

Keeping in Touch

WINTER EDITION 2021

~ FORT SCRATCHLEY ~



Fort Scratchley

AUSTRALIAN TROOPS DRAWDOWN ~ AFGHANISTAN

Pages 10 & 11

***ROYAL COMMISSION INTO DEFENCE AND VETERAN
SUICIDES ~ Pages 11 & 12***

***FORT SCRATCHLEY'S INVOLVEMENT DURING WW2
Pages 14 to 18***



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Keeping in Touch

From the president's desk...

Hello everyone.

Winter is upon us again and as this is being written, bitterly cold with snow on the Barrington's. Most of us are very lucky we have the means to put on extra clothing & heat our dwellings to ensure we remain comfortable in for us, very cold conditions.



We managed to hold both ANZAC services with the weather very pleasant on the day. I was surprised at the number of people attending both considering we could not invite the public. Hopefully, next year we won't have the same situation with perhaps a little bit more help from authorities. Just going on their actions of the past few weeks I won't be holding my breath.

As part of our Charter, we are always interested in the welfare of our serving and non- serving veterans. Recently while reading of all things, The Australian Woodworker Magazine, I came across an article by the editor Art Borrows and he was writing about how younger people are affected more by the pandemic than the older generations. Art then went on to write of his research stating 'survey after survey shows higher-than-ever anxiety, depression, mental illness, and suicide in this era of young people in their twenties & thirties'. His research indicated that many of these young people are having trouble finding meaning in their lives and he talks about a generation struggling to find a 'Why' to live and are therefore finding the 'How' of their lives unappealing and unrewarding. Politicians, psychologists, theologians and economists wishing to argue about how these views have become so commonplace is impacting and placing a negative effect upon the well being of the individuals who hold them. Art stated the surveys were based on the American populace however it would have the same result on a similar group in our own country, be it we have similar values.

We keep hearing we are failing our younger vets & we're not responding to their needs. I have visited a couple of areas with younger veterans meeting on a regular basis with the aim to find out what their needs are and how we can help. One point that is always clear is the area and environment they live in has a great deal to do with how these young people co-operate & gather. Country areas appear to have larger numbers meeting and they get on well together. In the larger cities they tend to be more individualised. Common to all is a reluctance to engage in committees of various establishments, RSL Sub Branches, Rotary, etc., are all finding it difficult to attract younger members. We have found that having an increasing number coming through our Pensions Office, our Advocates are wanting help with claims for investigation and submission through to DVA, however, they have no desire to engage with us otherwise.

Our Advocates are very busy with the number of claims and the requirement they have to complete the courses required to maintain currency. Keeping in mind our current good working relationship, they are not getting any younger and the workload they have is very demanding. We definitely need younger people to join the team, the alternative is a reduction in services.

We will just have to keep looking for an answer.

That's about it for this Kit, keep well, warm & safe.

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Bill Noble BEM ~ President

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DATES TO REMEMBER

**Monday ~ 12/07/21 ~ Monthly Meeting cancelled
due to COVID 19 Restrictions**

Monday ~ 09/08/21 ~ Monthly Meeting at 10.00am

Monday ~ 13/09/21 ~ Monthly Meeting at 10.00am

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Who we are: Newcastle Beacon brings together a network of organisations, professionals and volunteers with the common goal of supporting first responders, emergency department personnel, veterans and their families in Newcastle and the Hunter.

Our specialised team of staff and high trained volunteers include social workers, welfare officers and advocates and community members with lived experience of service. This essential combination of professional skills and lived experience enables us to understand and meet needs, as we bring together resources, skills, knowledge and compassion to support those who serve and their families.

Our mission is to strengthen our community by working together to enhance the physical, mental and social well-being of those who have served in the Australian Defence Force, Emergency Services Departments and their families.

How we help: Navigating support services alone can be overwhelming for someone in crisis. Newcastle Beacon aims to simplify the process of getting help by acting as a one-step shop for support.

Services Available Include: Mental/allied help, crisis support, family/carer support, children's programs, peer support, legal/financial. education/employment, advocacy welfare, social/community engagement, yoga, tai chi and mediation groups, specialised referral pathways, men's shed, community garden and café.

Who we serve Newcastle Beacon is committed to taking care of those who serve or have served on the front line for our community, including: Australian Defence Force/Veterans, Police, Ambulance, Fire and Rescue, all other emergency services including Hospital Emergency Personnel

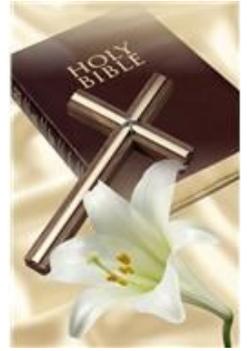
If needed, we look forward to seeing you at the space we proudly share with Hunter Multicultural communities between the hours of 9.30am and 2pm Monday to Friday, even its just for a chat, at:- 2a Platt Street, Waratah NSW 2298.

Other times by appointment:-

Phone: (02) 4960 8248 Mobile: 0455 120 880

Email: newcastlebeacon@gmail.com

Chaplain's Corner



Anzac Day 2021 was again different to what we were used to with COVID restrictions allowing only so many people to gather and no parades. Luckily, we were able to hold our shortened version of our ceremony with no groups or choirs singing, and we pray that next year there will be less restrictions for Anzac Day.

