



# War Veterans Village [Narrabeen] RSL Sub-Branch

Through an active membership we keep the ANZAC spirit alive and growing

## MARCH NEWSLETTER 2015

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Sub-Branch Office Hours Monday and Thursday 9am – noon Phone 8978 4266

**“The Butterfly counts not months but moments  
and has time enough”**

### The President's Message



Saint Patrick's Day luncheon Tuesday 17 March  
To be held at the Waterview Restaurant at  
Berowra Waters. Bus leaves 9.45 am from Colooli  
Road in front of the Gallipoli Building.

**So far 22 members have booked for  
Saint Patrick's Day luncheon, we need 9 more  
members to ensure that we cover the cost of the  
bus. Come along you will have a great time.  
Contact Doug at the Sub-Branch office 8978 466.**

Services Bowls Day Tuesday 17 February was  
another great day filled with lots of laughs and  
comradery and of course won by Army.

The presentation by our guest speaker, Tony  
Griffiths last meeting was very interesting with a  
twist at the end of his presentation. Tony spoke of  
a young Aboriginal lad Douglas Grant the Black  
Digger from the Scottish Mob who was raised by a  
Scottish family and who eventually joined the  
Australian Army to fight in the Great War. The  
twist in the story was that this lad eventually found  
himself in later life as retired veteran living at the  
War Vets.



We need you at our Annual General Meeting  
Thursday 12 March and at the ANZAC Centenary  
March and Commemorative service to be held in  
at Pittwater Park on Sunday 19 April 2015.

President  
George Main

### Chaplain's Comment

On the 4<sup>th</sup> March we will be moving in to our new  
chapel here at The War Vets and what a wonderful  
place it is. It will provide a new spiritual home for  
worship, prayer, funerals and hopefully more  
baptisms and weddings! There have been people  
who have said that they may now start coming to  
church in the village. It is so wonderful that people  
are seeing this as a positive moment in the spiritual  
life of our village.

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### Chaplains Corner Continued:

I am pleased to say that the memorabilia has been  
transferred from the old chapel, the 'Ghan Cross'  
from Tarin Kowt is in place and our links to our  
military heritage have been cemented. Many  
people, residents and visitors alike who have come  
to look at what is more than just a building.

As we commemorate the Centenary of ANZAC I  
wonder how many will also make some type of  
pilgrimage, either to a local memorial or to one  
further afield for similar reasons?

As Christians we come to give thanks for the  
sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as  
members of the Defence family we come to give  
thanks for the sacrifices made for our country.

My prayer is that ALL who share the freedoms and  
way of life so dearly fought for and won at  
incredible cost, will also publicly give thanks for the  
great country in which we all share and live. My  
prayer is also, that we will not confine our thanks to  
ANZAC Day, but every day.

Bob Durbin  
Chaplain

### Dates to Remember

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March Committee Meeting  
11.00am (**Sub-Branch Office**)

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March General Meeting  
9.30am (**Montgomery Centre**) followed  
by Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March **St Patrick's Day** 12pm  
Waterview Restaurant, Berowra Waters  
Bus leaves 9.45am from Colooli Road in  
front of the Gallipoli Centre. \$60pp. Last  
opportunity to purchase a ticket is at the March  
General Meeting

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April (after Easter Monday)  
Committee Meeting 11.00am (**Sub-Branch Office**)

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April General Meeting  
9.30am (**Montgomery Centre**) Guest Speaker  
Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> **Warringah and Mackellar Federal  
Electorates ANZAC Centenary Commemoration**  
11.00am at Pittwater Park.

### Who's Who - Name Tags

**Please wear your name tag to all Meetings**  
(If you need a name tag please drop the Hon.  
Secretary a note and request one.)

