



DISPATCHES

September 2018

"The price of Liberty is eternal Vigilance"



NOTE YOUR
DIARY NOW

Attention - Must read

Our next **General Meeting** is on
Thursday 20th September at 9.30am
in the Montgomery Theatre.

NOTE THE CHANGED DATE
NOT THE 13th September

Guest Speaker: **Ben Webb, Center
Manager - Veterans Center - Sydney
Northern Beaches**
Topic: **"What We Do"**

The President's Message

On the 18th of August our sub-Branch, in conjunction with RSL LifeCare, conducted the third Annual Vietnam Veterans Day Service. Held in the Chapel it was attended by 42 people, many of whom were Vietnam Veterans and their wives/partners/friends. The focus this year was on the 50th anniversary of the Battles of Coral and Balmoral.

The guest speaker was Ron Lehn, a resident and former member of the Australian Army who served in Vietnam.

In my introduction to the service, I quoted from the Winter Edition of 'Vetaffairs', highlighting the recent award of the Unit Citation for "those who were there".

For many, this is a long and overdue award, with recognition and reminder of service given and a sad reminder of 26 lives lost. For the veteran family it is an affirmation that we should never give up on seeking recognition and support for all who have worn the uniform of our country's Defence Force.

Regardless of the where/when/length of service, our continuing aim should be to be there for each other – "Mates helping Mates" – in all circumstances.

'Lest We Forget'

Bob Durbin
President

Welfare Update

Hello members, Sadly this last month we have had several members pass away and it is felt by all our members, however I am always encouraged by the friendly way our members soldier on in a positive way. I will be away for the month of September and one of our members, Janet Slater will be filling in for me. Janet and her partner Peter are a lovely and friendly couple who live at the Dardanelles and are always willing to assist in any way. I will be looking forward to catching up when I return, so please all stay well and happy.

Warm regards to all Patti Page.

Important Dates for your Diary

Friday 14th September noon

"Dispatches" copy deadline. This is early as the Editor is away for most of September. Please consider contributing.

Thursday 20th September 9.30am

General Meeting – Montgomery Theatre.

Guest Speaker: Ben Webb from the Veterans Center Sydney Northern Beaches. Topic: "What We Do"

Thursday 11th Oct. 9.30am

General Meeting – Montgomery Theatre.

Special Guest speaker

Wednesday 17th Oct. Twilight Bowls. War Vets Village Bowling Club Members Vs sub-Branch Members.

The perpetual trophy is at stake. Bowling sub-Branch members can choose to represent the Bowling Club. Members are welcome to participate or be a spectator. Entry fee for all \$5. Meet at 2.30pm at the Bowls Club Locker Room (Beside the Chapel).

Registration during the week before 3pm

on Green to bowl away. 5pm finish bowling. 5.30pm to 7.00pm after function, Lone Pine Lounge, Gallipoli Building. Light refreshments and drinks. Raffle to be run by Bowling Club during the afternoon and evening.

Membership

Membership Data Base:

The amended membership program has been received, now waiting to be loaded to RSLLifeCare computer system.

Once completed the Membership Officer will be able to obtain real time information on each member, the type of membership each holds and the number of members in each membership category e.g. Service members, affiliate members etc.

Membership Details:

Your advice of ANY change to personal details e.g. new address, phone number, your email address, would be appreciated.

Name Badges:

It's always nice to put a name to a face.

Please can all members, life members, service members, affiliates, associates, wear your name badge. If you don't have one, email our Membership Officer or add your name to the List at the meeting.

Starting from our September meeting, when you leave the meeting, please put your name badge into the collection tray provided. At the October meeting your name badge will be set out on the table ready for you to collect and wear.

Denise Kuessner
Membership Officer

My Medal Matters



To any reader who (after seeing all of a Veterans medals) may be asking the question "what did you do throughout your war service". I give this simple answer.

Except for volunteering at 16 years of age, to go to war in 1938

and also repeating it in 1950 for the United Nations first conflict in the Korean War, I usually say, "Forget all those medals, I simply did what I was told to do".

Although it may be incorrect to wear my one "foreign decoration" well apart from my string of British Commonwealth and United Nations Medals, I feel that in the Editor's "My Medal Matters" series, my Favourite Medal warrants the privileged position in which I always place it. I refer of course to the French decoration of Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur.

On the afternoon of Monday the 5th of April 2015, an embassy car arrived at my front door, to take myself and a few friends to the Naval Dockyard of Garden Island.

Later that evening, aboard the French frigate FNS Vendemiaire, with the media in full attendance, I became the recipient of two awards:



The first being the official badge of the Normandy Association. This was presented to me by the French Consul General.