I was extremely fortunate to help with the Toronto Private Hospital in their Anzac Day ceremony too. This is where I met Peggy. This is the first time I have ever heard an address given at Anzac Day from a woman. Listening to Peggy's story of becoming a RAAF servicewoman at the age of 20 (that's 78 years ago) was nothing short of amazing. Peggy knew what she wanted to do, and she never let anyone convince her otherwise including all the men that made it difficult for her. She went on to train pilots in how to conduct daily inspections on the aircraft. Despite her courageous story she reminded everyone to take care of our returned service men and women, having her dad and husband return home from war with no help, she recognised the lack of care for them. Peggy wants us to ensure that our returned service men and women are well cared for, and she believes that this is also crucial moving forward.

Peggy is right, it is imperative that we take really good care of our returned service men and women. May we listen deeply to their needs and advocate for them. May God's blessing be upon all who do this work and our returned service men and women as they journey this side of the conflict that forever changed their lives.

Peace be with you,

Reverend Melanie Whalley

Toronto Anglican Church

REMEMBRANCE DAYS FOR THIS QUARTER.

27th July Korean Veterans Day

15th August Victory in the Pacific (VP) Day

18th August Vietnam Veterans Day

31st August Malaya and Borneo Veterans Day

There I was sitting at the bar staring at my drink when a large, trouble making biker steps up next to me, grabs my drink and gulps it down in one swig. "Well, watcha' gonna do about it?", he says, menacingly, as I burst into tears.

"This is the worst day in my life," I say. "I'm a complete failure. I was late to a meeting today and my boss fired me. When I went to the parking lot, I found my car had been stolen and I don't have any insurance. Then I left my wallet in the cab I took home, when I got there, I found my wife with another man and then my dog bit me."

"So I came to this bar to work up the courage to put an end to it all, I buy a drink, I drop a capsule in and I sit here watching the poison dissolve; then you show up and drink the whole thing! But enough about me, how's your day going?"

An old man was sitting in a truck stop eating a meal when three tough looking bikers walked in. As they passed the old man, the first biker pushed his cigarette into the old man's pie. Then laughed and took a seat at the counter. The second biker picked up the old man's milk and spat into it. The third biker turned over the old man's plate before joining the others.

Without saying a word to the laughing bikers, the old man put his money down, got up, and left the diner. One of the bikers said to the waitress, "Not much of a man, was he?" The waitress replied, "Not much of a truck driver either. He just backed his big rig over three motor cycles!"

COMMON SENSE:- If you get a loan from a bank, you'll be paying it back for 30 years. If you ROB a bank, you'll be out in 10 years.

Follow me for more financial advice.....ED! rjm

Australian troops to drawdown in Afghanistan

Joint media release

15 April 2021

Prime Minister, The Hon Scott Morrison MP Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women, Senator the Hon Marise Payne

The Government has announced that Australia will finalise the draw-down of our contribution to the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. Over the past two years, we have been reducing our military presence in Afghanistan from a high of over 1,500 personnel to around 80 personnel currently.

In line with the United States and our other allies and partners, the last remaining Australian troops will depart Afghanistan by September 2021.

This decision is consistent with the Government's policy, as set out in the 2020 Defence Strategic Update, to prioritise military resources on our region.

This decision represents a significant milestone in Australia's military history.

Over the last 20 years, Australia has been a steadfast contributor to the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan. Australia has fought alongside Coalition and Afghan partners to degrade the capabilities of terrorist organisations, including al-Qaeda.

More than 39,000 Australian Defence Force personnel have deployed on Operations SLIPPER and HIGHROAD, helping to protect the safety and security of the Australian people at home and overseas.

But safeguarding Afghanistan's security has come at a cost. Since 2001, 41 Australian personnel have lost their lives while serving in Afghanistan, and many more were wounded, some physically and others mentally.

The memories of all Australian Defence Force members who have lost their lives will continue to be honoured for their sacrifice and contribution to Australia's mission in Afghanistan. We also acknowledge all those Australians who have served in Afghanistan and the impact this has had on their lives.

The conflict has exacted an enormous toll on the Afghan people and the complex task of making peace lies ahead. Australia continues to support the peace negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban. We encourage both parties to commit to the peace process and call on the Taliban to cease the violence.

While our military contribution will reduce, we will continue to support the stability and development of Afghanistan through our bilateral partnership, and in concert with other nations. This includes our diplomatic presence, development cooperation program, and continued people-to-people links, including through our training and scholarship programs. Australia remains committed to helping Afghanistan preserve the gains of the last 20 years, particularly for women and girls.

Preparations for Royal Commission moves to next phase

22 May 2021

Preparation for the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide has moved into the next phase.

Over the past month I have had discussions with hundreds of veterans, serving members and families across the nation.

The feedback has been extremely positive and constructive and while opinions have been incredibly diverse, we all have one common goal – to prevent suicide within the Defence and veteran communities.

More than 1400 pieces of written feedback on the themes that will inform the Terms of Reference have been received by DVA alone.

Some of the common areas of concern identified throughout the consultation process relate to the transition process from Defence to civilian life, dealing with DVA in accessing assistance and the complexity of the legislation and the claims process, as well as mental health support, operational tempo and rotations, negative treatment of personnel, and a number of issues that impact families of those who serve.

Publication of the feedback is optional and where consent has been provided, DVA has been progressively making these available on the website.

The consultation phase has now concluded and all feedback provided to the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) will be passed to the Attorney-General's Department, who will draft the Terms of Reference.

