

# Keeping in Touch

**SPRING EDITION 2023**

**ROSEMARY IN REMEMBRANCE**



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# *Keeping in Touch*

## *From the president's desk..*

Hello again everyone.

Spring, in my opinion the best time of the year, the temperature not too hot with trees shrubs and flowers in full bloom, all getting over winter and pleased to get on with it. The only thing different this year is the lack of bee's; all domestic hives having been destroyed & bush hives baited. We haven't seen the full results of those actions yet; time will tell, and I believe a dramatic loss of crops will be the result of it.



For some time now we here at the Sub-Branch have been running a campaign to invigorate our membership. Since membership fees have stopped and people wishing to join the RSL now do so online, the Sub-branch has lost that link we once had with members, in that we at least were able to see and talk to the members unable to attend regular functions at least once a year. Losing that link has made it difficult for us to check on the welfare of those members. In saying that we are not trying to pry into other people's lives, we only wish to see they are coping, and all is ok. We have been holding small function nights, getting members & partners together, just for a chat with some drinks & finger food; the intention to regain that link we had and check on your welfare and just say hello. It also allows us to keep an update on records, change of address, phone number & Web addresses. State RSL have made it a requirement for us here at the sub-branch to keep all records on the State RSL portal of our members up to date. We request you inform us of any changes relating to your address, phone or email, please. If you know of a veteran needing help, get in contact or get the person to contact us. They don't have to be a member of our sub-branch or be a member of the RSL, we are here for veterans, service personnel and families.

In past years we've depended on Australia Post to send out letters when needed and to get to you your copy of this magazine. We don't wish it to happen but that may all be changing. The cost of mailing letters, as most of you know, has increased dramatically the last couple of years. The cost to post you this magazine is now \$2.30 and we send approximately 300, making this a considerable cost



just on postage. When you add the printing costs (we print approximately 1000 to 1500 each quarter) the magazine is one of our major outlays. On top of this Aust. Post is now in the process of assessing the viability of posting and delivering letters again and we all know what that means. If we don't get your correct address, we incur the extra costs associated with returned mail. We are also looking at sending emails instead of letters, something that will save us a considerable amount of money. The old ways we are used to are changing, some may say for the better, others thinking it is flashing by all too fast.

The Sub-branch will be holding a service for Remembrance Day at Goffet Park again this year. We have had to put an application to Lake Macquarie City council to "Hold an Event". Another modern trend requiring us to get permission to use our own public park. I don't see any reason why permission will not be granted, allowing us to start at 10.45am on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month with you all welcome to attend.

**I wish you all the best and hope you remain healthy and safe.**

*The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance*

*Bill NOBLE BEM  
President*

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**REMEMBRANCE  
DAY  
GOFFET PARK  
SERVICE TO  
COMMENCE AT  
1045hrs  
(10.45am)**

**~ GOFFET PARK ~**

**Remembrance Day 2023 will be held in Goffet Park by the members of the Toronto RSL sub-Branch where a short service will be held along with a wreath laying ceremony.**

**Members and the public are invited to attend and participate including the laying of tributes if they so wish. If laying a tribute on the day please make yourself known to the Secretary or President either prior to the day or when you attend, so that you can be called upon when the time arises**

**We thank everyone in advance for their attendance in paying respects for the fallen.**



# **UPDATE ON THE ROYAL COMMISSION INTO ADF SUICIDES**

*8 September 2023*

## **Address by Commissioner Nick Kaldas APM (Chair)**

The Chair of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide says he fears the Defence hierarchy is waiting for the inquiry to end so they can go back to business as usual.

The Royal Commission has today concluded its 11<sup>th</sup> public hearing in Melbourne, where it's heard further evidence about cultural and systemic issues within the Australian Defence Force and Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs.

In his closing statement, Commissioner Nick Kaldas warned the problems will never be fixed if leadership does not accept, they exist.

"We still have not identified any strong evidence to suggest that Defence is prioritising the mental health and wellbeing of its people in a sustainable way," Commissioner Kaldas said.

"Nor does it seem to be responding adequately to the pressing issue of suicide and suicidality in its ranks with any sense of urgency."

"We Commissioners fear the Defence hierarchy is simply waiting for this inquiry to end so that it can go back to business as usual. We hope that's not the case," he told the hearing.

The two-week hearing focused on the experience of ADF personnel transitioning to civilian life; cultural problems within Defence and how the hierarchy manages complaints relating to unacceptable behaviour; the lack of support from Defence and DVA for veterans and their families; and the military justice system in the ADF and how that is monitored.

The Royal Commission heard evidence from a former medical advisor within DVA who painted a bleak picture of the Department – highlighting poor leadership, a culture of blame and lack of interest in innovation.

"Regardless of the good work the DVA has been doing recently to clear the backlog of claims – its outdated systems and processes, as well as its adversarial approach to those it is supposed to be supporting, seem to be designed to limit access to entitlements. This must change," Mr Kaldas said.

