WELCOME TO “51-72”

Hi everyone, So we are well and truly into the planning stages of all the trips we have organised for you. We have a couple of date changes, due to circumstances beyond our control and these are on the back page of this newsletter and will be added to the new Yearly Agenda, which will be sent out not too far behind this newsletter. I have had to wait to finish both until I was given the new confirmed dates, which I only received this evening, so my apologies for the delayed sending.

For most of the planned trips we will need a minimum of 20 people, so please consider booking in. The rest of this year is jam packed with wonderful trips, both single and multi-day, which are ALL at heavily discounted prices, due to the whole bus costs being covered by our grant. So take advantage of these great offers.

Don't forget that Saturday 18 August is Vietnam Veterans Day, service at Little Street memorial at 2pm, please wear uniforms and medals. Cheers, Kim Dwyer

REPORTS

PRESIDENT - Hi members, It’s not the best time of the year, is it but it is winter. Our AGM went well in our re-modelled meeting venue, with a few new faces on your committee for the coming year. The new committee is: President - Keith McNeil; Vice President - Kevin Dwyer; Secretary - Keith McNeil; Assist. Sec. - Marlene Meyer; Treasurer - Judy Russell; Assistant Treasurer - Robyn Tattam; Social Secretary - Kim Dwyer; Honours and Awards - Kevin Dwyer; SWONS co-ordinator - Pat Janes; Welfare Officer - Robyn James; Quarter-master - Kevin Dwyer; Publicity and Archives Officer - Barry Bolton; Committee members - Rex Meyer, Ron Wallingford.

I would like to express my appreciation to those who stood down this year, as they have done a very good job for our Sub-Branch in past years, thank you Gloria McNeil, Eric Janes, John McNeil, Sharon McNeil.

We are about to embark on a new era for our Sub-Branch social activities now that we have the $50,499 financial grant from the DVA and the next bus trip to Maitland will be partly subsidised by this grant money.

The state Branch AGM and annual conference in Sydney is coming up soon, in September. Would anyone like to represent us? Petrol money is supplied by us, so please let me know if you would like to go.

Happy Parade, Keith McNeil

SECRETARY - Our Sub-Branch is still travelling along very well. We seem to lose some members and then we gain new members, so we are probably the biggest Sub-Branch in NSW at present. If not the biggest, we certainly are the most active Sub-Branch . At the last Great Lakes AGM not one member present offered to fill the vacant position of Hon Secretary, so I volunteered to do the job. Is there a member out there who did not attend the election meeting, who might like to have a go at being our Hon. Secretary? If so I can give as much support to that person that may be required, but please be mindful that some computer skills are required and all out going cost incurred by this work will be covered by your Sub-Branch.

I would like to let you know that our State President Ron Brown has been on the sick list a lot lately and was still in hospital at last report to me. We send him our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Cheers, Keith McNeil
SUB-BRANCH HAPPENINGS

TEN-PIN BOWLING CHAMPIONSHIP - TUESDAY 23rd JULY 2019 - Unfortunately today we were well down on numbers, compared to recent years, with only 19 for lunch and 11 bowling. Those who didn’t join us for lunch today certainly missed out, as this was our first time dining in the new Eastern Tiger Restaurant at the Bowling Club and it was wonderful. There were a few regulars not bowling today, due to ill health, so that was a shame. However those who did bowl put on a good show for us spectators. The winners on the day were: Ladies Scratch Winner - Robyn Tattam, Ladies handicap winner - Sonia Oates; Men’s Scratch Winner - Paul Fitzgerald, Men’s Handicap winner - Keith McNeil. Congratulations and well done to the winners and a big thank you to everyone who participated. Hopefully next year our numbers at this event will be back up again.

The happy winners, and The fun that it was all about today

PEACE DAY IN LONDON, JULY 1919

To celebrate and mark the end of World War 1, a Bank Holiday was declared in Britain, having been decided by a committee chaired by Lord Curzon, foreign secretary: We, considering that, with a view to the more wide-spread and general celebration of the Conclusion of Peace, it is desirable that Saturday, the Nineteenth day of July instant, should be observed as a Bank Holiday and as a Public Holiday throughout the United Kingdom

Though November 1918 had marked the end of fighting on the Western Front, negotiations were to continue at the Paris Peace Conference until 1920, with the “high and tremendous task of settling the peace terms’. The Treaty of Versailles was not signed until June 1919.