Cont..P.12/

cont frompage...11/

This is standard practice for a Royal Commission, and as evidenced by the Aged Care and Disability Royal Commissions, the community can have complete confidence in that process.

To be clear, DVA, the Australian Defence Force and the Department of Defence are not involved in the conduct of the Royal Commission itself or the drafting of the Terms of Reference. The Royal Commission itself will be completely independent of Government.

We have a world-class system of support for veterans and their families and Australians can be proud of the fact that \$11.8 billion in taxpayers' money is provided every year to allow DVA to do its work.

There's an enormous amount of help available through DVA, ex-service organisations and community groups which is making a difference every day and it is so important that none of this stops during the course of the Royal Commission.

But the system isn't perfect and the Royal Commission is an opportunity to identify any weaknesses, listen to the ideas of Australians, and implement changes that can help to save lives.

I would like to thank all those in the community who have provided their feedback.

EDITORS NOTE: I am led to believe that there are about 90,000 service members within the ADF at any given time present day, with a turn-over of about 6,000 members each year. Of these members, often many of them are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) along with depression and/or addiction.

This Royal Commission is long overdue, one can only hope that it's Terms of Reference go deep enough to identify and rectify issues associated with the topic, "Defence and Veteran Suicide"



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Fort Scratchley

FORT SCRATCHLEY'S NEWCASTLE WW2 SERVICE

About 0215 on 8 June 1942, Japanese submarine I-21 under the command of Captain Kanji Matsumura, shelled Newcastle New South Wales.

I-21 had travelled across Stockton Bight and positioned itself about 9 kms north east of Newcastle. I-21 travelled eastwards firing almost directly across the stern of the submarine. Their orders were to shell the Newcastle shipyards at Carrington. It is possible that it may have also targeted the BHP Works at Kooragang Island, Fort Scratchley and a large BHP-owned iron ore bulk carrier ship, the "Iron Knight" (4,812 ton's), which was moored at the steelworks docks. The "Iron Knight" was used to transport raw materials from BHP's Whyalla iron ore mines to the Newcastle steelworks.

The "Iron Knight" eventually succumbed to the Japanese 8 months later when it was sunk by Japanese Submarine I-21 on 8 February 1943 approximately 15 miles off Montague Island, New South Wales with the loss of 36 crewmen of her complement of 50 men.

The Japanese gun crew broke out 20 shells (1400 mm) from the ready locker. They also brought up another 14 rounds from the armoury below decks. 8 of the shells were "illuminators" or "star shells". All 34 shells were fired at Newcastle. After 13 minutes of firing, the guns at Fort Scratchley returned fire with 4 rounds. I-21 continued firing for another 3 minutes until all 34 shells had been fired. The shelling caused minimal damage and no casualties.

Fort Scratchley Battery could not locate the Japanese submarine in any search-light beams, the gunners located it by observing its gun flashes at bearing 067 degrees and approximately 5000 m. Four rounds were fired from Fort Scratchley's Battery. After the fourth round was fired, there was no answering fire from the submarine. Personnel at Fort Scratchley reported that some Jap rounds fell left of their battery into the harbour and others appeared to pass overhead.

The Point of Impact for the 34 Shells Fired at Newcastle Shells that Didn't Explode

Lloyd & Sons Office Building (The shell landed on the footpath outside the office. It was soon declared safe and was kept by Lloyd & Sons as a door-stop for the front door of their Mayfield shop.)

The Tram Depot. (Now the site of Queens Wharf Cafe's and Ferry Wharf, the shell landed just next to the Depot.)

Shells that Did

Parnell Place (A Historic Terrace House street overlooking the beach in Newcastle.). The shell hit several houses on the street. This was about only one block from Fort Scratchley.

The BHP (Steelworks) a shell landed in a storage shed at the steel works causing little damage.).

The Northern Wall of the Newcastle Ocean Baths which was situated just down the hill from Parnell Place, next to Newcastle Beach was the site of the 3rd explosion. The shell, landing between the bath's northern wall and the rock pools that spread between the baths and Nobby's Beach. The explosion caused no damage.

Nobby's Breakwall (This shell exploded on the side of Nobby's Breakwall. It is said to have caused no damage.).

The Remaining Shells landed in Newcastle Harbour. Several exploded in a fountain of water while the rest sank to the bottom where they still remain.

Frank Zammitt was stationed at Rail Battery during the attack. He believes he would have been the first one to see the attack because he was on guard at the time and was watching the flashes which seemed to be directed towards the steel works. He thinks, he can remember at the time, that he counted 5 flashes going to the steel works then the next ones were like a dot and he heard the shell go over his head. It was then that he realised they were being shot. He woke the rest of the gun crew and they took their posts. He knew that one shell landed on Nobby's Head. He thinks one landed in the Customs House and he thought a couple landed near Fort Scratchley.

Frank and his group at the Rail Battery had two Hothkiss 2 pounders. He thinks they were captured from the Germans in the First World War. They were dated 1919 on the breech The emplacements were still there recently. Frank was on the gun furthest away from Nobbys. Their job was to guard the river. They were informed of the movement of the tides so that if they saw anything moving against the tide they had orders to shoot. About the following weekend, Frank was on duty again and saw something moving up against the tide. He swung the gun around and fired. The soldier on the other gun must have seen it as well and fired his gun also. The next thing a mine sweeper, possibly HMAS Cowra, came down the river dropping depth charges, then the VDC opened up with their Vickers machine gun and there were tracers flying in all directions. They never ever found out if it was a submarine or not.

