

Keeping in Touch

AUTUMN EDITION 2020

PORTSIDE AT ANCHOR IN SYDNEY HARBOUR

HMAS SYDNEY (II)

EDITED BY M. MCCARTHY

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Official Newsletter of:
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Keeping in Touch

From the Presidents Desk

We have had a change of personnel within the Sub Branch Executive. After many years of service Ron decided he could no longer continue his role as President. His health has not been the best and the demands of both here and the Diggers Club were catching up.

We at the Sub Branch pass on our gratitude and thanks for his years of dedicated service to helping veterans and families and in running and maintaining the office. Many of you may not realise just how hard it has been over the past 3 years and the amount of work required to maintain the Sub Branch, it has not been fun and at times very hard on Ron's health.

Because Ron stood down I have taken up his role after being nominated at the AGM in February. I only hope I can continue the position in the shadows Ronnie has established over the years.

It was disappointing to see the small number of people at the AGM and even more disappointing was the members disinterest in taking up positions on the Sub Branch board. A very small number of people have been keeping the Sub Branch active and continuing the role of the RSL, that of looking after veterans. I understand we have an aging membership and know too well the difficulty in getting younger people interested in taking part in an established organization such as ours.

This subject has been discussed in all levels of the RSL without any real answers. It has also been the subject of interest in many of the Veteran Support agencies throughout the country, all of them having the same problem, younger people want to be in their interest however don't want to be involved in the running and organising. Very few of the support agencies these days are run by volunteers, the RSL and Vietnam Vets are two that come to mind who still do so.

The remainder are run with paid executives & staff, most of the money coming from Government agencies. I cannot see them lasting too long as the money will soon dry up, especially now in the troublesome times we are experiencing.

Will they continue to help the veteran society when there is no money to keep them in paid positions, you make up your own mind. This week I have had to make the decision to close the Sub Branch indefinitely for the first time in its history. The COVID-19 virus has made it impossible for us to keep in close contact with the general public and all meetings have or will be cancelled until further notice.

We have also had a double blow in that we have had to cancel our ANZAC Day and our services to the local schools and aged care homes we normally have associations with have also been put on hold. We intend to have a very small dawn service, with just the executive present, to lay a couple of wreaths and sound the last post if that is still possible. We cannot invite the general public, the current situation just does not allow us to do so. Our veterans past will not be forgotten and we will do our best to ensure their memories and sacrifices are always in our thoughts.

The Sub Branch emails will still be monitored so if any require our help, use that or leave a message on our office phone and we will contact you as soon as possible.

I wish you good health in these troublesome times, look after yourselves

The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance

Bill Noble BEM

President

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Ollies Bistro

\$10 LUNCH*

MONDAY-SUNDAY 11.30am-2.00pm



Steak Sandwich w Chips
Chicken Schnitzel w Chips & Salad or Veg
Warm Chicken Salad
Bangers & Mash

*\$12 for Non Members, subject to change, Not available on Public Holidays, Mother's Day, Father's Day or any other day as deemed by the Club.

**** \$12.00 for Non Member***

LOOKS OF DISAPPOINTMENT: A man was just waking up from anesthesia after surgery, and his wife was sitting by his side. His eyes fluttered open and he said, “You’re beautiful.” He then fell asleep again. His wife had never heard him say that before, so she stayed by his side.

A few minutes later his eyes fluttered open and he said, “You’re cute.” The wife was disappointed because instead of ‘beautiful’ it was now ‘cute’.

She asked, “ What happened to beautiful?”

The man replied, “The drugs are wearing off.”

MARRIAGE HUMOUR: Wife, “What are you doing? Husband, “Nothing” Wife, “Nothing? You’ve been reading our marriage certificate for an hour.” Husband, “ I was looking for the expiration date.”

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**GOFFET PARK, BRIGHTON
AVENUE TORONTO
DAWN SERVICE EXECUTIVE
MEMBER (ONE) ONLY TO LAY A
WREATH DUE TO GOVERNMENT
RESTRICTIONS**

**THERE WILL BE NO MARCH OR
OTHER FUNCTION CARRIED OUT
ON THIS DAY DUE TO
GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS
AND AS A DIRECTIVE FROM RSL
(NSW) STATE BRANCH TO ALL
SUB-BRANCHES IN NSW**

CHAPLAINS CORNER



Greetings, my name is Reverend Melanie Whalley, I am the Chaplain and have recently started at Toronto Anglican as the Intentional Interim Priest. I am married to Angus and we have two children Amelia (9) and Joseph (2). I am originally from the Upper Hunter, I grew up in and around Aberdeen and Scone and lived in Muswellbrook in more recent years. I hope to get to know you all more too.

As you read this our beloved nation is in lockdown because of the COVID 19 pandemic. I have been reading and pondering the effect of isolating and distancing on mental health and I am especially aware of the vulnerabilities that face you all at this time. I encourage you all to stay connected to one another, and to encourage one another. But I am also aware of the resilience that comes from Returned Service Personnel. You have great strength to draw on in times of sacrifice for your country.

Sadly, this year we can't gather as a community for ANZAC Day. A time to honour the memory of those courageous men and women who sacrificed their lives in service to their country. It is the day on which we remember Australians who served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations. The spirit of Anzac, with its human qualities of courage, mate ship, and sacrifice, continues to have meaning and relevance for our sense of national identity. Not gathering for ANZAC Day will be hard, but I encourage you to spend time on ANZAC Day lighting a candle, holding a poppy and/or a cross and praying. Perhaps, you can collectively do this at dawn or at a later service time. Here is a prayer you may find helpful:

Lord God, help us this day to remember the sacrifice of the first ANZACs, Australian and New Zealander, and the generations of men, women and children who have died in the cause of liberty and peace. Help us to remember those who still bear the physical and mental scars and disabilities of their service.

Help us to remember the widows, girlfriends, boyfriends, parents and orphans and all those who waited in vain for the return of a loved one. Help us to remember the mateship, agony, courage and compassion of war service, but save us from ever glorifying the horror and tragedy of war.

We remember with thanksgiving, those who made the supreme sacrifice for us in times of war. We pray that their offering of their lives may not have been in vain.

May your grace enable us this day to dedicate ourselves to the cause of justice, freedom and peace; and give us the wisdom and strength to build a better world. **Amen.**

There is a passage of Scripture that stands out for me right now. Psalm 23 is one. Psalm 23 reminds us and so many of you may already know this, that during the dark times in the deep valley God is ever present with us. God sustains us in difficult times. Here is the Psalm in case you find it helpful for reading and pondering during this time.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;

Peace be with you all.

Reverend Melanie

Phone: 0488 413 186

Email: parishpriest@torontoanglicans.org.au

HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED MAKING A BEQUEST OR INCLUDING THIS SUB BRANCH IN YOUR WILL

May we encourage you to think of us when making a bequest or when you are making your will. Your memorial gift will help us towards our goal; to look after the welfare needs of veterans, their widows and their dependents on a continuing basis at no cost to them.

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MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR US
TO HOLD OUR ANNUAL ANZAC
SERVICE IN 2020.**

**GOD ONLY HOPES THAT THEY
FIND A COMPLETE CURE FOR
THE VIRUS QUICKLY AND
PEOPLE CAN LIVE THEIR
NORMAL LIVES AGAIN**

'ZEST FOR LIFE'

Active Over 50's Exercise Classes

Which your local Toronto RSL sub-Branch ran for over 10 years, which was one class per week under its **"Zest for Life Program"**

A light exercise program run at 8.00am on Tuesday of each week under the watchful eye of Advanced Exercise Professional Pamela Glover.

