Mateship
and the art of
the possible

Also inside:
Your full 2019 Remembrance Day guide

Cover Photo: Ross Swanborough
Dear RSLWA

Today I received my membership confirmation and badge from you. Thank you.

I cannot tell you how proud I am to have been accepted as an affiliate member of an RSL. I am 65 years old and my life has not previously crossed paths with the RSL, the circumstances just never lined up.

However, those circumstances changed a year or two back and it became critically important to be eligible and accepted.

I’m saddened that my father and grandfather will never be aware of this but if they were, they would have a smile on their face.

Thank you for the opportunity to wear your badge.

Murray Hall

You can email you Letters to the Editor to Maxine via comms@rslwa.org.au

If you prefer more traditional means, please post to:

Letters to the Editor
PO Box 3023,
EAST PERTH 6892

The best of your submissions will be published in the March edition of The Listening Post.

PS: Nothing makes us happier than receiving all your emailed story and letter submissions. But please ensure all The Listening Post email submissions are provided on a Word Document. Also, all photos must be over 1MB and in JPEG form, sent as an attachment.
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MATESHIP and the art of the possible

Ex-SASR and now corporate leaders Tim Curtis and Ben Pronk talk mateship … and how this frames their commitment to the Veteran cause as members of RSLWA’s fundraising committee. By Maxine Brown

ONE can only dream of being spoken about with the depth of honour, respect and trust that former Commanding Officer and Veteran Ben Pronk has for his mate, old SAS boss and now-business partner Tim Curtis.

While the pair are polished corporate performers and seasoned motivational speakers, Ben reveals a belief in his mate at the end of our interview that, when vocalised, carries the impact of an emotional punch to the heart.

Make no mistake; these are not soft men. The foundations of their friendship were forged in service as leaders within our elite SASR … where they immersed themselves in high-stakes missions in Timor, Iraq, Afghanistan and here at home (the seizure of North Korean drug ship Pong Su as she made a dash for international waters, having dropping 150kg of heroin on our eastern shores in 2003).

So yes, these are men who have lived life on the edge and survived to tell the tale, in no small part thanks to each other.

Upon meeting for our interview at their Mettle Global offices in the CBD, Tim and Ben are warm, philosophical, articulate, witty, generous of spirit and quick to smile. But there’s no hiding that occasional flicker of energy through the eyes or voice that commands respect.

So when Ben is asked to describe his brother-in-arms Tim at the end of the interview, his display of conviction in the strength of their partnership is a beautiful thing.

“We’re talking about mateship and Tim is a mate,” he says. “If you look at all the ways we’ve chosen to define mateship, and in particular that unconditionality, that sort of ‘got your back, you know that you can rely on this person’, then that’s Tim. Expanding on that as well, particularly
in this context, there’s a lot of things that Tim does naturally, as part of who he is, that I aspire to and want to learn. He used that phrase about having the difficult conversations early, Tim is able to do that, and it just sets such a beautiful clarity for not only our business relationship, but also our interactions with other people. What you see is what you get, no garbage, no facades or anything like that. It’s knowing that you’re talking with the genuine person and that what he says is what he means. It’s a really good foundation.”

That same enthusiasm is apparent in their devotion to our Veterans’ cause. Both sit on RSLWA’s fundraising committee, where they are helping shape future strategy and ensure the opening of ANZAC House Veteran Central is an absolute success.

We’re lucky to have them. The pair, now armed with MBAs and a dearth of international experience that includes Tim’s years working with the United Nations, where he was a lead elections planner for the 2005 Afghanistan Parliamentary Elections, and then heading a truly global group of 42 companies based from Dubai, they bring much to the table.

Again, at their core is an unwavering belief in the ‘art of the possible’, especially when built on a foundation of mateship.

While the pair recognise that the true definition of mateship can’t be summed up in a few sharp sentences, they do have some strong thoughts forged from their own military experience.

Tim says: “The basis of mateship, in my opinion, is a shared and common experience. And I think that experience has to be hardship. Anything that you do that is difficult with other people produces a platform for mateship. The next piece, of course, is some level of equality, a classlessness. And the last one is a strong commitment to providing assistance regardless of the circumstance. And if I put those three things in a triangle, that would be a very simple explanation of mateship.”

That triangle certainly drives their belief in RSLWA’s new ANZAC House Veteran Central hub in the Perth CBD, which will rewrite the rules nationally when it comes to the delivery of lifesaving Veteran and family care.

It will open next year as a one-stop shop for Veterans seeking medical treatment, advocacy, welfare assistance, wellness and an audience with the Department of Veterans Affairs, by providing a home to reputable ESOs that provide services in this crowded space.

On this subject, Ben’s passion is obvious: “Coming off my last role as a commanding officer, the landscape for Veterans who need help has been very clouded, very confused. There’s sooo many -and this is a fantastic thing because it wasn’t the case in the ’70s - organisations that can help people, but interestingly that’s created a bit of confusion as to who: where do I go, what do I do?

“So this concept of a one-stop shop, where you’ve got an umbrella where a Veteran who needs assistance, their families who need assistance, can just go somewhere and have an organisation that just provides guidance into the best forms of assistance. That’s pretty exciting for me.

“And under the one roof, with people who get that shared and common experience. That’s really a fantastic initiative from RSL.”

Ben adds: “And not only under one roof, but under one roof in a central location, a fantastic new building, and things like the social aspect of that …. I think it’s important because we see a lot of people, anecdotally we see our mates who deal well with everything they’ve been through while still in that framework of mateship while in the military, but when they get out they can kind of fall off a cliff if they haven’t got that same framework to transition out to.

“I think just the idea of having a social hub where people can meet, have a meal, catch up, that can help keep that soldier for life/service person for life concept going. ‘

And to Veterans who are facing, or have recently overcome, some of the challenges unique to ex-service life, Tim says this: “It’s OK to make a mistake and it’s OK to stumble and I think the beautiful thing about Veteran Central is that it’s going to be there to catch you before you fall.

“So you can stumble, but there is a safety net there with people who absolutely appreciate what you’ve done in uniform, and understand your particular and very unique circumstance.’

In the meantime, they are focused on their own business growth, having backed themselves all the way by incorporating their company last year.

Their future looks bright, with clients seeking corporate crisis/emergency management leadership training in strong, capable hands.
The construction of our new ANZAC House is proceeding on time and budget. The fourth floor has been poured and by the time you read this, the fifth should be in place, completing the base “block” of floors.

It is timely, however, to remember that a building, no matter its outstanding architectural merit, is there to serve a purpose.

For RSLWA, that purpose is threefold: to house the organisation that is RSLWA; to provide operating space for those Veteran service providers (VSPs) and other ESOs that directly interact with Veterans and their families/dependents; and lastly, to provide an edifice that projects into public consciousness the image of the RSL as the premier Ex Service Organisation.

Of the three purposes, the second is far and away the most important. While for a number of reasons it is convenient for RSLWA to be located in a Perth CBD building, it is by no means critical that it be so. RSLWA could just as effectively operate from a suburban site, perhaps even a regional locality! The projection of the image of the RSL to the public is of itself no justification for a new building, however it is an advantage that arises from the unique design of the new ANZAC House. It will stand out among the square glass towers that flank it and be easily recognised as the home of RSL in WA.

The heart and soul of ANZAC House will be Veteran Central, with the facilities and services that will be available to members, all Veterans, their families and dependents. These include advocacy support for veterans seeking access to DVA benefits, welfare support, medical, mental health, wellbeing, employment, financial planning, legal advice, housing/accommodation (including support for homeless Veterans). These services will be delivered by RSLWA, other ESOs, government agencies and private VSPs. Right now, RSLWA staff have established, or are establishing, partnerships, agreements, MOUs etc, with a range of organisations to provide these services.

