had a sense of humour too. He often sent me notes addressed...Pte Burnett and signed... G. Bruce Hall. Once I had to reply so I signed.. L.Wilson Burnett—from then on his messages were addressed to... L.Wilson Burnett.

Major Otto Nothling was the 2 I/C from inception until Beirut.

He was a Queenslander and a Test Cricketer. I saw him play in his only Test Match on the Sydney Cricket Ground in the early 1920's.

He was a medium-paced bowler and a forceful batsman.

However, he did not show good form and he was dropped immediately. He was a clever surgeon noted for his deft fingers.

He was not young. He left a Practice in Rose Bay to enlist.

Major "Mick" Susman and **Captain Harley ("Mick") Turnbull** were perhaps the most expert surgeons in our team.

Both had outstanding careers in pre and post war times as well as their great contribution to the Army Medical Services.

I believe Mick Turnbull remained single throughout his life.

Major Norman Wyndham joined us in Beirut.

Whilst the unit was on "Stand-By" in the lead-up to Alamein, there was a danger that the troops might become bored and distressed.

He organised a programme of lectures, discussions, classes—mainly to keep up morale. He was quite successful.

Ben Jones—an amazing person.

I had heard of him through our closeness to the 2/6th AGH and much, much later at Bowral in 1977 or thereabouts.

My wife, Dorothy, got to know Ben's wife, Ursula, through a Bible Study group. This led to social visits between the Jones's and the Burnett's.

Ben's eyesight, at this stage, was in a bad way but Ursula coped well.

I can remember Ben showing me a copy of the history of the 2/6th AGH—a very thick volume. After their deaths, their effects were gathered up by their nephew, Charles Floyd Jones.

I know he had Ben's medals so he may have the book.

Sergeant Frank Aarons was the son of Manny Aarons, the Wurlitzer Organist at the State Theatre for many years.

That's about all I can recall at this stage. I could find out addresses of some chaps who worked more closely with the doctors, and their anecdotes may be of some consequence.

I am enclosing two more copies of the book—don't hesitate to ask for more if required.

If you wanted more facts I am sure the war museum in Canberra would have lots of documents available.

Bye for now, Les.



MAKE TIME!

Edited—but with kind thanks to member Barry Perigo)

After 21 years of marriage my wife wanted me to take another woman out to dinner and a movie.

She said... *"I love you but I know this other woman loves you also and would love to spend some time with you".*

The "other woman" my wife wanted me to take out was my mother. She had been a widow for 19 years, but the demands of my work and our 3 children had made it possible to only visit her occasionally.

That night I called mum and invited her out to dinner and a movie.

"What's wrong, are you well?" she asked. My mum is the type of woman who suspects that a late night call or a surprise invitation is a sign of bad news.

"I thought it would be pleasant to spend some time with you, just the two of us." I responded.

She thought about it for a moment and then said... *"I would like that very much".*

That Friday after work, as I drove over to pick her up, I was a bit nervous. When I arrived at her house I noticed that she too, seemed to be nervous about our "date".

She waited in the door with her coat on. She had curled her hair and was wearing the dress that she had worn to celebrate her last Wedding Anniversary.

She smiled from a face that was as radiant as an angel's.

"I told my friends that I was going out with my son, and they were impressed, they can't wait to hear about our meeting." She said, as she got into my car.

We went to a restaurant, although not elegant, was nice and cozy. My mum took my arm as if she was the First Lady.

After we sat down I had to read the menu. Her eyes could only read large print. Half way through the entree's, I lifted my eyes and saw mum sitting there staring at me—a nostalgic smile was on her lips.

"It was I who had to read the menu to you when you were small," she said.

"Then it's time that you relax and let me return the favour." I responded.



During the dinner we had an agreeable conversation, nothing extraordinary, but catching up on recent events in each other's lives.

We actually talked so much that we missed the movie.

