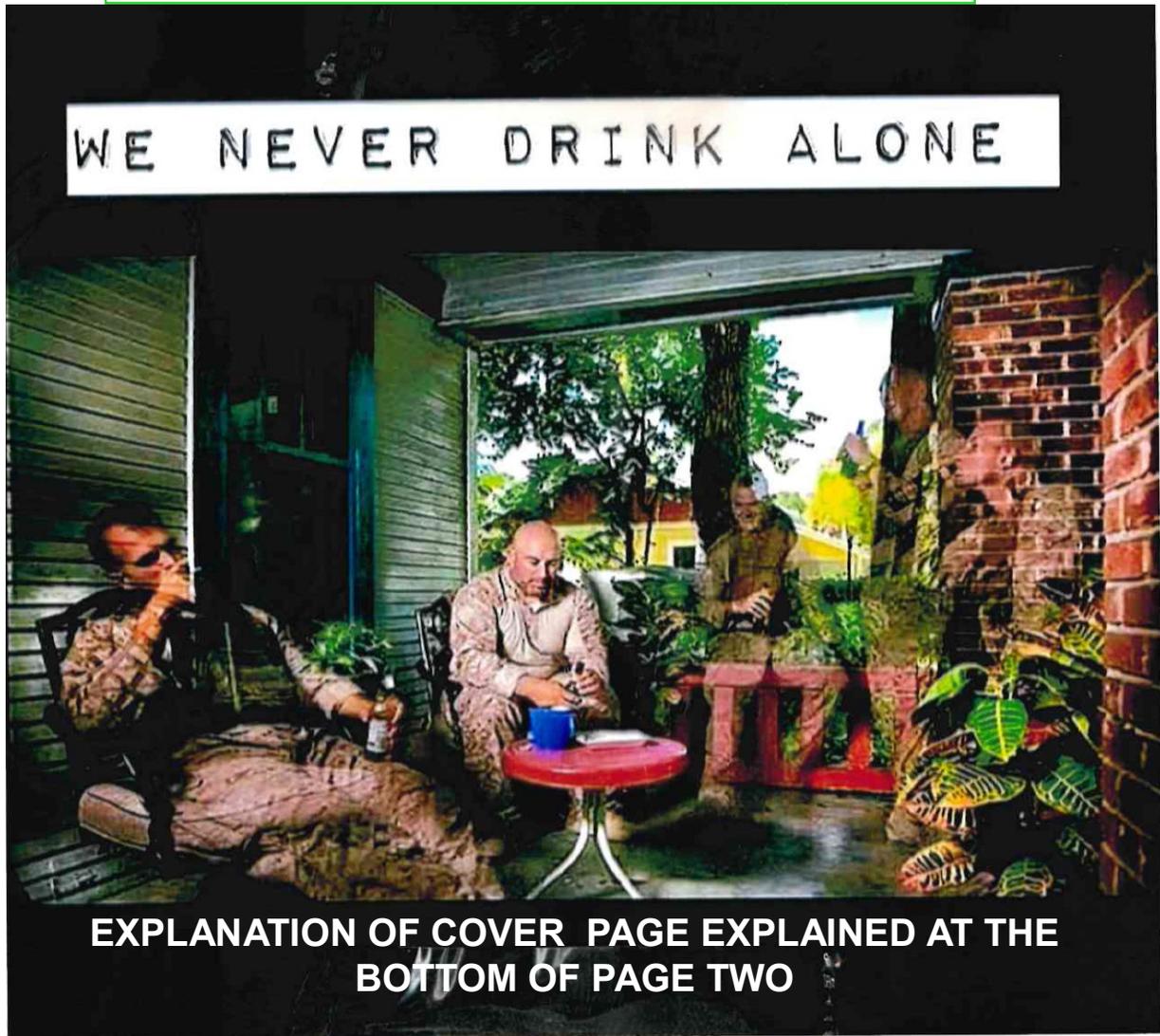


Keeping in Touch

SPRING 2017



MEM-

BERS

WELFARE/SOCIAL FUNCTION ~ Page 3
ON THE LIGHTER SIDE OF MILNE BAY ~ 1942 ~ Page 12 to 16
THE "NACHTHEREN" OR "NIGHT WITCHES" OF WW2 ~ Pages 25 to 28



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Keeping in Touch

From the president's desk...

The year is coming to a close rather quickly. Before we know it; it will be 2018.

In August 2017 I celebrated Vietnam Veterans Day with my mates with whom I served with in Vietnam 1969-70 in Victoria at Phillip Island. The next stop past there was the Antarctic. and the wind of an evening blew as if we were there.

We had our normal Saturday night dinner with all who attended (which included wives and/or partners) and 2 former Lieutenants of our era were in attendance Mick Wolan and his wife Jenny as well as His Excellency The Governor General Sir Peter Cosgrove and his wife Lynne. All enjoyed themselves at the dinner.



The following day we headed out to the Vietnam Veterans Museum where Peter and Lyn uncovered a plaque dedicated to those who served in the Defence and Employment (D & E) Platoon from its inception in 1965 until they were disbanded in 1971. This was done in the Remembrance Garden of the Museum. We then did a tour of the museum it was like going back in time, everything on show was from the Vietnam era. I identified one of the Centurian Tanks that I worked with in Vietnam that was called "The Widow Maker" ~ which was clearly painted on the barrel. Another tank I remember was called "The Birth Controller", I believe that is in Queensland. The Museum is well worth a visit, however I suggest the warmer months would be the time to do it unless you really like a cold fix.

I must admit it is very enjoyable catching up with my mates of yesteryear as we are not getting any younger.

On Saturday the 19th August with my wife Val, I attended the official Newcastle Vietnam's Day where the commemoration took place in Civic Park. I laid a wreath on behalf of our sub-Branch at the Vietnam Cenotaph.

Later that evening I along with Val and The President of Newcastle District Council David Edmond and his partner Christine attended the Vietnam Veterans Dinner Dance at the Wallsend Digger Club. During the evening The President of Newcastle District Council David Edmond and I presented to Kerry Wollard a RSL shield for all the work she had done as a member of the Department of Veteran Affairs and especially as a member of the Veterans Network Office at Newcastle where she assisted many veterans in their claims or steered them in the right direction.

The Newcastle Vietnam Veterans also presented Kerry with a gift and plaque for all the loyal years she had given to the veterans. Kerry was quite moved and surprised by the presentations and the fuss we made over her for all her years work she Kerry had done for the Veterans in and about the Newcastle area.

