Captured weapon from Afghanistan donated to RSL

ON WEDNESDAY 27TH NOVEMBER THE HEADQUARTERS SECTION FROM 2 COMMANDO COMPANY, FORT GELLBRAND, WILLIAMSTOWN, ARRIVED WITH A SPECIAL GIFT FOR THE RSL.

This special gift was a captured Russian PKM machine gun – this world famous weapon has been the Eastern Bloc’s machine gun of choice for most terrorists throughout the world as well as the armies of third world countries.

Chambered as a 7.62mm rifle, the calibre is the same as the Australian machine guns except the PKM bullet is a shorter version, but still has a hard-hitting capacity.

An interesting aside – the old signals unit, 126 Signals Squadron was given in 1980 the Freedom of the City of the old City of Box Hill. This unit was the signals component of 2 Commando Company and like them was stationed at Fort Gellibrand, Williamstown.

Pictured above during the presentation, members of the 2 Commando Association, members of Box Hill RSL and the HQ group from Fort Gellibrand, OC Pat Johnson, 2IC Marc Preston and CSM Ross Walker.

Committee Elections 2014

NOMINATIONS FOR THE POSITIONS OF
- PRESIDENT – SECRETARY
- SERVICE/AFFILIATE MEMBERS X 2

Nominations will open on Thursday 6th February, 2014 and close on Friday 21st February, 2014

Please note: to nominate for the positions of President & Secretary the applicant must have served on the committee for a minimum of 12 months.

The President, Committee, Management and Staff would like to extend to all members and their families a Happy Christmas and a safe New Year.
Hello Ladies

It is hard to believe that Xmas is upon us and I wonder where the year has gone.

Our speaker for October was Hendy O'Toole. Hendy went deaf at the age of eighteen and after lots of hospital visits and several operations that weren’t successful, she opted to try the bionic ear. In Hendy’s words to hear the leaves rustle and the birds sing once again was fantastic.

So to give herself a treat and reward for all the trauma she had gone through, she went and walked the Kokoda Trail, which took 18 days. The trek is a great endurance test and makes you stop and think what our soldiers endured. The Trail is now a proper track and walked regularly by lots of tourists.

Wednesday 13th November was our chicken and salad, fruit salad and cream day. Everyone was really pleased with the afternoon and we finished off with fun Bingo.

I would like to thank all our committee for the lovely salads and the Red Rooster chickens went down well. Thanks to Zoe for calling the Bingo - great job as always.

Whilst I’m on the thanks and seeing this is the last newsletter before Xmas I would like to thank the Sub-Branch and club manager and his staff for all the help they have given throughout the year, my committee for the great work they do and for being a quality group of ladies, to my husband, Bob, for doing all my running around, chauffeuring me to functions and generally supporting me in my role as president.

Lastly thanks to all the members for without you there would be no Auxiliary.

We wish you all a very Merry Xmas and healthy and happy New Year.

Till then take care and enjoy the festive season.

Joan Clarke
Honorary President
Three new members inducted

Three new members have been inducted into our Volunteer of the Year Hall of Fame. What commenced in 1999 has now entered its tenth year and in perusing the names of previous winners we see a group of members that have worked tirelessly for the betterment of the Sub-Branch and its members.

This year we welcome the following three new members into a selective and exclusive club within Box Hill RSL Sub-Branch.

Geoff O’Reilly – Geoff has been a member of the Sub-Branch for thirty years and has worked as a volunteer in excess of ten years. Geoff has worked closely with Brian Tateson with all of the displays throughout the RSL. He has worked tirelessly over many hours on each display. In the main Memorabilia cabinet this can entail up to five hours at any one time. On more than one occasion he has given up his weekend to achieve this.

Previous to working with Brian, Geoff worked on these displays with Jock McCormick, which include the Spring Racing Carnival, Footy Finals and our many other promotions. Our displays have become well known and as such Box Hill RSL has received much publicity via both the print media and television.