When we arrived at her house later, she said... *"I'd like to go out with you again but only if you let me invite you."* I agreed.

When I arrived home my wife asked how our dinner date went? *"Very nice, I said, much more so than I could have imagined."*

A few days later my mum died of a massive heart attack. It happened so suddenly that I didn't have a chance to do anything for her.

Sometime later I received an envelope with a copy of a restaurant receipt from the same place that mum and I had dined.

An attached note said... *"I paid this bill in advance. I wasn't sure that I could be there; but nevertheless, I paid for two plates—one for you and the other for your wife. You will never know what that night with you meant for me. I love you son."*

At that moment, I understood the importance of saying in time "I love you" and to give our loved ones the time they deserve. Nothing in life is more important than your family. Give them the time they deserve, because these things cannot be put off 'till some 'other time'.

Be kinder than necessary—for everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle!





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A Soldier returns home

(With much thanks from Member, COL Suresh Badami OAM RFD and the people who sent it to him)

I am sending this to you as I believe you will feel the import of this to its very core. As a battle-hardened soldier who has commanded troops in the face of the enemy, you will be able to appreciate this more than any civilian can imagine. We civilians can at best fantasise, about the 'goings-on' on the enemy front, slouching in a comfortable sofa in the ambience of an air conditioned room.

Discipline is one of the underpinnings of a civilised society. I think it would be very good if all nations were to follow the Israeli example and impose compulsory military training on their youth. It will only do them good.

This is sent to me by Bill Doherty, a godly man. He retired from PanAm as a 747 pilot. Met him in Hawaii and he and his family treated us extremely well.

Regards

Bill Doherty writes: My lead flight attendant came to me and said, "We have an H.R. on this flight." (H.R. stands for human remains.) "Are they military?" I asked.

"Yes," she said.

"Is there an escort?" I asked.

"Yes, I already assigned him a seat."

"Would you please tell him to come to the flight deck. You can board him early," I said.

A short while later, a young army sergeant entered the flight deck. He was the image of the perfectly dressed soldier. He introduced himself and I asked him about his soldier. The escorts of these fallen soldiers talk about them as if they are still alive and still with us.

"My soldier is on his way back to Virginia," he said. He proceeded to answer my questions, but offered no words.

I asked him if there was anything I could do for him and he said no. I told him that he had the toughest job in the military and that I appreciated the work that he does for the families of our fallen soldiers. The first officer and I got up out of our seats to shake his hand. He left the flight deck to find his seat.

We completed our preflight checks, pushed back and performed an uneventful departure. About 30 minutes into our flight I received a call from the lead flight attendant in the cabin. "I just found out the family of the soldier we are carrying is on board," she said. She then proceeded to tell me that the father, mother, wife and 2-year-old daughter were escorting their son, husband, and father home. The family was upset because they were unable to see the container that the soldier was in before we left. We were on our way to a major hub at which the family was going to wait four hours for the connecting flight home to Virginia.

The father of the soldier told the flight attendant that knowing his son was below him in the cargo compartment and being unable to see him was too much for him and the family to bear. He had asked the flight attendant if there was anything that could be done to allow them to see him upon our arrival. The family wanted to be outside

by the cargo door to watch the soldier being taken off the airplane. I could hear the desperation in the flight attendant's voice when she asked me if there was anything I could do. "I'm on it," I said. I told her that I would get back to her.

Airborne communication with my company normally occurs in the form of e-mail like messages. I decided to bypass this system and contact my flight dispatcher directly on a secondary radio. There is a radio operator in the operations control center who connects you to the telephone of the dispatcher. I was in direct contact with the dispatcher. I explained the situation I had on board with the family and what it was the family wanted. He said he understood and that he would get back to me.

