



# "Sitrep, Over!"

EDITION 11. 2020

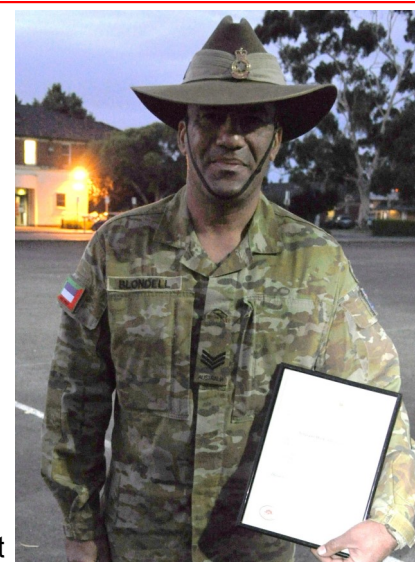
**Official Journal of the Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc**

## Committee Members Moving On

After 4 years as a member of the RSARA Committee of Management, SGT Mark Blondell has been posted to Adelaide University Regiment (AUR) as of January 2021 and hopes to continue towards his goal of attaining his Warrant to WO2 after being promoted to Sergeant in 2017. Mark has represented the Serving Members of the RSAR Association since he joined us in 2013, and has been instrumental in signing up at least 12 new Serving Members to the RSARA in that time. He is also our No. 1 link with the working operations and deployments of the Battalion, and has submitted a number of articles for this newsletter. We thank Mark for his support, guidance and friendship over the past 7 years, and we hope to see him back at 10/27 Bn in the near future.



Also leaving us is our Battalion Welfare and Liaison Officer, Chaplain Derek Crozer, who joined us last year after a request from us to the CO to provide a more-permanent link with the Battalion. Derek has attended most Committee meetings and assisted with the packing and transit of the RSARA Christmas Care Packages last December.



Derek is busy in his other role as Senior Pastor of The Source Church at Stirling in the Adelaide Hills, but will add to his workload when he is posted to 9 Combat Services Support Battalion (CSSB) at Warradale in January 2021. We wish Derek all the best and know he will give his new flock as much support and pastoral care as he has given us. "Hooray for Padre, Hooray at last, Hooray for Padre, 'cos he's a...etc...etc...etc."

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## PLEASE GET THE ADDRESS CORRECT

From time to time we have letters from members go astray and not reach us. On investigation it reveals that 9 out of 10 missing letters are incorrectly addressed. Out of necessity we either change our addresses or there is a change of committee members, but some letters are still not reaching their destination. There are two ways to remedy this. 1) put the correct address on the letter and 2) put a return address on the back of your envelope so it is returned to you if it doesn't make it to us. Also, please ensure if you're sending a letter to the Secretary David Laing, ADDRESS it to "The Secretary David Laing." Some postal officers have no idea where "The Secretary RSARA" lives, but if you address it to me personally, it'll most likely arrive here safe and sound. The same applies to the Treasurer. Letters or cheques etc to him should be addressed accordingly. "The Treasurer RSAR Association Christian Bennett," etc.

And finally, PLEASE DON'T SEND CASH THROUGH THE POST. If it goes missing, we have no control over it. At least with cheques you/we can cancel them. Cheers.

## The Battle for Milne Bay Part 5

Over the course of 23 and 24 August, aircraft from the 25th Air Flotilla carried out preparatory bombing around the airfield at Rabi. The main Japanese invasion force left Rabaul on 24 August, under Matsuyama's command, at 7:00 am. The fleet was made up of two light cruisers, *Tenryū* and *Tatsuta*, as well as three destroyers, *Urakaze*, *Tanikaze* and *Hamakaze*, in concert with the transports, *Nankai Maru* and *Kinai Maru*, and the submarine chasers *CH-22* and *CH-24*.

At 8:30 am on 24 August, Milne Bay GHQ was alerted by an RAAF Hudson bomber near Kitava Island, off the Trobriand Islands, and coastwatchers that a Japanese convoy was approaching the Milne Bay area. HMAS *Arunta* – escorting the transport SS *Tasman* – left the Milne Bay area and sailed for Port Moresby after learning of the invasion force. Reports of the second Japanese convoy, consisting of seven barges, which had sailed from Buna carrying the force that would land at Taupota were also received at this time. In response to this sighting, after the initially poor weather had cleared, 12 RAAF Kittyhawks were scrambled at midday. The barges were spotted beached near Goodenough Island where the 350 troops of the 5th Sasebo SNLF, led by Commander Tsukioka, had gone ashore to rest. The Australian pilots then proceeded to strafe the barges and, over the course of two hours, destroyed them all and stranded their former occupants.