I apologise for this edition of Keeping in Touch being a couple of week late in print as we have been quite busy during the previous month, what with a number of RSL Eulogies following the deaths of some of our WW2 Veterans, preparations for Remembrance Day and all the matters going on with RSL (NSW) Statae Branch with the (mini commission) called the Burgin Inquiry. All sub Branches have been banned from obtaining any types of Poppies/Badges and the like for sale to the Public until the inquiry is finished.

The date we have been given for the inquiry to finish is February 2018, but then how long is a piece of string.

All I can say is watch this space.

Other than that our sub-Branch is still running along on the tracks quite smoothly and we can only but apologise for the situation at hand coming out of State Branch but hang in there with us as I can assure you we at the Toronto RSL sub-Branch are squeaky clean. **(I am saying that with fingers crossed and tongue in cheek)** However in saying that, our sub-Branch has been Audited by State Branch previously and we got a clean bill of health except for, a Key Book and a certain Insurance Policy, which are now all in place.

In finishing my report on behalf of the Executive and the Committee we all wish you the members and your families a Merry Christmas and hope that Santa brings you what you wish for and also a Healthy and Prosperous New Year in 2018.

That's it for me in this issue. Trusting you all stay upright, out of Doctors Surgeries and out of Hospitals.

*******COVER PHOTOGRAPH*******

SHADOWS IN THE WALL

HAUNTED BY THE PAST

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

DEPRESSION/ANXIETY



MERRY



CHRISTMAS

To all our veterans, ex-service members, their wives/partners and family ~ The executive, committee and staff of the Toronto RSL sub-Branch wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year.

NOW ~ Hear Ye, Hear Ye, Hear ye

On Wednesday the 13 December 2017, arrival 10.45am for 11.00am seating for 12.15pm luncheon we have set a Welfare/Social Function for our Members, Wives and/or Partners with a 3 course meal.

Commencing with entrée of Satay Chicken Skewers or Prawn Cocktail alternatively served, main meal Barramundi Fillet or Rosemary Lamb Rack alternatively served and finally Vanilla Bean Brulee or Strawberry Panna Cotta again alternatively served, all washed down with a couple of free refreshments and/or coffee or tea for those who choose same. Come along and enjoy the company of your fellow members together with wives and/or partners. *Entertainment ~50' to 80' Rock & Roll ~ Country* *Music Starts 11.00am.*

A reasonable cost has been worked out at \$10.00 per head with your sub-Branch picking up the difference under our Welfare/Social package.

ANY SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS CATERED FOR ~ PLEASE INFORM THE SUB BRANCH AT THE TIME OF BOOKING

Numbers and money to be paid by 1st December 2017 as the caterers need to have the numbers for stock reasons.

PLEASE NOTE: OPEN TO MEMBERS ONLY OF THE TORONTO RSL SUB-BRANCH WITH THEIR WIVES/PARTNERS

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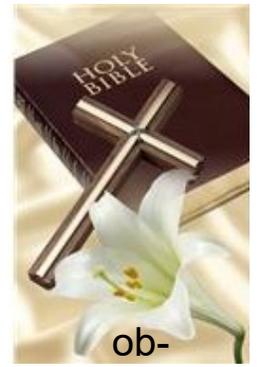
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BINGO

Every Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday
@ 11.00am Books on sale @ 10.30am

Toronto Diggers

CHAPLAINS CORNER



Keeping in Touch Oct ~ Dec 2017

On the second of November each year, the church celebrates All Souls' Day; the day we remember those we have known and loved who have died. It's interesting to note that since 1918, we serve another remembrance, only a few days later ... the signing of the Armistice on November 11th at 11.00am bringing about the end of World War One. Since then Armistice Day/ Remembrance Day has given us the opportunity to give thanks for peace and to remember not only those who died in World war One but all who have died in military conflict since then.

So why do we remember them?

The answer for All Souls' Day; the first memorial day in November is simple – these are people we have known, people we have loved, people who've influenced our lives, people who've taught us how to be the best people we can be... they've shared in our lives and made a difference in our lives.

So what about Armistice Day/ Remembrance Day, the second memorial day in November? The armistice we commemorate happened 99 years ago this year... so what on earth has it to do with us? How do the people who died back then affect us? Why do they affect us? What is the point of this remembering?

Well like those we've known and loved and remember on All Soul's Day; the ones we honour on Remembrance Day have done something for us... they forfeited their lives, their health, their relationships, their futures to offer us the opportunity to have better prospects. They made huge sacrifices – they left family, friends, home, work; everything of the life they knew, the life they expected and went into the unknown... and experienced the horror that is war... and so many did not return... and those that did returned either physically or mentally broken... or both; in fact, most likely both.

The ones who went away to World War One and all those who have left home and family to serve their country since, have also, potentially, had a great influence on our lives. By their example we've been shown how to live lives that are not simply about our own needs and wants, but lives that take into account the needs of others. Whether we knew them or not and if we are willing, we can allow them and their sacrifices, to make a difference to our lives.

If they could speak to us now, I wonder what they might want to share with us?

Remember Me(The voice of the dead)

Remember me

*Duty called and I went to war
Though I'd never fired a gun before
I paid the price for your new day
As all my dreams were blown away*

Remember me

*We all stood true as whistles blew
And faced the shell and stench of Hell
Now battle's done, there is no sound
Our bones decay beneath the ground
We cannot see, or smell, or hear
There is no death, or hope or fear*

Remember me

*Once we, like you, would laugh and talk
And run and walk and do the things that you all do
But now we lie in rows so neat
Beneath the soil, beneath your feet*

Remember me

*In mud and gore and the blood of war
We fought and fell and move no more
Remember me, I am not dead
I'm just a voice within your head*

As we remember them yet again this year; the difference they've made to our world and our lives are the things we should hold at the forefront of our minds as we remember them. But more than that we ought to ensure that our lives are lived differently because of the sacrifices they made.

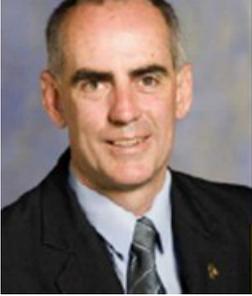
So what is this remembering time in November about?

It's about knowing that those before us have given us something to aspire to: lives lived better in recognition of the gift they've given to us.

Blessings ~ Rev. Julie

Phone: 4959 8108

Email: rev.julie@bigpond.com



Greg Piper MP

Member for Lake Macquarie



One hundred years ago from July 31 to Nov 6 the Third Battle of Ypres – Passchendaele, was valiantly fought. Intended to be the major breakthrough in Flanders, Allied progress was slowed by terrible mud. The British Expeditionary Force suffered some 310,000 casualties, the Germans 260,000.

