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**NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT LAKES SUB-BRANCH**

**TUESDAY 23rd JULY**

**TEN PIN BOWLING CHAMPIONSHIP**

Includes lunch at Eastern Tiger Restaurant at Forster Bowling Club, 2 games bowling, afternoon tea in Forster Bowling Club auditorium. Lunch $13, Bowling $11, Aft. tea $4. Do it all or any combination, just pay for what you do.

**THURSDAY 15th AUGUST**

**BUS TRIP TO MAITLAND**

Includes morning tea on the way, visit to and tour of Mortels Sheepskin Factory, AKA “The Big Ugg Boot, and buffet lunch at East Maitland Bowling Club.”

Members $62, non-mem. $72

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**WELCOME TO “51-72”**

Hi everyone, My apologies for not being at the June meeting, Kevin and I had a function to attend in Sydney, but the plan went awry and I ended up in St George Hospital for 8 days instead!! I am now on the mend and eager to get things rolling here.

Most of you will, by now, be aware that we have been given a substantial funding grant by the DVA. The money must be spent by the beginning of April next year, so it is now time to get down to the business of planning some fantastic trips for all our members. There will be day trips and multi-day trips for you to choose from and the trips which receive the most interest will be the ones that are booked.

The grant money will fully cover the per day cost of the coach, on all trips that we take. When we go on a bus trip, the per person cost is worked out by combining all of the costs involved, including the per day cost of the coach, and dividing that figure by the expected number of people who book, which is usually around 30-35. Considering that the per day cost of a coach, depending, of course, on the destination, is between $1,000 and $1,400, that is a massive saving off the overall per person per day cost, of between $29 and $40.

So I strongly urge you to come along to the next meeting on Friday 12 July, which is also our AGM, and have your say. This money is being used so that you can enjoy some extra trips that you might not ordinarily take.

I hope to see many of you at the meeting.

Cheers, Kim Dwyer

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**REPORTS**

**PRESIDENT** - We all welcome the return to Forster Bowling club for our monthly meetings. We know they have spent a lot of money on modernising the club with a new restaurant and from all reports it is wonderful. Our BBQ’s may resume in the not too distant future but in the meantime we can enjoy all the club food if we chose to, after our monthly meetings.

Your committee has been working tirelessly on the application for the $100,000 DVA Grant and I am pleased to announce that we now have received $50,499 for our members towards our bus and boat trips that will happen in the next 12 months.

Your committee has been working tirelessly on the application for the $100,000 DVA Grant and I am pleased to announce that we now have received $50,499 for our members towards our bus and boat trips that will happen in the next 12 months. You would like to put your hand up for one of these three positions you will be most welcome and if you have concerns about your ability to do that job that you may wish to take, all the help and support will be given by those currently doing that job.

Happy Parade, Keith McNeil

**SECRETARY** - Boy has this last year flown. I have enjoyed my service to our Sub-Branch as your Hon. Secretary this year but I feel that it is time for someone else to have a go at this most important position. All that is needed is basic computer skills and a phone. All phone and postal charges are met by our Sub-Branch as is all photo copying and if you are concerned about the work load there are plenty of our willing committee members to help you. It is time for me to move on.

Cheers, Gloria McNeil
For Robert Whited and Jean White, there was never a question that they would serve in the military, and they never doubted the merit of the war they were sent to fight in Korea. It was this unbending faith in their service as U.S. Marines that carried both men through America’s darkest hour in the Korean War: the harrowing retreat from North Korea’s Chosin Reservoir, where American forces were surrounded, vastly outnumbered and facing mass slaughter in brutally cold mountains near the Chinese border.

It wasn’t supposed to go that way. The Korean War began in June 1950, when communist-backed troops from the north of the recently divided nation stormed into the Western-aligned south. But by the end of that summer, a coalition of South Korean and United Nations forces, led by the US and General Douglas MacArthur, had regained territory and made significant inroads into the north. Military leaders talked of ending the war by Christmas & reuniting the nation under democratic rule.

Then, Communist China entered the conflict at “frozen Chosin,” shifting the war’s momentum again. In a surprise attack, more than 100,000 Chinese troops trapped American forces in some of the harshest, most remote territory of the region, in temperatures that regularly fell to 25 degrees below zero. In a place where it was too frigid to dig foxholes without explosives and bulldozers, combatants piled frozen bodies in lieu of sandbags. Feet froze into blocks of ice inside boots. Even bullet wounds sometimes froze, keeping soldiers from bleeding out until they went inside heated tents.