After the initial sighting, the main invasion force, consisting of the heavy naval screening force and the two transports, remained elusive until the morning of 25 August. In an effort to intercept it, US B-17s operating from bases at Mareeba and Charters Towers in Queensland, were dispatched, although they were unable to complete their mission as bad weather closed in. Later in the afternoon, a number of Kittyhawks and a single Hudson bomber strafed the convoy and attempted to bomb the transports with 250 lb (110 kg) bombs near Rabi Island. Only limited damage was caused to the convoy and no ships were sunk. After this, due to the withdrawal of the only Allied naval presence in the area – *Arunta* and *Tasman* – an RAAF tender was sent to act as a picket in the bay, ready to provide early warning of the approaching Japanese.

Meanwhile, earlier in the day, Clowes decided to shorten his lines and passed the order for D Company, 61st Infantry Battalion, which had been sent to Akioma in the east, to withdraw back behind 'B' Company at KB Mission and reposition itself at the No. 3 Airstrip at Gili Gili. A shortage of water craft, however, delayed D Company's departure until the evening of 25/26 August after requisitioning three luggers *Bronzewing*, *Eleva* and *Dadosee*. At around 10:30 pm, the Japanese main force, consisting of over 1,000 men and two Type 95 Ha-Go tanks, had made landfall near Waga Waga, on the northern shore of the bay; due to an error in navigation they came ashore about 3 kilometres (1.9 mi) east of where they had intended, placing them further away from their objective. Nevertheless, they quickly sent out patrols to secure the area, rounding up local villagers, and established a beachhead.

Later that evening, two of the small water craft that D Company were using to withdraw to Gili Gili encountered the Japanese landing force. In the firefight that followed, one of the craft – *Eleva* – was forced to beach and its occupants forced to return to take to the jungle on foot, eventually reaching Gili Gili some time later; the other, *Bronzewing*, was holed and of its passengers, 11 were killed either in the engagement or by the Japanese following their capture.

### Japanese advance inland

By dawn of 26 August, advancing west along the coast with armoured support, the Japanese had reached the main position manned by troops from B Company, 61st Infantry Battalion, around KB Mission. The Japanese force moved through the jungle at the edge of the coastal track, and was headed by two light tanks. Although they lacked anti-armour weapons, the Australians were able to turn back the Japanese attack. At this stage, the Japanese suffered a serious setback when their base area was heavily attacked at daylight by RAAF Kittyhawks and a Hudson aircraft, along with B-25s, B-26s and B-17s from the US Fifth Air Force. As a result of the attack, a number of Japanese troops were killed, while a large quantity of supplies was destroyed, as were a number of the landing barges which were beached near the KB Mission. Aside from severely hampering the Japanese supply system, the destruction of the landing barges also prevented their use to outflank the Australian battalions. The Japanese did not have any air cover

## The Battle for Milne Bay Part 5

as the fighters based at Buna which were to patrol over Milne Bay were shot down by Allied fighters shortly after they took off and other aircraft based at Rabaul were forced to turn back due to bad weather.

Nevertheless, the Japanese were still pressing on the 61st Infantry Battalion's positions throughout the day. Field, who had command responsibility for the local area, decided to send two platoons from the 25th Infantry Battalion to provide support. Later, the remaining two rifle companies from the 61st were also dispatched, along with their mortar platoon. The muddy track meant that the Australians were unable to move anti-tank guns into position; however, as a stop-gap measure quantities of sticky bombs and anti-tank mines were moved up to the forward units. At 4:45 pm, with air and artillery support, the Australians launched a minor attack upon the Japanese forward positions which were located about 600 yards (550 m) to the east of the mission, pushing the Japanese back a further 200 yards (180 m). Weary from the day's fighting, though, they withdrew to Motieau, west of the mission..