Rightly, members and other Veterans in regional and remote areas can question the relevance of ANZAC House, and Veteran Central, to them. Its benefits will lie in the ANZAC House connectivity with Veteran Hubs in selected metropolitan and regional areas, and with Sub-Branches state wide. This connectivity will bring the full range of services to augment those provided in the Veteran Hubs and in full to regional/remote Sub-Branches.

With the opening of the new ANZAC House, tentatively planned for August 2020, I look forward to the services and benefits I have mentioned being established and the full potential of the Veteran Central and Hub model being realised for all our members, Veterans as well as their families and dependents.
As you know, RSLWA is well ahead of planning with our Veteran Central building in the new ANZAC House and rollout of Hubs and it was pleasing that RSLWA was being seen as the trendsetter by our eastern states contemporaries.

While all this is great, we at State Branch are now working with some clever partners to determine how best to communicate our services while case-managing Veterans’ needs with other Ex-Service Organisations and Veteran Service Providers.

Importantly, when we see a Veteran (or their family) in need, we have to be agile enough to act - and act immediately.

I was recently walking back home from the office and passed a homeless person I thought I knew. Yep, it was an Iraq Veteran. A proud Veteran, but obviously in need of support. And real support, not just words.

This is why RSLWA’s partnerships are so important. We were able to put him in touch with a partner agency that not only provides emergency accommodation, but a plan to get back into long-term housing. I have a nice home and many of us have nice Sub-Branch facilities, but it’s our duty to give our brother and sister Veterans a hand up when they need it.

A key way forward for RSLWA is to be far more agile in supporting Veterans. More agile in helping Veteran families through...
through tough times. I’m proud of the excellent work done by State Branch’s welfare and advocacy officers - and the great work of the volunteer welfare and advocacy folk among our membership. Be confident that State Branch is as passionate as you in assisting Veterans. It’s why RSLWA exists.

**Cradle-to-Grave Model**

This brings me to discuss our next step in helping all Veterans – young or old. We’re calling it the Cradle-to-Grave Model and, through a State Government grant, have engaged a business strategy company to assist in the planning.

RSLWA wants to be able to support Veterans from the time they enlist to the time they need to consider aged care. It’s an ambitious model, but very achievable.

With the advent of Veteran Central in the Perth CBD and Veteran Hubs throughout the state, their life’s journey will be enduringly supported. For example, the proposed Veterans Hub in Busselton is set to be a joint venture between RSLWA and a major retirement and aged-care organisation.

RSLWA has current partnerships with Veteran Service Providers to provide:

- Support for serving personnel – from recruitment to transition.
- Support post-transition – medical, wellbeing, advocacy, financial and legal advice.
- Retirement planning, including downsizing and transition to retirement estates.
- Aged-care support, from at-home services through to aged care and high care.

And it doesn’t matter if a Veteran is not a member of RSLWA. Our job is to look after and support Veterans, wherever they are, with whatever they need.

RSLWA continues to grow in membership and I note that more new applications are coming from younger cohorts, which augurs well for our organisation. I am looking forward to 2020 as your CEO and we have plenty to do – not least working with others to do things better together for Veterans.

“Supporting Veterans and their families is our primary goal.”
Amputee AWARE

Spare shoes, inquisitive kids and $440k of prosthetics

By Mark Daniels

IN the interest of raising awareness, I thought I’d provide answers to some of the most frequent questions I’ve been asked in the four years since losing my leg, writes new WA Veteran Mark Daniels.

What happened?
On 17 December, 2015, just three days after returning from deployment onboard HMAS Arunta, I was struck by a car while riding my motorbike home – resulting in the loss of my right leg above the knee, among many other injuries.

Do you have one of those fancy blade-runner legs?
I actually have six different legs and, while Oscar Pistorius doesn’t best represent amputees with his recent actions, he was a hell of an athlete.
My running blade is very different to his, as he’s a below-the-knee amputee. This means he was able to use his own knee instead of a prosthetic knee, which is a lot easier.

**Do you get phantom pain?**

I do and while it’s nowhere near as bad as it used to be, it still kicks my ass. Each amputee experiences slightly different phantom pain, depending on how their nerves were cut in the amputation.

For myself, it feels like a hot knife cutting down the back of my calf, or that I’ve put my foot in a bear trap. There’s not a lot you can do, apart from scream and wait for it to settle down…but you get some pretty weird looks when you’re driving with the windows down.

**Do you get half price on shoes?**

If I had a dollar for every time I’ve been asked this … I could probably afford shoes for the rest of my life! No, I use a prosthetic leg most of the time so I wear shoes just like any one else…though I can get 25 percent off a full body massage (true story).

There’s actually a Facebook group called Sole Mates, for amputees who don’t use a prosthetic. You can find someone else that wears the same size shoe with the opposite shoe to yourself to trade shoes with.

**How do you fund your prosthetics?**

Funding prosthetics is the worst part about being an amputee. My set of six legs cost $440,000, with two of them costing $160,000 each. The Navy have paid for two, the insurance company funded $60k and I took out a loan from them for the remaining $100k. My mum lent me $20k for another leg and we fundraised the $20k for my running leg.

Unfortunately, most amputees aren’t as lucky as myself, although I’m in a crazy amount of debt for my legs. I get to live an extremely active life. I have plenty of amputee friends who have been rejected for prosthetics being funded, because the insurance companies and NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) don’t deem them to be necessary or justifiable.

**Why do some amputees use wheelchairs and some use prosthetic legs?**

This is a really interesting one. I class myself as a pretty active person, I’ve competed all over Australia and the world in many different sports, and train more than most able-bodied athletes … so I wouldn’t call myself lazy.

However, the perception of amputees in society really gets to me. When I wear a prosthetic and achieve amazing accomplishments, I’m told I’m an inspiration, but when I’m using my chair due to injury or overuse, I’m questioned publicly about why I’m lazy and don’t use a leg.

There can be many different reasons that amputees don’t wear prosthetics: such as pain. Wearing a prosthetic hurts, it’s like wearing a set of high heels that are three sizes too small. The stump can be too short to fit a prosthetic, there may have been recent surgery, or they may have a blister. If you get a blister from a bad-fitting prosthetic, it can mean that you can’t walk for two weeks while it heals, or you risk infection.

**How should I treat an amputee?**

Like anyone else …we are people too! We also get that people are going to point and stare, and that your kids are going to yell “look at that one-legged guy, mum!” It happens daily, so don’t worry about it. Instead of dying from embarrassment and pulling your child away, bring them over and ask if they can ask us a question.

This way, we’re educating the next generation that people with disabilities are just like anyone else.

**Do you miss having two legs?**

Every day! My biggest regret in life is taking being able-bodied for granted.

Despite all my accomplishments, such as competing on Australian Ninja Warrior, in 24-hour obstacle course races and winning gold at the Invictus Games and the Warrior Games, I would trade everything just to feel able-bodied again for 24 hours.

But thinking like this doesn’t help anyone, so I’m just focusing on the future and kicking down doors so others may walk through them.

To all the able-bodied people reading this, I hope it has given you a bit of insight on the life of an amputee. And to all my fellow amputees, always reach out, this life is a tough one but you’ve been given it because you are strong enough to push through all the crap to come out the other side.
How PTSD nearly cost this Veteran everything

WHEN ordnance expert Corporal Jason Wornes was in service with the Australian Army, there wasn’t a snowball’s chance that he ever saw himself becoming a homeless Veteran.

Then again, being medically discharged with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder after 14 years’ service with the regular Army and the Reserves wasn’t high on his life plan, either.