The Rail Battery was located on the breakwater under Nobbys Head. One gun was at the start of the breakwater and the other one was further along the breakwater about 100 yards from the first gun. The emplacements are still there.

Their quarters were on the shore below the first gun. Their food came from Fort Scratchley in a hot box. Washing facilities were either in the sea off the beach or up to the Fort. I think from memory the search light unit was between both guns. Frank has forgotten where the engine room was located.

He knows it was driven by a Macdonald Imperial Diesel engine which run on kerosene. It had a 6 inch cylinder and was horizontal stroke. It had an 8 ft fly-wheel. They had a blow lamp which was lit and directed on the cylinder head till it got red hot, then they rocked the wheel back and forth until it kicked over. Sometimes it would go the wrong way and they would have to stop it and start again.

Ron Southgate told me that his father was stationed at Bob's Farm at this time with 41st Battalion. He recalls being told that one shell hit the main office of the steel works but did not explode, another hit the tram terminal at Nobby's but again this shell did not explode. Additionally, he recalls that some of the guns (possibly randomly positioned for local defence around Nobby's) that returned fire on the submarine could not depress low enough to fire on the submarine because of their positioning. However, on attempting to return fire, they managed to destroy part of the roof of the Electricity Commission office.

In 1980, Peter Doig was completing an urban survey study for University which involved a detailed door knock in a number of Newcastle suburbs. A few streets from the BHP steel works, just across the bridge, he interviewed an old couple (the man being 87 as he recalled). They lived in an 1890's type semi-terraced workers cottage. During the interview, he told Peter that one shell (it may have been more) came through the back wall of his house. He showed Peter where it came through. It didn't explode. He said that he was on night duty at the metal works at the time -- which was interesting, as he said that 4 rounds landed there also and did not explode. (Can anyone identify which house this was?) Peter Doig's description of the house location is as follows:- "If you face the ocean with the steel works in front of you, you will see a small bridge (I think it went over a railway line). Just over this bridge turn right; then after some metres turn left. I think his house was about six from the corner. If I had a street directory, I could probably be more specific. Albeit it is very close to the bridge. Just over the bridge opposite the works is a small group of shops."

Not long after the shelling started, a group of residents set up a search light at King Edward Park that was established for the cause to help Fort Scratchley locate the Japanese submarine. It proved useless since by the time it was fully set up, the submarine had gone and the surprise raid was over.

During the shelling of Newcastle, 4 shots were fired by the guns at Fort Scratchley at the Japanese submarine a few miles out at sea.

Extracts from Fort Scratchley War Diary

(Page ~ 13)

Time Line: 8 June 1942

1245	Air-raid warning - red
0119	Air-raid warning - yellow
0121	Air-Raid warning - white (all clear)
0217	Sounds of gun fire - alarms sound
0219	Fort battery on alarm station. White flares and gunfire spotted.
0220	No visible target in search light beam.
0226	Fort battery opens fire on enemy vessel; not visible in any beam, but located by gun flashes at bearing 067 degrees and approx 5000 m. Four rounds fired from battery. After fourth round fired, no answering fire from enemy. During action rounds fall left of battery into harbour - others appeared to pass overhead.
0231	No. 2 gun out of action - LBM (lever breech mechanism) damaged.
0307	Guards posted over unexploded shell (which) also smashed electricity wire in street (Parnell Place)
0542	Port closed to outward shipping till daylight June 9 th . Port is open to inward shipping - advise Nobby's (lighthouse).

On the morning of the bombing the HMAS Whyalla was docked on the city side of the port and was ordered to set sail out towards the submarine to fight for Newcastle.

A Singleton family by the name of Bradford had left their house in Singleton since it was so close to the airbase and bought a nice house near King Edward Park in Newcastle not too far from Fort Scratchley. The first Japanese attack on Newcastle awoke the whole family and they all gathered in the living room as shells whizzed above them. One of the eldest children remembers his mother saying "I think our boys are fighting in the wrong direction" and left to play the piano in the lounge room to drown out the sounds.

The only injury caused from the entire raid was that to a soldier on duty at Fort Scratchley who was sleeping during the raid. When he awoke to the explosions he leapt up quickly and twisted his ankle.

A boy, Peter Wilson and his brother, who were sleeping quietly in their Parnell Place enclosed verandah/bedroom awoke to the first shells and simply watched from his window as rays of fire zoomed through the sky. It was only after the guns at Fort Scratchley began firing back, that his mother ran in and grabbed him and his brother and pulled them downstairs to the lounge room. At about that time a Japanese shell hit the house and destroyed the boys bedroom. In the Newcastle Morning Herald the following morning he was reported as "The Luckiest Boy in Town." All that remained in Peter's bedroom was a burnt iron bed, cut in two and the scatted remains of glass from his windows. There were two major injuries in the Parnell Place area. When World War Two broke out, Novacastrians (Newcastle & Hunter Valley Residents) were told that it was a good idea to keep fragile windows open or replace them since the guns of Fort Scratchley were so strong the every window in the city's east end could be shattered. Most ignored this advice and when the guns were fired in the early hours of that morning most windows in the city cracked or smashed. Jason Goulding recalls that in about 1993 a house that sits about 150-200 metres behind Fort Scratchley was being renovated. The workmen were removing the Hardie-plank cladding on the front of the house and noticed there were shrapnel holes in the original timber walls. Various people came to view it and it was in the Newcastle Herald at the time. They concluded it was from the Japanese shelling of WW2.