One local was killed in action on 23 October 1917 in Ypres, Belgium. Lance Corporal Frederick Walter Ball from Boolaroo was a locomotive fireman with the NSW railways prior to his enlistment in the army. His father and step-mother, who lived at Creek Reserve Road, were required to consent to his enlistment as he was aged under 21.

Fred served with B Company in the 30th Battalion and sailed overseas on the HMAT Beltana on 9 November 1915. Fred was only 22 years old when he was killed. Lest We Forget.

On other local matters, and as you may have read or heard in the news, the EPA is investigating the extent of soil and possible groundwater contamination around the old Mines Rescue station at Argenton.

The contamination is caused by PFAS chemicals which were used on the site prior to 2002 when firefighting foam was used in training exercises.

It's important to note that the EPA and NSW Health say there is no consistent evidence that this contamination has an effect on human health, but that is not to say we should be complacent.

The investigation has been ongoing over the past month. A final report, due out soon, will determine the extent of the contamination. If you'd like a copy of the report when it's released, please contact my office.

This is the same contamination issue relating to the Williamtown air base and surrounding districts, but the situation at Argenton is different, mainly because no groundwater is used by bores at Argenton homes or used to water food crops.

I've made representations to Environment Minister Gabrielle Upton and she has assured me I'll be kept up to date throughout the investigation period.

Finally, I look forward to catching up with many of you on November 11 to commemorate the end of WWI, 99 years ago.

Regards



[facebook.com/GregPiper1MP](https://www.facebook.com/GregPiper1MP)
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BLONDES AGAIN: A blonde teenager wanting to earn some extra money for the summer, decided to hire herself out as a 'handy women'. She started canvassing a nearby well to do neighbourhood. She went to the front door of the first house and asked the owner if he had any odd jobs for her to do.

"Well I guess I could use someone to paint my porch," he said, "How much will you charge me?" Delighted, the girl quickly responded. "How about \$50?" The man agreed and told her that the paint brushes and everything she would need were in the garage.

The man's wife hearing the conversation said to her husband, "Does she realise that our porch goes ALL the way around the house?" He responded, "That's a bit cynical. isn't it?" The wife replied, "You're right, 'I guess I'm starting to believe all those dumb blonde jokes we've been getting by email lately."

Later that day the blonde teenager came to the door to collect her money. "You're finished already?" the startled husband asked.

"Yes," she replied, "and I even had paint left over, so I gave it two coats."

Impressed the man reached into his pocket for the \$50.00 and handed it to her along with a \$10.00 tip.

"And by the way," the teenager added, "It's not a Porch, it's a Lexus."



Nasho's News

Westlake Macquarie
National Servicemen's Association



Greetings all this quarter there is not much to report ,Myself, Gordon along with Janice and Keven attended the AGM of the State Branch, sadly there were many sub branch's not attending this year though it was good to see those you only get to see once a year.

Not much was raised and the committee was return for a further year, and monies were paid to the breakaway group by court ruling if I recall correctly it is a matter of we just keep going for another year and dam the break-aways.

The Quarterly meeting of the hunter groups took place at Toukley attended by committee members ,the usual discussions were held and again nothing to report from this except we are holding the next Quarterly at Toronto.

My wife and i attended the 20th birthday of the Gosford branch a service was held at the Memorial followed by a dinner at the Leagues Club , how time has flown since myself and another Andrew started the ball rolling to form this sub branch took long hard work and it is gratifying to see that it has a large membership along with the wives and many different outings and trips are done ,it seems trips away on cruise lines is a favourite with them.

Also a Sausage sizzle was held for the TLKALESCO school for the students ,a small school with children from disadvantaged families and with other problems ,it went well and wish to thank those members that assisted on the day, sadly their BBQ was missing a set of burners along with a couple of other problems and Gordon kindly purchased a replacement which we picked up from Salamander Bay ,again a much deserved thanks Gordon from myself and the school .The students were over the moon with the surprise and many of the girls sat talking to Janet and Rhonda ,this surprised even the teachers as some of the children are withdrawn when in company again thank you all who gave of their time .

You will all be notified of what is happening re Christmas gathering for the sub branch and I ask on States behalf that all FEES are paid in by December 2017 as this helps them with their budget, fees were still being paid on the day of the AGM by some groups and members, Please see Des and pay him before the Christmas break.

That is about all, I ask you all to take a moment and think of Bruce and his family due to their sad loss of a daughter.

Merry Christmas, and a happy new year to all, be sure to let all your friends know IT is Christmas NOT a happy Holiday this is one we will not lose to the PC correct brigade, and YES still doing Santa



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In another Life

We nearly all know that 'Our Beloved Leader' (OBL), in another life was involved with the New South Wales Constabulary. But, did you know that at one stage he was seconded to the "Stock Squad"? The "SS".

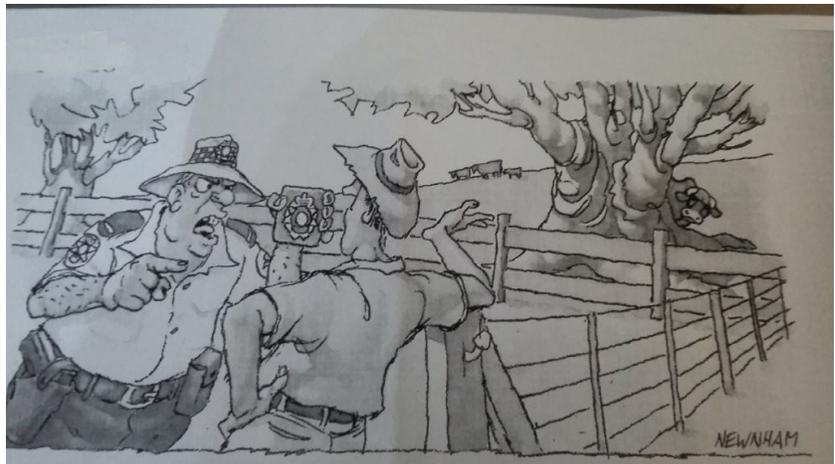
The SS was established to track down & arrest the cattle & sheep rustlers, duffers, of the great wide, wild-west of this state.

The members of the "SS" in the main, were solid individuals and their presence greatly appreciated by the settlers & squatters. But, they were in many cases a bit short at time with tempers & too big for their boots. Not to say that this description fits OBL.

However, the story goes that one day he arrived at a property armed with a search warrant to search for stolen cattle. He explained this to the cocky having smoko on the veranda of the homestead who said " OK but you better not go into that paddock over there."

This riled OBL. "Mate, I'm a Police Officer and I have the authority of the Government with me, exploded OBL, reaching into his pocket, he jerked out his badge and jammed it into the Cockey's face.

"See this badge? This badge means I'm allowed to go anywhere I want on this or any land. No questions asked? And no answers given. Do I make myself clear?"