The Royal Commission will next sit in Sydney from Monday 20 November 2023. Its final report is due to be delivered by no later than 17 June next year.

~~~~~**Cont...Page 5/**

13 September 2023

## **Address by Commissioner Nick Kaldas APM (Chair) National Press Club, Canberra**

I want to start today by taking you back to Australia's very first Royal Commission. The S.S. Drayton Grange was a British merchant vessel chartered to transport 1,500 Australians returning home from the Boer War in South Africa in July 1902. Considerable overcrowding and unsanitary conditions, compounded by a lack of adequate medical supplies and poor weather, led to outbreaks of measles and influenza, as well as lice infestation.

By the time the troopship had docked in Melbourne at the end of its month-long voyage, five soldiers were dead – and another 12 died in the weeks that followed.

Public outrage led to the Royal Commissions Act being enacted in August 1902 – and within days Australia's first Royal Commission into the Drayton Grange was underway.

It ultimately found the Officer Commanding Troops wanted to do the best in a trying position.

But 'the best' seemed to be accepting things as they were, rather than making strenuous efforts to improve them – to endure rather than to overcome.

One might draw parallels between this dark chapter in our military history, and the current tragedy at the core of *this* Royal Commission.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide was established in 2021 after then-Prime Minister Morrison bowed to political pressure from cross-party MPs and Senators.

That followed a hard-fought and sustained campaign by the brave families of Australian veterans who had taken their own lives, as well as former ADF members who were traumatised in various ways.

The numbers are heartbreaking.

There were *at least* 1,600 deaths by suicide between 1997 and 2020 of veterans who served on or after 1 January 1985.

That's more than 20-times the number killed in active duty over roughly the same period.

~~~~~Cont....Page 6

There is also mention in this statement that there are some 30,000 claims still to be processed, down from around 43,000 a year ago.

One might draw parallels between this dark chapter in our military history, and the current tragedy at the core of *this* Royal Commission.

*15 September 2023*

**Address by Commissioners Nick Kaldas APM  
(Chair), Dr. Peggy Brown AO and James Douglas  
KC**

The Royal Commission's focus on hearing from people with lived experience of suicide or suicidality in the military will be greatly supported by the introduction of a new bill to Federal Parliament on 7 September 2023.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide received more than 1000 eligible applications for private sessions prior to the closing date on 28 April 2023. Commissioners have already conducted 535 sessions with people who have lived experience of suicide and suicidality in the Australian Defence Force. There are some 400 sessions still to be undertaken between now and June 2024, when the Royal Commission's final report is due to be handed to Government.

Current laws mean only a Royal Commissioner can conduct a confidential one-on-one meeting with a person with lived experience.

"We Commissioners are undertaking as many sessions as possible, both in person and virtually; however, to get through the large number of outstanding private sessions in the time we have left, we must appoint an Assistant Commissioner to help us," Commissioner Kaldas said.

The new legislation will allow for the appointment of an Assistant Commissioner with the appropriate skills, experience and gravitas required to undertake private sessions alongside the three existing Commissioners over the next nine months.

"We know how important these sessions are to veterans and their families, and the catharsis and validation they bring to so many people impacted by suicide and suicidality.

~~~~~**Cont Page 7**



~~~~~Cont From Page 6/

We want to continue to give them the time and attention they deserve, and the addition of an Assistant Commissioner will ensure that."

One can assume that this new position of Assistant Commissioner came about after the Commissioners wrote to the Prime Minister on the 11 May 2023 requesting an extension of time to complete the inquiry, especially with the one on one private sessions, still to be completed as only about 500 of these sessions had been undertaken with many more to go.

On the 1 August 2023 the commission was informed that no extension had not been granted. However, this refusal was followed with a changing of the Act so that an Assistant Commissioner could be appointed.

One would assume that this move was an effort by the government following their refusal to extend to complete in full and outcome of the Royal Commission.

**IF YOU WISH TO READ THESE REPORTS IN FULL GO TO  
THE WEB SITE UNDER:-  
royal commission into defence suicides.**

**PROVERB  
AND THE TRUTH IS  
THAT ALL VERERANS PAY WITH THEIR LIVES.  
SOME DIE ALL AT ONCE,  
WHILE OTHERS DIE OVER A LIFETIME.**

*JmStorm*

***LAST POST***

**The following serviceman passed away  
since our last issue**

*Darren Noel CAHILL ~ 28/08/2023 ~ ARMY  
(RSL Eulogy as requested by the family)  
Ronald James COLLINS ~24/7/23 ~ ARMY*

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## **PENSIONS REPORT**

We now have three Pension Officers/Advocates who are currently processing a significant number of claims for veterans and defence personnel. We are more than happy to field enquiries from any veteran or defence member. You don't have to be a member of the RSL to receive this service and it is free of charge.

DVA is still processing significant claim numbers and delays are still impacting claims in a timely manner, but we have been assured that the processing times are decreasing.

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

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](http://www.rma.gov.au) then look under "What's New"

Statements of Principles (SoP's) are continually being reviewed by members of the RMA or on request.