Two hours went by and I had not heard from the dispatcher. We were going to get busy soon and I needed to know what to tell the family. I sent a text message asking for an update. I saved the return message from the dispatcher and the following is the text:

"Captain, sorry it has taken so long to get back to you. There is policy on this now and I had to check on a few things. Upon your arrival a dedicated escort team will meet the aircraft. The team will escort the family to the ramp and plane side. A van will be used to load the remains with a secondary van for the family. The family will be taken to their departure area and escorted into the terminal where the remains can be seen on the ramp. It is a private area for the family only. When the connecting aircraft arrives, the family will be escorted onto the ramp and plane side to watch the remains being loaded for the final leg home. Captain, most of us here in flight control are veterans. Please pass our condolences on to the family. Thanks."

I sent a message back telling flight control thanks for a good job. I printed out the message and gave it to the lead flight attendant to pass on to the father. The lead flight attendant was very thankful and told me, "You have no idea how much this will mean to them."

Things started getting busy for the descent, approach and landing. After landing, we cleared the runway and taxied to the ramp area. The ramp is huge with 15 gates on either side of the alleyway. It is always a busy area with aircraft maneuvering every which way to enter and exit. When we entered the ramp and checked in with the ramp controller, we were told that all traffic was being held for us.

"There is a team in place to meet the aircraft," we were told. It looked like it was all coming together, then I realized that once we turned the seat belt sign off, everyone would stand up at once and delay the family from getting off the airplane. As we approached our gate, I asked the co-pilot to tell the ramp controller we were going to stop short of the gate to make an announcement to the passengers. He did that and the ramp controller said, "Take your time."

(Continued on page 41)



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I stopped the aircraft and set the parking brake. I pushed the public address button and said, "Ladies and gentleman, this is your Captain speaking I have stopped short of our gate to make a special announcement. We have a passenger on board who deserves our honor and respect. His name is Private XXXXXX, a soldier who recently lost his life. Private XXXXXX is under your feet in the cargo hold. Escorting him today is Army Sergeant XXXXXXX. Also, on board are his father, mother, wife and daughter. Your entire flight crew is asking for all passengers to remain in their seats to allow the family to exit the aircraft first. Thank you."

We continued the turn to the gate, came to a stop and started our shutdown procedures. A couple of minutes later I opened the cockpit door. I found the two forward flight attendants crying, something you just do not see. I was told that after we came to a stop, every passenger on the aircraft stayed in their seats, waiting for the family to exit the aircraft.

When the family got up and gathered their things, a passenger slowly started to clap his hands. Moments later more passengers joined in and soon the entire aircraft was clapping. Words of "God Bless You," "I'm sorry, thank you, be proud" and other kind words were uttered to the family as they made their way down the aisle and out of the airplane. They were escorted down to the ramp to finally be with their loved one.

Many of the passengers disembarking thanked me for the announcement I had made. They were just words, I told them, I could say them over and over again, but

nothing I say will bring back that brave soldier.

I respectfully ask that all of you reflect on this event and the sacrifices that millions of our men and women have made to ensure our freedom and safety in these United States of America.

Foot note:

As a Vietnam veteran I can only think of all the veterans including the ones that rode below the deck on their way home and how they were treated. When I read things like this I am proud that our country has not turned their backs on our soldiers returning from the various war zones today and give them the respect they so deserve.

I know every one who has served their country who reads this will have tears in their eyes, including me.

Prayer chain for our military... Don't break it!

Please send this on after a short prayer.. Prayer for our soldiers Don't break it!

Prayer:

"Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for the selfless acts they perform for us in our time of need. Amen."

Prayer request: When you receive this, please stop for a moment and say a prayer for our troops around the world.

There is nothing attached. Just send this to people in your address book. Do not let it stop with you. Of all the gifts you could give a Marine, Soldier, Sailor, Airman, and others deployed in harm's way, prayer is the very best one.

GOD BLESS YOU!