Cheryl Ryan – Cheryl joined the Sub-Branch in 2004, with her main interest being the Bowls Section, but this hasn’t stopped her from volunteering elsewhere within the club. Cheryl can be seen every Friday evening cooking and serving sausages when the barefoot bowling is in progress. She is the “Decorating Queen” of the Sub-Branch as her artistic talents can be viewed whenever the bowls section has a function. For any of you who were at the Ladies Luncheon in the Box Hill Town Hall honouring Women and War – Cheryl’s handiwork was the floral centrepiece on each table.

Cheryl is always one of the first within the Bowls Section to put up her hand when volunteers are called for to sell poppies and badges for Remembrance Day and Anzac Day and as a passionate gardener she has been involved in the Welfare herb garden and the surrounding gardens. She could also be seen at the Anzac Dawn Service serving the food to the hungry multitudes.

Ray Jones – Ray has served on many positions in the fifteen years of the Dart Section including President and Treasurer. He is a tireless worker in these positions. As well as assisting with the catering on Anzac Day he transports Sub-Branch members to hospital and rehabilitation all without recognition. He has “house-sat” for members as well as looking after their pets.

On a recent trip to Nepal he went specifically to help disadvantaged children with the provision of shoes, kindly donated by our members. As well he supplied clothing and supervised the construction of classrooms in the local school. He also volunteers within the City of Whitehorse as an Art & Craft instructor to local school children.

Members of Box Hill RSL can be proud of these three new Volunteers of the Year and the work they do on a voluntary basis for the various sections of our Sub-Branch.
AUSTRALIAN NURSE LORNA JOHNSTON WAS HELD CAPTIVE IN A JAPANESE PRISON CAMP FOR THREE YEARS DURING WORLD WAR TWO. SHE WAS BEATEN, STARVED, FORCED INTO LABOUR AND SURVIVED BY EATING THE GLUE OFF ENVELOPES, BUT HER SPIRIT WAS NEVER BROKEN.

The last survivor of a group of 76 Australian prisoner of war nurses, Lorna died in September aged 98.

Colonel Jan McCarthy from the Returned Nurses RSL Sub-Branch paid tribute to the veteran nurse. “She was the last survivor, it is an end of an era. She was a very good nurse and maintained a sense of humour and that’s something you need in the military.”

Born Lorna Whyte at Hay in New South Wales in 1915, she trained as a nurse before joining the army in 1941. Lorna was one of six nurses chosen to go to Rabaul on the island of New Britain in New Guinea, now part of Papua New Guinea. Holding the rank of Lieutenant, the young nurse spent a year at a military hospital treating soldiers suffering from tropical diseases before the Japanese began dropping bombs on the island.

Treatment then turned to amputations, an experience Lorna described in a newspaper article published before her death, as traumatic. “We didn’t have time to think, it was all automatic,” she recalled. The nurses and their patients were moved for safety to the Australian-run Catholic Mission in Vunapope for five months before they were captured and taken by ship to Japan. They were imprisoned at Yokohama for 18 months from July 1942, where they were forced to knit silk bags and make envelopes. Conditions were so bad that the nurses ended up eating the glue of the envelopes to survive.

The women were later moved to a former TB clinic at Totsuka, south of Tokyo. They survived in sub-zero temperatures with no running water and only two futons each. There they witnessed the fire-bombing of Tokyo, which killed 100,000 people in March 1945. Corpses were stacked on top of each other in graveyards. Starving and desperate for food, Lorna and the other nurses crept in at night and ate the rice balls which family members had laid on the bodies of their spirits. “We decided the spirits that are alive deserve them more,” she was quoted as saying.

It is that fighting spirit that saw Lorna survive her capture. She and the other nurses were rescued by American soldiers and flown to Manila to recuperate for a month, before returning to Australia on 25 September 1945. Two years later Lorna was recognised by the Australian Government with a Mention in Despatches Award (MID) for holding the hospital in Vunapope together.