At this stage the classes have been put on hold as it was a group program and is now impractical due to the Government restrictions that are in effect relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At this stage all I can say is if the Government gives us the GREEN light again shortly to live our normal lives again:

IS WATCH THIS SPACE



217 ARMY CADET UNIT (ACU) KEEPING IN TOUCH REPORT FOR APRIL 2020



1. Happy Autumn for 2020!
2. The first quarter of 2020 has been full of ups and downs. Currently we have 23 Cadets parading and three Adult Cadet Staff. We have had some very helpful parents who have also been volunteering to prepare our evening supper and assist on Working Bees.
3. There has been a few new position changes in appointments above 217 ACU at both 21 Battalion level (new Commanding Officer – MAJ (AAC) Richard Fenn, new ADF Liaison Officer - SGT Tunicliff) and restructure of NSW AAC Brigade (new staff, retiring staff and change of duties).
4. Unfortunately, due to poor timing and weather, both our planned recruiting activities (Australia Day Festival and Morisset Show) in January and February fell through. In March, 217 ACU conducted a combined camp at Singleton Military Area with all the other units within 21 Battalion in order to conduct Recruit field training and enhance Cadet navigation skills. 21 Battalion also conducted a Corporals Promotion Course over 3 weekends and 217 ACU sent 3 Cadet Lance Corporals to obtain this qualification. Congratulations, CDTLCPLs Aaron Cusack, Denver Dines and Cooper Smith. In addition, we were able to support West Lake Macquarie National Servicemen for their remembrance service held on the 21st of March.
5. April is always very busy. 217 ACU will be supporting our various community sponsors in several ANZAC Services. Currently we are planning to attend the Masonic Lodge Service on the 11th April, All Saints Church Service on the 19th April at 1800Hrs and ANZAC Day services at Speers Point Dawn Service and March at 0430Hrs, Ryhope Memorial Service at 0900Hrs and Toronto March and Service at 1030Hrs.
6. May begins the second Term of the Year and we have several activities planned such as a simulated shoot at Williamtown RAAF Base, trip to Canberra for the Queens Birthday Long Weekend and planning for the NSW Brigade Promotion Courses held at Richmond RAAF Base.

Thank you for your continued support and patience.

Kind regards

Yvonne Fuller

CAPT (AAC)

217 Army Cadet Unit (ACU) ~ Officer Commanding (OC)

Mobile: 0409 310 713 ~ Unit email: 217acu@armycaadets.gov.au



217 Army Cadet Unit (ACU)

229 Army Cadet Unit (ACU)

End of year Parade 2019 and Award Luncheon



On the 15 December 2019 whilst President of the Toronto RSL sub-Branch one of my final duties was to attend the end of year parade of the cadet unit that we support. On this occasions because of the numbers it was a combined parade between 217 ACU and 229 ACU which was held at the Doyalson/Wyee Sports Ground.

The end of year parade commenced at 0930hrs (9.30am) however due to the heat the Parade was cut short, so we attended the Doyalson/Wyee RSL. There we partook of a luncheon followed by the presentation of the award to the various cadets for their achievements throughout the year..

- A. CDTLCPL Cooper Smith – Cadet of the Year – sponsored by Toronto RSL Sub-Branch**
- B. CDT Kaleb Barnes – Most Improved – sponsored by Boolaroo/ Speers Point RSL Sub-Branch**
- C. CDT Eli Logan – Rookie of the Year – sponsored by Mr R. Carle on behalf of Mr V. Carle**
- D. CDTCPL Rowiena Maza – Top Shot**
- E. CDTCPL Rowiena Maza – Leadership Award**
- F. CDTSgt Brandon Roddom – CSM 2019**



**President Ron Mitcherson
presenting the Cadet of the Year
Award sponsored by
Toronto RSL sub-Branch
to CDT L/CPL Cooper SMITH**

**Ron Mitcherson
Committee member
Editor of Keeping in Touch**

NUSHIP Sydney arrives in her home port

📹 Published on 27 March 2020 LEUT Geoff Long and LCDR Kristen Russo (author), AB Sittichai Sakonpoonpol (photographer), PTE Olivia Cameron (photographer), LS Nadav Harel (photographer), PTE Dustin Anderson (photographer)

Location(s): Garden Island, NSW

Topic(s): [NUSHIP Sydney \(D42\)](#)



The Air Warfare Destroyer NUSHIP Sydney prepares to berth at Fleet Base East in Sydney for the first time, on 27 March 2020.

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Sydney residents had a first glimpse of their city's namesake ship with the arrival of [NUSHIP Sydney](#) at Garden Island today.

The last of the three [Hobart Class Destroyers](#) joining the Royal Australian Navy's Fleet entered Sydney Heads and made her way through the harbour.

NUSHIP *Sydney*'s Commanding Officer, Commander Edward Seymour, said the arrival of the warship was a proud moment for all involved.

"*Sydney*'s arrival into her homeport is the result of 15 months of hard work by her ship's company and the product of years of Australian ship-building," Commander Seymour said.

"The Hobart Class Destroyer is the most lethal warship operated by the Royal Australian Navy and will provide capability including air defence to task groups as well as land forces and coastal infrastructure," he said.

The arrival of NUSHIP *Sydney* comes exactly 36 years to the day that the people of Sydney saw Guided Missile Frigate [HMAS Sydney \(IV\)](#) arrive for the first time.

This will be the fifth ship to bear the historic name 'Sydney.'

For Petty Officer Maritime Logistics – Support Operations sailor Dion Georgopoulos, HMAS *Sydney* (IV) was the first Royal Australian Navy ship that he served in, and he is proud to be a commissioning crew member of *Sydney* (V) 19 years later.

"It is a surreal feeling knowing that this is probably the beginning of a new legacy where thousands of sailors for years to come will have the privilege of being *Sydney* crew."

NUSHIP *Sydney* was brought into harbour under a Red Ensign and delivered under the direction of civilian contracted mariners, with the ship's company providing the personnel to operate and maintain necessary systems for safe steaming.

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On board were Defence personnel from Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group, members of NUSHIP Sydney's ship's company, as well as contractors from Teekay and the Air Warfare Destroyer Alliance.

One of the Navy personnel on board was Leading Seaman Naval Police Coxswain Sue Rochford, who has been looking forward to this moment for over 12 months.

"I'm over the moon, I'm so excited. This is the posting of my career. I'm pretty proud to be part of this historic occasion of driving the ship into Sydney for the first time," Leading Seaman Rochford said.

The 147-metre warship sailed from Osborne, South Australia, where she was built by the Air Warfare Destroyer Alliance and has been undergoing sea trials before she is commissioned later this year.



NUSHIP Sydney transits through Sydney Harbour for the first time on approach to her new homeport at Garden Island.

A bit of Irish: 1. Mick says to Paddy, "Close you curtains next time you're making love to your wife. The whole street was watching yesterday, and laughing at you." Paddy says, "Well the joke's on them, stupid, I wasn't even at home yesterday."

2. Paddy says to Mick, I'm ready for a holiday, only this time I'm going to do it a bit different. 3 years ago I went to Spain and Mary got pregnant. 2 years ago I went to Italy and Mary got pregnant. Last year I went to Majorca and Mary got pregnant. Mick asks, "So what are you going to do this year?" Paddy replies, "I'll take her with me."

KOOKIES MORSELS

AUTUMN

SPICE CRUSTED CHICKEN AND SALAD

1 tsp cumin seed	2 tbsp panko bread crumbs
1tbsp ground coriander	2 tsp sesame seeds
3 medium white potatoes, peeled and chopped	½ cup reduced-fat plain yoghurt
2 tbsp wholemeal plain flour	200g skinless chicken breast
pepper to taste	1 tsp olive oil
2 tbsp lemon juice	¼ cup mint leaves
½ apple, thinly sliced	½ cup frozen peas, defrosted
¼ lettuce torn	¼ red onion

Preheat oven to 200c and line a baking tray with baking paper.

In a food processor, mortar and pestle or with a knife, roughly chop cumin seeds. Add panko breadcrumbs, ground coriander and sesame seeds and mix. Microwave the potatoes for four minutes on high, stirring after two minutes. Toss with olive oil and pepper and scatter on an oven tray. Place in the oven while you prepare the chicken. Slice the chicken in half so that you get two, thinner pieces. Sprinkle the pieces with flour and shake off the excess. Dip the floured chicken in the yoghurt, shaking off the excess and place on baking tray. Discard the yoghurt that has touched the raw chicken. Press half the crumb mixture onto the top of each chicken piece.

Place the chicken on the oven tray next to the potatoes. Bake for 20 minutes, until the chicken is golden and crunchy and the potatoes are soft.

Meanwhile make the dressing by finely chopping half the mint and mixing with the reserved yoghurt and the lemon juice. Season with pepper. Assemble the salad by arranging the vegetables, apple and mint on a plate and topping with the chicken. Pour the dressing over just before serving

Bon appetit

APPLE BREAD AND BUTTER PUDDING

3 slices of spicy fruit loaf	1 cup milk
2 tsps. Margarine	1 egg
2 tbsps. Sultanas	2 tsps. Sugar
quarter cup 410g can pie apples	1 tsp vanilla essence
half tsp cinnamon	quarter tsp nutmeg

Spread bread with margarine, cut into quarters and place in a small greased ovenproof dish. Sprinkle sultanas, apples and cinnamon between layers.