**Review of conditions can also be requested by those interested in a particular condition**

**Our Advocate and Pension Officers are normally on duty in this sub-Branch office on Wednesdays between the hours of 9.30am and 12 midday. Other times by appointment only.  
Phone 4959 3699**

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Regards

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# **Australian company wins government grant to secure global F-35 work**

*25 July 2023*

**A Melbourne company will use a \$1.5 million Australian Government grant to buy a next generation machining centre to secure more work on the global F-35 Program.**

**A key supplier to the aerospace and defence industries, Lovitt Technologies will also use the grant to train staff and upgrade equipment and software.**

**A machining centre is an advanced, fast, computer-controlled machine that can perform multiple operations like milling, boring and drilling.**

**Lovitt Technologies is the first recipient of Defence's Joint Strike Fighter Industry Support Program - Production and Modernisation Grant, which provides local companies up to 50 per cent of the money they need to develop new or improved capabilities to secure work from the lucrative program.**

**More than 70 Australian companies have already benefitted from over \$3.7 billion in global F-35 production and sustainment contracts.**

**Australia plans to have 72 fifth-generation, F-35A Lightning II aircraft combining air-to-air, strike and ground attack capabilities.**

**Head of Aerospace Systems Divisions, Air Vice-Marshal Graham Edwards AM CSC, said Defence wanted more skilled Australian workers to benefit from long-term jobs from the F-35 Program and strengthen Australia's defence industry.**

**The grant scheme will introduce a new capability to Australia to manufacture larger and more complex components for the F-35 Program, which will also benefit other Defence programs.**

**"Australian industry is poised to increase its contribution to the global F-35 Program, which has more than 930 aircraft with an expected global fleet of over 3000," Air Vice-Marshal Edwards said.**



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## **Chaplain's Corner**



### **The Significance of Silence**

It was on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918, that the guns fell silent on the Western Front bringing an end to WW1 after 4 years of continuous warfare. 330 000 people served in WW1, 60,,000 never made it home.

Remembrance Day Services are a tradition where we remember all who have served in the Australian Defence Force, in World War I and in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations since.

This year RSL Australia are calling on all Australians to make it to a Remembrance Day Service to honour those who served. If you can't make it to a service, it's easy to set a reminder on your calendar, switch your phone to 'do not disturb' and pause for one minute to remember. It's a simple action that will mean so much.

Pausing for 1-2 minutes silence is a sign of respect and a time for reflection. Henry George Honey a Melbourne journalist and World War I veteran, was living in London in 1919. Honey wrote a letter that was published in the London Evening News. He suggested that the commemoration on Armistice Day (now Remembrance Day) should be a brief but solemn ceremony, including a pause of silence for 5 minutes. That period would honour the service and sacrifice of those who had died during World War I. Henry said:

'Five little minutes only. Five silent minutes of national remembrance. A very sacred intercession. Communion with the Glorious Dead who won us peace, and from the communion new strength, hope and faith in the morrow.'

Today we normally do not have a full 5 minutes of silence though, the silence in our Remembrance Service is sacred. As we reflect and our hearts join with those who paid the supreme sacrifice and with them, we join in strength, hope and faith in the tomorrow. For people who are Christian our hearts commune with God too.

Peace be with you,  
The Reverend Melanie Whalley  
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## **UH-60M Blackhawk**

*By defence correspondent [Andrew Greene](#)*

*Monday 7 Aug 2023*

**Two new Black Hawks have arrived in Australia, which will eventually form part of a 40-strong helicopter fleet to replace the army's troubled Taipans that remain grounded following last month's crash in Queensland.**

### **Key points:**

- **Two of the US-made UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters have been delivered to Holsworthy army barracks in Sydney.**
- **The Black Hawks are among 40 ordered by Defence to replace the troubled MRH-90 Taipan**

**Investigations into last month's deadly Taipan crash are continuing**

**The ABC has confirmed the pair of American-made helicopters was transported into Sydney's RAAF Base Richmond last Sunday, two days [after the MRH-90 tragedy occurred](#).**

**Flight data reveals the two new UH-60M aircraft have now been delivered to the Holsworthy army barracks where the 6th Aviation Regiment is based, supporting members of 2nd Commando Regiment. ~~~Cont Page 15/..**

**Cont from Page 16/..**

**"The first two of 40 UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters for the Australian Army arrived at RAAF Base Richmond Sunday 30 July via US Air Force C-17, as scheduled," a spokesperson for Defence Minister Richard Marles said.**

**In January, Defence announced it would acquire 40 of the Sikorsky manufactured Black Hawks which will replace the Taipan fleet from next year, although the government [is being urged to accelerate the transition.](#)**

## **AMERICAN AIRLINES**

**A Plane is on its way to Toronto, when a blonde woman in economy gets up and moves to the First Class Section and sits down.,**

**The Flight Attendant watches her do this and asks to see her ticket.. She then tells the blonde that she paid for economy class and that she will have to sit in the back.**

**The blonde woman replies, "I'm Blonde, I'm Beautiful, I'm going to Toronto and I'm staying right here."**

**The Flight attendant goes into the cockpit and tells the Pilot and Co-Pilot that there is a blonde woman sitting in First Class, that belongs in Economy and won't move back to her seat..**

**The Co-Pilot goes back to the blonde and tries to explain that because she only paid for economy she will have to leave and return to her seat.**