But this was the distressing position Jason found himself in, having made an all-or-nothing dash from the east coast to Perth to get treatment for the PTSD ripping his life apart.
Now happily rebuilding his life with his companion dog Loki following a hand up by RSLWA, Jason was happy to answer these questions from a newspaper journalist recently to help raise awareness about the debilitating effects of PTSD.

Where did you serve and how long for?
- Australian Army, four years service RAAC Armoured Corps driver crew commander and assault troop.
- Regular Army RAAOC Ordanance Corp 2007- 2011 various units Kapooka Pilbara Regiment.

What was your experience when you left the Army?
Because I was discharged with PTSD I felt alone, abandoned and isolated. The reason you feel that is because you are with an organisation that is your family, then when you discharge there are three to six months where you have nobody, until DVA (Dept of Veteran Affairs) pick up your case. That gap right there is the most crucial time, because you've got no one, you can very readily slip through the gaps and it costs Veteran lives.

What were the major challenges you experienced?
The major challenges … it’s a snowball effect. It starts with the isolation.

But the biggest challenge for most of us, is the lack of public awareness. Veterans with PTSD are not going to hurt you. We’re not going to melt down and start harming the public.

My first full panic attack in a shopping centre, I was in sensory overload hunched over grabbing onto the shelf. People were just walking past.

We haven’t been educated on how to cope with our condition. Imagine, you can’t go to a shopping centre because of your condition, so you start shopping online. So then you find yourself isolated.

It’s a one-way ticket to misery … and the worse thing is you don’t know you’re in it.

I understand you came to Perth to get treatment for PTSD. Why did you have to move to Perth to receive treatment? How difficult was it to access?
I was let down by an eastern states ESO (ex-service organisation). Thankfully, the needs of Veterans come first in Perth and I was given access to the only crisis-care bed in the country.

How did you come to experience homelessness?
Please refer to original story on RSLWA’s website: www.rslwa.org.au/rslwa-gives-veteran-a-hand-up-out-of-homelessness/

I imagine being in that situation must have been awful, and something you never expected to have to experience. How did you feel at that point in your life?
You’re caught in a whirlpool of conflicting emotions and dark thoughts. Suicidal. You’re in a spiral, a downward spiral, and there is no way out.

After the suicide attempt (sleeping pills, I didn’t want to wake up) I went into survival mode and my military training kicked in, going on 7km a night pack marches with 20kg on my back. I did that every second day, which I eventually built up to 10km every second day. But that had an adverse effect because it fuelled the fire until I had a meltdown. Leading me to Perth, a make-or-break move, it was my last option because there were no crisis care beds available anywhere else in the country.

What do you think should be done to further support Veterans experiencing homelessness, since we know it is so common?
Public awareness and prevention (mainly between that gap between leaving service and DVA assistance).

However, RSLWA’s Veteran Central will save a lot of lives from next year. It will also help families of Veterans get the help they need too. I’m so excited to see them do this and it needs to be rolled out across the country as a priority.

Anything else you want to add?
The RSLWA and its State Welfare Officer Rosalind Howat helped save my life. I am forever in RSLWA’s debt.

Follow the progress of ANZAC House Veteran Central on its dedicated Facebook page, where you can learn more about how this one-stop shop for Veterans will operate.
MUM of two, military wife and now a Nursing SSO in the Army Reserves, Pam Truscott wears many hats in her daily life.

Given that this Remembrance Day RSLWA will focus on the sacrifices of Veterans and their families, we reached out to Pam to see if she could shed some light on an element of service not often spoken about: the effect it can have on the family unit.

For any member of Australian Defence Force (ADF), time away from home can be difficult – but this is especially true when children are involved. For the parent who is absent, they face missing out on important milestones, everyday anecdotes and cuddles with the kids.

Pam credits making daily video snippets and a countdown calendar for helping their family through these long absences.

It can be especially difficult for mothers to leave their children, however Pam advises that “mums should feel proud and strong knowing that one day they will be able to sit down and explain why they chose to leave, why they chose to serve their country, why they are able to sleep safely at night and why others all over the world benefited from their sacrifice.

Finally, when times get tough remember why you enlisted, what your goals are, and that soon you will be back home with them safely in your arms.”

“The most difficult part of being an ADF family is finding the correct balance of what information we tell our children. It can be challenging to explain what we do, why we do it and how to take the element of danger out of it so the children are not frightened.” Pam explains.

Pam met her husband, who is currently serving, during her training, and believes that having both been in ADF makes it easier on them as a couple because they have a unique understanding of the physical and emotional challenges each other faces.

“I feel privileged and proud to be an ADF family, while circumstances change at short notice and the reality and mental toll of service can at times be overwhelming the positives still win.”

Applying lessons learnt in service to civilian life can help make the transition that much easier. As Pam describes it “the biggest lesson was regarding self-discipline. Planning, organisation and being five minutes early are now ingrained into my persona and are part of my daily routine.”

Whether during service or transition, there are plenty of ex service organisations, such as RSLWA who aim to support Veterans and their families. Pam credits these agencies as being a great support to hers and other families in their situation. “I think the associations do a wonderful job of checking in with families and having playgroups gives you that extra incentive to get out the door.”

RSLWA’s groundbreaking initiative, ANZAC House Veteran Central, will provide a one-stop shop for Veterans and their families to access critical assistance services under the one roof.

Pam explains that “having a space that will facilitate holistic family support will be of great value to our family and others just like us. It will give families a safe space to start conversations and be amongst like-minded personnel.”

Perhaps the most relatable insight Pam could give was that hands down, facing a toddler who had not had their nap was much scarier than facing the enemy – because toddlers “will not simply follow commands or obey directions as instructed.”

Sacrifice is just part of military family life

REMEMBRANCE DAY 2019
What Remembrance Day means to you

IF you haven’t yet joined RSLWA’s thriving Facebook community, please come and check us out. It’s your place to stay informed, be entertained, test your grey matter, commemorate, share your wisdom and enjoy a giggle.

Best of all, it’s where kindred spirits who understand what it means to have served come to boost their spirits, join the weekly discussion and enjoy our sense of community. The same goes for our Instagram and LinkedIn pages.

So when our Top Fans on Facebook were recently asked, ‘what does Remembrance Day mean to you?’, they were keen to share their thoughts.

Here’s what they had to say (some comments have been edited for clarity):

Stephen Clarke Whilst ANZAC Day is extremely important to the Nation, Remembrance Day allows me to (personally) remember my 255 mates who never made it home. Falklands War 1982 - 255 British and 609 Argentinians died in 74 days and I remember all of those who died.

Jason King It’s sad reflections of the times we were at war, the soldiers that never made it home and the ones that made it home safe only to struggle mentally, that end their life alone in a place that’s their home, where their families would give everything to help them fight the lonely nights to help them through the tough roads ahead.

We owe our past and present Diggers with our freedom to live in this the best country on the planet.

Grandad, my uncle Brian and uncle Keith all joined. They are the ones I honour the most, along with every man, son, mother and daughter.

Lest we Forget!

Leslie Amos Being an ex-submariner, I remember lost sailors on both sides. A lot were just kids, war was not as Hollywood made it out to be, at times it was terrifying and no good. I always stop whatever I’m doing and stand in rememberance. It’s the least I can do.

Vicki Billington Remembrance Day is when we remember and thank all ADF members past and present. I remember my dad with much love and my husband ex Vietnam Vet.

Joan Milton A time to remember everyone who lost their lives through the stupidity of war-mongers. It has never solved anything. To servicemen and women, including innocent civilians all over the world. I thank you and RIP.

Doug Burrows The obvious answer is the sacrifices made by our fathers and grandfathers and all other serving members of our military that created the wonderful lives we have been able to enjoy.

Beverley Macey-McMaster Remembrance Day means a lot the soldiers gave their tomorrows for us today.