The cocky nodded and off went OBL, not long after the cocky heard some god almighty screaming coming from that paddock he told OBL not to go into. He jumped into the Ute and drove over to the fence to find OBL running madly from a huge Santa Gertrudis bull.

The cocky climbed onto the fence and yelled, "Show him your badge, show him your bloody badge."

One day a **Blonde** walks into a doctors office with both ears burnt. The doctor asks her what had happened. She said, "Well....I was ironing my work suit the phone rang and I mistakenly picked up the iron in stead of the phone," The doctor said, "Well that explains one ear, but what about

HEROICS RECALLED AT EXHIBIT

AN EXHIBITION focusing on ships and their crews lost off Indonesia in World War 11 opened in Sydney last month. The Australian National Maritime Museum's exhibition 'Guardians of Sunda Strait ~ the WW11 loss of *HMAS Perth* and *USS Houston*', is the result of considerable collaboration between governments.

Perth 1 was lost in company with *Houston* during the battle of Sunda Strait against the Imperial Japanese Navy on the night of February 28, 1942, off the coast of Indonesia.

United States Consul General Valerie Fowler unveiled a plaque in memory of the ship's crew during the ceremony. Two remaining *Perth 1* survivors, Frank McGovern, 97 and David Manning, 94, were on hand to give their personal accounts of the fateful night.

Indonesian Ambassador Kristiarto Legowo, Australian First Fleet Commander RADM Stuart Mayer and museum director Kevin Sumption attended the opening of the exhibition, which tell the heroic story of the crew of *Huston* and *Perth* as they fought a superior force of Japanese warships.

It brings together emotional accounts from survivors of the battle, as well as significant objects from various international collections, including the Australian War Memorial, the Royal Australian Navy's Heritage Collection, the Sea Power Centre ~ Australia, the University of Houston, and the United States History and Heritage Command. The exhibition also examines the wrecks of both ships and the recent work of Australia and Indonesian authorities, including the Australian National Maritime Museum and Indonesia's National Research Centre of Archacology Indonesia Pusat Penelitian Arkeologi National (ARKENAS), to protect them from illegal salvaging.

The maritime museum and ARKENAS conducted a joint dive on the wreck *Perth 1* in May supported by officials from the Indonesian Navy, Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, the Directorate of Heritage and Museum ~ Regional Office Serang, and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The dive revealed *Perth 1* had suffered significant damage from illegal salvaging, with only 40 percent of the vessal remaining. Since the May dive, Australian and Indonesian Authorities have continued to work together to achieve legislated protection and support this protection once formalised. Submission of the report from the dive to Indonesian Authorities is an important step in that process.

Foreign Affairs minister Julie Bishop said this followed the commitment by the two governments in February to increase cooperation on shared maritime cultural heritage.

'Guardians of Sunda Strait' is part of the Australian Nation Maritime Museum's



THE LEAGUE BADGE

SYMBOLISM OF THE LEAGUE BADGE

The wattle is symbolic of Australia.

The Leek, the rose, the thistle, and the shamrock symbols represent the link with Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland respectively.

The Badge is a symbol of readiness, at all time to render service to Queen and Country and to former comrades. It is a time honoured emblem - one that has been worn with a deep sense of pride by the most revered in our land and one that glorifies the forms of dress of all privileged to wear it.

No wealth or influence can purchase the Badge which may be worn only by those who have served their Country.

Your attention is drawn to the three colours in the Badge. The red represents the blood tie of war. White stands for the purity of motive in joining the League - to render service without thought or personal gain or ambition. The blue indicates willingness to render that service to a comrade anywhere under the blue sky - wherever he may be.

Depicted in the centre of the Badge, and encircled by the name of the organisation, you will see a sailor, soldier, airman and service-woman marching together with their arms linked in friendship. This is to show the circle of the League, all services and all ranks, march together in unity and comradeship.

RSL NSW MISSION STATEMENT

To provide for the wellbeing, care, compensation and commemoration of serving and ex - serving Defence Force personnel and their dependents and promote Government and Community awareness of the need for a stable and progressive Australia.

ACT OF CORPORATION

The Returned and Services League of Australia (New South Wales Branch) is incorporated under and Act of Parliament (Act 39 of 1935)

BECOME A MEMBER:- Contact your local sub-Branch for more information. **(Most of us have Pension or Advocacy Officers who can help if required or point you in the right direction)**

HEAD OFFICE:- ANZAC House, 245 Castlereagh Street, Sydney NSW 2000 Telephone (02) 9264 8188 ~ Email:- admin@rslnsw.org.au

A Blonde walks into an electronic store and said to the salesman; "I want that tv." The salesperson shook his head and said, "No, we don't sell to blondes." So the blonde left and came back with her hair dyed brown and said, "I'll take that tv." Again the salesman said, "No, we don't sell to blondes." So she left again and came back with her hair dyed black and said, "I want that tv." But the salesman still said, "No we don't sell to blondes." Finally the blonde got fed up and said, "That's it! How'd you know that I was a blonde?"

The salesman answered; "Cause it's a microwave."



ZEST FOR LIFE

Active Over 50's Exercise Classes



Your local Toronto RSL sub-Branch runs two classes per week under its

"Zest for Life Program"

A light exercise program at 8.00am on Tuesday of each week under the watchful eye of Advanced Exercise Professional Pamela Glover. The class runs for about 40 minutes to 1 hour.

Cost: \$5.00 per session

So if you feel that a little "Exercise" can help with your overall health, improving things, such as balance, strength, etc., come along and sign up. You will also get to meet new friends who have social outings, cups of coffee together., etc. Open to all if you are **Over 50.**

The programmes are not new they have been running for the past 6 years so if you feel up to it, contact the Toronto RSL sub-Branch for full details.

Phone:- 4959 3699 between 9.30am & 12md

On The Lighter side of Milne Bay ~ 1942

The Second World War in 1942 was into its third year and the Allies were struggling in Europe & in South East Asia however it did seem that change was on its way. They had had a couple of successes in Europe and the recent Battle of the Coral Sea, the first real success against the Japanese on water. The Japanese were still a threat though and they were after New Guinea. Their defeat at Coral Sea caused them to change their plan of attack however they still planned to capture Port Moresby. Prior to 1942 MacArthur decided to establish airbases to protect Moresby. To the west he established an Airbase at Merauke in Netherlands NG and planned another at Abau-Mullins harbour to the east, however the Owen Stanley Ranges was a problem due to weather & the height of the range, plus the fact it had not yet been explored made that location unfavourable. Australians under General Blamey suggested Milne Bay & a party of 12, made up of Americans & Australians flying in a PBY Catalina determined it was a suitable location and Milne Bay became a reality. The Americans gave it the code name "Fall River" named after the real Fall River in Massachusetts. This proved to be a mistake as most of the supplies arranged for Milne Bay were sent to the real location in hometown America. This set the scene for Milne bay, supplies were always in demand.