She moved to New Zealand in 1948 where she met and married her husband Bill and raised three children. Lorna’s daughter Pat Wright said her mother was able to start a new life after the war. “She didn’t stay stuck like so many others, she moved on.” She moved on, but never stopped giving her time to help others. In 1992, Lorna was awarded a Queen’s Service Order Medal for 14 years of work with handicapped children. “She was a remarkable lady and very keen to do what she could for whatever cause she could;” said Colonel McCarthy.

Ms Wright said her mother believed that sharing her war-time experience was an important responsibility and was often contacted by the children of other soldiers she’d known. “She had people writing to her from around the world wanting to know what happened to their Dad and her experience of that time and place where their Dad was killed.”

Lorna’s story was immortalised in a telemovie in 2010 called Sisters of War, in which she made a guest appearance at the end of the film. “She loved every minute of it;” her daughter laughs. In 2011, Pat travelled to Japan with her mother, where Lorna was one of five former POWs who received an apology from the Japanese Government. “It was a completion of the whole process for her.”

A remarkable woman whose memory will live on, Lorna Johnston is survived by two children, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. She died in Auckland aged 98.

Article reproduced from the Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal – November 2013.

Box Hill Swimming Section

On 27th October Box Hill members attended their fourth and last Carnival for the year at Mentone. Bentleigh members were also in attendance and the day, weather-wise was good.

Overall scores were: Box Hill 96pts, Mentone 90pts and Bentleigh 82pts.

Individual Box Hill winners: 100m first, Michele Robinson, 50m first, Liam O’Connell (junior), 25m first, Douglas Bell.

10 person relay: second, Box Hill.

RSL Entitlement: third, Box Hill.

WW2: first, Box Hill.

Box Hill, Encouragement Award Best Junior: first and second, Kyal Robinson.

Braced Pairs: first, Box Hill.

Box Hill members were elated that we had at last won a Carnival. Presentations were made, with juniors really showing up as winners. Luncheon was served and the afternoon was enjoyed by all in a very comfortable homely area. Please contact Douglas Bell if you would like to join us on 9842 1321.

Gladys Bell, Hon. Secretary

Thank you to the poppy appeal volunteers & all who donated

We would like to thank all the volunteers who gave their valuable time to collecting for this most worthy appeal, plus all members who donated their hard earned money.

While we are still in the middle of counting the donated cash and banking the cheques, it is anticipated the final figure will be more than $50,000.

Your appeal organisers – Arthur Merryweather and Ray Wall.
Remembrance Day 2013

Remembrance Day this year fell on a Monday with the attendance somewhat below the previous 2012 event, which fell on a Sunday. With good weather but with the many fences around the memorial it gave the impression of being hemmed in.

The ceremony commenced with wreaths being laid by Cr. Robert Chong who represented the Mayor and Sub-Branch President, Tony Bowden, then followed Robert Clark MP for Box Hill and State Attorney General, and other members representing the various ex-service groups from within the RSL family.

Following the service everyone adjourned to the Upton Room for light refreshments and lunch.

Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey 25 April 2015

THE SUB-BRANCH HAS BEEN INFORMED BY THE MINISTER FOR VETERANS’ AFFAIRS, MICHAEL RONALDSON, THAT BALLOT REGISTRATION HAS OPENED FOR ATTENDANCE AT THE ABOVE MEMORIAL SERVICE TO COMMEMORATE THE CENTENARY OF ANZAC.

With the Ballot now open it will close at midnight on 31st January 2014 – if a successful applicant you will be entitled to a maximum of two attendance passes to attend the official Anzac Day commemorations at Gallipoli in 2015, including the Dawn Service and the Australian Memorial Service at Lone Pine.

Things to be aware of before registering:

• All attendance passes are free and are non-transferable.
• Individuals must arrange and meet all costs for their own travel and arrange entry visas to the Republic of Turkey.
• Applicants must be Australian citizens or permanent residents of Australia to register, but do not need to be living in Australia at the time of registration.

There are another 8 criteria you should read and understand before registration – further information can be viewed on the Gallipoli 2015 website at www.gallipoli2015.dva.au

Individuals that do not have access to the internet and require a paper application form should call Ticketek on 1300 364 002 in Australia or +61 3 9039 9318 for international callers.

Box Hill Angling Club

Angling members have been active in fishing a variety of spots, with a mixed bag of results. Charles and Vic have been hammering the flatheads in Westernport in Charles’ boat, with one visit resulting in over 50 flathead. All fish were returned to the water as neither gentleman eat fish!

Keith is up North savaging Barramundi and we hope the fish are as big as the tales he tells when he returns.

Heather and Marja have tried a few freshwater locations and the occasional trout has met their fate. However, Marja has become the belle of Station Pier, and as you can see by the accompanying photo, she has been very successful.

To all the members; tight lines!

Volunteer visitors required

If you think you would be interested in the role of visiting our members who might be in hospital, sick at home, or just house bound, please contact me on 9898 2044.

Faye Clark, Welfare Coordinator
Ada celebrates 100 years and still going strong

Long-time member of the Sub-Branch, Ada McNally celebrated her 100th birthday in style at a morning tea in the Upton Room, organised for her by Legacy’s Betty Laurie. Legatee Norm McDonald chaired the happy occasion attended by around forty ladies from Box Hill Legacy, including the President, Beth Gowdie, members of the RSL including President, Tony Bowden, Secretary, Gail Robertson, and a number of Ada’s nephews and nieces who journeyed from Phillip Island to join in the celebrations.

Everyone enjoyed good company and good food, which consisted of nice sandwiches, little cakes and lamingtons. Of course there was a very nicely decorated birthday cake for this special occasion. Ada also received lovely arrangements of flowers from Beth Gowdie on behalf of Legacy and Gail Robertson on behalf of the RSL.

There were congratulatory letters from the Queen, the Prime Minister and the Victorian Premier. Ada started work at the age of fourteen, different times in those days, and she now lives in Mont Albert, her home for the past fifty years. Ada whose looks belie her age, responded to her enjoyment of the occasion with special thanks to Betty, the Legacy committee, the legacy ladies and the RSL for making the morning so special for her.

All in all a memorable time for Ada as she celebrated this significant milestone in her life.

Just a common soldier

He was getting old and paunchy
And his hair was falling fast,
And he sat around the Legion
Telling stories of the past,
Of a war that he had fought in
And the deeds that he had done,
Of his exploits with his buddies
They were heroes, every one.

Tho’ sometimes to his neighbours,
His tales became a joke,
All his Legion buddies listened,
For they knew whereof he spoke,
But we’ll hear his tales no longer,
For old Bill has passed away,
And the world’s a little poorer –
For a soldier died today.

He’ll not be mourned by many,
Just his children and his wife,
For he lived an ordinary,
Quiet and uneventful life,
Held a job and raised a family,
Quietly going his own way;
And the world won’t note his passing –
Though a soldier died today.

The time that they were young,
But the passing of a soldier
Goes unnoticed and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution
To the welfare of our land
A guy who breaks his promises
And cons his fellow man?
Or the ordinary fellow who,
In times of war and strife
Goes off to serve his country
And offers up his life?

A politician’s stipend and the
Style in which he lives
Are sometimes disproportionate
To the service that he gives,
While the ordinary soldier
Who offers up his all
Is paid off with a medal,
And perhaps a pension, small.

It’s so easy to forget them,
For it was so long ago
That the “Old Bills” of our country
Went to battle, but we know
It was not the politicians,
With their compromise and ploys,
Who won for us the freedom
That our country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger
With your enemies at hand,
Would you want a politician
With his ever-shifting stand?
Or would you prefer a soldier
Who had sworn to defend
His home, his kin and country,
And would fight until the end?