**The blonde woman replies, "I'm Blonde, I'm Beautiful, I'm going to Toronto and I'm staying right here."**

**The Co-Pilot returns to the cockpit and tells the Pilot that he probably should have the Police waiting when they land to arrest this blonde woman who won't listen to reason.**

**The Pilot says, "You say she is a Blonde? I'll handle this, I'm married to a blonde. I speak blonde."**

**The Pilot goes back to the blonde woman and whispers in her ear, and she says, "Oh, I'm sorry." and gets up and goes back to her seat in economy.**

**The Flight Attendant and Co-Pilot are amazed and asked him what he said to make her move without any fuss. The Pilot replied, "I told her, First Class isn't going to Toronto.**



## **SEVEN VICTORIA CROSS GROUPS ON DISPLAY**

The Australian Army Infantry Museum (AAIM) will support the School of Infantry (SOI) Open Day to be held on Sat 21 Oct 2023. AAIM will install a temporary 1 day exhibition featuring seven Victoria Cross medal groups.

These are part of collections held by the Australian Army Museum of Western Australia and the Australian Army Museum of New South Wales. Together they will represent the largest gathering of Victoria Crosses on public display in Australia outside of the Australian War Memorial.

Please pass this information on to your members and anyone else you think may be interested in attending.

### **Confirmed list of VC medal groups to be on display**

|                          |                              |   |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Henry Jones</b>       | <b>British Army<br/>1855</b> | <b>Servastopol,<br/>Ukraine</b>           |
| <b>Alfred Heathcote</b>  | <b>British Army<br/>1857</b> | <b>Delhi<br/>India</b>                    |
| <b>Lucien Chase</b>      | <b>British Army<br/>1880</b> | <b>Kandhar,<br/>Afghanastan</b>           |
| <b>Martin O'Meara</b>    | <b>6th Bn<br/>1916</b>       | <b>Pozières,<br/>France</b>               |
| <b>Joseph Maxwell</b>    | <b>8th Bn<br/>1918</b>       | <b>Estrees,<br/>France</b>                |
| <b>Percy Gratwick</b>    | <b>2/48th Bn<br/>1942</b>    | <b>El Alamein<br/>Egypt</b>               |
| <b>Leslie Starcevich</b> | <b>2/43rd Bn<br/>1945</b>    | <b>Beaufort,<br/>British North Borneo</b> |

I hope to see you on the day.

Regards

Mr Paul Mitrovich, Curator

Australian Army Infantry Museum

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# **Defence joins international effort to enforce sanctions on North Korea**

Defence has conducted air surveillance of illegal activity in North Korea as part of an international effort to eliminate nuclear weapons in the country.

As part of Operation Argos, Defence deployed two Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft to enforce United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctions on the rogue nuclear state.

Operating from Kadena Air Base in Japan, the P-8A Poseidon aircraft conducted airborne surveillance to monitor and deter illegal ship-to-ship transfers of sanctioned goods in the region.

Since 2018, Australia has deployed RAAF maritime patrol aircraft on 12 occasions and Royal Australian Navy vessels nine times to support the UNSC sanctions.

## ***Quotes attributable to Chief of Joint Operations, Lieutenant General Greg Bilton:***

“Operation Argos reinforces Australia’s commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and directly contributes to maintaining the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region alongside our partner nations.

“Australia remains committed to enforcing UN Security Council sanctions and our own sanctions against North Korea.

“This operation is Australia’s contribution to a multinational effort, alongside Canada, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States, all of which conduct operations in support of UN Security Council resolutions.”