Three airstrips were built at Milne Bay and this along with a deep protected harbour made it a very attractive proposition for the Japanese and they established a force to capture it. The Battle of Milne Bay began on 25 August 1942, code named "Operation RE" or the Battle of Rabi by the Japanese, with 2000 Japanese naval troops, (Special Naval Landing Forces), landing approximately 11 kilometres east of the bay with two small tanks. Due to poor intelligence work, the Japanese miscalculated the size of the predominantly Australian garrison and believed that the airfields were only defended by two or three **Companys**. The Allies, forewarned by intelligence, had heavily reinforced the defence to of the 3 airstrips to approximately 9,000 Allied troops including two Australian infantry brigades - the 7th and the 18th and an additional advantage of having air support close at hand because the 75 and 76 Squadrons from the RAAF, equipped with P-40 fighter bombers.

The Japanese suffered a setback when part of their invasion force (approx. 1600 men & Equipment) used a small island off the coast as a preparation area and were discovered by the RAAF fighter bombers. They destroyed all of the landing craft in the harbour and the force were out of the attack, unable to leave the island

Allied communications were poor, mainly due to insufficient equipment and a shortage of supplies; however morale among the men also created problems. Conditions at Milne Bay were considered bad at best,

Malaria was eventually to affect about 60% of the troops stationed at the Bay. Rumours circulated among the Allies and they also believed they were being constantly watched by the Japanese. Extra patrols were sent out with no evidence gained to suggest that this was the case. The Japanese themselves were having difficulty traversing the 11 kilometres due to the terrain and the conditions, they eventually succeeded and attacked the first of the airfields and overrun the defending Allies after heavy fighting.

THIS THEN SET THE SCENE FOR THIS ARTICLE.

Allied Headquarters were concerned the stores & equipment at the 2nd airfield would fall into Japanese hands if they progressed any further. Lt W Crofts was commander of the engineers in that section and was dispatched to prepare demolition charges in the stores & radio transmitter. His instructions were “if small arms fire is heard close to the site the equipment is to be blown up – on no account must it be allowed to fall into Jap hands”. Lt Crofts split his group, one to set the charges in the canteen & his group to destroy the transmitter & equipment. They did not have a lot of explosives, mainly ‘biscuit tin’ demolition sets, not enough to do a complete job plus a Bren gun with one clip of ammunition & seven rifles with 5 rounds each. The last transmission Lt Crofts heard on his radio from command was “The Japs have broken through, we may not be able to maintain contact with you for much longer – act on your own responsibility”. At this point he heard a loud explosion which he assumed correctly was the canteen being blown up however he did not hear any firing from the direction the Japs were supposed to be attacking so held off blowing the transmitter & equipment.

The following are extracts from the soldiers nearest to the explosion at the time;

“In the subsequent explosion, sheet-iron & timber supports flew most

spectacularly. Part of the walls and roof disappeared, but the really grave image was the smashing of about three cases of beer. However the rest of the stock was intact so with the help of others our vehicles were loaded with the spoils in quick time. With cunning forethought, the trucks were not driven to the rear, but forward, towards the enemy to suitable places



MILNE BAY, PAPUA. 1942-09. PICTURE SHOWING THE DAMAGE TO THE MILNE BAY FORCES CANTEEN WHEN IT WAS BLOWN UP BY LIEUTENANT W.J. CROFTS, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS, DURING AN ATTACK BY THE JAPANESE

“When we reached the copra shed, the sight that met our eyes is one that I will never forget. The demolition charge had blown the roof off the shed and the sides were flat on the ground. Hundreds of items were scattered about, packets of chocolates quite intact, were everywhere and at least 100 cases of Queensland beer was in disarray but mostly intact. We had no trouble selecting thirty or so sound cases and loading them into a disabled truck as this would be a safe haven until such time as it was required. No sooner had we finished loading, when the leading sections of the 2/10th (probably the 2/12th) started filing past on their way into action...Jack and I had the pleasure of handing out bottle after bottle of beer to the troops as they passed by.”

I was walking through Gili Gili that morning and needed a lift. I stopped an oncoming truck with several men standing on the back. All of them had bottles of beer stuffed down the front of their shirts, and as they drove along the road they threw bottles of beer to their mates. I'm sure no weapon or other piece of military equipment was handled so carefully, or carried so lovingly, as those bottles that sailed through the air towards the open hands of those who just happened to be there.

“As I climbed into the cab beside the driver, I couldn't see his feet. They were completely buried beneath bottles of beer! How he located the clutch and the brake among all the bottles, I'll never know, but he managed all right. I being an exalted Warrant Officer, had 'no idea' that there was any beer on the truck and, after that first startled glance, kept my eyes steadily on the passing jungle – naturally on the look-out for possible snipers. “We saw some men come out of the trees – they were from the 2/10th – they had been in the bush for quite some time, without any food. We gave them a few bottles of beer and directions back to our lines. The last we saw of them, they were staggering down the track as ‘full as boots’.”

Comments from Colonel Cummings 2/9 Bn.

I went into my tent and saw a sack bag on the ground. I said to myself “that the Batman's getting bloody fussy laying carpets for me” but when I stepped on it, it was very soft. I lifted it up and there was dirt covering a full case of Foster's Larger. He'd buried them for me.

Brigadier Field noted in his diary the call he received about the destruction of the canteen from one of his senior field officers.

“An officer of Milne Force HQ, of quiet and temperate habits, revealed an unexpected depth of feeling with his comment. ‘Well some people are not fit to live’.”

So it came about, engineer Lt Crofts now had to ‘face the music’ and was ordered to attend a Court Of Inquiry to be convened on the 31 August 1942, a week before fighting was to end at Milne Bay on 7 September.

The Evidence of Lt W Crofts

“At approx. 1530 hrs on 28Aug42 I was instructed by the CRE (Commander, Royal Engineers) to proceed with your batman armed with a Tommy gun to HQ 7 Brigade & inform the Brigade that you have been sent to prepare the beer in the canteen for demolition and request information as to how they will communicate orders for execution to you. Proceed to the canteen, make your plan and prepare charges. You will receive orders for demolition from HQ 7 Brigade but the beer is not to be allowed to fall into enemy hands as it may cause atrocities. If an emergency arises and you cannot get orders from Brigade, use your own Judgement.”