The second and by far the very prestigious award was the medal itself, which was pinned to my jacket lapel by the French Ambassador, His Excellence Christophe Lecourtier.

Accompanied with the awards, was a framed document signed by Le President de la Republique Francalse, and from that document I quote, "Veteran de la deuxieme guerre

mondiale", or possibly in plain English "on the 70th anniversary of my "D Day 6th June 1944 landing" and the subsequent liberation of the entire French mainland, just four months later.

This award originated by Napoleon Bonaparte, is unlike any other medal that is worn, being the highest that can be given to any person not of French decent. It's more like a piece of high class jewellery.

Reg No. 6204805

Corporal Clifford Thomas Stevens
9th Battalion, Middlesex Regiment
Willesden, Pound Lane, NW London

Transferred to Royal Artillery, Anti Aircraft Battery
UK in 1939 at the outbreak of World War 2.

Chaplain's Corner

Something to smile about, a lot to ponder upon, but all with a gem of positive thoughts for you. Enjoy!

A Great Lesson on Stress.

A young lady confidently walked around the room with a raised glass of water while leading a seminar and explaining stress management to her audience. Everyone knew she was going to ask the ultimate question, 'half empty or half full?' She fooled them all. "How heavy is this glass of water?" she inquired with a smile. Answers called out ranged from 8 oz. to 20 oz.

She replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long I hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes."

She continued, "and that's the way it is with stress. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on."

"As with the glass of water, you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. When we're refreshed, we can carry on with the burden - holding stress longer and better each time practiced.

So, as early in the evening as you can, put all your burdens down. Don't carry them through the evening and into the night. Pick them up again tomorrow if you must.

1. Accept the fact that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue!
2. Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.
3. Always read stuff that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.
4. Drive carefully... It's not only cars that can be recalled by their Maker.
5. If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.
6. If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
7. It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.
8. Never buy a car you can't push.
9. Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you won't have a leg to stand on.
10. Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
11. Since it's the early worm that gets eaten by the bird, sleep late.
12. The second mouse gets the cheese.
13. When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
14. Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.
15. Some mistakes are too much fun to make only once.

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16. We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names and all are different colors, but they all have to live in the same box.

17. A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.

18. Have an awesome day and know that someone has thought about you today.

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY

19. Save the earth..... It's the only planet with chocolate!

Today someone asked me if I liked you all. I laughed, and said, "Ha! That's funny!! I absolutely LOVE them!! They're funny, caring, crazy as heck, sweet, beautiful, they're reading this email right now & I love them!!"

Be the kind of person that when your feet hit the floor each morning the devil says~~ "Oh Crap, she's up!

Treasurer Horst Kuessner Bio



Born, 11th February 1941 in a town called Thorn, a German piece of acquired territory known as the Polish Corridor, approx two hundred kilometres east of Berlin. There for 3-4 years until the Russians advanced on

Germany. My mother then decided it was time to return to Berlin, the place of her birth and her remaining family. My father was a bomber pilot who got shot down and killed over the Bay of Biscay early 1944.

Up to the end of the war, mother and I kept moving from Berlin in a south-west direction seeking to evade the Russians. We ended up in Munich and as mother had fortunately learnt English in school, she obtained a job as a translator with the US occupation forces.

With Germany practically destroyed as a result of the war, we joined the refugee queue. I believe the choice was Canada or Australia, the latter won. In October 1949 we embarked on an American Troop Carrier (General Hersey), destination Melbourne, then Albury-Wodonga. Fate played its hand with the Troop Carrier being called to Korea to pick up wounded US troops, so we were unceremoniously dropped off in Fremantle. A train was organised to take us to the Northern ex Army Camp 5kms out of Northam Township, it had no normal town facilities.

Accommodation in Northam consisted of the standard long barrack buildings without fittings, featuring natural air conditioning with dividing walls between family units being old over-lapping Army blankets suspended from fencing wire. Beds were the old camp stretchers with palliasses mattress and some other basic old ex Army furniture items.

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Little education facilities were offered, so we left in February. I resumed primary school in 1950 in Grade 1, as I had no knowledge of English. At the end of the school year I was in my Grade for my age. I completed primary and high school in 1958 and started at University of WA in 1959.

That was the start of a new life – freedom. After three years at Uni, my notion of becoming a Nobel prize winning scientist vanished! Somebody forgot to tell me I had to study. Mother determined I needed a disciplined career path – “Join the Army”, she said, which I did on 14th February 1962.

Recruit training followed by Corps training, in Artillery, indicated that wasn't the life for me. I was encouraged to apply for entry to Officer Cadet School, Portsea, Victoria. I commenced training in January 1963, graduating in December 1963. The next few years were spent learning the practical ropes of becoming an Officer.