I am a Vietnam veteran war widow.

Derek Rea War sucks! People hate war, yet there have been very few, if any days where there hasn’t been a war being fought somewhere in the world. There are so many people that sacrifice and are scarificed in war. There would be very few people alive that are not related to, or know someone that has been a victim of war. There needs to be a day, where people from all places can gather to remember those that have been victims of war.

Neil Bowden For me, every day is Remembrance Day!
RSLWA’s official Remembrance Day service will take place at the State War Memorial in Kings Park on November 11.

Keep an eye out at major CBD intersections for one of 10 buglers who will sound out The Last Post in synchronisation with the Kings Park bugler just before the Minute’s Silence.

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WORLD WAR I
A Hero’s Lament

By Kathy Harmer, RSLWA Facebook friend

In my life, memories of all sorts abound
Of men without legs in old London town
With tears that I cried both then and now
In my growing old age I wonder just how
This world goes on excusing all of the pain
Will we face such conflicts like this war again?

At five I watched legless surviving men
Sit begging in the London Underground and then
At people who passed them by with nary a word
Wounded soldiers voices by this child were heard “does no one care,
this was my life I left it all, home, kids and wife

Came home wounded with leg long gone

On a battlefield blown away by guns. So here I sit cap in hand ‘till I die in pain
Will I ever just die and be free again? The words echo down through the
passage of years I remember it all, the pain and the tears

A child wondering why all of this did occur

And if my daddy (a soldier) would go in a blur

Would I lose him to war, to death and to glory

Hollow the laugh when writing this story

Soldiers serve countries, do just what they’re told
Give up their limbs, sanity and their lives - they’re bold

Little reward do they get for their sacred vows
When governments pretend that they are sacred cows.

Written by Kathy Harmer, August, 2019
Sub-Branch Remembrance Day Services

APPLECROSS
Monday, 11 November
1045 | Wireless Hill War Memorial site, Telefunken Drive Ardross. Followed by a complimentary morning tea

BULLSBROOK AND DISTRICTS
Monday, 11 November
1045 | 6 Hurd Road, Bullsbrook 6064. Parking on street or at the local school

BUNBURY
Monday, 11 November
1040 | ANZAC Park, Stirling St, Bunbury. At the conclusion of the service, light refreshments will be held at the RSL Hall, 19 Spencer Street, Bunbury.

CAMBRIDGE
Monday, 11 November
1035 | West Leederville Cenotaph 88 Cambridge Street West Leederville. Refreshment will be provided at the West Leederville Sporting Club after followed by our AGM – all enquiries to awilson@amnet.net.au

CANNING DISTRICTS
Monday, 11 November
1100 | 162 Wharf Street Cannington. Followed by a light lunch and entertainment by the WA Bush Poets Society. For more information 0418 958 865 or wilkinse@westnet.com.au

CITY OF BELMONT
Monday, 11 November
1100 | City of Belmont War Memorial.

CITY OF FREMANTLE
Monday, 11 November
1030 for 1045 start | Fremantle War Memorial, Monument Hill. Wreaths and flowers may be laid. Wreath layers are requested to RSVP to the City of Fremantle. events@fremantle.wa.gov.au 9432 9999

CITY OF SOUTH PERTH
Monday, 11 November
1045 | City of South Perth Memorial Garden. Cnr Sandgate St and South Tce, South Perth. Followed by morning tea in the Community Centre. Kerry Fisher Secretary Ph: 93550134 – all welcome.
COTTESLOE
Tenth Lt Frederick Bell VC Annual Memorial Lecture
Friday, 8 November
1830 | Cottesloe Civic Centre
War Memorial Hall, 109 Broome Street, Cottesloe. Admission $10 per head, payable at the door. Light refreshments will be provided. RSVP ASAP to Rob O’Connor, phone 9367 9771 or rkoconnor@iinet.net.au.
Seating is limited.

DAWESVILLE
Monday, 11 November
1030 | Dawesville Memorial, Estuary Road. Following the Service there will be a Barbecue lunch provided for Sub-branch Members at the Port Bouvard Recreation & Sporting Club.

DONGARA
Monday, 11 November
1100 | Memorial Park. Followed by lunch and light refreshments at the clubrooms 10 Waldeck St, Dongara. All visitors are welcome. 0408 489 022.

GERALDTON
Monday, 11 November
1100 | City of Geraldton RSL at Birdwood House, Chapman Road Geraldton.

GOSNELLS
Monday, 11 November
1045 | War Memorial in the City of Gosnells Council Civic Centre.
Contact: 08 9398 1661

GREENBUSHES
Monday, 11 November
1000 | Greenbushes Cenotaph. Contact: 0427 643 508

HIGHGATE
Monday, 11 November
1130 | State War Memorial. Followed by lunch at Frasers Kings Park. Contact greg.wilson@highgate-rsl.org.au for bookings.

JOONDALUP CITY
Monday, 11 November
1045 | Joondalup War Memorial, Central Park, Joondalup. All welcome, for further information call 08 9400 4438 or visit www.joondalup.wa.gov.au

KALAMUNDA
Sunday, 10 November &
1400 | Stirk Park Kalamunda
Monday, 11 November &
1045 | Kalamunda Cenotaph, Kostera Oval

LANCELIN AND DISTRICTS
Monday, 11 November
1050 | Harold Park Memorial.
Followed by drinks at the Endeavour Tavern.

MANJIMUP
Monday, 11 November
1100 | “War Memorial” Junction of Giblett and Brockman streets.
Followed by drinks and snacks at RSL Hall 10 Brockman Street.

MOORA
Monday, 11 November
1045 | Moora War Memorial.
Contact Arthur Tonkin 0428 518 166
REMEMBRANCE DAY 2019

MOSMAN PARK
Monday, 11 November
1030 | Mosman Park Council Memorial Gardens. Light refreshments provided.

NEDLANDS
Monday, 11 November
1040 | Karrakatta War Cemetery. For further information contact nedlands.RSL@gmail

NORTH BEACH
Monday, 11 November
1100 | Charles Riley Memorial Reserve. Contact Rob Sweet 0417 654 533

NORTHAM
Monday, 11 November
1100 | Northam Memorial hall Fitzgerald Street, Northam. For further enquiries please contact the Northam Sub branch Secretary on 0437 489 638 or northamrslsb@hotmail.com

NORTHAMPTON
Monday, 11 November
1055 | At the Memorial, corner of Hampton Rd and Essex Street. Remembrance Dinner to be held on Friday 8th November 2019. Reservations essential: 0429 667 778

PINJARRA
Monday, 11 November
1045 | Pinjarra Memorial, Pinjarra Road. Fellowship at the RSL sub-branch after the service.

TOODYAY
Monday, 11 November
1045 | ANZAC Park, ANZAC Ave. All are welcome to attend.

YORK
Monday, 11 November
1045 | York War Memorial Park, Railway Rd.
Remembrance scooter run to rev up coffers for Veterans

THE South Side Scooterists and Fremantle RSL are joining forces again to raise funds for Veterans – with their free pre-Remembrance Day event for all riders, their families, friends and members of the public.

It will be held on Sunday, 10 November at Clancy’s Fish Pub in Fremantle and will feature a display of vintage, classic, retro and modern scooters.

Riders will assemble at Clancy’s at 10.15am. Following a short service that will include a rendition of The Last Post, riders will depart and return to Clancy’s about 12-12.30pm. There will be lunch, followed by entertainment and the drawing of prizes. All riders will be invited to donate $5 and participants will receive a poppy and a ticket to win one of the many prizes on offer.

Based on the club’s mantra “We will never forget those who have fallen or abandon those who struggle today” all monies raised will go towards the welfare of Veterans and their families.