Victory March through London, on 19th July 1919.

Once negotiations were nearing their end and “proper peace” was within sight, a peace committee was set up with the intention of deciding how Britain would publicly mark the end of the war and do justice to the widespread feelings of jubilation.

The committee first met on 9th May 1919. Its members, led by Curzon, at first considered a 4-day August celebration, including a river pageant. But this was simplified and reduced to a single day on 19 July, under the perhaps more reserved direction of David Lloyd George, Prime Minister.

Though the prevailing mood was in the main triumphant, the proposal of a day of celebration and victory parade attracted some criticism from those who felt that the money would be better spent supporting returning servicemen who faced physical and mental injuries, and who needed work and a place to live. The Unemployment Insurance Act of 1920 attempted to address this by raising the amount of contributions given and the number of workers who could claim.

On the morning of the 19th July, thousands gathered in London, having arrived overnight. It was a spectacle never seen before, with nearly 15,000 troops taking part in the victory parade, led by Allied commanders Pershing (head of the US Expeditionary Force), Foch (Allied supreme commander) and Haig (British commander in chief), who saluted fallen comrades. Bands played, and the central parks of London hosted performances and entertained the crowds.

That morning, King George V issued a message: To these, the sick and wounded who cannot take part in the festival of victory, I send out greetings and bid them good cheer, assuring them that the wounds and scars so honourable in themselves, inspire in the hearts of their fellow countrymen the warmest feelings of gratitude and respect.

A monument to those killed and wounded was unveiled in Whitehall, to mark the end point of the victory parade, soon to be decorated with flower wreaths. Architect, Sir Edwin Lutyens, was commissioned by Lloyd George at the start of the month to design the monument, and had just 2 weeks to create a piece befitting of the memory of the fallen. Though it was a temporary wood and plaster construction, another made from Portland stone was to replace it in 1920, which still stands today. Though the main spectacle was in London, other celebrations organised by local authorities and communities took place in cities, towns and villages across the country.
Surviving Australian troops were on hard-earned R&R at Messines in Belgium, just over a century ago, as their Canadian reinforcements took on Germans 20km away, in the corpse-littered crater bog of Passchendaele.

Since joining the Third Battle of Ypres in September, Australian forces had amassed 38,000 casualties, with 12,000 deaths, in punishing battles at Menin Road, Polygon Wood, Broodseinde and Poelcapelle.

The British infantry attack that began on 31 July 1917, would claim about 310,000 Allied casualties in an offensive that won just 8 km of German-held territory. Despite the losses, British Field-Marshall General Douglas Haig persisted with the attack to drive German forces back from the Belgian coast.

Australian efforts at Menin Road over 5 days from 20 September, Polygon Wood from 26 September to 3 October, Broodseinde on 4 October helped the Allies take possession of a ridge east of Ypres. But battles at Poelcapelle on 9 and 12 October made little progress.

Haig then ordered Canadian commander Lieutenant General Arthur Currie to bring his four divisions from France to Flanders to take up the battle around the ruins of Passchendaele village. Currie objected to what he considered a reckless attack.

Canadian Corps took turns to assault Passchendaele ridge in four attacks that gained just a few hundred metres. The 1st attack was 26 October, when the Canadians lost almost all its junior officers after just one hour. Their 3rd attack was 6 November, under clear skies, turning to cloudy but no rain, noted by Flemish pastor Achiel Van Welleghem, describing an enormous artillery barrage by several thousand cannons.

Under heavy fire, Canadians in the 6th Brigade struggled in Ravebeek Valley, where men were knee deep, and in places waist deep, in mud and water. As they entered Passchendaele, Corporal H.C. Baker described shell exploded bodies, scattered everywhere so that you could not avoid stepping on them. Men of his 28th were falling like ninepins, but it was worse for the Germans. If they stood to surrender, they would be caught in machinegun fire from their rear and killed, if they tried to move back, they would be caught in the Allied artillery barrage. The advancing men moved from shell hole to shell hole and crouched in the cellars of destroyed buildings. By 7.10am Canadians were streaming through the village and were bayoneting the Germans in the rubble along the main street. When they encountered pillboxes, the soldiers laid down covering fire with Lewis guns and rifle grenades and then outflanked them. By 8.05am, the village had been taken.

Poor visibility limited air to air fighting, so low-flying enemy aircraft on both sides strafed enemy infantry.