Ultimately, some American units took the brunt of the attack, allowing others to escape on a hard-fought 70-mile march to the sea. Casualties were high and victory, seemingly within reach, evaporated, leaving the war to slog on for several more years. The Chosin Reservoir battle has become one of the most storied exploits of grit and sacrifice in Marine Corps history. In the words of Commanding General Oliver P. Smith: “Retreat, hell. We’re not retreating. We’re just advancing in another direction.”

This is the story of two Chosin veterans and their experiences on the frigid front lines.

Growing up during war years, neither White nor Whited could wait to enlist. White, who spent his formative years in Idaho, Missouri and eastern Washington state, saw his father move from job to job and as a bookkeeper to keep the family afloat during the Depression. As a high-school freshman in Spokane in 1941, White idealised young pilots training for war, who seemed ever-popular with the girls. By the time of his graduation and 18th birthday in 1945, he switched gears, signing up for the Marine Corps. He had barely finished his training at Camp Pendleton when Japan surrendered, ending World War II.

Robert Whited, two years White’s junior, also spent his childhood in the heartland, in Nebraska. Like many Midwesterners his family moved to California where preparations for World War II were revitalising the economy. With his father working in the Oakland shipyards and relatives fighting the war in Europe and the Pacific, Whited was chomping at the bit to enlist.

“I tried to sneak in. I was only 16, but big enough,” says Whited, who was working as a chaser in a bull ring in Wyoming when he made his first attempt. “I got as far as the Denver recruiting station when my parents caught up with me. And man, that was the end of the line. So back I went.” Two years later Whited, at 18, joined the Corps, which deployed him to the Marine Brigade in Guam after training in San Diego.

For the two men, the Marine Corps began as a job. “I was good at what I was doing, and I was making progress at it, so I thought it might make a good career,” White remembers. Neither paid much attention to world events or followed the nation’s politics of building a new world order in the wake of WWII. Nor did they pay heed to the escalating events of the Cold War, like the 1945 division of Korea into two superpower-backed spheres of influence, separated at the 38th parallel. “We concentrated on what our job was,” Whited recalls. “If we had to go fight a war somewhere, we packed up and went.”

Neither man had given any thought to Korea when they learned that the U.S. was to lead a U.N. coalition in an effort to push back North Korea’s invasion of its southern sibling nation on June 25, 1950.

By early August, when Bob Whited arrived in Pusan, on the south-eastern corner of the Korean peninsula, U.S. forces held no more than 10% of the Korean peninsula. Over the following weeks, the U.S. and its allies transformed Pusan from a ragtag refuge to holding a well-equipped point of departure for General MacArthur’s boldest and most successful strategic move in the Korean War. “His plan? To land troops behind enemy lines at Inchon, a port city just west of Seoul, and retake the South Korean capital.

On 15 September 1950, Whited’s unit moved quickly after the Inchon landing. At Kimpo Airbase, his squadron found itself run through by North Koreans. “We had no clue where we were. It was the dark of night. We got attacked... There were North Koreans... trying to flee from the onslaught from the South. It turned out they came right through the middle of our position.”

Both Whited and White remember heated house-to-house combat as they closed in on retaking Seoul. About 30 miles further north, White had a close call. “My platoon leader saw signs of activity up on the hill. He told me to take my squad up this hill and we did. All of a sudden I saw something moving and I fired my weapon in the brush, and four North Korean soldiers jumped up with their hands in the air and surrendered. I am glad they did because my weapon jammed. Pinned down by artillery fire, White was hit by shrapnel in the face and leg and was evacuated to a naval hospital in Japan.

By the time White returned to his unit in early December, a lot had changed on the front lines. Together with U.N. allies and South Korean troops, U.S. forces had pressed northward through Korea, capturing the northern capital of Pyongyang on 19 October and approaching the Yalu River, the border to China, by the end of November. Fearing an invasion, Communist China’s leader Mao Zedong deployed 200,000 soldiers of the People’s Volunteer Army (PVA) across the Yalu, 120,000 of whom headed toward the Chosin River Valley. All of a sudden I saw something moving and I fired my weapon in the brush, and four North Korean soldiers jumped up with their hands in the air and surrendered. I am glad they did because my weapon jammed. Pinned down by artillery fire, White was hit by shrapnel in the face and leg and was evacuated to a naval hospital in Japan.