For enquiries contact: Lindsay Lovering at rslfremantlewa@gmail.com

ANZAC Cottage
Remembers the fallen

THE Friends of ANZAC Cottage will be marking Remembrance Day this year on Sunday, November 10 with what has become its traditional Sunset Service.

This service, set in the grounds of ANZAC Cottage in Mt Hawthorn, a memorial built by the community in one day in February 1916, is even more evocative considering that some of the men who helped in the construction went on to enlist and venture overseas to ‘do their bit’, but sadly did not return.

The commemorative activities at the Cottage will begin at 3pm and will feature a free poppy- making workshop for children, which will help to pay tribute to those veterans who are remembered in our “Field of Remembrance”. The amazing Rockingham 10th Light Horse Group will be there with their beautiful animals, paying tribute to those animals that served alongside our servicemen and women in times of war.

The day will conclude with the evocative “Sunset Service” which will begin at 5.30pm.

For more information about this memorable day, please contact Anne on 0411 44 55 82
WWII Veterans honoured with France’s highest order of merit

By Belinda Carter

RSLWA was thrilled to host a recent Legion d’Honneur (Legion of Honour) ceremony to celebrate World War II Veterans John Revell and James Edgar.

During the ceremony, the pair were presented with the highest French order of merit for their outstanding service during this time.

At the ceremony were members of the French Assembly, who were touring Australia and visited Perth especially for this ceremony, Minister Peter Tinley, and family and friends of Mr Revell and Mr Edgar.

Julie Duhaut-Bedos, Deputy Head of Mission, presented the medals to the two Veterans, with much praise for the bravery shown by these men and a resounding merci beaucoup on behalf of the French Government.

Mr Revell was born in Great Britain in 1923 and joined the Royal Navy in 1942. He was just 21 years old when he first experienced the tragedy of war, during his first battle in Normandy.

Mr Revell was part of the invasion of the Dutch island of Walcheren, a critical tactical operation to allow Allied armies access to the captured port of Antwerp. The Allies urgently needed Antwerp in order to supply advancing armies as they moved towards Berlin. Devastatingly he was injured during this operation and had to be evacuated due to shrapnel in his thigh.

Mr Edgar was born in South Africa in 1920 and was a member of the Intelligence Corps of the British Army. He was recruited into Special Operations Executive, British French Section, to train would-be agents for sending into France.

As a British Commando, Mr Edgar played a critical role in several raids on the German-occupied Channel Islands in 1942. This elite unit was formed during World War II at the request of Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

One of Mr Edgar’s duties was to disguise fishing boats to safely escort Norwegians to Shetland. He also parachuted into Burma to fight the Japanese and stayed in Sumatra for 12 months on peace keeping operations.

Lest we forget!
Soldiers
& Sirens
Winning fans by saving lives

AS the daughter of a former cop who has self-medicated his PTSD for as long as I can remember, when I learnt that RSLWA had partnered with a new mental health service run by a trio of ex-military and police for their peers (and families), I had to learn more.

By Maxine Brown

There’s this odd little fact about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that few people know or talk about: that it is never too late to seek help.

Granted, PTSD is a monster of a condition – sometimes taking years to wrap its grim claws around the psyches of trauma survivors, before up-ending their daily lives with anxiety, severe depression, paranoia, hyper-vigilance, explosive anger, self-destructive behaviour, insomnia and more.

And let’s not minimise the toll it takes on a PTSD-bearer’s loved ones and family, either.

It’s exhausting, socially isolating and can leave its bearers feeling overwhelmed and desperate.

So is it any wonder that suicide rates among our current and former military, and first-responders – such as our brave cops, fireys and ambos – consistently outweigh those in the civilian population? Or that in Australia in 2002-16, ex-servicemen accounted for suicide rates 18 percent higher than the civilian population.

It’s why Soldiers & Sirens co-founders Danielle Baldock, a former WA police officer and now psychologist, and Daniel Bates, a former WA and Victoria police officer, set up their dedicated service offering counselling, peer support and mental health crisis assistance for past and present uniformed personnel.

The third weapon in their arsenal is Fleur Massey, a police wife and former RAF and WA Police officer herself, who has dedicated herself to equipping families of military and first responders with the tools and support to push through their unique challenges.

Not only have this passionate trio experienced first-hand the consequences of dedicating their lives to running toward the gunfire, they are now
fully equipped to help others battling with their mental health as a consequence.

In fact, it was Daniel’s own battle with PTSD and suicidal thoughts, since overcome thanks to his work toward a psychology degree, which saw him initially connect with Danielle. From there, they recognised a mutual vision and Solders & Sirens was born.

The pair have heavily invested their time and capital into their registered charity. While still a fledgling operation, they are making serious waves by proving that with the right support, understanding and treatment, even the most desperately affected can turn their lives around and continue on with functional, productive and loving lives.

An example of some of their success stories include:

1. The police officer who had attended multiple fatal vehicle crashes and other traumatic events in his career. He was struggling with anger and intrusive thoughts on first attending, yet completed 20 sessions AND was able to continue working during the treatment. He has reached almost full recovery and has become an advocate for mental health in his workplace.

2. The ex-paramedic who was struggling with alcohol and suicidal thoughts/behaviour, along with relationship issues. He has completed 40 sessions and is now back in employment, has a loving relationship and is in control of his alcohol use.

3. The ex-Army soldier struggling with depression, self-harm, and overwhelming work and relationship stress. He has now improved his self-esteem, processed both military and other unrelated traumas, and is experiencing a better quality of life.

As Danielle states: “We want people to know that being diagnosed doesn’t mean the end of your career, and that early intervention gives you a much better chance of a full recovery.”

Instrumental in their success are the weekly Soldiers & Sirens peer support meets over coffee in Ellenbrook, where attendees offer advice, share stories and open up about past traumas in an environment that is supportive and understanding. And it’s never too late.

Daniel said: “We had a Vietnam Vet who came along and told us more in 10 minutes than he had in 40 years because he felt comfortable .. and he felt good talking to someone who knew what he was on about and was equipped to help him.

“There’s no judgment, no pity and no one bats an eyelid. It’s like catching up with a group of friends where everyone understands.

“We have Vietnam Vets that turn up at peer support. Our client demographic ranges from younger people through to people in their 60s and 70s. We’ve got clients who left service decades ago. But it still feels good to process that old trauma.”

At the moment, the support groups are held weekly in Ellenbrook, although there are plans to start them south of the river, likely in Rockingham or Fremantle. And the psychology services are held in Heathridge and one day a week at RSLWA. For families, there’s a range of events planned for coming months so that partners and children of those in uniform know what to look for, where to go for help and what to do.

Fleur said: “Prior to reaching danger point - and the aim here is to not have to get to that as no one can MAKE anyone seek help - gaining education and support for themselves is so important. Educate yourself on all that your partner is going through. Learn, learn, learn. Support from others that are going through similar things ensures help is always there.

“This goes to provide a far better understanding of all that’s going on and create confidence in how to manage situations, communicate with your partner and instil boundaries to enable better relationships and a far stronger foundation at home. The partners will seek help only when they are ready and we don’t want the family to fall apart in the meantime.

“Talking with your partner about seeking help for your own wellbeing and understanding is a great idea, although not essential. Keeping them in the loop without making any demands of what you feel they ‘should’ do is a way of opening the doors to discussions when they are ready.”

• For more information about this lifesaving service, go to soldersandsirens.com.au, or follow their Facebook page.
Larrikins in Khaki
Tales of irreverence and courage from World War II Diggers
By Belinda Carter

IN Larrikins in Khaki, Tim Bowden weaves a poignant tale of mateship, blind optimism and the ever-enduring spirit of the ANZACS.