Combine milk, egg, sugar and vanilla in a bowl, beat and pour over bread. Sprinkle with nutmeg and bake at 180c for 30-40 minutes or until custard has set. Serve Hot.

Bon appetit

HINT. Remaining pie apple can be used in fruit strudel or on top of breakfast cereal. Remaining Fruit loaf can be frozen, this makes a delicious snack when toasted.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Monday ~ 13/04/20 ~ Cancelled ~ Virus

**Tuesday ~ 25/04/20 ANZAC Day Service's
Cancelled Due to Virus**

Monday ~ 11/05/20 ~ Cancelled ~ Virus

**Monday ~ 15/06/20 ~ Monthly Meeting at 10.00am
???????? ~ Check with sub-Branch ~ Virus ??????????**

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Joel Fitzgibbon MP

YOUR FEDERAL MEMBER FOR HUNTER

Shadow Minister for
Agriculture and Resources

Labor



An Invisible Enemy

No one can spot a real and present threat like our military veterans. Right? I hope so, because a large proportion of our veterans are seventy years of age plus. When you have served in the uniform of the Australian Defence Force, it's hard to take an invisible enemy with a funny name seriously. But the Coronavirus is deadly serious, and I ask readers to treat it as such.

At time of writing, thirteen are dead. By the time this contribution is published, the number will have grown. Sadly, that is a sure bet. It's a difficult time for governments which are doing their best to stem the spread without putting our economy into a coma. It's a fight I fear we may be losing. More will need to be done, we can't risk the failure of our health system. We can't be asking Doctors to choose which patients receive ICU treatment and which don't.

That is the shocking reality in some other countries.

More action on the isolation front will make the economic situation will make it worse but not acting will make it even worsen. People will continue to lose their livelihoods and I fear, the roof over their heads. Keeping residents in their homes must be a priority for governments.

Our Service men and women know the value of planning, strategy and teamwork. Working together we will get through this crisis. I ask readers to follow the health advice, wash your hands regularly, stick to distancing guidelines and as much as you can, stay at home. Most of all, stay safe. If my team or I can assist, please don't hesitate to contact us on 4991 1022 or by email: joel.fitzgibbon.mp@aph.gov.au

**David Bullock – Media Advisor for and on behalf of the
Office of the Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP | Shadow Minister for
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R1 48, Canberra
ACT 2600**

Labor



DIFFERENT WAYS OF LOOKING AT THINGS

A BIT OF LAUGHTER IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES

Two guys were discussing popular family trends on sex, marriage, and family values. Bill said, “I didn’t sleep with my wife before we got married, did you?” Larry said, “I’m not sure, what was her maiden name?”

‘Mr. Clark, I have reviewed the case very carefully,’ the divorce Court Judge said, ‘And I’ve decided to give your wife \$775 a week,’ ‘That’s very fair, your honour,’ the husband said. ‘And every now and then I’ll try and send her a few bucks myself.’

A doctor examining a woman who had been rushed to the Emergency Room, took the husband aside, and said, “I don’t like the look of you wife at all.” “Me neither doc,” the husband said. “But she’s a great cook and really Good with the kids.”

While shopping for vacation clothes, my husband and I passed a display of bathing suits. It had been at least ten years and twenty pounds since I had even considered buying a bathing suit, so I sought my husband’s advice. “What do you think?” I asked. “Should I get a bikini or an-all-one?” ‘Better get a bikini,’ he replied. ‘you’d never get it all in one.’ He’s still in Intensive Care.



Greg Piper MP

Member for Lake Macquarie



March 2020

It's very disappointing that ANZAC Day commemorations have had to be cancelled this year due to the ongoing health risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given the significant concerns around the spread of the disease, RSL NSW was forced to make the only decision it could. It would, of course, have been irresponsible to allow such large gatherings to go ahead.

Still, I know that Australians will find a way of marking ANZAC Day in other ways, and will continue to pay tribute to all our current and former servicemen and women. I know of several local communities which are already planning to light candles on their porches and greet the ANZAC dawn from outside their homes. That spirit of the ANZACs will never be forgotten.

My annual ANZAC Day booklet is still being produced this year. It will be mailed to all homes in my electorate in the week leading up to ANZAC Day, so look out for it in the mailbox.

In other news, I recently met with local police chiefs Danny Sullivan and Brett Greentree to be briefed on the local response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While there are clear concerns about the potential for the rate of infection to overwhelm our health services, the good news is that we are starting with an excellent health system and there are many measures being taken to make sure our health system copes.

Along with concerns about health, we are seeing some incredibly ugly and unnecessary behaviour with people over-purchasing and hoarding many products. If everyone would just calm down, supply chains will work! It's not the virus causing this problem, it's irrational behaviour!

As Australians we pride ourselves on supporting our mates, our neighbours, our brothers and sisters. This behaviour is the opposite of that and is causing totally unwarranted stress particularly to the more vulnerable in our community. For those sensible, calm people doing the right thing, thank you.

Finally, there's been some confusion about the \$250 Regional Seniors Travel Card. For the record, if you're on an aged pension, a veteran's pension or hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health Care Card and live in my State electorate of Lake Macquarie, you ARE eligible for the \$250 travel card. The card can be used for fuel, taxis and pre-booked rail services. You can apply for yours by phoning 13 77 88 or calling in to the Service NSW centres at Toronto or Warners Bay.

I hope you all stay healthy. LEST WE FORGET.

We will remember them.

Regards



92 Victory Parade, Toronto NSW 2283

email: lakemacquarie@parliament.nsw.gov.au 
[facebook.com/GregPiper1MP](https://www.facebook.com/GregPiper1MP)

Electorate Office 4959 3200

1942

It was 1942 and the Japanese scare was at its height.

Way out in the far north of Australia, we were erecting telephone wires to improve communications.

Looking on in silence were a group of aborigines.

They watched us for hours without saying a word. Then it got too much for one bloke.. "Soldiers silly fools to put fence right up there, " he snorted. (IT WAS JUST SIGNED "DIG")

JUST A COUPLE OF QUICK ONES

I heard a bloke complaining about how expensive his wedding is. He is going to be really peed off when he finds out how much the divorce is going to cost him.

Judging by the frying pan that just flew past my head, I did something wrong.

I can't wait to find out what it was.

PENSIONS REPORT

At present our Pension Officers and Advocates have been quite busy with 14 cases running for veterans and the like.

There are: 20 matters at present underway.

1 matter that is currently under review by the Department.

So as you can see our Officer's have not been idle dealing with the high demand. Considering at present we only have one Pension Officer's (full time) and one part time and one Advocate.

For a full list of any new conditions being investigated go to the RMA website at www.rma.gov.au and look under "What's New".

A number of investigations have been finalised and SOPs determined and details of these will be published and mentioned in our Keeping in Touch as they come to hand.

Our Advocate and Pension Officer's are on duty in these sub-Branch offices each Wednesday between the hours of 9.30am and 12 midday. Other times by appointment only. Phone 4959 3699

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Nasho's News

Westlake Macquarie
National Servicemen's Association



Welcome to Autumn, it's been a disastrous summer for the majority of people in Australia, we have been in massive bush fires followed by heavy rain and damaging floods.

We have been in a very good location, as Lake Macquarie area avoided this disaster and only needed water restrictions.

Our Christmas Party was held 13th December, 2019 and attendance was down mainly due to people's prior engagements and appointments; but we still had a good roll up.

Meetings were postponed for December and January.

Our next event was the 2nd February 2020 at Nelson Bay Combined Forces National Servicemen Remembrance Day was held in the meeting room of Nelson Bay West Diggers Club. It was an extremely hot day with Des and myself attending and all in attendance received a \$10 voucher for drinks or food on the day. We decided to have meals and were surprised how large they were.

Our February meeting was a surprisingly large crowd even though some members went to the senior's concert in Sydney.

Sunday 16th February 2020 Des and I attended the Newcastle Combined Services National Services Day held at Civic Park.

Acknowledgements.

Lord Mayor City of Newcastle Councillor Nuatali Nelmes

Federal Member for Newcastle Ms Sharon Claydon MP

State Member for Newcastle Tim Crankanthorp MP represented by Newcastle Councillor, Peta Whinney-Baartz

State member for Charlestown Jodie Harrison MP

**Wing Commander John Stark Commanding Officer 26 Squadron,
Air Base Executive Officer RAAF Base Williamtown**

**Chaplain (Flight Lieutenant) Gabriel Ezenwalian Air Force Cadets
RAAF Base Williamtown, No 26 (City of Newcastle) Squadron**

Warrant Officer John Markham RAAF Williamtown Base W/Officer.