In February 1944, the Japanese submarine, I-21 which attacked Newcastle was sunk by an American vessel near Gilbert Islands in the Pacific.

It was also reported that Japanese planes had been mapping and spying on Newcastle since early May 1942. They had also reportedly recovered British maps of the area and used them to plan the attack.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Matthew Endacott for his assistance with this home page, particularly with the details of where the 34 Japanese shells landed in Newcastle.

The author would like to thank Frank Zammitt NX112631, a "Gunner" at the Rail Battery at the time of the Japanese raid for his assistance with this home page.

The author would like to thank John Groves, Ron Southgate, Jason Goulding and Peter Doig for their assistance with this article.

Reference

Jenkins, David, "Battle Surface - Japan's Submarine War against Australia 1942 - 44", Random House Australia, 1992

Peter Dunn

This story was compiled by the Battle for Australia Association NSW Inc



PRICELINE PHARMACY

Suppliers of all your prescriptions, medical supplies, beautician products, and advice, come in and talk to our friendly staff for help.....Page... 19/

KOOKIES MORSELS

Chicken Cacciatore

(ONE PAN COOKING)

2 to 3 tbsp olive oil or a bit more as needed
8 small chicken breast fillets, trimmed
3 anchovy fillets, drained, finely chopped
1 brown onion, finely chopped
200g button mushrooms, trimmed, sliced
1 green capsicum, thickly sliced
½ cup chicken stock
2 tsp balsamic vinegar
1 cup pitted kalamata olives
Sea-salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper to season
Roughly chopped flat leaf parsley to serve.

2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 small carrot, diced
1 tsp dried oregano
2 cups of tomato passata

Heat one tsp (or a bit more) oil in a high sided Large frying pan over high heat. Cook half the chicken for 2 minutes each side until golden. Transfer to a plate. Repeat with the same amount of oil and remaining chicken, cook in the same manner. Remove from pan and set aside.

Reduce heat to medium, add remaining oil with onion, garlic and anchovies, and cook, stirring occasionally for about 5 minutes until the onion is softened and anchovies dissolved. Increase heat to high, add mushrooms, capsicum and carrot to the pan and cook for 3-4 minutes, add oregano, stock and passata and bring to the boil. Return chicken to pan poking it into the sauce. Reduce heat to medium low and cook, covered, turning occasionally for 15 to 20 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through and the sauce is slightly thickened. Add olives and vinegar and heat through, season with salt and pepper. Serve scattered with chopped parsley.

SERVES 4 Adults

(leftovers can be stored in fridge for the next day)

Bon appetit

KOOKIES MORSELS

SOUP WEATHER

Creamy Chicken Soup

(Quick and Easy)

4 Cups Chicken Stock

Two cups of shredded or chopped cooked chicken

1 tsp Worcestershire Sauce

1 Clove garlic, finely chopped

3 to 4 drops of Tabasco Sauce

1 Cup Cream

¼ Tsp salt (opt)

Pinch of Black Pepper (opt)

Mix the chicken, stock, Worcestershire sauce, garlic, Tabasco Sauce and cream in a saucepan over medium heat, stirring for about 3 minutes, until it reaches serving temperature. (taste) Then add the salt and pepper if you so desire.

To add more base to the soup during the heating stage you can add left over or pre-cooked corn, peas, beans or diced carrot if you wish.

Serves 2 or 3 ~ Serve with crusty bread or toast

(Leftovers can be enjoyed the following day or frozen)

Bon appetit

+++++

BROCCOLI SOUP

1kg broccoli florets and stalks

1 large white potato

1 litre of chicken stock

1 long red chilli

Small Cream jar of pouring cream

Cut the broccoli into florets chop the stalk, place in a large saucepan, peel the potato, chop and add to the saucepan, chop the red chilli and add. (You can remove the seeds from the chilli for less bite (heat) if you wish. Add chicken stock and gently boil for 15 to 20 minutes or until very tender.

Puree until smooth, season with pepper and salt.

SERVE: Swirl of cream on top long with Crusty bread or toast on the side. Serves 2 to 3.

Bon appetit

PENSIONS REPORT

In writing this report it is with sadness that we report that we have lost our most Senior Advocate Ron Savage with his passing in May this year. Ron will be sorely missed not only by his fellow pension officers here at Toronto, but by the many veterans and service people he has helped/assisted in his time here at the sub-Branch.

We, the sub-Branch would like to thank Ron's wife Pam, and his family for allowing him to give his time to undertake the volunteer work he gave as a member.

OUR PENSION OFFICE:

Our Pension Officers/Advocates have remained busy with pension claims and inquires. They still have numerous cases ongoing at various stages.

Non-liability health care is still available to Veterans under VEA and MRCA for Mental Health and Cancer plus some other conditions.

For a list of any new or amended conditions and those conditions under review can be found on the Repatriation Medical Authority (RMA)

Web site www.rma.gov.au then look under "What's New"

Statements of Principles (SoP) are continually being reviewed by members of the RMA or on request. A review of conditions can also be requested by those interested in a particular condition

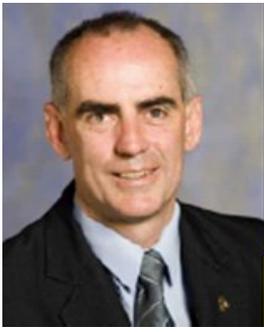
Regards ~ Pensions

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

Phone 4959 3699

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 dependent's on a continuing basis at no cost to them.