Ontario Private Clarence Garfield Mainse, then aged 24, survived the 6 November attack, but at 6am rollcall on 7 November Mainse was missing. Later found and taken to Canadian Number 1 Field Ambulance Depot, he was examined and pronounced dead.

Mainse had suffered a concussion, likely sustained in a blast from a shell that landed close to him in a German artillery barrage after Canadian forces took the village and ridge. He was among more than 4,000 Canadians killed and 12,000 wounded. At rollcall on 7 November, Baker noted, sometimes someone replied, more often there was silence. My impression was that we had won the ridge but lost the battalion.

Relieved on 7 November, men of the 22 Battalion were told to pick up a wounded man and take him to Ypres. When Baker tried to find fresh troops to help he explained, I went up the trench and called out “Hi there”. There was no answer but I could make out blurred figures. I slithered down, thinking they were sleeping. I shall never forget what I found … the boys were sitting in grotesque positions, and every one was dead. The trench was only shell holes joined up, and it was open to overhead shrapnel fire from both sides.

Private Jacques Lapointe described the scene when he arrived, In a flooded trench, the bloated bodies of some German soldiers are floating … arms and legs of dead men stick out from the mud, and awful faces appear … every-where I look bodies emerge.

After Passchendaele and the ridge were secured, Haig’s expeditionary force abandoned the area, as it was no longer seen as strategically significant.

Evelyn Waugh, Author, writes to his wife, Laura, from Egypt, after serving as Robert Laycock’s intelligence officer during the retreat from Crete. Waugh felt that abandoning Crete, leaving behind 12,000 men to become POWs, was a military disgrace.

I sent you a birthday present of cigarettes by way of Peter Flemming. I should have liked to send eggs, chocolate, quails and silk stockings and all the things you must need, but he could carry so little I thought Lucky Strikes the most acceptable thing...

Since I wrote last to you, I have been in a serious battle and have decided I abominate military life. I found I was not at all frightened, only very bored and weary. For the time being I am delivered from countless perils to life and liberty.

I shall have a great deal more to tell you when we meet, which I cannot write now. Meanwhile, be profoundly grateful to God and his saints for my preservation during the days May 28 - June 1, 1941.
OUR YEAR’S PROGRAM OF EVENTS:
From time to time, EXTRA dates for special events, or outings such as bus trips, will be included in this program, marked with a **, so watch for any changes. Unless otherwise advertised, our meetings are held on the second Friday of the month (not Dec.), in DANNY’S REST., FORSTER BOWLING CLUB, STRAND ST, FORSTER, commencing 10.00 am. Street parking at front of Club, and a carpark at rear of Club, accessed from Cross Street.

**AUGUST 18 - Vietnam Veterans Day.** Service 2pm, Little St memorial, Forster. Please wear uniforms & medals. Invited to “the Bunker”, Kularoo Dr. afterwards for drinks.

**SEPTEMBER 13 - Bus trip to Hillview Herb Farm.** Tour of farm and BBQ lunch. Visit to winery and tasting. Visit to Gloucester Museum. Members $30, non-members $40.

SEPTEMBER 20 - General meeting and morning tea.

**SEPTEMBER 20 - OCTOBER 4 - Annual campout to Urunga.

**OCTOBER 17 - Bus trip to Nambucca Heads.** 3 hour lunch cruise on Nambucca River. Members $30, non-members $40.

OCTOBER 18 - General meeting and BBQ lunch.

OCTOBER 31 - Committee meeting 2pm

**NOVEMBER 11 - Remembrance Day

**NOVEMBER 13 - Bus trip to Broken Bay Pearl Farm.** “Pearls of Australia” cruise tour with lunch included. Members $55, non-members $65.

NOVEMBER 15 - General meeting and morning tea

**NOVEMBER 21 - Annual Bocce Fun Day and sausage sizzle.** Loads of fun and games, not just bocce, BBQd sausage sizzle lunch included. BYO tables, chairs, and anything else you want to eat and/or drink. FREEEE!!

**DECEMBER 2-5 - 4-day bus trip to Cowra and Young.** Details yet to be finalised.

DECEMBER 8 - Christmas party. 2-course roast lunch, with homemade pudding and cake and 2 free drinks. Monster raffle with lots of homemade cakes and puddings and other great prizes. Room set up in tables of 10, so get your group together. $30 per person. Doors open 12pm.

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