T.S Tobruk Australian Navy Cadets

211 ACU Australian Army Cadets

321 Squadron Australian Air Force Cadets

Supported by City of Newcastle RSL Pipeband

Australian Armed Forces Re-Enactment Heritage Group

Everyone was welcomed back to Waratah Mayfield Islington RSL Sub Branch Hall for refreshments after the service.

Westlake Macquarie Nasho Sub Branch held a combined services meeting at Toronto Diggers on Monday, 24th February, 2020 at 10.30 a.m. On 1st March, 2020 was held a barbeque at Bunnings, Glendale and we managed to get a full crew.

7th March, 2020 Newcastle NNSAI held their National Service Memorial Day at Maitland Park. They had a full crew of dignitaries. A barbeque was held in the park after the service.

Westlake Macquarie National Service Day was held on Saturday 21st of March 2020 10.30 a.m. A lot of organising had been done for this thanks to Bruce Robberds and Janice Hargrave.

Our AGM was held on 12th March, 2020. No other meeting on that day.

Please keep in mind the Reserve Forces Day to be held in Newcastle the same setup as last year on the 4th of July, 2020.

Wishing you all better health as well as better weather.

Gordon Maxwell
PRESIDENT

**HEARS A FEW MORE I MIGHT HAVE TO DUCK
DEPENDING ON THE READER**

**I ONCE WON AN ARGUMENT WITH A WOMAN.....IN
THIS DREAM I HAD.**

**MEN HAVE FEELINGS TOO. FOR EXAMPLE, WE FEEL
HUNGRY.**

**IT IS FUNNY WHEN MY GIRLFRIEND GIVES ME THE "SILENT
TREATMENT". SHE THINKS IT IS A PUNISHMENT.**

**IF THERE WAS A WAY TO READ A WOMAN'S MIND, I AM NOT
SURE I WOULD WANT TO. I HATE SHOES, SHOPPING, GOSSIP,
AND I ALREADY KNOW THAT I AM ANNOYING,**

WORLD WW1 ON THE GROUND AND IN THE AIR

Australia's involvement in the First World War began when Britain and Germany went to war on 4 August 1914, and both Prime Minister Joseph Cook and Opposition Leader Andrew Fisher, who were in the midst of an election campaign, pledged full support for Britain. The outbreak of war was greeted in Australia, as in many other places, with great enthusiasm.

The first significant Australian action of the war was the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force's (ANMEF) landing on Rabaul on 11 September 1914. The ANMEF took possession of German New Guinea at Toma on 17 September 1914 and of the neighbouring islands of the Bismarck Archipelago in October 1914. On 9 November 1914 the Royal Australian Navy made a major contribution when HMAS *Sydney* destroyed the German raider SMS *Emden*.

On 25 April 1915 members of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) landed on Gallipoli in Turkey with troops from New Zealand, Britain, and France. This began a campaign that ended with an evacuation of allied troops beginning in December 1915. The next year Australian forces fought campaigns on the Western Front and in the Middle East.

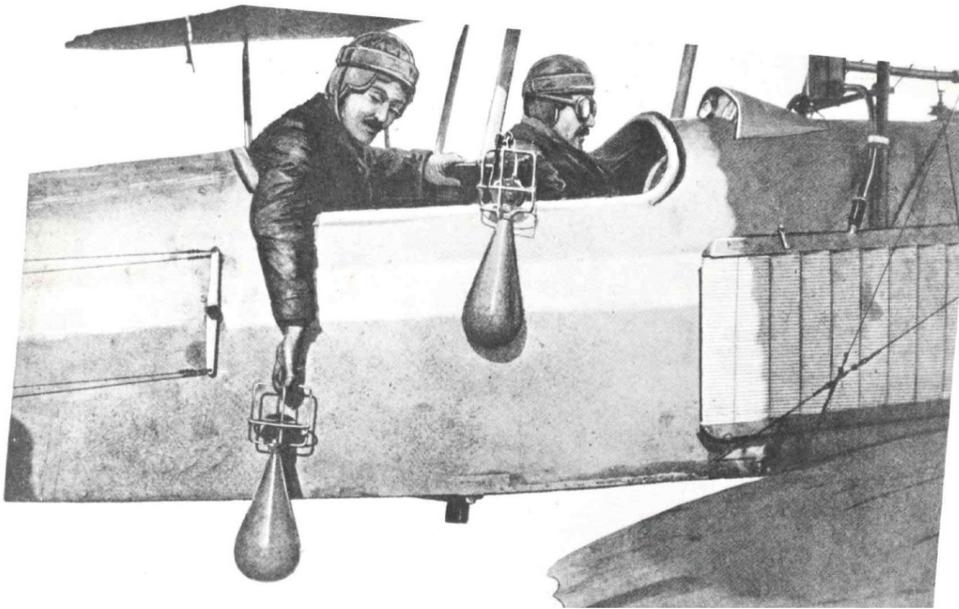
Throughout 1916 and 1917 losses on the Western Front were heavy and gains were small. In 1918 the Australians reached the peak of their fighting performance in the battle of Hamel on 4 July. From 8 August they then took part in a series of decisive advances until they were relieved in early October. Germany surrendered on 11 November.

The Middle East campaign began in 1916 with Australian troops taking part in the defence of the Suez Canal and the allied re-conquest of the Sinai Desert. In the following year Australian and other allied troops advanced into Palestine and captured Gaza and Jerusalem; by 1918 they had occupied Lebanon and Syria and on 30 October 1918 Turkey sued for peace.

For Australia, the First World War remains the costliest conflict in terms of deaths and casualties. From a population of fewer than five million, 416,809 men enlisted, of whom more than 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed, or taken prisoner.

THE BEGINNING OF THE USE OF THE AIRCRAFT WAS FIRSTLY BY THE ITALIAN ARMY IN 1908

It was only 11 years before the first true airplane flight and only 6 years before that the pioneers, Orville and Wilbur Wright, had brought their aircraft across the Atlantic to demonstrate to some very inexperienced Europeans imitators how the trick could be managed. Yet, 3 years after the great meeting at Rheims, the Italian army had sufficiently perfected the technique of the new art to use airplanes against the Turks in its war in Libya. Shortly after, other aircraft were employed in the Mexican revolution of 1911 to observe enemy troop movements and to take photographs. The Italians had even attempted aerial bombing by hand against the Senussi tribesmen.

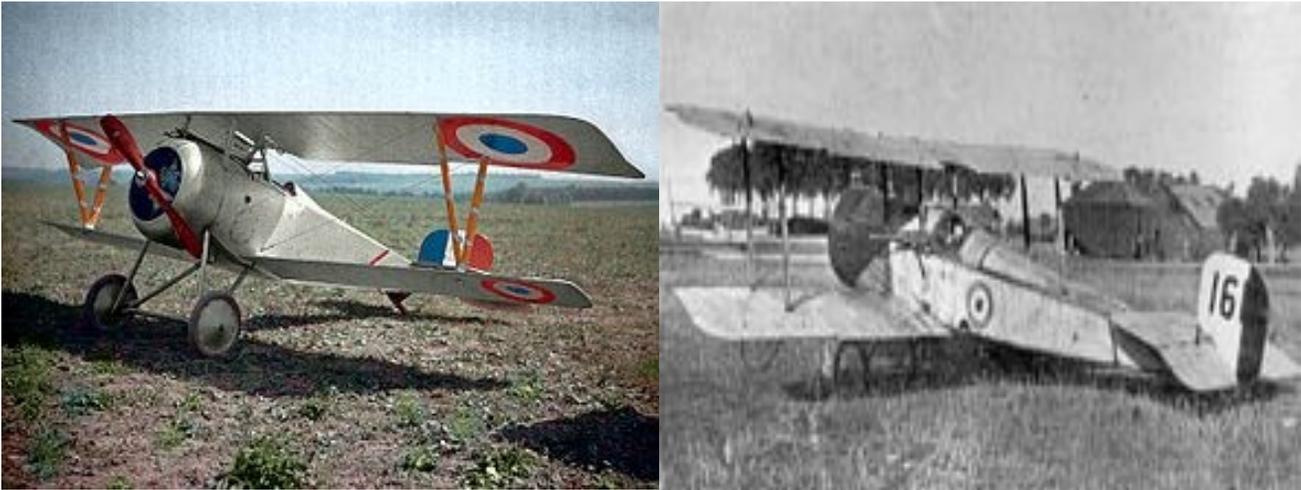


These developments had given the major European Powers the hint, hence the buildup of aircraft in the various countries around the world. There were many small groups of planes in various countries and mainly Zeppelins.