The Australians then attempted to break contact and withdraw towards a creek line where they hoped to establish a defensive line as darkness came. The Japanese stayed in close contact with the Australians, harassing their rear elements. The men from B Company then sought to establish their position, while the 2/10th Infantry Battalion made preparations to move eastwards towards Ahima, passing through the lines of the 25th and 61st Infantry Battalions. In the early evening, Japanese ships shelled the Australian positions and later, at 10:00 pm, the Japanese launched a heavy attack on the Australians which continued sporadically through the night. By 4:00 am the following morning, the Japanese began to employ infiltration and deception techniques to try to outflank the Australian positions. Anticipating an armoured attack at dawn, the Australians withdrew

A Japanese Type 95 *Ha-Go* tank near Rabi, bogged in the mud and abandoned

back to the Gama River, which was situated 1 mile (1.6 km) to the west. During the night, the destroyer *Hamakaze* entered the bay to make contact with the Japanese troops and land supplies. The landing force had been out of radio contact since 2:00 pm, and the destroyer was unable to raise it with either her radio or visual signalling devices. As a result, *Hamakaze* departed Milne Bay at 2:30 am without having landed any supplies.

Shortly after dawn, in the air, a Japanese force consisting of eight dive bombers with 12 Zero fighter escorts attacked the Allied airfield at Gili Gili. One of the attacking aircraft was shot down, while only a small amount of damage was inflicted. Meanwhile, around the mission as the Japanese reconnoitred Australian positions, the 2/10th Infantry Battalion, consisting of just 420 men, was ordered to the Gama River by Clowes. This operation was badly planned and did not have a clear purpose; it was launched as both a reconnaissance in force and a counter-attack, but evolved into an attempt to establish a blocking force at KB Mission. Moreover, while the Australians had no knowledge of the strength or intentions of the Japanese, no force would be able to reinforce the battalion once it moved outside the main defensive lines near the airstrips

Continued next month



## Mark Jones QFSM - Guest Speaker



Guest Speaker Mark Jones QFSM

50 members and partners attended the Luncheon at the Avoca Hotel on October 4th. We were all overwhelmed with the immense knowledge and friendship of our Guest Speaker Mr Mark Jones QFSM, Chief Officer of the SA Country Fire Service. Mark spoke of his senior roles within the UK emergency services, starting in 1985 with the Grampians Fire Brigade in Northern Scotland as a firefighter, up to his current role here in SA. After retiring from the UK Fire and Rescue Service in 2015, Mark moved to Australia and served as the ACT Emergency Services Agency's "Director of Strategic Reform" for two years before returning to the UK. His most recent role there was London Ambulance Service's "Head of Resilience and Specialist Assets" in which he oversaw the preparations for, and responses to, large scale emergencies, events and terror related incidents.

Mark has the highest praise for his South Australian volunteers and staff, and says he is most fortunate to be surrounded by extremely dedicated people, who make his job so much easier. He was approached by many RSARA members after his speech and thanked by them for his very interesting talk. Rod Beames presented Mark, who was accompanied by his partner Elizabeth, with an RSARA Regimental Tie and an RSARA stubby holder, and "must" for all Aussies.



Above & Left: Rod Beames thanks Mark for his speech, and recounts how he had himself joined the Ceduna CFS many years ago as a young volunteer, and had left his home in the early hours responding to an alarm, wearing only his underpants. It's amazing how dedicated our CFS volunteers have always been. Good one Rod!



# AVOCA LUNCHEON



Mark Jones talks with RSARA member Anthony Portakiewicz, who is a firefighter with MFS



David Laing, Rod Beames, Mark Jones, Corey Skapin and Mark's partner Elizabeth discuss the work of the CFS