On the morning of Saturday 29Aug42 an officer drove up the road from Gili Gili in a utility full of armed personnel and said that the enemy were half a mile down the road from the canteen and to get out quickly. I did not consider there was time to ring Brigade HQ as I had not had orders from Brigade I considered it was my duty to demolish the beer at this stage.



Lt W Crofts

As the charges had not been set I ordered the two sappers to open fire on the beer. When our ammunition had run out, as my instructions were not to let the beer fall into enemy hands I then prepared two hasty charges with two feet of safety fuse and lit both charges, I then moved down the road and the explosions took place.

‘On reaching American HQ and seeing that the enemy were not in the vicinity I went immediately to the canteen and prevented the looting of the beer, the Staff Captain 7 Bde arrived and he controlled all looting until a provost sergeant and five men came down and took orders as to the picketing of the stores. I reported to the CRE who requested information as to why I had executed demolitions and instructed me to make this report.’ Major Mckenzie (CRE) was also called before the court and in his statement he added:

“At approx. 1500 hrs I received a message written in blue pencil from force HQ by a Colonel at force OBS: ‘To CRE; Jap patrol half mile from Gili Gili approaching stores, evacuate immediately you have blown stores, will contact you as soon as possible (not signed)

AAQMG (Assistant Adjutant Quartermaster General) then communicated with me and said ‘the canteen has been demolished. No Japs anywhere near it. The force commander wishes you to report to him’ As indicated there is a difference of opinion between AAQMG and myself as to the exact words used in his instructions and in the absence of any written instructions which would normally come from GSO1, I can no more state what I believe to be true.

In conclusion I would like to state that if I had not given the instructions as stated to Lt Crofts and orders had not been received from Brigade, and the enemy had taken the beer in the canteen because I had not allowed him to use judgement in this emergency (in the circumstances of my receiving no instruction to the contrary) I would have failed in my duties as CRE”

The findings of the court or whether punishment was handed out was not ascertained. The men who benefitted from the incident, would no doubt be happy to provide Lt Crofts with a letter of commendation.

The battle is often described as the first major battle of the war in the Pacific in which Allied troops decisively defeated Japanese land forces. Although Japanese land forces had experienced local setbacks elsewhere in the Pacific earlier in the war, unlike at Milne Bay, these actions had not forced them to withdraw completely and abandon their strategic objective. Nor did they have such a profound impact upon the moral aspect of the war. Milne Bay showed the limits of Japanese capability to expand using relatively small forces in the face of increasingly larger Allied troop concentrations and command of the air. As a result of the battle, Allied morale was boosted and Milne Bay was developed into a major Allied base, which was used to mount subsequent operations in the region.

Ref - Milne Bay 1942, the story of “Milne-Force” and Japan’s first military defeat on land, Clive Baker & Greg Knight

LAST POST **The following members and comrades have passed away since our last issue**

Peter BARNETT ~ ARMY ~ 05/07/2017

John MARSHALL ~ RAN ~ 12/08/2017

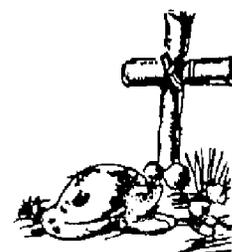
Harold EDWARDS ~ ARMY ~ 14/08/2017

John William (Jack) BARRATT ~ RAAF ~ 28/08/2017

Arthur GREEN ~ RAAF ~ August 2017

Daphne FINN ~ ARMY ~ 05/10/2017

Lest we forget





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KOOKIES MORSELS

BBQ CHILLI LIME PRAWNS

48 king prawns, peeled, deveined 4 limes, zested and juiced
4 green chillies, seeded and chopped 4 cloves garlic, crushed
5cm piece of fresh ginger, grated 1 med. onion, coarsley chopped

Prep: 30 minutes ~ Cook: 5 Minutes ~ Extra Time: 4 hours marinating

1. Place the prawns and lime peel in a large, non metallic bowl. Place the lime juice, chillie, garlic, ginger and onion in a food processor or blender and process until smooth. You may need to add a little oil to facilitate blending. Pour over the prawns and stir to coat. Cover and refrigerate for 4 hours.
2. Preheat barbecue for medium-high heat. Thread the prawns onto skewers (If using wood or bamboo skewers soak in water for about 2 hours) piercing each prawn first through the tail and then the head.
3. Brush cooking grate with oil. Cook prawns for 5 minutes, turning once or until opaque. Serves up to 6 *Bon appetit*

BLONDES: “How come you are late?” asks the bartender as the blonde walks through the door. “It was awful” she explains, “I was walking down Elm Street and there was this terrible accident. A man was lying in the middle of the street; he was thrown from his car. His leg was broken, his skull was fractured, and there was blood everywhere, thank goodness I took that first aid course — all my training came back in a flash.”

“What did you do?” asks the bartender. “I sat down and put my head between my legs to keep me from fainting” she said.

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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 dependants on a continuing basis at no cost to them.

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How are you cobber?

How is that grey mass in your nut performing? Are you keeping it active or not? We have all heard the old adage that if you don't use it you're loose it. This comment can apply to a number of the parts of our anatomy but in this case, I am referring to your BRAIN.

Yes, it is a filing cabinet, but one you cannot overfill, although many oldies do say its choker. No, it's not choker it sometimes takes longer to find a particular file. But, if you don't use it you know what will happen.

As we age there are some parts of our body that reach their use-by-date. Some of these can be replaced by titanium, stents, donated organs etc. but, at this stage of our medical expertise we have not achieved a brain transplant.

As we grow older there are a number of conditions or disorders that can affect our control box (brain). Yes, it is a control box in every sense of the word.

There are a number of neurological disorders that can come into focus as we age, these are covered under the general heading of dementia, the most prominent being Alzheimer's. This is most likely to affect those of us in the 65 and older age group. Generally, it does not affect the younger ones of our society, but it can. Only a small percentage of cases have been found to be genetic/ inherited.

Well, as most of us are in that group what can we do to prevent it or at least slow and maybe halt its progress.

Keep Active, don't become a "wally", sitting in front of the box. Take the dog for walkies, go for walkies by yourself with friend, partner or even your wife (the safest alternative cause she will know your not at the pub/club). Even if you have difficulty walking try getting in & out of a chair, walk slowly up & down the front steps, something that will get the blood flowing up to your noggin. But don't overdo it.

Exercise your Brain. No you silly old B, you cannot take it out & massage it! Pick up a pen or pencil & have a go at the crossword in the paper. If you have trouble there buy a crossword dictionary. Between the two you'll have fun. But, don't throw the dictionary at the cat, that may be too much. Then there is Sudoku, that will test some of you but keep at it. There are many mind games that can be found at the paper shop – give them a go.