The book is told through the voices of 11 of Australia’s World War II Diggers, all of whom have passed away. The reader follows the growth of these soldiers as they start out as optimistic young men, who are largely ignorant of the atrocities awaiting them, to battle-hardened soldiers and prison camp survivors.

Towards the end of the book, Tim then writes about the struggle of the Diggers to reintegrate back into civilian life and to cope with PTSD, issues that are still prevalent for today’s returning soldiers. Chapter 22 provided invaluable insights into the mind of the returning soldier and the lack of understanding, particularly among the soldiers themselves, of the mental battles they were facing.

At times, the escapades of the soldiers had me laughing out loud, anecdotes such as an inebriated soldier who was left lying on the ground outside base by his mates before they eventually returned to rescue him.

Even in the worst of circumstances, as prisoners of the Japanese, the larrikin spirit remained; when forced by the Japanese to drink to the Emperor, a daring officer made the toast “FAAAARK the Emperor” before downing his ration of sake, a toast repeated by the Japanese who failed to understand the words but were encouraged by the enthusiasm with which the Australians proclaimed them.

Although some parts of the book are hard to stomach, the courage and humour of the Australian ‘larrikins’ is evident throughout. Blatant disregard for authority figures is another key trait of the larrikin, as is the ability to make the best of a bad situation; the “Changi University” was established to allow prisoners of war to pass the time by attending lectures on anything from ancient Egypt to engineering, to law.

It would have been easy for Tim to rest on the laurels of comedic relief but he does not permit the reader to lull into a false sense of security and forget that this is at its core, a book about war. Anecdotes about getting rip snorting drunk on “rehomed” whisky are interspersed with sickening tales of unfathomable loss and defeat.

The 11 co-authors of the book are: Ivan Blazely, Joe Dawson, Ken Clift, Colin Finkemeyer, Norm Fuller, Bob Holt, Clarry McCuloch, Peter Medcalf, Roy Sibson, Ken Joyce and Bill Spencer.

Tim Bowden is a highly acclaimed broadcaster, radio and television documentary maker and social historian.

• Larrikins in Khaki was published by Allen and Unwin Book Publishers. It is available from all good book stores and online.
ANZAC House Veteran Central build hits halfway mark

IT’S exciting times at the ANZAC House Veteran Central construction site in the CBD. Twelve months into the main contract program and the building is past the halfway point.

The fourth-level floor slab was poured in late September, with the core walls and columns for the fifth floor now being formed. Services installations to the basement and ground have started. Windows, claddings, balustrading and lifts are being fabricated off-site.

Fit-out and furniture layout designs are nearing completion and being prepared for tender.

Overall, the project is on time and on budget.

When the ground floor was being poured six months ago – and following expressions of interest from affiliated and ex-service organisations – RSLWA’s Board approved the addition of an extra office-use level. This is now under construction, without disruption to the construction sequences, and will provide opportunities for even more organisations to be part of Veteran Central’s groundbreaking service delivery to Veterans and their families.

It will now consist of three fully equipped levels for administration, welfare, advocacy and medical services; two for function and meeting rooms; a ceremonial hall; and one floor for the ANZAC Club.

ANZAC Club to have glamorous rebirth

The spirit of ANZAC is part of Australia’s DNA. ANZAC Club is steeped with a rich history, but steps into the modern world in the highly anticipated Veteran Central building. The ANZAC Club is a RSLWA initiative, set to launch in July 2020. We will offer our members an exclusive environment to socialise, network, and become a part of a likeminded community of achievers.

A home away from home for industry leaders across WA; we invite individuals to acquire membership in the lead up to opening. We will offer a stimulating blend of homely comfort, hospitality and the perfect environment for business and social interactions. Please note that RSLWA members will automatically receive ANZAC Club membership.

For more information, further enquiries or to submit an application, please contact our ANZAC Club Development Officer on acdo@rslwa.org.au.
Get your finances back on track

You can now get expert help at RSLWA

In these tough economic times, talking to a financial counsellor can help you work through your money problems, while teaching you how to maintain your financial stability independently.

Financial counselling is a free and confidential service and can assist you with managing a household budget, negotiating outstanding bills, providing advocacy, bankruptcy information or referrals to other services.

This is an inclusive service that is appropriate for Veterans in a broad range of circumstances no matter where you live in WA or how much you may earn.

RSLWA now has a qualified and experienced financial counsellor on staff to explain how to get your life back on track.

Financial counsellor Nicky Sligo says: “If you have payments in place that you are struggling with, we can negotiate with creditors. We can also provide you with information relating to bankruptcy.

“We can also contact your creditors if there aren’t any payments in place, but someone’s hounding you for money. “And we can provide you with some food vouchers and payment of some bills if you meet the criteria.”

Call Nicky here at RSLWA on (08) 9287 3799 to make an appointment.

Care you can see

At Regis, we believe the good life is built on great relationships. That’s why we’ve been nurturing trusted connections with our staff, residents and their families for over 25 years.

Here we know that what we do, means more than what we say. So the care we deliver goes beyond specialist skills and tailored services, giving our residents the support they need, the choices they want and the freedom they deserve. And this is why we’re the best choice in aged care.

To find out more about discounts we offer RSL WA members, call us and discover Regis today.
Toolbox info days a hit with Sub-Branches

RSLWA Branch Incorporated was established 102 years ago to provide assistance to those who served us.

Welfare, advocacy, transition and commemoration are the core values of RSLWA and it wasn’t for the hard work, dedication and commitment of the volunteers who run the 130 RSL Sub-Branches, RSLWA would not be able to reach the Veteran community at the capacity in which we do.

In the ever-changing and evolving world of technology we now live in, RSLWA is developing new ways to assist the Sub-Branch committees in running their branch. The Sub-Branch Toolbox was one of these initiatives.

The Toolbox is now the Sub-Branch committee’s one stop shop for everything needed to build and run a Sub-Branch. It contains documents from procedures, application forms and protocol to the RSL calendar, detailing every need to know date for Sub-Branches. The initiative was long awaited but since its release at the 2019 Congress, it has been a huge success.

After finding the Sub-Branch Toolbox was such a beneficial resource for the executive committees, State Branch believed the most effective way for us to continue to assist was to run information sessions, with staff members going through the Toolbox and the different aspects to running a Sub-Branch.

Two of these information sessions were held in August with a great success. 55 attendees from 23 different Sub-Branches attended these sessions across the two days. Several attendees stated they would not have put their hand up for an executive position on their Sub-Branch committee if it were not for the Toolbox and the information session.

RSLWA is endeavouring to continue holding information sessions such as these more frequently throughout the year, covering a variety of different topics. The first of these information sessions covered welfare, advocacy, membership, finance, the roles within the Executive Committee as well as information on both ANZAC and Poppy Appeals.

In the future, we will be holding further general sessions, along with sessions tailored for specific Sub-Branch issues. Not only do we hope to be able to assist Sub-Branches better by giving them a better understanding of their duties and responsibilities but we also want to bring the Sub-Branches together to workshop ideas among themselves.

If you have any ideas or feedback on the sort of content you’d like to see in our information days, please contact Hayley at fso@rslwa.org.au.

By Hayley Barclay
All the glitz and military glamour from our inaugural 2019 HELP OUR HEROES Charity Ball.

THERE was glamour aplenty at this year’s first RSLWA Help Our Heroes Charity Ball, held at Crown Towers after State Congress in June.

About 300 finely attired guests were pampered with fine food and wine, the Army Band with bagpipers and everybody’s favourite Perthonality, MC Baby John Burgess.

The night was such a success in raising funds and awareness for Veteran causes that it is already locked in again for next year.

Stay tuned!
Members come from far and wide for **2019 State Congress**

SUB-BRANCH representatives from around WA flocked to the city on a sunny June Saturday to reconnect with old mates, discuss official RSL business and receive some prestigious recognitions and awards.