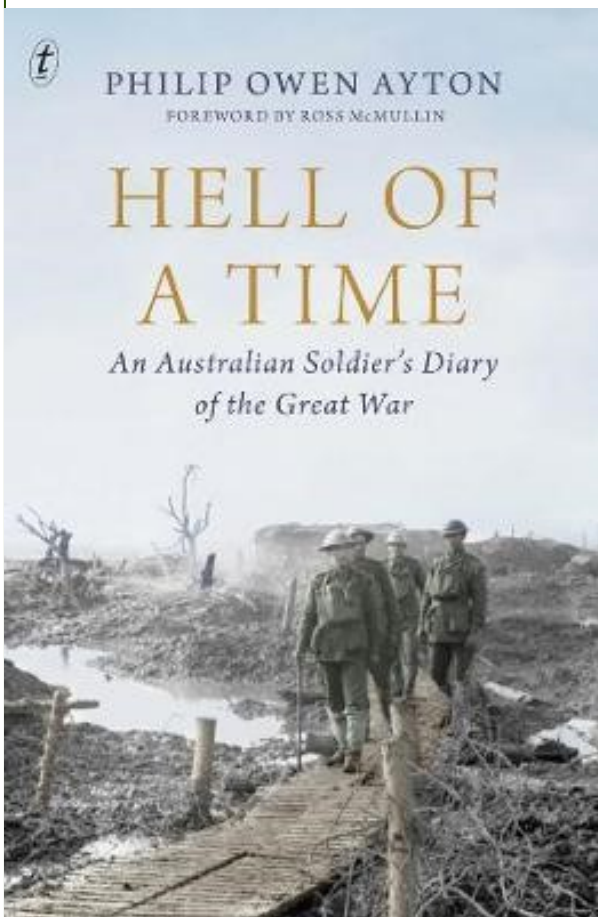
Thanks again to the Avoca Hotel for providing wonderful hospitality a great venue for our luncheon, and for the great service of wonderful meals. We'll definitely go there again.



Member Peter Loveder from Mildura sent in a poem from a book he'd read. The book is called "Hell Of A Time," and was written by a young Digger, Phillip Owen Ayton about his experiences in Gallipoli.

Ayton was working on the Sydney tramways when the call to join the fight against Germany came. Keen for action, he found himself in the First Field Company Engineers in the First Division of the Australian Imperial Forces. Shipped to Egypt, Ayton soon after took part in the Gallipoli landing. 'I would not have missed this for anything,' he wrote to a friend. Badly injured, he was sent to England to convalesce and from there joined the campaign in France, where he saw out the war.

From the start, Ayton kept notes of his experiences, which he would write up in a diary. Plucky, charming and self-deprecating, this son of the new nation records the horrors of trench warfare and his off-duty adventures in Cairo, London and Paris. This remarkable story is now published for the first time, a century after the wars end. Accompanied by a postscript by one of Ayton's sons and Ayton's poem about the Gallipoli campaign, *A Hell of a Time* is a vital and compelling account of the Great War. Ayton included in the book a poem he wrote called "Gallipoli" which is reproduced here.



# Lest We Forget

## Gallipoli

*All was quiet and still, as on the decks we stood around,  
When from the shore there came a crack, a sharp startling sound;  
‘Twas the enemies’ alarm, and we knew that we’d been seen,  
So onward dashed the destroyer under extra pressure of steam.  
And soon thousands of rifles were crackling, and bullets were hissing by,  
As into the boats we clambered, vowing to do or die;  
The cries of our wounded chilled us, but bending low to the oar,  
We pulled for our very lives that not far distant shore.*

*Into the water, waist deep amidst the flying spray,  
And waded towards the rocky shore just as 'twas breaking day.  
Heavens! How the bullets hissed, 'twas like a fierce, wintry storm,  
As we dashed across the open beach that glorious Sunday morn,  
Machine guns spurted their deadly hail, and man after man they found,  
Till many a hero's body lay on that hostile lead-swept ground;  
Still onward we rushed with bayonets fixed, for ahead was fiery work,  
And swiftly we mounted those rugged hills, and off them drove the Turk.*

*Crash! Crash! The very earth shook, 'Queen lizzie' had begun,  
And we cheered as her shells burst grandly right over the enemy gun,  
Earthworks were hurled upwards, great holes were torn in the ground,  
As shell after shell screamed over and burst with deafening sound.  
Crash! Crash! 'twas smartly answered and shrapnel rent the air,  
For the Turks had found our range and shell they did not spare,  
But amidst it all we dug trenches and prepared for a counter attack,  
And when the enemy launched it, we quickly forced him back.*

*For eight long months we stayed there and many fight we fought,  
Popes Hill, Steele's Post, Lone Pine, all were dearly bought;  
Hard food, bad water, flies, vermin, fever and rough weather,  
All these we braved out there, officers and men together,  
At last they thought of us in London and planned to evacuate,  
To give back to Johnny Turk, that land we'd begun to hate;  
So we silently left the trenches and boarded the transports once more,  
And said goodbye to Anzac, that never to be forgotten shore.*