As Whited remembers, the 5 Marines Division was driving straight into a trap: “When we were aboard trucks going up there, things were looking a little strange. You could see these freshly dug bunkers along the sides of the hills... Turns out, the Chinese were there all along.”

Whited occupied a roadblock with his anti-tank unit between
They were still inspired & encouraged his men & captured the trench. Although wounded in the initial advance, he reached his first objective. Leading his men against the trench itself, he was again badly wounded & incapacitated for a moment. He never-theless inspired & encouraged his men & captured the trench.

For most conspicuous bravery during an attack on an enemy strong point. His own immediate objective was a position in advance of the hostile trench, and thence against the hostile trench itself, after the capture which it was intended that his men should co-operate in a further assault on a strong point further in rear.

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Neither White nor Whited recalls much concern over the fact that their liberation of South Korea had escalated into a war against Communist China. “We had no clue,” remembers White, “as to really what was going on as far as the Chinese involved in the war was concerned.” Nor did they think much about the dangers of war with China. “Well,” says White, “one enemy is as good as another, we take them as they come… if you got a target, shoot it.”

The men on the ground were not the only ones unprepared for Chinese intervention. The headquarters of the UN war effort in Tokyo lacked the necessary intelligence to warn advancing troops. “In Tokyo, we wrote you guys off,” White’s friend and veteran of military intelligence confessed to him later. Whited and White not only feel let down by Tokyo, but they have little good to say about General MacArthur who, after Chosin, pressed to expand the war into and against China. MacArthur was ultimately relieved of his command by President Truman, who opposed the idea, remaining committed to keeping Korea a “limited war.”

White and Whited also point to the American military’s lack of preparation for such a forbidding climate. To shoot their weapons, they had to take off their clumsy mittens. Weapons failed to fire, car batteries went dead and lubricant jelled up in weapons and in vehicles. The blood plasma the U.S. Armed Forces had discovered for first-aid purposes during World War II froze to solid blocks in the North Korean winter.

The losses at Chosin Reservoir had been painfully high for U.S. troops. The estimated 18,000 casualties included about 2,500 killed in action, 5,000 wounded and almost 8,000 who suffered from frostbite. But there were troops worse off still - the Chinese. “Some of the Chinese prisoners that we got, they were happy to be with us,” remembers Whited. “I just absolutely felt sorry for them. Their feet were nothing but ice.” “They had much lower morale than we did,” White says he concluded at the time.

Hastily mobilised from Manchuria for deployment in Korea, they lacked any winter clothing or sufficient food. Similarly faulty information. Chinese military leadership made crucial mistakes that cost troops’ lives and gave U.S. forces time to retreat. Some 30,000 Chinese soldiers perished from cold alone, along with about 20,000 combat casualties.

Was Chosin Reservoir a defeat for American troops? Any map illustrating the troop movements would suggest yes. But White and Whited won’t have any of it. Both veterans are proud of the fact they saved their own lives and that of their comrades to fight another day.

“I am damn proud. We won!” says Whited of the war that ended, for all intents and purposes, in a stalemate. White puts it slightly differently: “We never quit. We weren’t defeated.”
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.

JULY 12 - General meeting and AGM, morning tea.

**JULY 23 - Annual Tenpin Bowling Championship - 12.45pm - Lunch; 2.15pm - 2 games of bowling, including shoe hire; Approx. 3.45pm - Afternoon tea and presentations in club auditorium.

JULY 27 - Korea Day.

AUGUST 1 - Committee meeting 2pm

AUGUST 9 - General Meeting followed by lunch.

**AUGUST 15 - BUS TRIP TO MAITLAND
Includes morning tea on the way, visit to and tour of Mortels Sheepskin Factory, AKA “The Big Ugg Boot, and buffet lunch at East Maitland Bowling Club. Members $62, non-mem. $72

SEPTEMBER 13 - General meeting followed by lunch.

OCTOBER 11 - General meeting and morning tea.

**NOVEMBER 11 - Remembrance Day

NOVEMBER 15 - General meeting followed by lunch.

DECEMBER 8 - Christmas party.

POSSIBLE DATES FOR DAY TRIPS:
Thursday 31 October - Broken Bay Pearl Farm.
Thursday 28 November - Nambucca River Cruise.

OUR SPONSORS
These businesses have made a commitment to support our Sub-Branch through their sponsorship of our newsletter. In return, please give them your patronage whenever possible.