## ***Quotes attributable to Commanding Officer No. 11 Squadron, Wing Commander Adam Saber:***

“Since the first Operation Argos deployment back in 2018, and on every subsequent 11 Squadron rotation, our teams have delivered a major contribution to regional security and stability.”

~~~~~Cont from~~~~~Page 20/

“Though Operation Argos is conducted a considerable distance from Australia, the importance of maintaining regional stability cannot be understated, particularly noting the interconnected nature of global affairs. The range and speed of the P-8A makes it an ideal platform to conduct these long-range operations.

“The P-8A is world-leading maritime patrol aircraft and provides a versatile capability for Australia’s contribution to Operation Argos.

“I am exceptionally proud of the 11 Squadron aviators who routinely deploy as part of this operation, and it is their dedication and professionalism that underpins the successes of each deployment.”

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Monday ~ 9/10/23~ Monthly Meeting at  
10.00am**

*Toronto Diggers Club*

**Monday ~ 13/11/23~ Monthly Meeting at  
10.00am**

*Toronto Diggers Club*

**Monday ~ 11/12/23 ~ Monthly Meeting at  
10.00am**

*Toronto Diggers Club*

# **TRIBUNAL DEFINES 'WAR AND PEACE' FOR AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE, OPENS BENEFITS FOR VETERANS**

**Defence has lost a 30 year battle to declare ADF deployments to Malaysia during a terrorist insurgency as a routine training exercise in an administrative "oversight" that has robbed 9000 veterans of entitlements.**

**The Defence Honours and Awards Appeal Tribunal (DHAAT) landmark ruling now defines "war" and "peace" and a category in between, that will have ramifications for all future deployments for the Australian Defence Force. (ADF)**

**The Tribunal was tasked by the Government in 2022' to look into the deployment of the Army's Rifle Company Butterworth between 1970 and 1980 during a Malay emergency brought on by the communist and terrorist insurgency.**

**Defence had consistently since that time declared it a training exercise before a trove of declassified military and intelligence documents clearly showed it was not, with maps and other memos warning of likely directions of attack on RAAF assets.**

**But ironically like most wars, there was no clear winner with the exhaustive 18 month Tribunal inquiry ruling it neither war nor peace, but in between in a category called "non warlike". The ruling means 9000 mostly army veterans who had been deployed to Malaysia to protect the RAAF crews stationed in Butterworth in those years, will now be entitled to more benefits under the Veterans Entitlement Act.**

**The extent of those entitlements and whether they will be retrospective and to be passed onto widows of those men since passed is not clear.**

**The Tribunal found in September 2007 the then Veterans Affairs Minister Bruce Bilson sought to clarify the deployment and declare it "non warlike service" but the instrument was not registered by Defence on the Federal Register of Legislation and thus never came into force. Because of this oversight, RCB personnel had only been entitled to baseline entitlements as veterans. The Tribunal has made 10 recommendations that, if accepted by the federal government, be immediately changed. ~~~~~Cont....Page 21/**



~~~~~Cont.....from Page 22~~~Retired Lieutenant Colonel Graeme Mickelberg who was instrumental in pursuing justice for himself and his colleagues said the overall findings were “win-lose”, in that many veterans believed it was war-like.

“It is not clear what this means for the veterans and importantly the widows of those who have passed since the 2007 decision.” he said.

“What is damning here, and the tribunal chair picked up on this day, it was a hazardous deployment and now it is non-warlike in the context of the Veterans Entitlement Act and therefore benefits should flow. My question is if today’s Veteran Affairs Minister Matt Keogh accepts these recommendations what does that mean for those disadvantaged retrospectively? Will widows whose husbands should have been eligible for benefits at that time now be awarded, for example, a disability pension?” He said this highlighted how successive governments and Defence has not paid due regard to veterans and their families.

In his 72-page July 2022 submission to the Tribunal, ADF Chief Angus Campbell said, Defence and successive Australian Governments had consistently and appropriately classified the mission as peacetime service and that should not change.

The Tribunal was critical of that view which it called “factually incorrect” given the overwhelming evidence otherwise, notably a 1993 Cabinet definition of war and the Billson ruling which has now been deemed as still legally valid despite Defence administratively losing it since 2007.

“It seemed to the Tribunal that, colloquially speaking, Defence had been ‘making it up as it goes’, the Tribunal concluded noting it was Defence’s statutory duty to see the Billson changes through and it did not do that.

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

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

## **DISNEYLAND**

Two blondes were driving to Disneyland when they came to a sign that said, 'DISNEYLAND LEFT', so they both started crying, turned around and went home.

## **THE ALPHABET**

I was having a beer at the pub and then the barmaid yelled, "Doe's anyone know CPR?" I yelled out, "I know the entire alphabet." Then everybody in the pub just laughed and laughed. Well except for one person.

## **GRANDFATHER**

'I'll never forget my Grandfathers last words to me just before he died.' "Are you still holding the ladder?"

## **DOCTOR**

Man: "Where exactly are you taking me, doctor?"

Doctor: "To the morgue."

Man: "What? But I'm Not dead yet!"

Doctor: "And we're not there yet!"

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## 217 Army Cadet Unit (ACU)



1. Hello Readers!
2. Spring has sprung and 217 ACU has weathered the winter..
3. In late July, we had several Cadets attend a First Aid course in 25 ACU's training location and are now qualified in First Aid. Also thanks to 25 ACU for inviting us to attend their field training weekend at Camp Chapman (Somersby) in September as this gave the Cadets plenty of additional skills to go to 21 AAC BN's AFX during the holidays.
4. 217 ACU hosted at Morisset High School the 21 AAC BN Competition Day, where Cadets from all over the Hunter and Central Coast area competed in several events including: a Senior and Junior Division Drill competition, Tug-O-War, Volleyball, Touch Footy and Vortex throwing. We had some impressive results with Tug-O-War matches going over 2 minutes and Vortex throws over 50 meters. 217 ACU performed admirably and took out 1st place in the Junior Drill Competition. A big thank you to Morisset High for allowing the Battalion to use the School facilities for this event!
5. At the end of September, 21 AAC BN held their Annual Field Exercise (AFX) at Singleton Military Area and the 4 day event was well planned with exciting activities which included, Weapons familiarisation, Navigation and First Aid scenarios along with participating in Command and Observation Posts.

Future activities include an adventure training activity at Tree Top Adventure Park - Minmi, Remembrance Day at Toronto Memorial in Goffet Park and our End of Year ceremonies on 25th November 2023..

Thank you for your continued support and patience.