*We failed in our objective, but we did our level best,  
So I'm proud of this bit of silver I'm wearing on my breast;  
But I'm prouder by far of the struggle, though 'twas a struggle in vain,  
For the glory of young Australia, in the Dardanelles Campaign.*

Digger. 129  
CPL P. O. Ayton  
1st Field Company Engineers  
Aust. Imp. Forces  
France 1916





# The Victoria Cross for Australia

The **Victoria Cross for Australia** is the highest award in the Australian Honours System, superseding the Victoria Cross for issue to Australians. The Victoria Cross for Australia is the "decoration for according recognition to persons who in the presence of the enemy, perform acts of the most conspicuous gallantry, or daring or pre-eminent acts of valour or self-sacrifice or display extreme devotion to duty."

The Victoria Cross for Australia was created by letters patent signed by Elizabeth II, Queen of Australia, on 15 January 1991. As the highest Australian award, it is listed first on the Australian Order of Wear with precedence in Australia over all orders, decorations and medals. The decoration may be awarded to members of the Australian Defence Force and to other persons determined by the Australian Minister for Defence. A person to whom the Victoria Cross for Australia has been awarded is entitled to the post nominals **VC** placed after the person's name.

The Governor-General of Australia awards the Victoria Cross for Australia, with the approval of the Sovereign, on the recommendation of the Minister for Defence. The first medal was awarded on 16 January 2009 to Trooper Mark Donaldson, for the rescue of a coalition forces interpreter from heavy fire in Uruzgan Province in Afghanistan. Donaldson's award came almost 40 years after Warrant Officer Keith Payne became the last Australian to be awarded the (original) Victoria Cross for gallantry on 24 May 1969 during the Vietnam War. Original VCs awarded to Australians were usually presented either by the Governor-General or the reigning monarch. The first VC for Australia was presented to Trooper Donaldson by the Governor-General, and on a subsequent visit to the United Kingdom he was received at Windsor Castle by the Queen. As with the original VC, recipients are entitled to an annuity from the government.



Clockwise from Left:  
Ben Roberts-Smith VC.  
Mark Donaldson VC  
and Daniel Keighran VC







**All Members of the RSAR Association, Serving Members of 10/27 Bn and Attached Units and their families are invited to**

**The 2020 END OF YEAR BBQ**

**Sunday 20th December 2020**

**Keswick Barracks**

**Roy Inwood VC Club**

**1100 - 1500 hrs**

**Please bring a hat & chair.**

**All meat and salads provided FREE of charge**

**Contact David Laing for catering purposes on 0407 791 822 or [davidlaing49bigpond.com](mailto:davidlaing49bigpond.com)**





## Harold for President

A new teacher was trying to make use of her psychology courses. She started her class by saying, 'Everyone who thinks they're stupid, stand up!' After a few seconds, Little Harold stood up. The teacher said, 'Do you think you're stupid, Harold?' 'No, ma'am, but I hate to see you standing there all by yourself!'

Harold watched, fascinated, as his mother smoothed cold cream on her face. 'Why do you do that, mommy?' he asked. 'To make myself beautiful,' said his mother, who then began removing the cream with a tissue. 'What's the matter, asked Harold 'Giving up?'

The math teacher saw that Harold wasn't paying attention in class. She called on him and said, 'Harold! What are 2 and 4 and 28 and 44?' Harold quickly replied, 'ABC Kids, FOX, NETFLIX and NITV!'

Harold's kindergarten class was on a field trip to their local police station where they saw pictures tacked to a bulletin board of the 10 most wanted criminals. One of the youngsters pointed to a picture and asked if it really was the photo of a wanted person. 'Yes,' said the policeman. 'The detectives want very badly to capture him. Harold asked, "Why didn't you keep him when you took his picture?"

Little Harold attended a horse auction with his father. He watched as his father moved from horse to horse, running his hands up and down the horse's legs and rump, and chest. After a few minutes, Harold asked, 'Dad, why are you doing that?' His father replied, 'Because when I'm buying horses, I have to make sure that they are healthy and in good shape before I buy. Harold, looking worried, said, 'Dad, I think the Milkman wants to buy Mum ....'