The French established an Air Service in 1910. The Germans founded the Imperial Air Service in 1913. Britain which had a balloon battalion since 1870, created the Royal Flying Corps with naval and military wings, in May 1912 and in June 1914 had detached the naval wing to form the Royal Naval Air Service. However the number of all aircraft in all these new organisations was small.

Britain had 113 military aircraft in August 1914, France 138, Russia 45, Austria 36 and Germany 384, with 30 Zeppelins. Pilots were also scarce, not surprising in an age when the armies found it difficult to recruit enough men who knew how to drive motor vehicles. **Page 27**

THE STYLE OF PLANES BEING USED BY THE NAVY ROYAL AIR SERVICE AND THE RAF DURING WW1



The role of the aircraft was strictly limited to that of serving military headquarters to which they were attached. The Generals wanted their pilots to bring them information of the enemy's movements and saw them as a useful extension of the additional cavalry scout rather than as pioneers of a new arm in their own right. From the very beginning they were able to fulfil this role. On the 22 August 1914 a British pilot operating forward of the British Expeditionary Force observed the approach of Kluck's First Army towards Mons and was able to give advanced warning of the impending attack. Shortly after, the first recorded instance of aerial combat occurred. On the 26 August three British pilots led by Lieutenant H. D. Harvey-Kelley observed a German aircraft beneath them. They dived on him surrounded his aircraft and forced him slowly to the ground. Once the trench lines had been established, observation would lose its strategic importance for combat for control of tactical observation, would become more important. The fixed trench lines made effective artillery bombardment much more practicable than in the weeks of open, mobile warfare, but required observation from the air to check its accuracy and correct the laying of the guns. Pilots then began to chase enemy intruders over the lines and in March 1915 a Frenchman, Roland Garros, hit on a new method of attacking. A prewar stunt pilot, and the first to fly the Mediterranean, he had been in Germany giving a flying exhibition when the war broke out, and had only just made his escape in time. By early 1915 he was an established military French Pilot.

Aware that in 1914 other airmen, Stribick and David, had shot down a German photographic intruder with a hand-held machine gun, he decided to make such a weapon an integral part of his machine. The obvious place to mount it was above the engine, so that he could fire it along his line of sight, but to do so would destroy the propeller when the gun was fired. By experiment he found that steel plates fitted to the propellers would deflect the bullets which did not pass through the arc, and thus equipped he took to the air and shot down two German airplanes in two weeks in March 1915.

In April however an engine fault forced him to land behind German lines and his aircraft was captured before he had time to burn it.

A Dutchman Anthony Fokker, who was assisting the German Air Service with aeronautical design, was called to inspect it, and at once detected the innovation. He also recognised the principal Defect,



which was that prolonged use would shorten the propeller, and set about to design a better mechanism. He quickly produced a mechanical interrupter gear which checked the gun's firing when the blades were in front of the muzzle, and so provided the first weapon specifically adapted to aerial use. These, superior to any aircraft to any used by the Allies were not allowed to cross no man's land, but waited in their own front to attack any Allied airplane's which ventured into their airspace.

However, the second year of the war saw the development of aircraft types specifically designed for combat in all the existing air services.

Just about all planes were biplanes, their second passenger normally had a machine gun mounted and dropped hand bombs on troops and targets as ordered. There were numerous air battles once the Allies came on terms with the enemy with their aircraft. Many men died on both sides.

One such Australian that stood out among many was Robert Alexander Little, born in Hawthorn, Melbourne on the 17 July 1895 and was K.I.A. on the 27 May 1918. During his two years in the air he first joined 8 Squadron in England, he then joined the RNAS and finally he transferred to the 203 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

By then he had made Captain and finally he was promoted to the rank of Major. He was credited with having shot down 47 enemy planes before being killed himself.

It was considered in WW1 that if you shot down 5 Planes, you were credited as an Ace, Australia had quite a few, such as Major Little. He was married at the time and had a baby boy and following the war, his wife moved to Australia and raised their son in Australia as promised. Major Robert Alexander Little, RAF for his services to Britain during WW1 was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal (DSC) with Bar, the Distinguished Service Cross with Bar and the French Croix de Guerre with Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Australia at first did not recognise foreign medals given to Australians during the war. However, they later relinquished that decision and accepted the foreign medals and awards.

Australia had 77 such pilots classed as Aces, flying in different Squadrons for England numbering from 5 planes through to 39 which was achieved by Rodic Stanley Dallas from 40 Squadron RAF. The average flying time of a WW1 pilot was 69 hours.

However, when art of flight first entered WW1, Germany had the biggest strike power when they commenced it's Imperial Air Service in August 1914 and as a result when the air combat finally commenced in earnest they had a pilot named Baron Manfred von Richthofen, who flew a Fokker D.1 Fokker Triplane, coloured bright Red, except for the distinct markings of the German Black Crosses on the wings and sides of the plane, including the tail.

This man later became known as the "Red Baron" a flying Ace who shot down 80 aircraft. On the 21 April 1918 with 80 victories under his belt, he flew into Allied territory in pursuit of a British aircraft, however on this occasion he himself was being pursued by Lieutenant Arthur Roy Brown, a Canadian and a member of the RNAS. Brown was firing from the rear and on this occasion they were quite low to the ground. There is more to what happened as a result of this action on this day, which is mentioned in the following story about "The Red Baron" however, on this day it led to his death.

Baron von Richthofen only terrorised the skies for a little over 2 years before his death. He was born on the 2 May 1892 and died that fatal day on 21 April 1921.



Baron von Richthofen (The Red Baron) and his famous Red Triplane

In the skies over Vauz sur Somme, France, Manfred von Richthofen, the notorious German flying ace known as “The **Red Baron**,” is killed by Allied fire. ... The **Red Baron** was flying too near the ground and an Australian gunner shot him through his chest, and his **plane** crashed into a field alongside the road from Corbie to Bray. There is great conjecture actually who shot him down. However, he was shot through the chest which leads you to believe that the shot came from the ground.

The report from Australian intelligence officer Donald Fraser observes that Sgt. Cedric Popkin of an Australian anti-aircraft machine-gun company probably **fired** the **shot** that killed Manfred von Richthofen, the leading ace of **World War I**. He believes it was a lucky shot considering von Richthofen was some 400 feet up in the air. There is another story that the shot was fired from a .303 rifle that killed him.

Though a British documentary noted that Popkin should receive at least some credit for von Richthofen’s death, the Royal Air Force gave the credit to Canadian Pilot, Capt. Roy Brown, who pursued von Richthofen in the air.

There are numerous speculations as to who actually shot down the Red Baron, but by the trajectory of the wound through his chest, he was definitely shot from the ground..

Controversy and contradictory [hypotheses](#) continues to surround the identity of the person who fired the shot that actually killed Richthofen.

However, notwithstanding that, von Richthofen the enemy in WW1, just to mention some of the honours that were bestowed on him for his flying feats and skills in the air was the awarded: Prussian Iron Cross 2nd Class on the 12 September, 1914, Prussian Iron Cross 1st Class on the 23 September, 1914, Prussian Pour le Merite ("due Blaue Max") on the 12 January, 1917 (recognising 16 aerial victories), Prussian Order of the Red Eagle, 3rd Class with Crown and Sword (recognising his 70th aerial victory & many others from other countries aligned with Germany..

In common with most Allied air officers, Major Blake, who was responsible for Richthofen's body, regarded the Red Baron with great respect, and he organised a full military funeral, to be conducted by the personnel of No. 3 Squadron Australian Flying Corps.

The body was buried in the cemetery at the village of Bertangles, near Amiens, on 22 April 1918. Six of No. 3 Squadron's officers served as pallbearers, and a guard of honour from the squadron's other ranks fired a salute.

Allied squadrons stationed nearby presented memorial wreaths, one of which was inscribed with the words, "To Our Gallant and Worthy Foe".

A speculation that his opponents organised a flypast at his funeral, giving rise to the missing man formation is most unlikely and totally unsupported by any contemporary evidence.