We’re certainly looking forward to doing it again with you next year!
Ex-Pow Norm Eaton turns 100

By David Bailey

DESPITE the best efforts of a German sniper during the Battle of Crete, an RSLWA Life Member celebrated his 100th birthday recently.

Bunbury Veteran Richard Norman Eaton (known to family and friends as Norm), was born in Goomalling, spending his formative years in the Wheatbelt town before moving to Perth in the 1930s.

After a stint in the Citizen Militia Forces in 1939. He joined the 2/11th Battalion in November of that year and, after training in New South Wales, was posted to the Middle East.

Norm, after taking part in successful campaigns at Bardia, Tobruk and then around Benghazi, found a new role becoming a dispatch rider for the battalion.

He swapped the desert and his two wheels for the back of a truck, after the 2/11th were shipped to Greece in a disastrous attempt to stop the Germans as they moved to take control the Balkans in April 1941.

“We should never have gone, we had 303 rifles with which to try and stop Panzer tanks,” he said.

The battalion evacuated to the island of Crete, where they faced a large-scale attack from the Fallschirmjäger, Hitler’s much-vaunted paratroopers.

Norm said he could still remember the sky filling with dots as the brilliant white parachutes billowed against the azure skies, the invaders drifting down through a hail of fire from the men below.

Mr Eaton was wounded by an enemy sniper on the first day of battle.

Despite their best efforts, the defenders were overwhelmed and Norm became a POW. He would spend the next four years in prison camps across Europe.

Happy Birthday to the former biker from Bunbury, a proud member of the RSL for more than 70 years.
100-year Stretch a courageous ANZAC worth celebrating

By Maxine Brown

RSLWA’s Facebook page lit up for a very special Veteran recently when we invited everyone to wish Military Cross recipient Gerry Stretch a Happy 100th Birthday.

William Gerrard Farquhar Stretch, better known as Gerry, celebrated his centenary with family and friends in Busselton.

Born on 15 August, 1919 in Bridgetown, Gerry enlisted in the Australian Army in Claremont on 4/12/1940, joining the 2/24 Infantry Battalion – going on to enjoy a remarkable World War II military career.

Gerry’s five-and-a-half years of wartime service took in Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Papua New Guinea and Tarakan, to name just a few.

In a personal letter to Gerry, RSLWA President Peter Aspinall wrote: “It gives me great pleasure to offer the sincere congratulations of the Returned and Services League of Australia WA Branch Incorporated to you as you celebrate the wonderful milestone of turning 100 years of age.

“From all at RSLWA we offer our respect and best wishes to you and your family for an enjoyable celebration of this key event in your illustrious life.”

We all salute you Gerry, as a living treasure and an ANZAC legend!

Letter in full below) was received thanks to the Lieutenant’s bravery in Tarakan, Borneo, toward the end of the campaign, on 6 May, 1945.

His solo assault on a pillbox dugout on a ridge – armed with flamethrower and then machinegun – nullified the enemy, clearing the path along ANZAC Hwy for his battalion and resulting in the ultimate capture of Tarakan Airport.

Gerry’s Military Cross (read his jaw-dropping Commendation Letter in full below) was received thanks to the Lieutenant’s bravery in Tarakan, Borneo, toward the end of the campaign, on 6 May, 1945.

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We all salute you Gerry, as a living treasure and an ANZAC legend!
“The days after losing Rick are still such a blur, but from the earliest time after I learned the awful news, Legacy was there for me and our girls.”

Join Legacy WA as a Legatee and help us keep the promise to families of veterans.

Legatees are the dedicated men and women who volunteer their time to provide the compassionate care and assistance to families of Australian veterans who have died or become incapacitated as a result of their active service.

For more information about becoming a Legatee please email reception@legacywa.com.au, call (08) 9486 4900 or visit promisesliveon.com.au.

“The spirit of Legacy is service.”

The award winning National Anzac Centre is one of Australia’s most important cultural pilgrimages.

Follow the stories of men and women in the Great War through interactive visual and audio displays.

Located within the Albany Heritage Park, the National Anzac Centre is adjacent to the rich military history of the Princess Royal Fortress.

We’re here to HELP

Financial grants to veterans, widows, dependents including ex-ADF and serving members in times of hardship.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN AGED SAILORS, SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN’S RELIEF FUND TRUST

Visit our website: www.rslwa.org.au/financial-assistance

Contact the administrator: Rosalind Howat on 9287 3707
Service returned

NAVIGATING the complicated aged-care system is about to get easier for WA’s Veterans.

A partnership between RSLWA and White Oak Home Care Services is ensuring Veterans and their families are given a guiding hand in understanding and accessing entitlements and services.

“Veterans, like lots of other people, sometimes don’t actually appreciate what is on offer and how you go about accessing it. It’s a case of what you don’t know, you don’t know, and it can get quite complicated,” RSLWA chief executive John McCourt says.

“What we are doing with all Veterans, young and old, is to help make it easier to access services that are available.”

RSLWA works on a “Veterans Central Model” as a central point of contact for its 10,000 Veterans, of whom about half are senior, and pointing them the right way.

“If a Veteran doesn’t appreciate or really know what they can access, or what they are entitled to, they can ring us. For example, they may say ‘I need better homecare and I think I have some entitlements’, and we say ‘Listen, have you spoken to White Oak?’ Or they might say ‘I have some mental health issues’, so we say ‘Have you spoken to Open Arms’,” Mr McCourt, a Veteran of Iraq, Afghanistan and Timor, says.

White Oak is not a newcomer. It has been providing personal, domestic, respite and clinical services to Veterans for 20 years.

Graeme Prior, chief executive of White Oak’s parent company Hall & Prior, says the partnership builds on the provider’s already big program for Veterans, as well as providing continuity of care if Veterans move from home to a residential facility.

White Oak Home Care Services general manager Treasa Lonergan says the partnership aids advocacy. “This partnership allows us to empower those veterans with information about what services they are eligible for and what services they can receive,” she says.
Police Academy welcomes North Beach RSL with open arms

By Jon McKenzie

THE North Beach Sub-Branch organised a visit and tour of the Joondalup Police Academy through one of its members, ex-police officer Peter Bowring.

Members found the tour very informative and a good insight into our WA Police Force, as well as the high standard of training they undertake to protect our state.

With other countries sending their officers to be trained here, the academy has its own hotel for training in room breaching and drug detection. It also has a small village with bank, chemist, corner shop etc for training purposes, with paid actors as criminals. (The scenarios are very real, with actions and language not for the faint hearted).

We also got to view the small-arms firing range, the parade ground and their memorials - one being in memory of the first two WA police officers killed in the line of duty in 1926. At the time of our visit, they were in the process of creating a memorial to officers lost to PTSD.

Thank you to the academy for your warm welcome. We Salute you men and women in blue.

Collaborative effort wins high praise in Capel

THIS year’s WA Local Government Association (WALGA) ANZAC Award has been won by the Shire of Capel, in honour of its work with the RSL.

The shire and Capel RSL have demonstrated five years of successful collaboration relating to ANZAC Day and involving the community.

Pictured left are Capel RSL Vice President Ray Jones with Shire President Murray Scott, with councillors and staff.
Cockburn comes together for Vietnam Veterans Memorial Day

By Arthur J Stanton

THE City of Cockburn Sub-Branch conducted the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Day Service on Sunday, 18th August, where 90-plus Veterans and guests filled the hall, including members from RSL Fremantle and RSL Bicton-Palmyra.

