

55/53 BATTALION ASSOCIATION ORDERLY ROOM "NEWS" SHEET

A MESSAGE FROM THE RETIRING PRESIDENT (ALEX BELL).

to
ALL ASSOCIATION MEMBERS.

A President's report to members in lieu of Orderly Room Gossip"
Issue 1/00.

Members who were in attendance at the December '99 A.G.M. at Petersham R.S.L. Club would be aware of my announcement to retire as President in the Year 2000 and assuring all present that I would hope to offer my personal recommendation of a successor to "change-over" this important office, which I have been honoured to hold for many years.

I also gave my word of continuing personal support to the important period which lies ahead, particularly this Year 2000. No doubt by the year end the "younger breed" will have perceived what is required of them in taking over the management role for the future.

At this time, I share my thoughts with you regarding our achievements of the past and importantly in what direction our future is planned to take us.

THE PAST.

THE FINANCIAL POSITION- This has already been appraised and I believe with some further support we are in a sound position at this time. (See later reference, member "donations" in lieu of membership fees).

SERVICE MEMORIALS - Our "Service" memorials are now clearly identified and the two important ones, the Sanananda Station Concord (Australia) and the plaque at Sanananda Village (P.N.G.) are properly established. Both of these memorials are highlighted in the recent "photo kit" offered to association members.

SERVICE MEMORABILIA - These mementos have been carefully indexed and safely deposited at the Glebe Branch Library (Glebe Point Road). The two doors of this storage cabinet have been greatly enhanced by two excellent wood carvings, one being the Rising Sun emblem with 55/53 superimposed and the other featuring a somewhat aggressive symbol of the fighting mouse (Mice of Moresby).

Plans are in place to have a half mannequin (a mannequin is a figure model used in large window displays of retail stores), suitably attired in WWII battle (patrol) dress.

UNIT PUBLICATIONS - As an adjunct to Frank Budden's book "That Mob" we have now available an abridged unit history booklet which also includes the very proud service history of the 53rd and 55th Battalions in WWI.

The cost is \$20.00 and the booklet is available on request from Trevor Harper.

ORDERLY ROOM GOSSIP - This will we hope continue to be issued perhaps under a new title "Orderly Room Newsheet" - being in greatly reduced form and probably to include the Secretary's broadsheet and be a combined publication.

SOUVENIRS - The most recent issue of personal Key Rings were indeed well received (still available at \$6.00 including postage). A small quantity of past souvenirs including postcard holders etc. are also available through Trevor.

GENERAL SERVICE ENQUIRIES - Through the Secretary or myself we handle numerous enquiries for "service" details for families of members and the same will be available in the future.

CHRISTMAS GREETING CARDS FOR WIDOWS This means of retaining contact has already been acclaimed and will also continue when requested as an appropriate action.

CONTACT WITH OTHER ASSOCIATIONS ETC. - In certain cases, by financial support and in all by personal contact these will continue. Particularly in the case of Royal NSW Regiment. (RNSWR) refers to the Reserve Force component of our Defence Strategy and is in other words the MILITIA of today. Our contact is well received and can be considered as an important objective of the Association.

THE ASSOCIATION YEARS AHEAD.

Considering the 54 years since the end of WWII and the proposed CARETAKER ROLE of the SUPPORT GROUP we have endeavoured to read the likely SIGNPOSTS for the future.

Good judgement prevailed when we addressed this likely problem some years ago. (In recent times, we have noted that a number of associations with which we keep in contact are now considering WINDING UP. Two that quickly come to mind are the 39th and 49th Infantry Battalion Associations). Others who still face this problem must of necessity have a gloomy future.

REMEMBER BOOKLET - a copy of which was distributed to all members some years ago is presently the subject of a discussion with the RSL - NSW, who have agreed to take the project over and hopefully lift the present distribution number from the 30,000 to 100,00 copies.

ANZAC TALK BOOKLET - This is another project which provides talks to SCHOOLS which I have researched and has possibilities of being handled similarly to the "Remember" booklet above. (Both booklets would in some measure be a small income earner and importantly some members who offer services to schools might be interested to obtain a copy in due course). (Enquiries from members welcome).

SPECIFIC IDENTIFICATION OF PAST DRILL HALLS - There are three drill halls that are possibly known to members of the Association - they are Forest Lodge, Belmore and Addison Road Marrickville. In the instance of the first two named I have correspondence from the Dept. of Defence that at some appropriate time identification plaques of 55th and 53rd Battalions association with these establishments will be arranged "on site".