## PRIVATE TED'S HUMOUR

Imagine if in London during the Blitz there'd been a whole bunch of people going "I'LL TURN ON MY LIGHTS IF I FEEL LIKE IT"

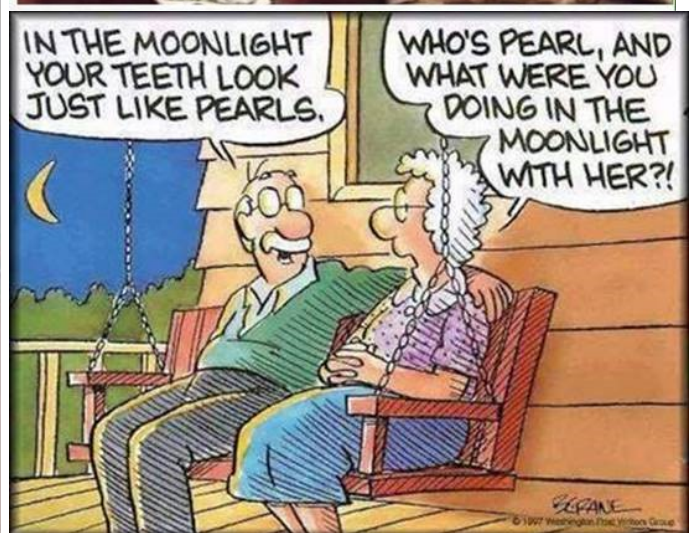
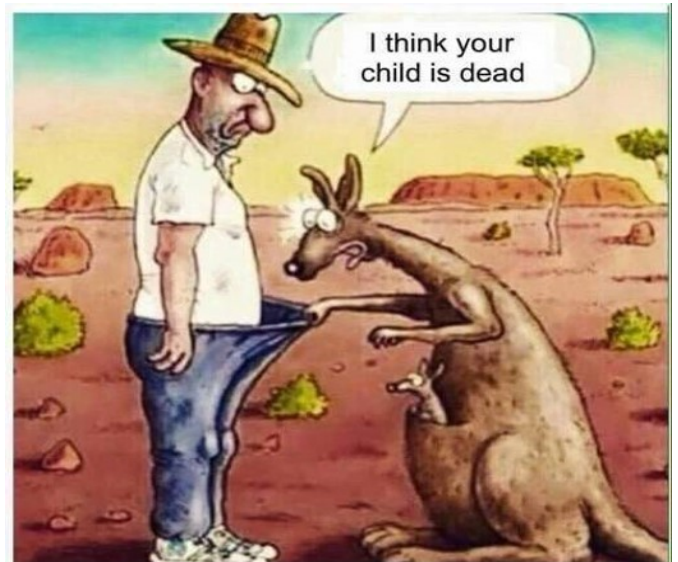
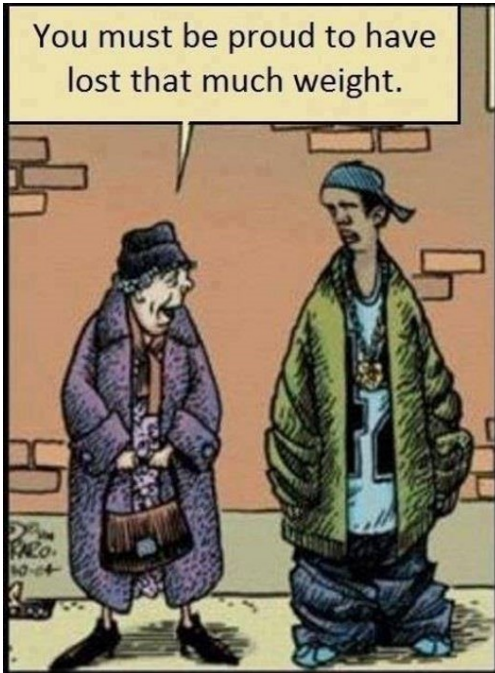
**It turns out when you're asked to pick your favourite child, you're supposed to pick one of your own. I KNOW that now!!!**

## Coronacoaster

**noun:** the ups and downs of a pandemic. One day you're loving your bubble, doing work outs, baking banana bread and going for long walks and the next you're crying, drinking gin for breakfast and missing people you don't even like.



## PRIVATE TED'S HUMOUR





# Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc.



## Pro Patria

All correspondence to:

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Phone: 0407 791 822



Find us on  
**Facebook**

[www.rsara.asn.au](http://www.rsara.asn.au)

Hard copies of this newsletter are kindly printed by the office of the Member for Barker, the Honourable Tony Pasin MP, in Murray Bridge.