He was just a common soldier
And his ranks are growing thin,
But his presence should remind us,
We may need his like again,
For when countries are in conflict
Then we find the soldiers’ part
Is to clean up all the troubles
That the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honour
While he’s here to hear the praise,
Then at least let’s give him homage
At the ending of his days,
Perhaps just a simple headline
In a paper that would say:
“Our Country is in Mourning –
For a soldier died today.”

Author unknown – first printed in the 1998 program – National Convention of the Korean Veterans’ Association of Canada

MEMBERSHIP FEES – 2014

Membership fees for 2014 can now be paid . To assist our staff you can avoid paying your fee between the lunch hours of 12 noon and 1.30pm.

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IN LAWN BOWLS, ‘AN EIGHT’ IS EQUIVALENT TO GETTING A HOLE-IN-ONE, OR A SEVENTY-METRE GOAL IN AFL.

What ‘getting an eight’ means is that the team has scored the maximum count of shots against the opposition: each player has two bowls to deliver each end. It means that not one of the opposition has been able to get close enough to the jack (the small, round ball at the head of the end) to cut down the count.

On Saturday October 12th, four of our bowlers achieved this, home, at Poplar Street. It may not be the only “eight” we get this season, but it is the first.

George Rutrecht, the Skip, said: “I’ve waited 33 years for this! It’s my first eight!” No wonder he was pleased. Heather Sutterby, the lead, was equally chuffed. She’s only been bowling one season. Brian McDonald and Fred Whitbourn, who joined our club this year, were also delighted. Congratulations to you all.

Ruth Boschma

THE TRIVIA QUESTION

The ANSWER to the November question was: When Box Hill RSL was first built it had no kitchen. All meals were prepared at Hines Hire in Elgar Road and transported to the Club by volunteers.

NEW YEAR’S EVE 2013

For New Year’s Eve this year we have booked a band called “The Orr Deal” and the musicians have provided backing for the likes of Wilbur Wilde, Frankie J Holden, Men at Work, The Divinyls, Russell Morris, Wendy Stapleton and Colleen Hewitt. The music will commence at 8.00pm in the Upton Room and there will be no bookings however it will be necessary to book for a meal in the Bistro beforehand. We really need a good rollup to ensure that we can continue to get a band for future New Year’s Eves

TREV’S COLUMN

Trevor Symes
Vice President

FINAL RAFFLE FOR 2013

The final raffle for 2013 will be held on Friday 20 December where we will have the traditional crayfish, hams, $40.00 Woolworth’s vouchers and sparkling wine.

CALL OUT FOR MEMBERS

We need your help this month to help bring in the funds for the Club and the Community. It is very easy to do, simply call out for members when you are at the bar or out and about. It makes a big difference and we would like to encourage all members to help out.

WHITEHORSE DAY CLUB

Alas, poor reader, you still have to make do with an amateur reporter for this month’s activities. Thank goodness the Coach Trip report was supplied by Wendy Grigg, so part of this will make sense. Rest assured though that Elsie will be back “on deck” for the next report.

The trip to the Wonthaggi Coal mine began at 9.15a.m. on a bright sunny day. First stop was for morning tea in Kooweerup. Our driver Craig then gave us a tour of Cape Patterson prior to our arrival at the Workman’s Club in Wonthaggi. During our two course meal there we were joined by Ron Teer’s son Police Senior Sergeant Teel and his wife.

After lunch it was off to the Historic State Coal Mine where we were given a tour of the museum and outbuildings. A few brave souls went 350 metres down into the Mine. Negotiating the steep decent (grade 1 in 4) and walking in the mine took one and a half hours. Fascinating tales were told about the old miners and the pit ponies working in dangerous conditions. Pumps cleared 20 to 30 thousand litres of water per day from the Mine, later discharging it into the Ocean. The return to the surface was via “The Wonthaggi Express”, a small train pulling a caged carriage. This train trip took 7 minutes. It was also interesting to see 42 year old “Cobber”, one of the retired pit ponies.