Greg Piper MP

Member for Lake Macquarie



MEDIA RELEASE

I hope this latest newsletter finds you all well and I hope you're finding your way through the maze of Covid restrictions better than I am! As I write this, I'm currently at home doing two weeks of isolation. This follows the Sydney outbreak which found its way into the NSW Parliament with Agriculture Minister Adam Marshall being infected with the virus in a Sydney pizza shop after Budget day.

I was later classified as a close contact of the Minister because I sat near him in the Parliament. I was allowed to leave the Parliament on the Thursday and return home.

.....

By chance (maybe her good fortune!), Lyn had been babysitting two of our grandchildren at our son's place on Thursday so she had no contact with me, meaning she could choose to stay at our son's home and carry on as normal, or serve two weeks in isolation with me. She chose wisely, and I'm home alone!

So, while I'm wearing out a walking track in the backyard and talking to my bees, I remain grateful that I haven't had to do it as tough as some. It's a wretched virus, and with four million lives claimed around the world, I'm grateful that we've managed to stay on top of it here in NSW. That involves a bit of luck, but also a lot of good management. No response to this pandemic was going to be perfect, but I think you'd agree that it's been managed pretty well by our health agencies and the Berejiklian Government.

.....

On the down side of all of that, Covid restrictions again played havoc with this year's Anzac Day commemorations. It was heartbreaking that some services were unable to proceed this year, but those which did were wonderful and well attended.

Just like last year, local people who couldn't attend a service found a new way to commemorate, either in their driveways with candles, or just spending a moment at home to remember our fallen, and all of our returned servicemen and women. The sacrifices, the bravery and honour will never be forgotten, and I know that people will return to these services in huge numbers again next year when things are hopefully back to normal.

Lest We Forget.

.....

Another thing I was really pleased about, the historic WWII gun emplacements at Wangi are getting some long overdue attention.

A \$50,000 State Heritage grant was secured to allow Lake Macquarie council to clean the site up, plant some new natives and install some signage.

.....

There are four octagonal pits which housed the weaponry and an underground command post which obviously served to protect the nearby RAAF base at Rathmines and the radar station at Catherine Hill Bay from air attack.

If you're ever out at Wangi, take a wander and check them out. I've found that the best way to access them is to drive to the very top of Crescent Rd and then follow the bush track and new signage.

The emplacements are an important reminder of the role our district played during the war, and I'm very pleased the site is now better recognised, maintained and protected. My congratulations go to Wangi Wangi RSL Sub-branch which led the charge on the restoration project, and everyone else involved.

.....

Finally, I hope everyone received a copy of the annual Anzac Day booklet I put out in April. I know many people like to keep them, and I still have copies at my office which I can send out to you if you want to give me a call.

.....

As always, I hope you're in good health and good spirits. If you require assistance with any State-related issue, don't hesitate to give me a call on 4959-3200.

LEST WE FORGET

Best regards,



92 Victory Parade, Toronto NSW 2283

email: lakemacquarie@parliament.nsw.gov.au 
facebook.com/GregPiper1MP



twitter.com/GregPiperMP

Electorate Office 4959 3200

www.gregpiper1.com



Nasho's News

Westlake Macquarie
National Servicemen's Association



We joined our RSL Sub-Branch friends at the ANZAC Dawn Service and assisted with the Flag duty and again at the main service where we had a good turnout of members. We accepted the invite back to The Diggers Club for drinks afterwards.

As we are now meeting on every other month, we hold a social get together on the odd month and on Thursday 13th May we visited Wangi Wangi RSL for a luncheon. We had 20 plus members and wives join us and enjoyed a pleasant lunch on a nice warm day looking out onto the lake.

More sad news with the passing of another of our foundation members, David Laidlaw, I notified our members of his passing and the details for the funeral, and a good number of members joined quite large gathering of family and friends for the service held at Ryhope Cemetery, our RSL President, Bill Noble conducted the ADF portion of the ceremony assisted by our Nasho President Gordon Maxwell and myself. We had quite a large guard of honour for David as the casket was brought in by his family members.

We held our June meeting at The Diggers Club which was low on numbers as so many members are not well at this time, as usual we joined with our wives for an enjoyable lunch afterwards.

I do hope that many of our members have now had their first covid injections or maybe even the second and are not feeling any bad effects. Robyne and I will get our second shot on Friday the 2nd June.

Robyne and I have been fortunate to have been able to spend two (2) weeks away in the warm climate of Tangalooma Island Resort on Morton Island and now being home are feeling the Toronto cold.

Recently we have had a number of members and wives on the sick list, I wish them well and here's hope that they are well on the road to recovery soon. Best wishes to all.

Bruce Robberds

Honorary Secretary.

PANIC BUYING TODAY~VERSES HISTORY.

ALCOHOL ~ VERSES ~ TOILET PAPER

Quite a few older gentlemen have recently informed me that in their earlier years, the only time they can remember such a thing as Panic Buying was prior to the 1st February 1955 about 6.00pm each day which was the closing time of the local hotels. At this time it was called the 6.00pm "Swill" when the bartender yelled "last call for drinks".