*Kind regards*

*Yvonne Fuller*

**CAPT (AAC)**

**217 Army Cadet Unit (ACU)**

**Officer Commanding (OC)**

**Mobile: 0409 310 713**

**Unit email: [217acu@armycadets.gov.au](mailto:217acu@armycadets.gov.au)**



**Dan Repacholi MP**

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR HUNTER



## **Standing up for Hunter**

**Sport brings people together. It brings joy and passion. It gives people a drive to win, and a drive to improve. What better way to celebrate our veterans than cheering them on while they compete in the sport that they love. That's why I am right behind the Invictus Games.**

**The Invictus Games is an international sporting event for wounded, injured and ill serving and former serving military personnel. The games use the power of sport to support recovery, rehabilitation and generate wider understanding and respect for those who serve their country.**

**Our veterans have sacrificed a lot for our country, but these games mean that one thing they don't have to sacrifice is their love of sport.**

**This year, the games were held in Düsseldorf from 9 to 16 September. Australia's competitors participated in athletics, indoor rowing, powerlifting, road cycling, sitting volleyball, table tennis, swimming, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby.**

**Australia was strongly represented by a combined team of 31 current and former serving ADF members. These heroes made us proud, giving their all against around 500 competitors from 22 nations.**

**I know what it takes to be competing on the world stage. For these returned service men and women to be competing at the level they do, after a career in the armed forces, with all of the physical toll that comes with it, there is even more of a reason to admire them.**

**The goal of the 2023 games was to create a "Home for Respect". The games aimed to make people gain new perspectives on the significance of those who have served in the armed forces.**



**The games also have great benefits for the competitors, as well as their friends and family by being a way to show appreciation and recognition for all they have done for their country. It is a chance for millions of people around the world to pay tribute to those who serve and acknowledge their sacrifices.**

**The Invictus Games in 2025, will be a Winter Hybrid Games hosted by Canada in Vancouver and Whistler, British Columbia, the first event of its kind. I can't wait to cheer on our Aussies again, and hopefully this time we will see some athletes representing Hunter!**

**The Invictus Games are a great way to support our Veterans, but I know that there are still plenty who are doing it tough. The increasing cost of living doesn't help either. That is why I was glad to hear the Minister for Social Services, The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP, announced that there will be a boost to the support payments of Veterans.**

**Single veterans on a service pension should now be receiving an additional \$32.70, bringing their service pension to \$1096.70 a fortnight, while veterans on the Disability Compensation Payment (Special Rate), known as the Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Payment will receive an additional \$53.00 a fortnight, increasing their payment to \$1729.20.**

**Not only will the indexation of these payments help veteran families with the cost of living, certain fortnightly education allowances will also increase, ensuring veteran families are better supported.**

**I hope the additional allowance will go at least some way to easing the financial pressures which are being felt by so many.**

**Kind regards**



**Dan Repacholi MP**

***Federal Member for Hunter***

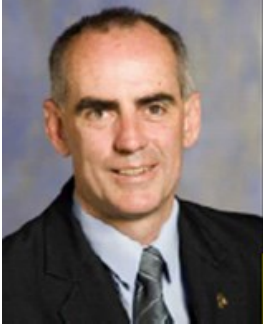
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***Email: Dan.Repacholi.MP@aph.gov.au***

***Cessnock NSW 2325***



# **Greg Piper MP**

## **Member for Lake Macquarie**



**Hello**

**I hope this latest newsletter finds you well.**

**It's been, at times, a torrid first six months of the 58<sup>th</sup> NSW Parliament. One of my roles as the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly is to oversee question time and to maintain order in the House. I can tell you it has, on occasions, been quite a challenge.**

**One of my aspirations over the next three and a half years is to improve the standard of behaviour in the Chamber (which is sometimes referred to as "the bear pit"). Of course, we are never going to make the House a "teddy bear pit" but as members of Parliament we should be able to maintain good robust debate whilst still being respectful and professional. I am up for the challenge though, and I will continue to do my best to keep the members in order and on point!**

**Locally, I had the opportunity to give NSW Premier Chris Minns a tour of Lake Macquarie in early September. While visiting Lake Macquarie the Premier confirmed an additional \$6 million in funding to address congestion issues around the Speers Point roundabout.**

**Transport for NSW are now working on plans to fix congestion and increase safety around TC Frith Avenue and The Esplanade. These plans will be provided to the community for feedback and consultation when they are finalised, I hope before the end of this year!**

**While I had the ear of the Premier, I also took the opportunity to discuss the need to improve infrastructure and services to meet the growing population of Lake Macquarie including health services and road upgrades, particularly around the Southern Lakes area.**

**In other news, in August I gave notice of a Bill I have been working on to increase the effectiveness of organ donation transplants in NSW and I am continuing to have discussions with the Government on a range of issues including mining and energy transition and the new Lake Macquarie Sport and Recreation Centre.**

**~~~Cont~~Page 29/**

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.

Best regards,



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# KOOKIES MORSELS

## HOISIN CHICKEN STIR-FRY

500g boneless chicken breasts                      2tbsp vegetable oil  
3 garlic cloves, roughly chopped                      1 onion, sliced into wedges  
2 capsicum deseeded, cut into bite sized pieces  
3 spring onions (shallots), cut into batons on an angle.