If push comes to shove pinch the grand kids iPad & try their mind games. Hopefully you will become so engrossed that the kid will never see his iPad again

Eat Nutritionally. The Mediterranean Diet is great & gives you a good balanced diet of brain food. Two chops & 7 vegs as grandma used to say is great but include vegies that are BRAIN FOOD, i.e. omega3 in fish, nuts, eggs. Omega 3 fatty acid can protect against inflammation & degeneration of the brain also broccoli, spinach, plenty of fresh fruit, whole grain & lean meat. But,

JOEL FITZGIBBON MP

Member for Hunter | Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry
Shadow Minister for Rural & Regional Australia | Spokesperson for Country Caucus



Established in the aftermath of World War 11, the United Nations was established to promote international co-operation and peace. Never did I expect ~ in my lifetime ~ to hear such belligerent, aggressive and hostile language being used on the floor of the forum designed to keep us safe. It is a great concern.

Thankfully, we are approaching the third generation of Australians who have not lived through a global conflict. A stand-off like that being played out by the Korean peninsula is a reminder of a number of things. First, peace cannot be taken for granted. It requires constant work. Second, while constantly working for the peace, we must remain prepared and able to independently defend ourselves. Third, we must always place the highest value on those who commit themselves to serve in our armed forces.

We all pray global sanctions begin to work in North Korea. It's sad they are necessary, Kim Jong-un is a leader prepared to allow his people to starve in order to fuel his ego and to keep his internal enemies at bay. So the world is left with little choice but to put further pressure on Kim's economy.

We don't know for sure exactly what nuclear and delivery capability Kim has, although United States Intelligence Agencies would be confident in their knowledge. It's hard to imagine the US being prepared to ignore any potential for a rogue state to deliver a nuclear payload to the American continent or indeed, the territory of a close ally. What are the options beyond sanctions? The answer is: very few.

Every military response available to the United States and its allies carry unthinkable consequences, particularly for the people of South Korea. So let's hope and pray that common sense prevails.

Lest We Forget.

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Regards Joel



217Army Cadet Unit (ACU)\

Report For

3rd Quarter of 2017



1. Hello all. 217ACU has settled into a new routine with change of Unit Commander and new staff and cadets joining the Organisation. Term 2 and 3 of the year will see us change our focus from ceremonial and history to field craft and navigation in lead up to the Annual Field Exercise held in September.
2. This last quarter has seen many events happen at unit level to National Headquarters. At the unit level Term 2 and Term 3 camps were conducted successfully, Working Bees improving the Unit Location. 21BN conducted Weapons Training and Competition Days where Drill and Military Skills were tested. NSW Brigade conducted the Promotion courses in July, where 2 of 217ACU Cadets attended and completed the Junior Leaders and Senior Leaders Module 1 courses. A change of Command for the Australian Army Cadets had seen Brigadier W. Budd posted elsewhere and incoming Brigadier M. Ashleigh becoming the new Commander of the AAC.
3. Over the last few months, I have had the pleasure in promoting several Cadets including: RCT's now CDT's Barratt, B. Roddom, C. Roddom and K. Hobman, CDT now LCPL N. Farleigh-Hall, LCPL now CPL S. Anderson and C. Howarth.
4. Future events include AFX Ex Menin conducted on 23-30 September 2017, 21BN WTSS Shoot in mid-October and preparations for Remembrance Day and End of Year Functions planned for the 2 December 2017 are well under way.
5. 217ACU is working towards achieving AAC goals and developing the next generation into the leaders of tomorrow.

Kind Regards

Yvonne Fuller CAPT(AAC) 217 Army Cadet Unit (ACU)

Officer Commanding (OC)

Mobile: 0409 310 713

Unit email: 217acu@cadnet.gov.au

Personnel Cadet email: yvonne.fuller@armycadets.gov.au

Up-Coming Activities and tasks

AFX17

BN WTSS

Remembrance Day

Organise long lead time activities;

Cadet of the Year Activity 17,

Duke of Edinburgh Award, and

Adventurous Training Activity (ATA).

End of Year Parade

NEW COMPENSATION ACT FOR VETERANS

MEDIA RELEASE ~ 8 SEPTEMBER 2017

THE HON DAN TEHAN MP ~ MINISTER FOR VETERAN AFFAIRS

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Dan Tehan said veterans would benefit after Parliament yesterday (7 September 2017) passed measures to simplify veterans' legislation.

Parliament yesterday passed the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988 (DRCA), which will replace for Australian Defence Force (ADF) members the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (SRCA). There will be no change to eligibility or the coverage of entitlements or benefits available to current and former members of the ADF.

The purpose of the change was to move all military compensation legislation under the minister for Veterans' Affairs. Mr Tehan said the legislation gave the Minister for Veterans' Affairs policy responsibility for all veterans' compensation legislation.

"This new legislation will allow for more consistency for Veterans' entitlements subject to consultation with the Defence and Ex-Service Community. This will allow the Department of Veterans' Affairs to improve the services it offers," Mr Tehan said.

DRCA will commence 28 days after Royal Assent when all Veterans' and ADF members with existing claims under SRCA will automatically become claims under DRCA.

Mr Tehan assured the Parliament that there would be no change to coverage in this move but that the Government had put in place a safety net for any unforeseen situations.

Any new claims for injuries and illnesses due to service prior to 1 July 2004 which are lodged on or after the commencement date will now also be DRCA claims.

Further information on the DRCA and on making a claim for rehabilitation and/or compensation due to a service related injury or illness under any of the military compensation Acts, can be found at

www.dva.gov.au

PENSIONS REPORT

For more information visit the DVA website at www.dva.gov.au/nlhc or view the Factsheet at www.dva.au/factsheets.

Here at the Toronto RSL sub-Branch offices we have two (2) mornings per week where we have “Fully Qualified Pension Officers” and “Advocates” available to assist the Veteran Community. The days and times are:-

Tuesday and Wednesday each week from 0900hrs to 1200hrs
Pension Officers can be contacted on telephone No. (02) 4959 3699 for an appointment

If you have served in the Australian Defence Services and need advice or help in your dealings with the Department of Veteran Affairs, telephone this office and make an appointment with one of our Officers.

We also have a Welfare Service where fully trained volunteers who are members of this sub-Branch visit veterans and other DVA persons in hospitals, etc. However, because of the stringent privacy laws of today, we are not informed of a veteran's plight (by the hospital or carer) and if we don't know we cannot do anything about it. If you know of any Veteran, War Widow, etc., who has

DATES TO REMEMBER

Monday 09/10/17 ~ Monthly Meeting at 10.00am

**Saturday 11/11/17 Remembrance Day ~ Goffet Park
Service commences at 10.45am ~ No March.**

Monday 13/11/17 ~ Monthly Meeting at 10.00am

**Monday 11/12/17 Monthly Meeting at 10.00am
followed by Christmas BBQ**

The "Nachthexen" or "Night Witches" of WWII

They flew under the cover of darkness in bare-bones plywood biplanes.