Political correctness At the rate we're going, they're going to have to cancel shampoo so bald people don't get offended.

**A wise man once told his wife NOTHING,
because he was a wise man.**

Man in bed with his wife, Slides his hand slowly across her shoulders across her waist under her neck
Under her back and suddenly stops.

Wife: (In a romantic voice) Why did you stop???

Man: Got the remote...u go back to sleep....

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Page19

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Back Our Troops or Lose them

Recently Scott Morrison and various government spokesmen have been laying the groundwork for a “khaki election”, one in which national security issues will be front and centre. We’ve heard conflict with China should not be “discounted”, the “drums of war beat”, and a terrorist attack on home soil in the next 12 months is “probable”.

These are comments one would not be surprised to hear in a meeting of the National Security Committee of the Cabinet. But what is the value of making them in public? I think none.

Do the comments calm or inflame regional tensions? Do they help our trading interest and our economic fortunes? Do they improve our capacity to defend ourselves if strategic competition becomes military conflict? I believe the answer to each of these questions to be “no”.

All that aside, we live in a changing region in which the ability to defend our people and their interests must be the highest priority of government. Developing and maintaining that capacity requires plenty of money and world’s best military platforms, including submarines, surface combatants, fighter jets, artillery, and all the high-tech capability so crucial to modern warfare success.

But there are some critical assets money can’t buy, including the skills, courage, and commitment of our Special Forces soldiers. We can invest in them as we do, but we won’t recruit the right people and maintain the necessary levels of morale and commitment if they have doubts about the support of their Government. Right now, they are unconvinced they have that support.

The Afghanistan Inquiry Report (Brereton Report) was disappointing and confronting. Any soldier who acted unlawfully while on deployment will need to have their behaviour tested. But not by the media or the court of public opinion – instead, by our legal system and all its protections including the burden of proof and the thresholds required for a finding of guilt.

But we must not allow the actions of a few to tarnish the reputation of the many. The overwhelming majority of our troops who deployed to Afghanistan did no more than put their lives on the line for our nation. In the coming months the Brereton Report is likely to resurface, and those who have served in our Special Forces will need our support.

For anything that went wrong in Afghanistan, politicians (including me) and senior Defence leaders must share collective responsibility. We sent them to one of the most dangerous places on earth with vague mission objectives and without a clear plan to win. They fought an enemy which wore no uniform, and unlike our troops, were not constrained by laws or rules of engagement.

We sent them on multiple and punishingly long rotations. Too often they lacked sufficient medivac, close-air support, and other vital resources.

NATO's "capture and release" policy was both frustrating and psychologically challenging for soldiers who had risked their lives to capture bad guys only to see them walking free days later. It's no wonder some may have begun to take the law into their own hands.

Defence Force Chief General Angus Campbell should not have been left alone to face the glare of the media when the Brereton Report was released. The Prime Minister and his Defence Minister should have faced the cameras too, pledging support for our Diggers and providing assurances that their sacrifices will continue to be appreciated and honoured. They could have also taken some responsibility for the reported events and helped the community better understand the settings in which they occurred. In failing to do these things, they failed our men in uniform. We turn our SAS and Commandos into warriors. We train them in the use of lethal force and authorise them to use it lawfully. They become battle-hardened and invested in their mission. In executing their orders, they need to know they have the support of their country and it's for us to provide it. All of us.

Now we've officially withdrawn from Afghanistan, there will be a long debate about the merits or otherwise of our involvement. Certainly, 41 lives are an expensive price to pay. And while Afghanistan still looks messy, we must ask ourselves what it might now look like without the intervention of the many countries which participated in what is now our longest war.

Would there have been more acts of terrorism in western countries? Would the persecution of ethnic minorities in Afghanistan have grown worse?

Would the Taliban now govern without any care for international community opinion? Would the country be more dependent on the illicit drug trade? Would Afghan women still be without the opportunities of education? Would Afghanistan be without Australian-built schools and hospital facilities? Would the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police be less capable of enforcing the rule of law? Would our alliance with the United States be as strong? I've no doubt the world is a better place for our actions.

Whatever your view, our troops performed magnificently in every task our politicians asked of them. If the drums of war beat louder and closer, we'll need our elite fighters, and they'll need our support, appreciation, and respect. We all have a part to play in providing it.

David Bullock – Media Advisor for and on behalf of the Office of the Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP | Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Resources | Federal Member for Hunter

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**Parliament House
R1 48, Canberra
ACT 2600**

Last Post

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

Ronald Norman SAVAGE ~ RAAF ~ 09/05/2021

Brian Francis FARRELL ~ ARMY ~ 18/05/2021

David Thomas LAIDLAW ~ ARMY ~ 23/05/2021

Eve TAYLOR ~ WRAAF ~ 09/07/2021

Lest we forget





217 ARMY CADET UNIT WINTER EDITION



1. Hello Readers!

2. The last three months for 217 ACU has certainly been busy for many different reasons. Recruitment at schools and online Social Media has gained us 10 new recruits boosting our numbers well into the high 20's. It is a great sight to see them all on the Parade Ground.

3. In addition to the new recruits, we welcome back an ex-217 Cadet back as a Staff Member - Mr Caleb Watts, ex Unit and Battalion Cadet Under Officer. We sincerely appreciate the time and effort that Mr Watts has contributed this year alone and the training and admin teams are for the better for his support.