### MARINADE

3 tbsp soy sauce    ½ tsp dark soy sauce  
1 tbsp Chinese Shaoxing wine                      ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda  
3 tsp cornflour or arrowroot

### HOISIN STIR FRY SAUCE

3 tbsp hoisin sauce    3 tbsp Chinese Shaoxing wine  
1 tbsp soy sauce    ½ tsp dark soy sauce  
2 tsp white vinegar    2 tsp sugar  
1 and a ½ tsp ground black pepper.

Slice the chicken across the breasts (against the grain) on the diagonal to form wide strips about 3-4mm thick. Place in a bowl. Whisk together the marinade and pour over the chicken and mix well with your hands to make sure that each slice gets a good cover. Set aside for 10 minutes.

To make the hoisin stir-fry sauce, mix the ingredients in a bowl to combine and set aside.

When ready, heat the oil in a large non-stick frying pan or wok over high heat. Add the onion and stir fry for about 30 seconds. Push the onion to the sides of the pan and add the chicken and the marinade into the centre. Spread the chicken out as much as possible and leave for about for 3-4 minutes, or until a crust begins to form. Then combine with the other ingredients in the wok.

Toss through the garlic. Then add the capsicum. Stir fry for another 30 seconds (leaving the capsicum crunchy) or until everything is well coated, the sauce has thickened slightly, and the chicken has finished cooking. Toss through the spring onions and serve over rice or as is, your choice.

Serves: 2 to 3 plus

*Bon appetit*

*Delish*



# Kookies Morsels Cont....

## SIMPLE CURRIED SAUSAGES

6 thick/thin sausages your choice as to the sausage and flavour

1 tbsp vegetable oil.

1 large brown onion, halved, sliced thin.

1 carrot peeled and thinly sliced

1 tbsp Keens curry powder

1 cup frozen peas

350ml Beef stock

1 tbsp cornflour or arrowroot

2 tbsp water

Heat the oil in a large frypan over medium to high heat, add the sausages and fry until browned all over, turning often to cook through then set aside, allow to cool slightly and then cut on an angle about 4cm slices, set aside. In the same pan add the onion and carrot and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, do not burn, cook until the onion is translucent. Then add the curry powder, beef stock and return the sausages to the pan. Bring to the boil then reduce to a simmer,

Mix the cornstarch or arrowroot with the 2 tbsp of cold water in a small cup, pour into the pan with the curried sausages and gently mix through. Add the peas and continue cooking for about another 5 minutes until the sauce thickens.

Season with salt and pepper. Serve over mashed potato, cooked rice, pasta or noodles. Serves 2-3

*Bon appetit*

*Delish*

### **JIGSAW**

Why was the blonde so pleased she completed her jigsaw puzzle in only 3 months?

Because on the box it said, '3 to 5 years'!

### **MAFIA HIT-MEN**

Two mafia hit-men drove down this old dirt road into the forest, pulled up got out and proceeded to walk deep into the bush.

One hitman said to the other, "Gee! It's really dark and scary here in the bush, isn't it?" The other one said, "Yeah, but just think how I'm gonna feel walking back out to the car by myself."



# **Nasho's News**

**Westlake Macquarie**  
**National Servicemen's Association**



**Spring is here with its unpredictable weather, but it looks like being a hot one.**

**We had a good roll-up at the Rathmines Catalina Club, twenty-five attended and had a great day. Meals were mainly Thai, and the desserts were very huge.**

**My wife Marjorie was very scared when she saw all that ice cream. Alf and Margaret Sulman were unable to make it as they had been ill. Margaret is having chemotherapy, since then Margaret and Alf have moved to Cameron Glen Retirement Village.**

**Greg Piper's Government House Tour including lunch was done with two trips. Some members missed out due to illness and had to cancel.**

**Lunch at Doyalson R.S.L. was arranged by Central Coast (Toukley) Secretary Teresa Witby and her husband Ron. We had four members in attendance and Newcastle had four, also a couple from Gosford, because they had a funeral that day. I got a big surprise to see the huge alterations that the Doyalson R.S.L. have made, it is a very classy club with excellent parking. It was good to meet a lot of old friends and also make some new ones. As a result, a very good day was had by all.**

**September 17<sup>th</sup> we had the State Annual Meeting at Lakemba R.S.L. One of the items that did come up was to join the National Service of Australia Association but this was rejected by 100% vote again. Rumours about us closing is not true, we will just continue to operate as we are.**

**Our youngest member, Warren Taylor passed away. He was the son of Committee man John Taylor and wife Margaret. Warren was a member of the Toronto Brass Band in which he played the tuba. The funeral was assisted by the Toronto Brass Band at Toronto United Church, then to Rhyhope for burial. We then attended the Toronto Diggers Club for the wake.**

**Our next outing for November has not yet been planned.**

**We still have a lot of sick and incapacitated members but we must all look on the bright side and carry on.**

**Gordon Maxwell**  
**President**

## **NEW COMBAT VEHICLE**

Minister for Defence Industry Pat Conroy has **confirmed at a press conference in Canberra** in late July 2023 that Hanwha Defence Australia has secured the contract to build 129 Redback infantry fighting vehicles for the Commonwealth under Land 400 Phase 3.