They braved bullets and frostbite in the air while battling skepticism and sexual harassment on the ground.



They were feared and hated so much by the Nazis that any German airman who downed one was automatically awarded the prestigious Iron Cross medal.

All told, the pioneering all-female 588th Night Bomber Regiment dropped more than 23,000 tons of bombs on Nazi tar-

gets. And in doing so, they became a crucial Soviet asset in winning World War II.

The Germans nicknamed them the “**Nachthexen**”, or “night witches,” because the whooshing noise their wooden planes made resembled that of a sweeping broom.

“This sound was the only warning the Germans had. The planes were too small to show up on radar... [or] on infrared locators,” said Steve Prowse, author of the screenplay *The Night Witches*, a non-fiction account of the littleknown female squadron. “They never used radios, so radio locators couldn’t pick them up either. They were basically ghosts.”

Using female bombardiers wasn’t the first choice. While women had been previously barred from combat, the pressure of an encroaching enemy gave

Soviet leaders a reason to rethink the policy. Adolf Hitler had launched Operation Barbarossa, his massive invasion of the Soviet Union,

In June 1941. By the fall the Germans were pressing on Moscow, Leningrad was under siege and the Red Army was struggling. The Soviets were desperate.

The 588th’s first mission, on June 28, 1942, took aim—successfully—at the headquarters of the invading Nazi forces.



The squadron was the brainchild of Marina Raskova, known as the “Soviet Amelia Earhart” ~ famous not only as the first female navigator in the Soviet Air Force but also for her many long-distance flight records. She had been receiving letters from women all across the Soviet Union wanting to join the World War II war effort.

While they had been allowed to participate in support roles, there were many who wanted to be gunners and pilots, flying on their own. Many had lost brothers or sweethearts or had seen their homes and villages ravaged.

Seeing an opportunity, Raskova petitioned Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin to let her form an all-female fighting squadron. On October 8, 1941, Stalin gave orders to deploy three all-female air force units. The women would not only fly missions and drop bombs, they would return fire ~ making the Soviet Union the first nation to officially allow women to engage in combat. Previously, women could help transfer planes and ammunition, after which the men took over .

Raskova quickly started to fill out her teams. From more than 2,000 applications, she selected around 400 women for each of the three units. Most were students, ranging in age from 17 to 26. Those selected moved to Engels, a small town north of Stalingrad, to begin training at the Engels School of Aviation.

They underwent a highly compressed education ~ expected to learn in a few months what it took most soldiers several years to grasp. Each recruit had to train and perform as pilots, navigators, maintenance and ground crew. Beyond their steep learning curve, the women faced skepticism from some of the male military personnel who believed they added no value to the combat effort. Raskova did her best to prepare her women for these attitudes, but they still faced sexual harassment, long nights and grueling conditions. “The men didn’t like the ‘little girls’ going to the front line. It was a man’s thing.” Prowse told **HISTORY**. The military, unprepared for women pilots, offered them meager resources. Flyers **Page 30**

“received hand-me-down uniforms (from male soldiers), including oversized boots.” “They had to tear up their bedding and stuff them in their boots to get them to fit,” said Prowse. Their equipment wasn’t much better. The military provided them with outdated Polikarpov Po-2 biplanes, 1920s crop-dusters that had been used as training vehicles.

These light two-seater, open-cockpit planes were never meant for combat. “It was like a coffin with wings,” said Prowse. Made out of plywood with canvas pulled over, the aircraft offered virtually no protection from the elements.

Flying at night, pilots endured freezing temperatures, wind and frostbite. In the harsh Soviet winters, the planes became so cold, just touching bare metal would rip off bare skin. Due to both the planes’ limited weight capacity and the military’s limited funds, the pilots also lacked other “luxury” items their male counterparts enjoyed.

Instead of parachutes (which were too heavy to carry), radar, guns and radios, they were forced to use more rudimentary tools such as rulers, stopwatches, flashlights, pencils, maps and compasses. There was some upside to the older aircraft. Their maximum speed was slower than the stall speed of the Nazi planes, which meant these wooden planes, ironically, could maneuver faster than the enemy, making them hard to target. They also could easily take off and land from most locations. The downside? When coming under enemy fire, pilots had to duck by sending their planes into dives (almost none of the planes carried defense ammunition).

If they happened to be hit by tracer bullets, which carry a pyrotechnic charge, their wooden planes would burst into flames. The Polikarpovs could only carry two bombs at a time, one under each wing. In order to make meaningful dents in the German front lines, the regiment sent out up to 40 two-person crews a night. Each would execute between eight and 18 missions a night, flying back to re-arm between runs.

The weight of the bombs forced them to fly at lower altitudes, making them a much easier target ~ hence their night-only missions.



Katya Ryabova and Nadya Popova
18 bombing sorties in a single night

The planes, each with a pilot up front and a navigator in back, traveled in packs: The first planes would go in as bait, attracting German spotlights, which provided much-needed illumination. These planes, which rarely had ammunition to defend themselves, would release a flare to light up the intended target. The last plane would idle its engines and glide in darkness to the bombing area. It was this “stealth mode” that created their signature witch’s broom sound. **There were 12 commandments the Night Witches followed.**

The first was “be proud you are a woman.” Killing Germans was their job, but in their downtime the heroic flyers still did needlework, patchwork, decorated their planes and danced. They even put the pencils they used for navigation into double duty as eyeliner.

Their last flight took place on May 4, 1945 ~ when the Night Witches flew within 60 kilometers (approx. 37 miles) of Berlin. Three days later, Germany officially surrendered. According to Prowse, the Germans had two theories about why these women were so successful: They were all criminals who were masters at stealing and had been sent to the front line as punishment or they had been given special injections that allowed them to see in the night.

Altogether these dare devil heroines flew more than 30,000 missions in total or about 800 per pilot and navigator. They lost a total of 30 pilots, and 24 of the flyers were awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union. Raskova, the mother of the movement, died on January 4, 1943, when she was finally sent to the front line her plane never made it.



She was given the very first state funeral of World War II and her ashes were buried in the Kremlin.

Despite being the most highly decorated unit in the Soviet Air Force during the war, the Night Witches regiment was disbanded six months after the end of World War II. And when it came to the big victory-day parade in Moscow, they weren’t included because, it was decided, their planes were too slow.



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Sunday
(Tickets on sale 11.15am, drawn 12.30pm)

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Saturday Drop Off from 8.30pm