After a wonderful afternoon tour of the mine and surroundings it was back on the coach for the return to Box Hill. On the way Jim Burrows kept us entertained with a laughter filled Trivia Quiz.

This special trip was “mostly” funded by the DVA to celebrate Veterans Health Week.

Our entertainment for October was provided by a favoured duo, Claire & Tom. Tom’s performance on the keyboard was remarkable as he filled in between costume changes and accompanied Claire. Claire’s operatic trained voice was amazing; her soprano range was beautiful through the wide ranging programme.

Remember. No matter how black things may seem, there is always somebody worse off than you.

Will you be having Christmas day lunch alone?

The Welfare Department has a table in the Bistro for anyone having Christmas Day lunch alone. So if you would like to celebrate Christmas and have lunch with a group of fun loving people, please ring me on 9898 2044 to discuss your situation.

Faye Clark, Welfare Coordinator
Keeping the tradition alive

TRADITIONS WORK WHEN THEY’RE WELL-SUPPORTED. THIS YEAR, IT WAS THE TURN OF TRARALGON RSL TO VISIT AND ENJOY BOWLS AND HOSPITALITY AT BOX HILL RSL’S VENUE AT POPLAR STREET.

The tradition was started 35 years ago by Bill Mollison and Noel McMahan, and has been kept up ever since. Each club looks forward to the visit. Sadly, Bill Mollison has passed away and Noel McMahan wasn’t able to attend the event. Another link was lost earlier this year when, sadly and tragically, Bill’s widow Eiko, was killed in a fire.

Fortunately, Allan Turk and Ron Ostler, the current Men’s Presidents of each club, stated that they are dedicated to keeping the tradition alive. It’s so nice to meet up again and be remembered by the Traralgon bowlers. They loved the friendly welcome, the games on our Poplar Street greens, the way the room looked decorated in shades of green by Cheryl Ryan, the delicious and abundant food and the fun. Thanks go to all the catering committee and many other volunteers.

The winning team for the day from Box Hill RSL were: Willy Klomp, Brian Kirwan, Geoff Peacock and Neville Frostick (Skip). Traralgon RSL’s winners were: Lyn Bloomfield, Ray Brand and David Morley (Skip). Traralgon RSL members won three of the prizes in the Special Effort, but Willy Klomp won the major prize (a bowling bag from Doncaster Sports) and everyone in the room applauded as she always does such a good job for the club. Cheryl Frail and Allan Turk, our presidents, exchanged commemorative gifts with their counterparts, Ron and Lorraine Ostler.

Thanks to the Match Committees from both clubs (Laurie Burgess and Bill Pasveer–Box Hill RSL- and Howard Reynolds and Trevor Brand – Traralgon RSL), Box Hill RSL managed to win by one point again and the shield is with us to be defended next year at Traralgon RSL.

Put aside the day for the visit to Traralgon in 2014. We want to keep this tradition alive and, if our members who couldn’t attend this year join us to make the journey to Traralgon, you’ll have a really good time. Guaranteed.

Ruth Boschma

Notification of death of a member

There is nothing worse than sending mail to a member not knowing that they had died. We have found that this has been happening lately with both Scuttlebutt and Mufti.

If you have a family member who is a member of the Box Hill RSL and that person has passed away, we really need to know this information. This will alleviate the problem of unwanted mail and we are also able to update our records. It is an obligation of the Welfare Coordinator, Faye Clark to notify Anzac House so they are able to update their records.

Faye can be contacted on either 9898 5992 or her direct line 9898 2044.

Gail Robertson JP, Hon. Secretary

Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting of the Box Hill RSL sub-branch will be held on Sunday 30th March 2014, commencing at 11am.

Please note: AGM agenda items must be received by the Secretary, Gail Robertson JP by close of business on the 14th March 2014