Some members don't have internet access or email, therefore the only way we can keep them informed is by snail mail hard copies. This is made much easier thanks to Tony and his hard working staff.

*Thank you Tony Pasin MP and Staff.*

Fees and Merchandise can be paid by EFT through the following *Bendigo Bank* account:

**RSAR Association**

**BSB 633 000**

**Acc. 1616 585 88**

Cheques etc can be mailed to the Treasurer Christian Bennett at

**The Treasurer**

**Christian Bennett**

**RSAR Association**

**5 Ashwin Parade**

**Torrensville SA 5031**

# EDITORIAL

Consider this.....

No one has been able to explain to me why young men and women serve in the Australian Armed Forces for up to 20 years, risking their lives & limbs, protecting our freedom, and only get a wee percentage of their pay on Retirement; while Politicians hold their political positions in the safe confines of the Nation's Capital, protected by these same men and women, and receive a good pension ... after serving only two terms! Plus, in the ADF you need to serve for 15 years before you get a Long Service Medal. 15 YEARS!

It just does not make any sense!!

If each person who receives this will forward it on to 20 people, in 3 days, most people in Australia will have got the message ... including The politicians "!!

This is one message that really should be passed around. I just passed it on ..... Will you?

If you choose not to pass it on, you still have made a choice, And these brave Australian Heroes have given you that right!

The recent luncheon featuring Guest Speaker Mark Jones QFSM from the CFS was a resounding success, with questions being asked about our future fire-fighting resources. Mark was presented with an RSAR Regimental Tie and one of our prized Stubby Holders for his efforts by President Rod Beames. And that brings me to my next question. Would you like to see these half yearly luncheons continue, and if so, who would you like to have as a guest speaker? The rules of engagement are quite simple.

1. The speaker must be one who is fairly well known, and an expert in their subject.
2. They must be interesting to 90% of members attending. Some of us like gardening, a lot don't, so please don't suggest we get Costa from Gardening Australia! I couldn't sit through an hour of how to grow and harvest Gazanias.
3. The speaker must provide their services gratis. We don't have the capability to afford Barack Obama and his \$400,000 fee for a 1 hour talk, so anyone who charges more than \$10 is out of the question.

If you have anyone in mind, I'll work on it and see what I can come up with. You know how to contact me.

The details of our End of Year BBQ are featured on Page 9. It would be great to see you all there to farewell what has been a challenging and different year. It has affected the way we support the Regiment, and changed the mode of our operations. The Battalion has once again come to the fore and will provide access to the Roy Inwood VC Club at Keswick Barracks, as in the past 2 years. All those who wish to attend MUST advise the Secretary for catering reasons. All meat and salads will be provided free of charge as a thank you for your support throughout the year. See you there.

Cheers and stay safe

*David Laing* - Secretary/Editor



# Who are they and where are they now?



We previously ran a couple of photos and asked members to identify the subjects. Former Webmaster and committee member Frank Morony wrote.....*"Concerning the first photo of the single soldier, It depicts Pte Rod Wewer, 10/27 Bn. Operation Anode, Solomon Islands, 2012. There's a copy of the picture in the album "The Regiment - 2010 to 2013"*

*"Re: the 2nd photo, I remember all of the faces as though it was yesterday, but as hard as I try, I can't recall many names. I probably served with hundreds of men during my 13 years in the CMF (1957-1970) and I wish my memory wasn't so bad (and that digital cameras had been invented). I've previously mentioned (top left) Gary Bailey, who worked for an insurance company at that time (1963).*

*Bottom right (holding Owen SMG) is Carl Mueller. Worked as a gardener at Government House Adelaide before moving to Australia Post (PMG at that time).*

*The skinny 25 year old in the centre looks familiar. . . I know! . . . Now I remember! . . . It's Lt. F.J.Morony, formerly L/cpl 16 NS Trg Bn. (3rd intake 1957)."*

Frank has a remarkable memory, but like us all, remembers the faces but not the names. If anyone can help out with the remainder of the group, we will ensure our records and web page are updated, and give credit to those who served so long ago.

*David Laing*—Editor

**SORRY!**  
New Financial Members List  
not available as we go to print.