4. In other good news, NSW AAC BDE is finally coming to the party to support the replacement of our deteriorating Storage Containers. Liaison is still ongoing but we hope to have the replacements within the next two months.

5. Unfortunately we had to cancel our planned activity to Canberra as the hosting unit - 234ACU had some unforeseen issues and the activity had to be postponed. We made up for it during a planned Working Bee and the Cadets were able to get some valuable experience in navigation, radio and first aid skills.

6. The next major activities 217/229 ACU's will be participating in will be the NSW AAC BDE Cadet Promotion Courses, where CDTSGT Cooper Smith and CDT Luca Powell will be attending to increase their leadership knowledge to bring back to the Unit.

7. 21 AAC Battalion - Central Coast and Hunter Region is conducting a Bivouac at Singleton Military Area in late July where the training focus will be on getting back to basic fieldcraft, navigation, section teamwork and first aid. We are all looking forward to the Field Weekend as it will be our first opportunity since the COVID-19 restrictions were placed on everyone early last year!

Have a safe and warm winter and thank you for your continued support and patience.
Thank you for your continued support and patience and stay safe.

Kind regards

Yvonne Fuller

CAPT (AAC)

217 Army Cadet Unit (ACU)

Officer Commanding (OC)

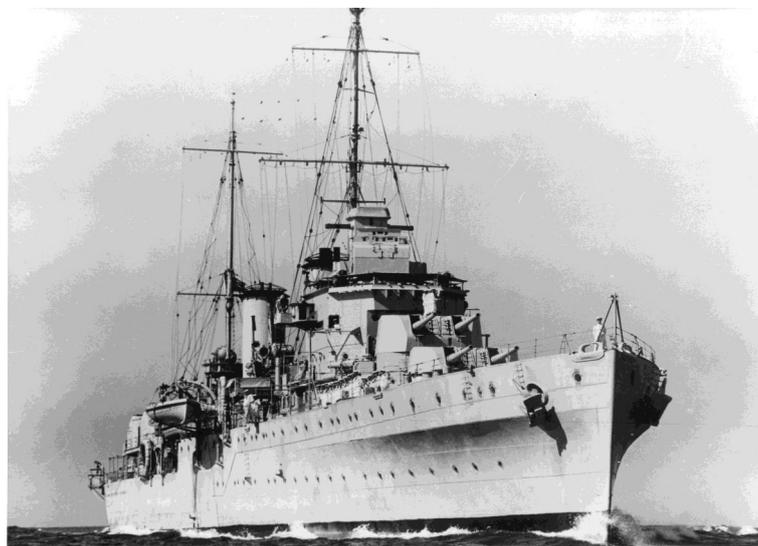
Mobile: 0409 310 713

Unit email: 217acu@armycadets.gov.au

“CRUISER”

The life and loss of HMAS Perth and her crew.

Mike Carlton, 2010



Of all the Australians who fought in the Second World War, none saw more action or endured so much of its hardship and horror as the crew of the cruiser HMAS Perth.

This book traces the time line from the leaving of the crew from Sydney on the steamship Autolykus in 1939 bound for England to accept the ship for the RAN, to the arrival home of the prisoner of war survivors of the crew in October 1945.

It tells the stories of the battles, the shore leaves, the tragedies and the guts and determinations of the survivors of the ill fated ship that died with honor in the Sunda Strait, Java Sea in March 1942.

A well written book with lots of comments from the survivors and other ex servicemen who were in some way involved.

Brian Staples

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HMAS Supply commissions

10 April 2021

Joint media release:

Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon. Melissa Price

The Royal Australian Navy's operational support capability has received a significant boost with the introduction of HMAS *Supply* into service.

HMAS '*Supply*' is the first of two new Supply Class Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment (AOR) ships. The AORs will enhance Fleet capability by extending the time a Task Group can spend at sea and the distance travelled.

Minister for Defence, the Hon Peter Dutton said the AORs are a critical support element to contemporary maritime operations across our region.

"With regional security challenges on the rise, it is more important than ever to have robust operational support capabilities for Australia's maritime assets," Minister Best regards, Greg Dutton said.

Carrying fuel, water, food, parts and dry cargo, the AORs will primarily provide logistics replenishment to naval combat units at sea. They will also be able to support Humanitarian and Disaster Relief operations domestically and regionally.

"*Supply*' will help sustain our lethal naval capability and will play a critical role in enabling our Joint Force to maintain the security, sovereignty and prosperity of Australia and our regional partners," Minister Dutton said.

Minister for Defence Industry Melissa Price said Australian Industry continued to carry out an active role in shipbuilding and bringing online new platforms with more advanced capabilities.

"Australian Industry played a key role in the build of the Supply Class Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment ships, including the use of 4500 tonnes of Australian BlueScope steel, and the final fit out of the ship in Western Australia," Minister Price said.

"As "*Supply*" embarks on her long life serving the Nation, Australian industry will carry out a central role in the sustainment of the capability, creating long term opportunities for Australian businesses and jobs for Australian workers.

"The AORs are an example of making the best use of our Defence platforms, with the introduction of a combat management system not present in predecessors, HMAS Ships '*Success*' and '*Sirius*'."

To efficiently support Navy's Fleet, '*Supply*' will be based at Fleet Base East, Sydney while '*Stalwart*', '*Supply*'s sister ship will be based at Fleet Base West at HMAS Stirling in WA.



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