The Catafalque Party and Flag Marshal were members from RAAF Base Pearce, they slowly marched in and took up their post around the monument. The MC was Malcolm “Tiny” Small, who opened with the Acknowledgement of Country, immediately followed by the Welcome and Introduction by Paul Prickett CSM. In Paul’s address he made special mention of how his two older brothers influenced him to join the Army, starting as an apprentice and rising through to the rank of Major, Paul’s brothers were both Armoured Corps officers and served in Vietnam.

The Vietnam Memorial Address was presented by Warrant Officer Jen Riches from RAAF Base Pearce, she spoke in detail on the history of Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War. During her address, WO Riches told of how in 1967, Canberra Bombers from 2 Squadron were sent from Butterworth, Malaysia, to Phan Rang Air Base in South Vietnam as part of the Australian contribution to the Vietnam War. Using Magpie call sign, 2 SQN released about 76,000 bombs during the war, conducting both high and low-level missions. On the 3rd November 1970, Magpie 91 disappeared without a trace following a bombing mission, leaving the pilot and navigator missing in action.

In April 2009, the wreckage of A84-231 was discovered. In August 2009, while based at Surveillance and Response Group at RAAF Base Williamtown, she was nominated to be Commander for the RAMP Ceremony in Hanoi, for the return of our last two members Missing in Action from the Vietnam War - Pilot Officer Robert Carver and flying Officer Michael Herbert, the crew from Magpie 91. It was certainly a very emotional event to be a part of.

The Wreath-Laying Ceremony was led by RSL Sub-Branch President Digger Cleak OAM, he was followed by Wayne Tarr, RSLWA State Trustee, then ADF representatives and another 10 wreath-layers, including MP Josh Wilson.

We were grateful to the ladies of the RSL Cockburn Poppy Club, who provided the after-service food. Thankyou ladies.
In the eternal struggle for freedom, Australia’s armed forces have proudly answered the call of their country. Now, you can show your pride for a hero who served with the Lest We Forget Men’s Ring, a heirloom-quality creation which keeps the spirit of remembrance and the courage of our heroes with you in elegant, gleaming style.

Finely hand-crafted, our exclusive design showcases a raised-relief rising sun and a digger near the grave of a mate within an inlay of genuine black onyx. The message “Lest We Forget” calls to you respectfully in the gleam of 24K gold. Each side of the ring shows a digger from Australia and New Zealand fully sculpted saying a silent prayer for the fallen. With the words “We will remember them” engraved on the inner band, the ring serves as a reminder of our heroes’ courage and commitment to our great nations and the freedom we all cherish so dearly.

Available for a Limited Time Only

Available in men’s sizes 8 – 15, high demand is expected for this gleaming tribute to our Anzac heroes. Secure your ring today for 5 instalments of $49.99 or $249.95, plus $19.99 postage and handling, backed by our 120-day guarantee. Send no money now. Return the coupon or go online today at www.bradford.com.au/lwf

For quickest delivery, order online: www.bradford.com.au/lwf
Quoting promotion code: 108299
With dignity and resilience, FRANK MALLARD rose above hate to set example for us all

VIETNAM War hero, proud Yamatji elder, Stolen Generation survivor, this year’s WA Senior Australian of the Year, author, tireless volunteer, Ellenbrook Sub-Branch media officer, loving father and husband.

These are just some of the many titles bestowed on Frank Mallard, a truly inspiration member of RSLWA’s community, who sadly passed away on August 10.

Mr Mallard served in the Australian army from 1962-85, and in the Army Reserves from 1986-99. He saw active duty in Borneo and Vietnam but on returning home, like other Aboriginal soldiers, was snubbed by the RSL. With a fire in his belly, Mr Mallard decided to bring about change by promoting the military service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within Veterans’ Affairs and the broader community.

In 2015, Mr Mallard received a Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation as a member of the 1RAR Group.

Most recently, despite PTSD and Parkinson’s disease, Mr Mallard was Media Officer at Ellenbrook Sub-Branch and a dedicated Veterans’ issues volunteer. He was the Chair of Voice of the Voiceless Ministry, which helps people with addiction, mental illness and social issues.

Following Mr Mallard’s death, WA Governor Kim Beazley AC wrote: “In public life for as long as I have been, it was impossible not to know Frank. He was devoted to service and determined to inspire. How inspirational he was he probably did not know until his later years. He was part of the Stolen Generation but he knew his family.

He was proud of his Uncles who had served in both wars. So he determined to serve himself. He joined the army in October 1962 and was posted to the school of military engineering. He re-joined, repeatedly volunteering himself into wartime situations – Borneo and Vietnam. He was additionally posted overseas, his family travelling with him. So early a volunteer for Vietnam was he that he served when IRAR was attached to the US 173rd Airborne. Along with his multiple service medals, that service saw him entitled to the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation.

He was with the regular army from 1962 to 1985 and then the Army Reserve until 1999. He reached the rank of Warrant Officer Class 2. He could not keep away from service or danger, volunteering for the UN in Croatia with the NATO force.

He married his second wife in Croatia. In civilian life he worked with Prison Services. As a military exemplar and an Indigenous elder he was uniquely positioned for volunteer work and was constantly engaged with ex-service organisation and voluntary activities. Notably, Chairman of the Voice of the Voiceless Ministry, devoted to people with drug, mental and social challenges.

He loved the Army. He loved the idea of serving his country. He was deeply conscious of the honourable character of that service. Fortunatley for us his biography was published just before his passing. Frank’s story will continue to inspire. He would hope that inspiration would carry us through to constitutional change to recognise the traditional owners and complete reconciliation.

Deepest sympathy to his wife Tanja and his family.”

RIP Mr Mallard, a true leader among men.
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<tr>
<th>Unit and Kindred Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<td>11th Battalion AIF 12th Brigade WW2</td>
<td>9384 3924</td>
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Armadale
Burr, Charles F3748
Mt Lawley-Inglewood
Cornish, Ronald F5310
Riverton
Devereux, Rowland 22825
Victoria Park
Dick, Trevor 52751
Busselton
Fry, Graeme R95254
Mosman Park
Jackson, Kevin F/V293
City of Mandurah
Kemp, Kenneth F4649
Nedlands
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Nelson, Donald F4303
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Robinson, James Cjx581840
Geraldton City
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Varley, Peter R57278
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Warburton, Owen F4351
City of Mandurah

Carlson, Thomas 525676
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How you can help Veterans with Christmas Hampers for Heroes

HOMELESSNESS, unemployment, PTSD and chronic physical injury are very real challenges encountered by some ex-service personnel.

Since Christmas can be the loneliest and most financially stressful time of year, RSLWA is inviting the public to join us in giving the gift of respect, love and gratitude to Veterans in need over the festive season.

We’re sharing a little Christmas joy to those who need it most with a special campaign called Hampers For Heroes – and it costs just $25 per hamper of common Christmas food staples.

However, we’re asking Sub Branch welfare officers for help connecting with the Veterans who need it most.

Since ex-service personnel are a stoic bunch and will rarely ask for help, we’re relying on Sub-Branches to pinpoint the Veteran families within their community who could do with a helping hand this Christmas.

In the meantime, RSLWA is doing the fundraising (https://www.rslwa.org.au/become-involved/hampers-for-heroes/).

These hampers come at no cost to Sub-Branches. However, a Sub-Branch representative must be willing and able to collect the hampers from one of two Foodbank centres (Perth Airport, or Peel) for distribution among your community.

RSLWA does not need numbers right now (this will depend on State Branch’s fundraising efforts), but we do encourage you to start thinking of likely beneficiaries. Please keep an eye on our website and social media channels to follow our fundraising campaign.

Please get onboard and if you have any questions contact Maxine via comms@rslwa.org.au. And as always, thank you for your continued efforts and support.
They fought for our freedom.
They taught us respect.

Serving our Veterans for more than 70 years.

Respect. Integrity. Loyalty.
It’s what we share.