In the early 1920s the French authorities created a military cemetery at Fricourt, in which a large number of German war dead, including Richthofen, were reinterred. In 1925 von Richthofen's youngest brother, Bolko, recovered the body from Fricourt and took it to Germany. The family's intention was for it to be buried in the Schweidnitz cemetery next to the graves of his father and his brother Lothar von Richthofen, who had been killed in a post-war air crash in 1922. The German Government requested that the body should instead be interred at the Invalidenfriedhof Cemetery in Berlin, where many German military heroes and past leaders were buried, and the family agreed. Richthofen's body received a state funeral. Later the Third Reich held a further grandiose memorial ceremony at the site of the grave, erecting a massive new tombstone engraved with the single word: Richthofen.

During the Cold War, the Invalidenfriedhof was on the boundary of the Soviet zone in Berlin, and the tombstone became damaged by bullets fired at attempted escapees from East Germany. In 1975 the body was moved to a Richthofen family grave plot at the Südfriedhof in Wiesbaden.

Many sources have suggested that Sergeant Cedric Popkin was the person most likely to have killed Richthofen, including a 1998 article by Geoffrey Miller, a physician and historian of military medicine, and a 2002 edition of the British Channel 4 *Secret History* series. Popkin was an anti-aircraft (AA) machine gunner with the Australian 24th Machine Gun Company, and he was using a Vickers gun.

He fired at Richthofen's aircraft on two occasions: first as the Baron was heading straight at his position, and then at long range from the plane's right. Given the nature of Richthofen's wounds, Popkin was in a position to fire the fatal shot when the pilot passed him for a second time.

The shot that hit von Richthofen hit him in the chest and side in an upward trajectory, therefore suggesting the fatal shot that brought his plane down came from the ground, it was believed that Sgt. Copkin who was a anti-aircraft (AA) machine gunner with the Australian 24th Machine Gun Company, and he was using a Vickers gun.

However, even though Britain mentioned Sgt Copkin in their report over the incident, they credited Lieutenant Arthur Roy Brown a Canadian Pilot who was a member of the Royal Naval Air Service with shooting "The Red Baron" down as he had chased him into the Allied Air Space and was behind him firing at him.

As stated previously, controversy and contradictory hypotheses continue to surround the identity of the person who fired the shot that actually killed Richthofen. There are many other suggestions by different historians but one cannot go past the fact that the trajectory of the bullet that killed von Richthofen.

If that was the case it was a lucky shot considering von Richthofen was approximately 400 feet (Approx. 121.6 metres) from the ground in the air.

As so many years have now passed I personally cannot see anyone coming up with a believable story to change what has been written and the accounts of what occurred considering all people involved have passed and there are no real documented evidence to prove differently
RJM

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A message from the Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Rick Burr AO, DSC, MVO to the Army:

COVID-19 is a serious challenge that will impact us in many ways. It is real, it is serious, and we all have an individual responsibility to act.

There are many things we will need to do, but first and foremost we must protect our people – you, your families – so that we can preserve our capability. We need to be fit to fight.

There is a lot of guidance and direction out there that we all need to follow. Put simply, your actions must demonstrate that we are all committed to stop the spread of this pandemic that is so threatening to our society. This virus does not discriminate, and the only way to reduce its spread is to strictly adhere to the direction given, which is regularly updated on the COVID-19 app the Government recently released. It is simple and it is clear and applies to everyone.

Across Army, and across Defence, we need to adjust to the new environment. We have a responsibility to continue to function within these necessary restrictions. On 31 March, the CDF released direction regarding ADF essential functions, social distancing measures and training. Subsequently, I have issued instructions to meet this direction and prepare the Army for an operation to assist the national effort to protect citizens against this threat.

I do not know the details of the tasks that Army will be asked to do in the coming weeks and months. Many of them will be different to the tasks you are specifically trained for. However, I am completely confident that you will step up, adapt to the problem, serve the nation with pride and selflessly support our communities during what will be difficult times.

The themes of Army in Motion and Good Soldiering should resonate with you as you perform these duties. This will be a tough time, and we will ask a lot of you and your family. So please, use the time that you have now wisely. Get yourself organised, help build family readiness and resilience and help your team become more ready to deal with these forthcoming challenges. Lead by your example and improve your confidence and capability to respond when needed. If you need help just ask. Your chain of command are here to support you. Working remotely will require innovation and self-discipline. Teams need to stay connected, learning needs to continue, the obligation to serve and be ready is undiminished - indeed it is ever more important. The nation and our communities associate the reassuring presence of our Army with safety, security and hope. It will be no different with COVID-19.

Thank you for all that you are doing. Look after your teams, your families and yourselves, Good Soldiering.

COVID-19 is a serious and rapidly evolving global challenge and will have profound impacts on Australia. The support to Australia during this time is Army's main priority.

This virus does not discriminate, and the only way to reduce its spread is to strictly adhere to the direction given. You can access regular updates on the official government "Coronavirus Australia" app on the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play Store](#).

We urge everybody to stay informed of the risks, symptoms and the process for testing and reporting. If you suspect you have been exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms, call the national COVID-19 hotline on 1800 020 080. Immediately isolate yourself and help protect others. On Wednesday 1 April, the establishment of Operation COVID-19 Assist was [announced](#). Army's efforts to support the COVID-19 response builds on the extraordinary efforts and courage of first responders, maintenance specialists, border force agents and others. Our people are a part of the joint Defence response and will support Government and local communities, Industry partners and many others.

This is Army at its best. Stepping up to help others, to contribute in unique ways, to reassure and protect.

THE FATE OF HMAS SYDNEY (11) DURING WW2 AND THE EVENTUAL FIND OF THE WRECK

HMAS SYDNEY (11) was originally purchased from England in 1933 and was originally named HMS PHETON. However, in 1934 when launched by Australia its name was changed to HMAS SYDNEY (11) after HMAS SYDNEY (1) following that ship's battle in destroying the German Cruiser EMDEN in 1914. Following two successful missions and returning to Australia, on the 11 November 1941 (Armistice Day) HMAS Sydney(11) left Fremantle under the command of Captain J Burnett RAN and escorted the British cruiser HMS DURBAN for the last leg of the voyage to Singapore without incident and at noon on the 17 November 1941, ZEALANDIA was turned over to HMS DURBAN and then *Sydney* turned homeward for Fremantle where she was expected to arrive on the afternoon on the 20 November 1941.



View of the Starboard side of the HMAS Sydney (11)

She did not arrive as expected and the District Naval Officer, Western Australia reported it to the Naval Board accordingly that *Sydney* was overdue, however the Naval Board was not over concerned as they had been advised that the ZEALANDIA had arrived later than expected and it was assumed that *Sydney* has been delayed as well.

There was also the possibility that she had diverted for another purpose and had not broken radio silence. When however, she had not returned by the 23 November, she was instructed by the Naval Board to report by signal, however there was no reply.

From 24 November, after *Sydney* failed to return to port however, the District Naval Officer reported it to the Naval Board. It was at this time that the Naval Board of Western Australia commenced first air and sea searches to be conducted. Boats and rafts carrying survivors from HSK *Kormoran* were recovered at sea, while others made landfall north of Carnarvon: 318 of the 399 personnel on *Kormoran* survived. While debris from *Sydney* was found, there were no survivors from the 645-strong complement. It was the largest loss of life in the history of the Royal Australian Navy, the largest Allied warship lost with all hands during World War II, and a major blow to Australian wartime morale.

Australian authorities learned of *Sydney*'s fate from the surviving *Kormoran* personnel, who were held in prisoner of war camps until the end of the war. The exact location of the two wrecks remained unverified until 2008.

The battle between the Australian light cruiser HMAS *Sydney* (11) and the German auxiliary cruiser *HSK Kormoran* was a single-ship action that occurred on 19 November 1941, off the coast of Western Australia. *Sydney* with Captain Joseph Burnett commanding, and the *Kormoran*, under *Fregattenkapitän* Theodor Detmers, encountered each other approximately 106 nautical miles (196 km; 122 miles) off Dirk Hartog Island. Both ships were destroyed in the half-hour engagement.