I served in South Vietnam from May 1969 to May 1970. On return from Vietnam I was fortunate to be posted in Perth where I recommenced part time study at University.

After two years part time, the Army agreed I could do the following year full time, so I completed my degree in Science majoring in Physics and Maths.

Finishing my degree it was time for posting again – initially to HQ Field Force Command in Sydney. Before I was due to leave Perth, my posting was changed to HQ Papua New Guinea Defence Force, Port Moresby, arriving there on 30th December 1973. By then my family had increased to two sons. We left Port Moresby in January 1976 having done my promotion exams and Corps training being promoted to Major.

In February 1976, I took up Squadron Commander, in 6 Signal Regiment in Melbourne. In early 1978, I was finally posted to Canberra. At the end of 1979 we went to England for one year, where I attended Division One, Royal Military College of Science. At the conclusion I was posted back to Canberra where I finished my military career on 15th September 1985.

I commenced a ten year plus career with the Australian Federal Police retiring on 17th July 1996. My principal activity was the design and commissioning of building security systems for new buildings for occupation by the AFP.

During my time with the AFP, I was fortunate to meet Denise and we have enjoyed our life together for 27 years.

Medical problems and major back surgery in 2011 together with the lack of medical backup in the country area, forced us out of our lovely 2 acre property in the mid north coast. We moved into this lovely Retirement Village in June 2012. My health continues to improve over the years to enable more involvement in activities.

My advice to a friend – Get yourself into a retirement village as soon as you turn 55, you'll never regret it.

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My political views both national and international are rather cynical – for the last many years, all I have heard is lots of hot air, seen little achievement for humanity, society, the country and environment, plus huge wastes of public monies.

My favourite saying comes from mother when checking me out before going out one night. She said “oben beglissen, unter beschissen”. Rough translation – “on top you glitter, on the bottom you look like. . . . (I’m sure you can translate the last word).

Finally, thank you for electing me to be your Treasurer – I am enjoying it, although it is challenging in the current times.

* * * * *



Shirley McLaren

Patron: “Sydney, Women’s Royal Australian Air Force (WRAAF)”.

I have led the WRAAF in the Anzac Day March in Sydney for more than 30 years

Coordinator: “Northern Beaches War Widows Guild NSW.”

Coordinator: “RSL Anzac Village Ex-service women”

Note: Coordinators do not have a committee. A Coordinator is a combination of President, Secretary, Treasurer and committee member, (a general gopher).

The reason that organisations created Coordinators, was because nobody in their senior years, wanted to be tied down to a committee.

Organisations would have folded’.

War Vets RSL Sub-Branch “Angel”.

Life member: “Defence Force Welfare Association (D.F.W.A.)”

Meetings held, 1030 hrs, 4 times a year at the Women’s Club, Elizabeth St., Sydney,

“Legacy meeting and Friendship Lunch”. Held at Dee Why RSL Club, 1st Tuesday of the month at 1200pm.

“Lightly Strung Orchestra (L.S.O.) Ukulele”. Held in the Montgomery Centre, RSL Anzac Village. each Monday at 10.00am.

“New Vogue and Social Dancing”. Held at Manly Seniors Club, Pittwater Rd., Manly, every Sunday at 1pm.

In my “Spare ? time”, I crochet “Granny Rugs” for family , friends and RSL Anzac Village Care Homes.

AND I have been known, a soon as I sit in my recliner chair, close my eyes, I sometimes have a “Nana Nap”. !!!

* * * * *

Email the Editor of “*Dispatches*” with any comments that can enhance the future editions.

dougsmyth.wvsb@bigpond.com



Mad Hatters Morning Tea



Our Newest Member at age 95



Stan Grant is welcomed by President Bob Durbin.

Note Stan is proudly wearing his new RSL Badge pinned on his lapel by Bob.

This welcome was special as Stan’s granddaughter Kate was present.

Even learning Journalists get it wrong, let alone our Editor

Due to a misinterpretation, the 1944 section of Norm Ziegler’s “My Medal Matters” article, in last month’s issue of “*Dispatches*” should have read:

1944. Mobilised and commenced Basic Training at HMAS CERBERUS, South of Melbourne, Victoria. My first morning Parade, before a very young Midshipman we were asked, “Anyone want to go to the OTC?” Being ignorant of Naval Lingo, I thought he was referring to the toilet so I didn’t join the 5 fellow rookies who stepped forward to go to Officer’s Training College.

Shirley’s “My Medal Matters” article was missing a very important sentence.

“Ex-Service women who served in the Royal Australian Army, Navy, Air Force, 1951 – 1977, enlisted for 4 years, with discharge on marriage.”

This was what the fight was all about.

The Government was adamant. You HAD to have served for 6 years to qualify for the Australian Defence Medal.