A soldier's casket is being carried from the plane by his battalion. (AAP: Australian Defence Force)



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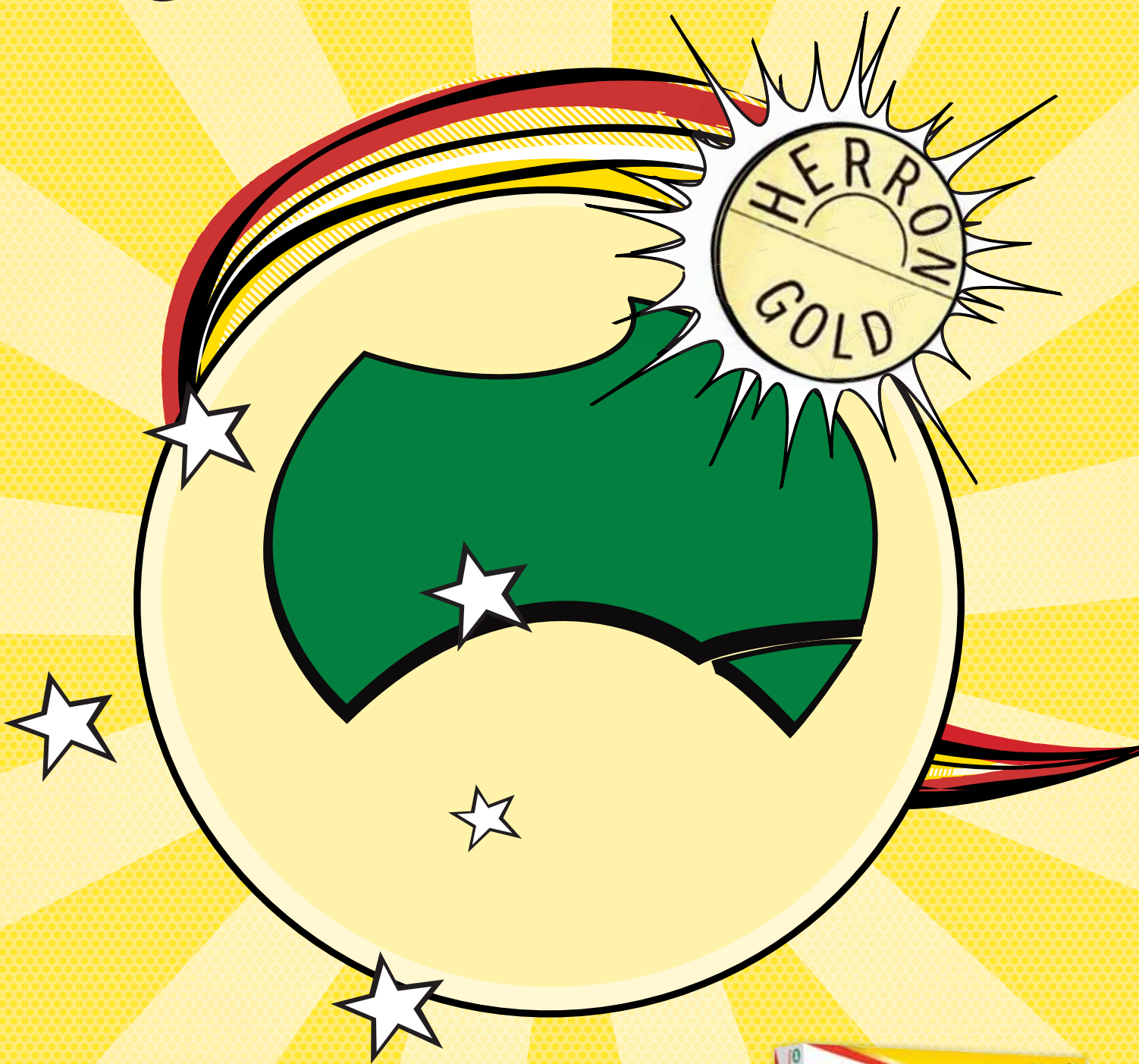
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