Controversy has often surrounded the battle, especially in the years before the two wrecks were located in 2008. How and why a purpose-built warship like *Sydney* was defeated by a modified merchant vessel *Kormoran* was the subject of speculation, with numerous books on the subject, as well as two official reports by government inquiries, published in 1999 and 2009 respectively. On 19 November, shortly before 16:00, *Kormoran* was 150 nautical miles (280 km; 170 mi) southwest of Carnarvon, Western Australia. The raider was sailing northwards (heading 025°) at 11 knots (20 km/h; 13 mph). At 15:55, what was initially thought to be a tall ship sail was sighted off the port bow, although it was quickly determined to be the mast of a warship *Sydney*. Detmers ordered *Kormoran* to alter course into the sun (heading 260°) at maximum achievable speed (which quickly dropped from 15 to 14 knots (28 to 26 km/h; 17 to 16 mph) because of problems in one of her diesel engines), while setting the ship to action stations. *Sydney* spotted the German ship around the same time, and altered from her southward heading to intercept at 25 knots (46 km/h; 29 mph). As she closed the gap, the Australian cruiser requested that *Kormoran* identify herself. Communications were initially attempted with a signal lamp to repeatedly send "NNJ" ("You should make your signal letters"), but those aboard the raider did not understand the uncommonly used signal and did not respond. *Sydney* continued to signal for 30 minutes, after which those aboard the cruiser used flags to send the more common "VH" signal ("You should hoist your signal letters"), while the signal lamp was used to transmit the message in plain language. After another delay, *Kormoran* raised "PKQI"—the call-sign for the Dutch merchant ship *Straat Malakka*—on the triatic stay and hoisted a Dutch merchant ensign. As *Sydney* was approaching from just starboard of *Kormoran*'s stern and 15,000 metres (49,000 feet) away, the call-sign was obscured by the raider's funnel: German accounts vary as to if this was to further the illusion of a civilian ship, a ruse to lure *Sydney* closer, or an error on the signaller's part. *Sydney* signalled "Make your signal letters clear", which the signals officer aboard *Kormoran* did by lengthening the halyard and swinging it around to starboard. By 16:35, with *Sydney* 8,000 metres (26,000 feet) away, the malfunctioning engine aboard *Kormoran* was repaired, but Detmers chose to keep it in reserve.

After the torpedo strike, *Sydney* turned hard to port: the Germans assumed that the Australian ship was trying to ram them, but the cruiser passed aft. During the turn, the 10th German salvo tore the roof from "B" turret and destroyed "A" turret's housing. The main phase of the engagement ended around 17:35, with *Sydney* heading south and slowing, while *Kormoran* maintained her course and speed. *Sydney*'s main armament was completely disabled (the forward turrets were damaged or destroyed, while the aft turrets were jammed facing port, away from *Kormoran*), and her secondary weapons were out caused *Kormoran*'s engines to fail completely, leaving the raider dead in the water while *Sydney* continued to sail southwards at low speed. *Kormoran* maintained a high rate of fire despite being immobilised—some sailors claimed that up to 450 shells were used during the second phase of the battle—and scored hits on the cruiser, although many shells missed as the range increased. The raider fired her guns for the last time around 17:50, with the range at 6,600 yards (6,000 m), and a torpedo was launched at 18:00, but missed *Sydney*. By the end of the 30-minute battle, the ships were about 10,000 metres (33,000 feet) apart: both were heavily damaged and on fire.

Sydney was proceeding on a south-south-east bearing, apparently not under control. The Australian warship quickly disappeared from German sight, although the glow of the burning ship consistently lit the horizon until 22:00, with some German survivors stating that the light was visible consistently or occasionally until midnight. *Sydney* sank during the night; it was originally thought that the cruiser exploded when fires reached the shell magazines or torpedo launchers, or took on water through the shellholes on her port side and capsized. However, after the wrecks were located, it was determined that *Sydney* was under limited control after the battle, maintaining a course of 130–140 degrees true at speeds of 1.5 knots (2.8 km/h; 1.7 mph). The ship remained afloat for up to four hours before the bow tore off and dropped almost vertically under the weight of the anchors and chains. The rest of the ship sank shortly afterward, and glided upright for 500 metres (1,600 feet) underwater until it hit the seabed stern-first.

Kormoran was stationary, and at 18:25, Detmers ordered the ship to be abandoned, as damage to the raider's engine room had knocked out the fire-fighting systems, and there was no way to control or contain the oil fire before it reached the magazines or the mine hold. All boats and life rafts were launched by 21:00, and all but one filled: a skeleton crew manned the weapons while the officers prepared to scuttle the ship. *Kormoran* was abandoned at midnight; the ship sank slowly until the mine hold exploded 30 minutes later. The German survivors were in five boats and two rafts: one cutter carrying 46 men, two damaged steel life rafts with 57 and 62 aboard (the latter carrying Detmers and towing several small floats), one workboat carrying 72 people, one boat with 31 men aboard, and two rafts, each bearing 26 sailors. During the evacuation, a rubber life raft carrying 60 people, mostly wounded, sank without warning; drowning all but three aboard.

Sydney asked *Kormoran* "Where bound?" to which the raider responded "Batavia". *Sydney* may have then made signals asking for the raider's port of origin and cargo; the Germans who claimed they said these replies were "Fremantle" and "Peace-goods" respectively. At around 17:00, Detmers instructed his wireless operators to send a false distress signal indicating that *Straat Malakka* was being approached by a suspicious ship.

The message, transmitted at 17:03 and repeated at 17:05, contained the distress call for a merchantman under attack from a raider instead of a warship (QQQQ, as opposed to RRRR), the latitude and longitude of the transmitting ship, the time per Greenwich Mean Time (normal practice was to transmit local time; using GMT was to let the *Kriegsmarine* know that the ship was actually a raider about to be lost), and the ship's name. This signal was partially received by the tugboat *Uco* ("QQQQ [unintelligible] 1000 GMT") and a shore station at Geraldton ("[unintelligible] 7C 11115E 1000 GMT"). The Geraldton station broadcast a message to all ships asking if there was anything to report (which was interpreted by the Germans as acknowledgement of their signal), but after no response was forthcoming, ignored it until a report on the signal was forwarded to the Naval Board on 27 November.



Port view of HSK *Kormoran* from a German U-boat in 1940

During the exchanges and distress signal, *Sydney* positioned herself just off the raider's starboard beam on a parallel course, approximately 1,300 metres (4,300 feet) from *Kormoran*. The cruiser may or may not have been at action stations: the main guns and port torpedo launcher were trained on *Kormoran* and her Walrus scout plane had been readied for launch, prompting Detmers to prepare to engage *Sydney*, but her 4-inch (100 mm) guns were unmanned, and personnel were standing on the upper deck. During her manoeuvre, *Sydney* appeared to signal "IK" (the short-form for "You should prepare for a cyclone, hurricane, or typhoon"), which *Kormoran* did not respond to, as from their perspective, such a signal did not make sense. The Germans were unaware that the letters were the interior of the real *Straat Malakka*'s secret call sign, "IIKP": to verify her identity, the ship had to signal back the outer letters.

The aircraft was shut down by 17:25, and the catapult swung into the storage position; the two ships were too close for a safe launch. At around 17:30, after the raider had failed to reply for 15 minutes, *Sydney* signalled by light "Show your secret sign"; Detmers knew that *Kormoran* was in trouble.

In response to the cruiser's signal, Detmers ordered that *Kormoran's* disguise be dropped, for the Dutch flag to be replaced by the *Kriegsmarine* ensign, and for the guns and torpedoes to open fire. **Accounts disagree on which ship fired first, but agree that both opened fire almost simultaneously.**

The cruiser was wreathed in smoke from fires burning in the engine room and forward superstructure, and around the aircraft catapult. *Kormoran* discontinued salvo firing, but the individually firing aft guns scored hits as *Sydney* crossed the raider's stern. At around 17:45, *Sydney* fired two torpedoes from her starboard tubes (although some Germans reported more). Prior to the torpedo launch, Detmers had decided to destroy *Sydney* completely and ordered the raider to turn to port so four-gun salvos could be fired: this manoeuvre caused the torpedoes to pass astern of *Kormoran*. After completing the turn, the first shots from *Sydney*, a full, eight-shell salvo from the main guns, were reported in most accounts to have passed over *Kormoran*, although some of the Germans said that shells punched through the funnel and the wireless office at bridge level without exploding, and hit the water on the far side of the raider, not causing any battle damage.

One analysis claims that this was either a warning shot just over the superstructure, or an attempt to destroy the raider's bridge as a prelude to capture. With *Kormoran's* opening salvo (which consisted of two shells instead of four because the raider's two centreline guns were slower to decamouflage), the gunnery officer attempted to bracket the cruiser's bridge but failed to hit it, with two torpedoes from *Kormoran's* starboard above-water tubes were launched simultaneously with the raider's attack, and the close proximity of the target allowed the use of the anti-aircraft and close defence guns to rake *Sydney's* flank, thus preventing the use of the cruiser's secondary weapons.