### Have a laugh

**I have reached the age in life where it is harder to  
find temptation than to resist it.**

**The man who can smile when all goes wrong has  
probably just thought of someone he can blame it  
on.**

## Adrian Paul Ghislain Carton de Wiart

*Continued from last months Newsletter. The article was handed to the Editor by Len Grant who received it in an email from David McFarlane. Thanks.*

It was during the battle of Somme in July 1916 that he won the Victoria Cross, the British Empire's highest award for gallantry in combat. His citation read: *"For most conspicuous bravery, coolness and determination during severe operations of a prolonged nature. It was owing, in a great measure to his dauntless courage and inspiring example that a serious reverse was averted. He displayed the utmost energy and courage in forcing our attack home. After three other battalion Commanders had become casualties, he controlled their commands, and ensured that the ground won was maintained at all costs. He frequently exposed himself in the organisation of positions and of supplies, passing unflinchingly through the barrage of the most intense nature. His gallantry was inspiring to all."*

In his later autobiography, 'Happy Odyssey', he made no mention of his VC. Of the First World War itself, and despite the loss of various body parts, he said: "Frankly I enjoyed the war."

From 1919-1921, Carlton de Wiart saw further front line action in Poland against the Red Army in the Polish-Soviet War. On one occasion, while out on his observation train, he was attacked by a group of Red cavalry. He fought them off with his revolver from the running board of the train, at one point falling on the track and quickly jumping back on. He even survived an aircraft crash which led to a brief period in Lithuanian captivity.

He retired from the Army in 1923 with the honorary rank of major general, and spent the next 15 years shooting waterfowl on a friend's 500,000 acre marshland estate in Poland - his home a converted hunting and gaming lodge on an island, only a few miles from the Soviet border.

His peaceful life was rudely interrupted by the Second World War in 1939, when he was recalled as head of the British Military Mission in Poland. When Poland was attacked by both Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in September 1939, the estate was overrun and all Carton de Wait's possessions were confiscated by the Soviets, then destroyed by the Germans in later fighting. He never saw the area again.

Carton de Wiart and his mission team escaped Poland by road convoy, with the Germans and the Russians in hot pursuit. Despite being attacked from the air by the Luftwaffe, the convoy made it across the Romanian border, He then made it back to England by aircraft, travelling under a false passport.

In 1940 he was dispatched to Norway, where he took charge of an Anglo-French force with orders to take the city of Trondheim.

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With few supplies and little support, he managed to move his forces over the mountains and down to Trondheim Fjord, despite coming under frequent attack from the Luftwaffe, being shelled by German naval destroyers and machine gunned by German ski troops. Unable to effectively challenge the superior German forces, Carton de Wiart was eventually ordered to evacuate. Royal Navy transports got his men away, but they were bombed severely on the way out. Carton de Wiart arrived back at Scapa Flow on his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Even back on British soil, he found himself on the front line when his London home was bombed by the Germans during the Blitz. All of his medals and decorations were destroyed or lost and he had to apply to the War Office for official replacements.

In 1941 he was appointed head of the British-Yugoslavian Mission. When his aircraft was heading to Cairo both engines failed and the plane crash landed in the Mediterranean. He was knocked unconscious in the crash but the cold water revived him and when the plane sank, he and the crew swam a mile to shore, where they were captured by the Italians.

Sent to a special prison for senior officers in Italy. He made five escape attempts, one which included seven months of tunneling. During one attempt, He evaded capture for eight days disguised as an Italian peasant - but his age, eye patch, empty sleeve, multiple scars and lack of Italian gave him away.

He was released from prison in 1943 and taken to Rome to act as messenger to the British government. He was accompanied by an Italian negotiator to Portugal to meet Allied contacts to facilitate the surrender. From Portugal he made his way back to England. On his way back he stopped at Rangoon as a guest of the local army commander. Coming down stairs, he slipped on coconut matting, fell, broke his back and knocked himself unconscious. He eventually made it back to England and into a hospital where he slowly recovered. The doctors succeeded in extracting an incredible amount of shrapnel from his old wounds during his hospitalisation.

After discharge he was immediately summoned by Churchill to be his personal representative in China, where he worked for the rest of the war and up to his retirement in 1947.

He finally settled in County Cork, Ireland, where he died in 1963 at the age of 83.



Medals & Decorations of Lieutenant-General Sir Adrian Paul Ghislain Carton de Wiart VC KBE CB CMG DSO