The decision comes nearly five years since Defence issued its Land 400 Phase 3 (Mounted Combat Capability) Request for Tender.

It also comes just four months after the number of Infantry Fighting Vehicles (IFVs) expected by Army to replace its long-obsolete M113AS4 armoured personnel carriers was slashed from 450 to 129 in April's Defence Strategic Review (DSR).

With this number inclusive of training, repair and attrition stock, the IFVs will equip a single mechanised battalion, in particular for littoral manoeuvre, as part of a single armoured combined-arms brigade “able to meet the most demanding land challenges in our region”.

South Korea's Hanwha beat out competition from Germany's Rheinmetall to secure the contract, which is the first time a multi-billion dollar Australian defence contract has been awarded to an Asian nation.

# **HMAS Anzac conducts Exercise Lumbas 2023 in the Philippines**

*28 JULY 2023*

Philippine Navy bilateral Exercise Lumbas has drawn to a close in Subic Bay with Anzac Class frigate HMAS *Anzac* taking part during a regional presence deployment.

The crews of Philippine Navy ship BRP *Conrado Yap* and *Anzac* joined for the five-day exercise, which was a valuable opportunity to train together.

Royal Australian Navy (RAN) Commanding Officer HMAS *Anzac*, Commander Barton Harrington said Lumbas aimed to build skills through expert exchanges, enhance cooperation and deepen cultural and people-to-people ties.

“We joined our Philippine Navy counterparts both ashore for the opening and closing ceremonies and at sea, off their coast to conduct a series of training activities in warfare, maritime security and seamanship,” he said.

“Now in its 23rd iteration, Lumbas is one of the RAN’s longest-running recurring engagements in the region. It is an important and longstanding activity in our bilateral engagement with the Philippines.

“Australia is committed to working closely with the Philippines to support a region that is stable, secure and prosperous and where the rule of law prevails.

“I’m proud of the hard work put in by everyone aboard *Anzac* and it was great to see the engagement between all participants of Lumbas,” Commander Harrington said.

Australia and the Philippines have agreed to formally elevate the bilateral relationship to a strategic partnership, with Defence and maritime cooperation as core pillars.

*Anzac* commenced the regional presence deployment in April demonstrating Australia’s commitment to and engagement with the Indo-Pacific region





*15 August 2023*

**United States Army units were invited to join Australia's 3rd Brigade on its annual culminating live-fire activity at Townsville Field Training Area this month.**

**Shortly after Exercise Talisman Sabre, units from the 3rd Brigade conducted Exercise Broлга Sprint with the United States 25th Infantry and 1st Armoured Divisions, during which infantry, armour, artillery and combat engineers worked together to achieve the mission.**

**Platforms involved in the exercise included ARH Tiger, M1A1 Abrams, M777 howitzers, 81-millimetre mortars, S AH-64 Apaches, M1A2 Abrams, UH-60 Black Hawks and CH-47 Chinooks.**

**Commanding Officer 4th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, Lieutenant Colonel David Silverstone, said this year's exercise was adjusted to test the two allies' ability to integrate.**

**"We saw United States tanks integrated within an Australian tank squadron, our Tigers flying alongside the United States Apaches, and Australian and United States firing guns side by side," Lieutenant Colonel Silverstone said. "We're learning about what we do differently, but most importantly we're discovering the similarities between our nations."**

**A major component of the exercise involved air mobility operations and air assault serials. ~~~~~Cont Page 36/..**

Cont from Page 35/..

Sergeant Tyler Stewart, of the United States Air Force, is a Joint Terminal Attack Controller who embedded with Australian manoeuvre elements to de-conflict the battlespaces on the ground and in the air.

“The integration between air and ground elements is very important to ensure the exercise runs smoothly and safely,” Sergeant Stewart said.

“As we work together, we’re learning from one another, which is important to secure both our nations’ future endeavours.

“We’re working hard, but at the same time we’ve created a fun atmosphere, and it’s been a privilege to work alongside you all.”

### *PROVERB*

Never argue with stupid people, because they’ll drag you down to their level and then beat you with experience.

*Mark Twain*

### *IRISH*

Paddy had long heard the stories of an amazing family tradition. It seems his father, grandfather and great-grandfather had all been able to walk on water on their 18th birthday. On that special day, they’d each walked across the lake to the pub on the far side for their first legal drink.

So, when Paddy’s 18th birthday came around, he and his pal Jim took a boat out to the middle of the lake, Paddy, stepped out of the boat and .....nearly drowned! Jim just barely managed to pull him to safety .

Furious and confused, Paddy went to see his grandmother.

“Grandma,” he asked, “Tis me 18th birthday, so why can’t I walk on the lake like me father, his father and his father before him?”

Granny looked deeply into Paddy’s troubled blue eyes and said, “Because ye father, ye grandfather and ye great-grandfather were all born in December, when the lake is frozen and ye were born in August, ya flamin idiot!”



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