Subsequent salvos from the raider were more accurate. The second, three-shell salvo destroyed *Sydney's* bridge and damaged her upper superstructure, including the gun direction control tower, wireless offices, and foremast. The fourth 15-centimetre (5.9 in) gun was ready by this time, and all four began to fire: the third and fourth salvos knocked the cruiser's "A" and "B" turrets out of action before they could fire a second time, and the fifth hit *Sydney* on the waterline in proximity to the forward engine room, although one shell hit high and destroyed the *Walrus*. *Kormoran's* guns were aimed at *Sydney's* waterline and upper deck during the next three salvos. After the sixth German salvo, *Sydney* resumed fire with her aft turrets: "Y" turret fired less than four times with little effect, but multiple shots from "X" turret struck *Kormoran*, damaging the raider's machinery spaces, wounding the sailors manning one of the guns, starting a fire in an oil tank. Around the time of the eighth or ninth German salvo, one of the two torpedoes fired at the start of the engagement struck *Sydney* just forward of "A" turret and near the asdic compartment (the weakest point on the ship's hull), ripping a hole in the side and causing the bow of the cruiser to angle down of range.

Total German casualties were six officers, 75 German sailors, and one Chinese laundryman. According to German accounts—which were assessed as truthful and generally accurate by Australian interrogators during the war, as well as most subsequent analyses - *Sydney* approached so close to *Kormoran* that the Australian cruiser lost the advantages of heavier armour and superior gun range. Nevertheless, several post-war publications have alleged that *Sydney* loss had been the subject of an extensive cover-up, by the Germans as they had not followed the laws of war.

David Mearns and Internationally renowned shipwreck investigator who has discovered many shipwrecks throughout his career including the *MHS HOOD*. Was provided with 4.2 million dollars in Commonwealth funding, together with funding from the NSW and WA governments, as well as private donations for his attempt to locate *HMAS Sydney (11)*.

Part of his investigation started in Germany where he spoke to several of the remaining crew members of *the Kormoran*, viewed many records concerning the battle.

Then the *SV GEOSOUNDER* was chartered for the search of the Western Australian Coastline for the *Sydney*. Following an intense search in using a set pattern which commenced on the 29 February, 2008 firstly he found the wreck of the *Kormoran* off the WA coast in 2560 metres of water. Using the *Kormoran's* position to localise the search area the team discovered the *HMAS Sydney (11)* on Sunday the 16 March 2008 in 2468 metres of water.

The find was officially announced by Australia's Prime Minister of the time Kevin Rudd. There was a low keyed ceremony aboard *HMAS ANZAC* over the site of the *HMAS SYDNEY (11)* and *HSK KORMORAN* with a number of relatives of those who perished on board on the 16 April 2008

There was a further National Memorial Service to commemorate the Ship's Company of *HMAS Sydney* (all 645 crew members) at St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney on Thursday the 24 April 2008.

Relatives of the Ship's Company who registered via the web site or the 1800 number were sent invitations to the Service.

HMAS Sydney (11) was a modified Leander Class Light Cruiser. It's Displacement was 6,830 Tons. Its length was 562 feet 3 inches. The Beam was 57 feet. It was built in England and laid down on the 8 July 1933 (as *HMS PHAETON*) It was launched on the 22 September 1934 as *HMAS SYDNEY (11)*) by Mrs. Bruce, wife of the Australian High Commissioner, United Kingdom.

Its Horsepower was 72,000 with a speed of 32.5 knots. Its Armament was 8 x 6 inch guns, 4 by 4 inch guns, 3 by 5 inch machine guns, 12 x .303 inch Lewis Guns and 8 x 21 inch torpedo tubes (in quadruple mounts) with a Compliment of 645 crew members.

THIS WAS THE WAR (WW2)

“Japanese bomb Sydney,” grinned the Jap guard while we were working on the Burma Railway as prisoners –of-war. “Harbour Bridge all gone,” added the guard. “Bombs hit middle pylon.”

The middle pylon we thought? We grinned to ourselves. Then my mate said to the guard, “I suppose Phar Lap has gone, too?”

“Phar Lap bombed ~~ all finished,” said the Jap.

A. E. EWERS (WW2)

(READERS JUST FOR YOUR INFORMATION IN CASE YOU NEVER KNEW, AUSTRALIA’S GREAT THOROGGBRED PHAR LAP DIED IN THE ARMS OF HIS BELOVEDSTABLE HANDLER TOMMY WOODCOCK ON THE 5TH APRIL 1932 IN SAN FRANCISCO USA)

After completing our tour of duty on the Pacific Islands we were being returned home and were eager to buy American cigarettes to take to the folks back home, but an order was posted restricting us to two cartons. We muttered a bit, but naturally, that was the order. We just had to become philosophical about it.

Until the “Black Day” when we were ready to embark, and the word went around that one of the officers had filed a suitcase with cartons.

By some strange quirk of fate, all the gear was safely loaded aboard the boats except for this one suitcase, which, by accident , was somehow dropped in the tide.

Deep water it was too, at that particular spot, far too deep for salvage, if there had been anything worth salvaging.

David Bruce HOCKEY ~ ARMY ~ 08/06/2019
Jon Rutledge HANDLEY ~ RAAF ~ 25/12/2019

Lest we forget

**THE Mexican Maid:**

The Mexican maid asked for a pay increase. The wife was very upset about this, and decided to talk to her about the raise. “Now Maria, why do you want a pay increase?”

Maria replied, “Well, Senora there are tree reasons why I wanna pay increase. The first is I iron better than you.”

Wife, “Who said you iron better than me?”

Maria said, “Jor huzban he say so.”

Wife, “Oh yeah?”

Maria, “The second reason eez he say that I am a better cook than you.”

Wife, “Nonsense, who said you were a better cook than me?”

Maria, “Jor hozban did.”

Wife, increasing agitated; “Oh he did, did he?”

Maria said ”The third reason is that I am better at sex than you in bed”

Wife: really boiling now and through her gritted teeth said “And did my husband say that as well?”

Maria said, “No Senora...the Gardener did.”

Wife: “So, how much do you think would be fair?”

THE ULTIMATE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

Dear Sir,

I am writing in response to your request for additional information. In block number 3 of the reporting form, I put quote-poor-planning-unquote as the cause my accident. You said in you letter that I should explain more fully and I trust the following details will be sufficient.

I was a bricklayer by trade. On the day of the accident, I was working alone on the roof of a new six story building. When I completed my work, I discovered that I had about 200kg of brick left over. Rather than carry the bricks down by hand, I decided to lower them in a barrel by using a pulley which, fortunately, was attached to the side of the building at the sixth floor. After securing the rope at ground level, I went up to the roof, swung the barrel over, and loaded the bricks into it. Then I went back to the ground, untied the rope and held it tightly to ensure a slow decent for the 200kg of bricks. You will note in block number 11 of the accident form that I weigh only 90kg.

Due to my surprise of being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope. Needless to say, I proceeded at a rapid rate up the side of the building and in the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming down. This explains the fractured skull and broken collarbone.

After this contact with the barrel, it slowed only slightly, however I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were two-knuckles deep into the pulley. Fortunately, by this time I had regained by presence of mind and was able to hold tightly to the rope in spite of my pain.

At approximately the same time, however, the barrel of bricks hit the ground and the bottom fell out of the barrel. Devoid of the weight of the bricks, the barrel now weighed approximately 20kg. I refer you again to my weight in block number 11. As you might imagine, I began a rapid decent down the side of the building. In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming up. This accounts for the two fractured ankles and the lacerations to my legs and lower body. The encounter with the barrel slowed me enough to lesson the injuries when I fell onto the pile of bricks and, fortunately, only three vertebrae were cracked.

I am sorry to report, however, that as I lay there on the bricks-in pain, unable to stand, and watching the empty barrel six stories above me-I lost my presence of mind and **I LET GO OF THE ROPE.**



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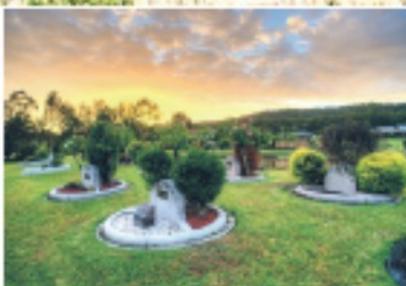


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