Members will appreciate I hope that there is much more work to be done and I will not be excluding myself from a personal commitment in this year 2000 from seeking the completion of the tasks where humanly possible.

I close my report with the fervent hope that there will be a good "roll up" for the year 2000 ANZAC DAY MARCH through Sydney. It is expected that the assembly point will be in Bligh Street as usual and the time of assembly gets earlier each year as the numbers at the front of the march get fewer.

ALEX BELL

OTHER ITEMS

DECEMBER '99 MEETING PETERSHAM RSL. (3rd Dec 1999).

This first time move from a city venue was acknowledged to be a successful event. The previous practice of a Martin Place assembly for a commemorative service was carried out as a featured event in the Auditorium of Petersham RSL and it was acknowledged in all ways as dignified as in past years. The meal service by the club staff was also of high standard and arrangements are now in place for a similar booking to be made for Friday 8th December at the same venue.

Pre-bookings for those attending in December 2000 will be necessary and the second annual newsletter will cover this matter in detail.

The Annual General Meeting followed the luncheon and the new committee is: -

President	Alex Bell	Phone 02 9642 6903
Secretary/ Treasurer	Trevor Harper	02 4332 5348
Committee Member	Harvey Blundell	02 9724 1459
	Warwick Davis	02 9622 5447
	Bruce Hilton	02 9789 2525
	Charles Jennings	02 9604 3396
	Harry Matthew	02 4943 2685
	Jack Symonds	02 9603 5516

The financial position of the Association was covered in some detail by the President in his report and at a later meeting of the Association committee in 2000 it was resolved that continuing financial support by members would be necessary. A call for this member support being a "DONATION" at the rate of \$5.00 per annum replacing the use of the word "membership fee" thereby avoiding GST problems likely to arise in the future.

THIS IS A GENUINE APPEAL TO MEMBERS IN ORDER THAT PAST SERVICES
GIVEN MAY BE CONTINUED IN FUTURE YEARS.

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

	<u>LEST</u>	<u>WE</u>	<u>FORGET</u>
N J BARNESLEY	J BRADFORD	I M CORNISH	J D CURTIS
J EYRE	J K GARBETT	W C GEARY	J GEORGE
L R HAYDEN	W H ISAACSON	A E LINTERN	J MURRAY
	W H PEARCE	J ST CLAIR SMITH	

We extend to the families of our Fallen Comrades our sincere sympathies and on those occasions when we gather together.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

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The past years activities have been well covered in the report from the President and I wish to extend my thanks to him and the committee and members who have been so supportive of me during this time.

I remind members that the Newcastle luncheon will be held on the **FIRST WEDNESDAY** in **APRIL** and **OCTOBER**, at Hamilton RSL Club. This allows this function to be held so as to

not clash with other functions, specifically KOKODA DAY.

The annual Church Parade will be held at St John's Church, Glebe as usual on Sunday 7th May and your support is required to carry on the tradition established by our WWI Battalions, from whom we inherited a proud tradition of service. The ladies of the church congregation provide a wonderful morning tea and we should respond to their hospitality by attending this service.

A further reminder to members that we may march off on ANZAC day earlier than usual so DON'T BE LATE. When we parade with our Fallen Comrades banner, we represent them and all who have since passed on, so let's put our best foot forward on this last ANZAC day of the century.

MY NEW ADDRESS FROM 23rd FEBRUARY

68 ROTHERHAM STREET BATEAU BAY NSW 2261

PHONE 43325348

Trevor Harper

SPECIAL NOTICE

It is necessary for catering and seating arrangements that the number of members attending the functions listed below be known as soon as possible. PLEASE indicate your intention by crossing out the relevant answer below, AND REPLYING BY MAIL.

I will/ will not be able to attend 12th March
1345hours:

Dedication at KOKODA Walkway Stations,
Buna, Gona, Menari and Wairope YES/ NO

Early Morning ANZAC DAY Commemorative Service at The
Diggers' Memorial St. John's Church
Glebe Point Road (Details of time available YES / NO
from any Committee Member)

Annual Church Service at St John's
Sunday 7th MAY 1030 hours YES / NO

ANZAC DAY Luncheon CIVIC HOTEL, corner Pitt
and Goulburn Streets -Cost \$20.00

YES / NO

IT IS VERY, VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU RESPOND TO THIS REQUEST AT
THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME