

# WESTERN OUTPOST NEWS



**APRIL 2011 Issue**



**St Mary's Outpost the  
'Train of Knowledge'**

## **St Mary's Vietnam Veterans Outpost & St Mary's RSL Sub-Branch Combined Newsletter**



**Hellfire Pass**

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## **VVAA ST MARYS OUTPOST PRESIDENTS REPORT**

### **GREG CANT - PRESIDENT**

Well here we are a quarter of the way into 2011 already. Much has happened within the 'train' since the last newsletter and President's Report. The AGM was held at the St Marys RSL in February and the main election results were as follows:

President:	Greg Cant
Vice President:	Uwe Schoenherr
Secretary:	Sam Vecchio
Asst Secretary:	John Taylor
Treasurer:	Ted Fish

David Bradbury MP officiated as returning officer and has graciously accepted the position as our Patron for 2011.

The AGM and Elections for the State Branch Vietnam Veterans was also held recently with Clive Mitchell-Taylor elected as President, David McCann & Len Schulz Vice Presidents; Tony Walker Treasurer, Pam Forsdike Secretary.

The 'Train washers' under the guidance of Reno has been extremely busy over the last two months or more with the repainting of the Train Station and carriages. They are also going to be moving on to the Locomotive Shed soon. Painting of the main office is also in their sights over the Easter/ANZAC week, therefore the office will be closed from April 21st to 2nd May inclusive. We owe a great deal of thanks to our friends at **Bunnings North Penrith and Dulux Paints** for their donation of paint to the Outpost so that this work could be carried out.

The closure will also mean that we have to cancel the April end of month BBQ. With ANZAC Day falling on the Easter Weekend it has interfered somewhat with our annual ANZAC Day Badge Selling activity at our usual Bunnings venues of North Penrith and Mt Druitt. We will of course still be selling at other venues and Reno is still looking for volunteers to help with the selling. Remember that this is our major fund-raiser for the RSL Mortality Fund and we need members to get behind this activity.

The next National Congress of the VVAA will be held in the Hunter Valley starting on the 19th May.

There are issues that members of the VVAA St Marys Outpost need to vote on before we send a representative to Council namely the election of the National President and Vice President.

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The two nominations for the position of National President are: Mr. Ron Coxon OAM (Current President) and Mr. Clive Mitchell-Taylor OAM (NSW State President); For the position of Vice President the nominations are: Mr. David McCann (Current Vice President) and Mr. John Smith (Qld). As Mr. Clive Mitchell-Taylor has only recently accepted the position of NSW State President, there needs to be an amendment to the Associations Constitution to allow him to hold both positions. Mr. Clive Mitchell-Taylor proposes to put the following Motion:

Motion to remove limitations to concurrent appointments within the VVAA

**Background:** S21(g) of the VVAA National Constitution precludes the National President and National Secretary from holding the concurrent position of State President or National President. It requires the National President or National Secretary to resign from the State Position as soon as they are appointed to the National position.

**Rationale:** The original amendment was introduced by Victoria in the early 1990's to overcome the perception that a particular individual could not competently fulfill both a National and a State position which was never really proven but the Motion was passed anyway. The individuals who proposed the motion had themselves successfully held both State and National positions concurrently prior to putting up the Motion. Some 20 years later, the VVAA should be sufficiently mature to accept that far from being a weakness, holding concurrent positions actually improves the management of the State Branch(s) as business does not have to be interpreted as it is passed along and can be delivered to the State in full. Holding down multi positions is not difficult, many Sub-Branches are forced to do so due to the difficulty to fill Executive positions. We simply cannot afford the luxury of turning down those who are willing to serve.

**Motion:** That s21(g) of the VVAA National Constitution be deleted in entirety.

Moved NSW Mr. Clive Mitchell-Taylor.

If this motion is defeated at the Congress Mr. Mitchell-Taylor informed the State Executive meeting last month that he would still run for the National Presidents position, but would resign his NSW Presidents position immediately.

There is also a further motion to be discussed that requires our input. The motion to be discussed is with regard to the Policy Handbook, the motion which was moved by Mr. Clive Mitchell-Taylor is to rename the Policy Handbook to become the VVAA Administration Handbook because after all it is basically an Admin document dealing with housekeeping matters.

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The next General Meeting of the VVAA St Marys Outpost is scheduled for Thursday 14th April. It is important that we have as large a roll-up as possible to discuss the above issues. Remember that this is your association and to make it work requires your input.

At this month's Management Committee meeting it was decided to re-promulgate and update our Dress Code.

The following rules are now to be strictly adhered to:

ALL TIP Qualified Welfare officers with 12 months working at the 'train' will be issued with a blazer. This is to be worn at all official ceremonies, funerals etc.

ALL unqualified Welfare Officers in-training will be issued with a VVAA Blue Shirt which shall be worn for all welfare work. Unqualified Welfare Officers do have the option of purchasing their own blazer, the cost of which will be reimbursed on their first anniversary at the 'train' as a Welfare Officer.

ALL TIP qualified Pension Officers with 12 months working at the 'train' will be issued with a blazer. This is to be worn at all official ceremonies, funerals and Veterans Review Board hearings etc.

All unqualified Pension Officers in-training will be issued with a VVAA Blue shirt which may be worn for all pension work at the 'train'. Unqualified Pension Officers do have the option of purchasing their own blazer, the cost of which will be reimbursed on their first anniversary at the 'train' as a Pension Officer.

Although the wearing of the Blue Shirt for Pension Officers on duty is not mandatory it is **preferred**; never-the-less neat and tidy casual clothes must be worn in the office. Uniform blazers must be worn for all ceremonial, funeral and VRB appearances.

Anyone without the necessary clothing or blazers to which they are entitled, see Tony Mullavey or Gary to arrange purchase, Tony has shirts in stock however, blazers must be fitted by our tailor.

Office staff and members attending reception area will be issued Blue Shirts which **must be worn** whilst on duty. Blazers will be issued to those members holding official elected positions. Other members of the Management Committee may, at the discretion of the Executive Committee be issued with clothing.



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## **St MARY'S RSL SUB-BRANCH REPORT**

### **GARY FIZZELL - PRESIDENT**



Now that we are back on deck and fully operational I would like to welcome everyone and thank those new members who have now joined us at the Sub-Branch. I am pleased to report that our Committee remains the same as last year, so thank you members for once again voting us all in, I hope this year is as productive as last year.

In late February through to the 10th March I travelled to Thailand for a well deserved holiday, the last time I ventured there was way back in 1966 from Vietnam on R&R and I must say I don't remember much from that trip having spent almost the entire 5 days in an American boozier.

This time was different as I was anxious to visit the Australian War Graves in Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, the Burma Railway Bridge over the River Kwai and Hellfire Pass. I visited each of these historic places in that order. Upon arrival at Kanchanaburi Cemetery I walked among the headstones of the Australians and was not surprised to see the ages of these unfortunate diggers, most seemed to be in their 20/30's. All Wars seem to take our young men who have been drawn into War and missed the opportunity to live their life out fully. I am not ashamed to admit that as I walked past these headstones, I stopped and repeated the RSL Ode to myself and promptly burst into tears, it was such a sobering experience.

Not far from the War Cemetery is the Bridge over the Kwae Yai River which was built by P.O.W's comprising Australian, British, American, Canadian, New Zealand and Dutch prisoners in addition to some 200,000 Asian Slave workers rounded up from Indonesia, Malaya, Burma, Vietnam and India. Construction was supervised by the Japanese 9th Railway Regiment with the 1st Battalion Commander in charge of surveying. The route through hundreds of kilometer of jungle-covered mountains was to involve the near-impossible construction of more than 300 bridges and trestles as well as several major rock cuttings.



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The Japanese plan to build the Thailand –Burma railway got off to a bad start when the Japanese General charged with turning the dream into reality died in an air crash while surveying the proposed route, his death was to have tragic consequences for both the Japanese and the allied prisoners of war who were to pay with their lives for miscalculations made by Japanese engineers.

Australian prisoner of war Hugh Clarke says the amateurish surveying and construction of the railway was not fully exposed until January 1943, when the Japanese realised the construction parties working from opposite ends of the line would miss linking up with each other by more than a kilometer.

The Japanese celebrated their marvel of engineering on 17 October 1943 when they filmed the completion of the railway by driving in of the last spike and minting a medal for the railway engineers involved in the construction project. The railway had been completed some 17 months after its murderous construction began, two months behind Japan's military schedule, a delay due in part to the line not following the best available route.

### HELLFIRE PASS

Getting down to Hellfire Pass and back up again is not an easy task, I turned 74 on this trip and I am not terribly fit even though back home I walk regularly, but I managed it with great difficulty - but in the end it was worth the effort. One has to see this engineering marvel built by the prisoners to understand what they went through under horrendous conditions. To build the railway the Japanese assembled a multi-national workforce of approximately 200,000 Asian labourers and over 60,000 Allied POW's. Work on the line began in southern Burma in October 1942 while at the same time construction also started in Thailand and finished as mentioned earlier on 16 October 1943.

Little modern equipment was made available for railway work. Earth and rock were broken by shovels, picks and hoes and carried away in baskets or sacks. Embankments of stone and earth were heaped up by human Endeavour. Cuttings were driven through rock by hand; metal taps and sledgehammers being used to drill holes for explosives.

From April 1943, the work pace increased greatly as the Japanese strove to meet a proposed August deadline for completion. This was the notorious "Speedo" period. POW's and Asian Labourers worked punishing hours well into the night. At Konyu Cutting the flickering bonfire light on the emaciated workers gave the place its name - Hellfire Pass. The "Speedo" coinciding with the wet season and outbreaks of cholera, claimed thousands of lives.

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Of the 60,000 Allied POW's who worked on the railway, 12,399 (20%) died. Between 70,000 & 90,000 civilian labourers are also believed to have died. The reason for this appalling death toll were lack of proper food, totally inadequate medical facilities and, at times, the brutal treatment from guards and railway supervisors.

Rice with a little dried vegetable and dried fish, was the basic food of the POW's. This meager diet provided by the Japanese was supplemented to some extent through trade with local people. Starvation led to a range of diseases, including beriberi. Weakened POW's living in appalling conditions, commonly fell in to malaria, dysentery and cholera and tropical ulcers. The Prisoners lived in overcrowded bamboo huts and the cooking and sanitary arrangements at camps were primitive. Lack of clothing and footwear increased the risk of illness.

Physical punishment was a feature of Japanese military discipline and the POW's were often given severe beatings as well as other forms of punishment. This was at its worst during the 'Speedo'

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The preservation of the Historic Hellfire Pass Memorial resulted from the inspiration of Australian former Prisoner Of War. Mr. J.G. Morris, he was among the thousands of POW's who worked on the Burma-Thailand railway during World War II. Through his efforts in the 1980's and approaching the Australian Government for funding the Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum was officially opened on 25 April 1998 and now receives 80,000 visitors each year.

I was fortunate enough to meet the Manager of the Hellfire Pass Memorial Mr. William Slape (Aussie) who made me most welcome and provided me with the material to put this report together.

I have never been to Gallipoli, I imagine that experience is equally as inspiring as this one; For me, even though I was too young to understand it at the time, it happened in my lifetime, so knowing about it now makes it more relevant to me and it touched me like nothing else could; reading about the Burma railway is one thing, but to go there one gets the 'feel' of what it must have been like.

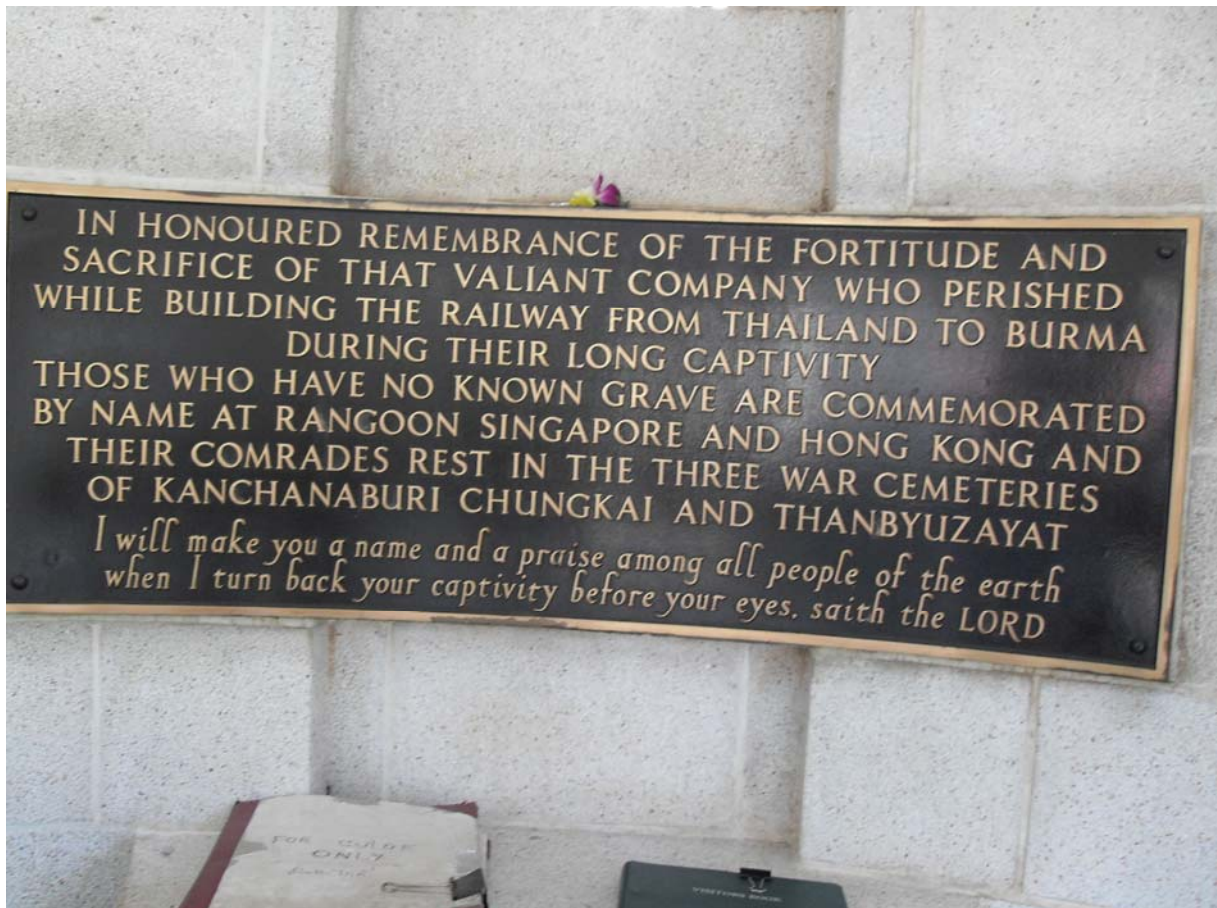
At future RSL Commemoration Services the Ode will have a special meaning for me and I will recall these images of Thailand. The front cover is a photo of Hellfire Pass, if you look closely where I am standing you can see some of the sleepers from the railway.

*Gary Fizzell*





**THE WAR CEMETERY AT KANCHANABURI THAILAND**



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## NEW ONLINE HEALTH ASSISTANCE PILOTED FOR EX-SERVICE PERSONNEL

Two new websites are being piloted to provide the ex-service community with access to vital health resources, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, Warren Snowdon, announced today.

Mr Snowdon said the sites, the *Wellbeing Toolbox* and *touchbase*, have been developed specifically for ex-service and transitioning personnel, their families and friends to help them face challenges that moving from military to civilian life may present.

"It is important that our service personnel and their families have access to helpful and informative resources to assist them in their day-to-day life.

"These websites provide information links and where necessary, facilitate early intervention options for those who may be experiencing mental health issues.

The *Wellbeing Toolbox* provides interactive educational material in key areas such as problem solving, building support, helpful thinking, getting active, keeping calm and sleeping better and has been developed in conjunction with leading experts at the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health.

"The site provides practical step-by-step tips and tools for improving mental and physical wellbeing and relieving stress," Mr Snowdon said.

The *touchbase* website, developed jointly by Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs provides information on lifestyle issues such as employment and finances, and is a one-stop-shop for useful links on topics ranging from compensation and finances to health, housing and parenting support.

The *touchbase* website also provides users with the opportunity to keep in touch or reconnect with other former serving personnel, family and friends using its online community *Find Your Mates*.

"These websites are being piloted and I would encourage any current transitioning or recently discharged service personnel using the sites to provide feedback on how we can continue to improve the information and support provided during such a crucial time in a serving member's life," Mr Snowdon said.

The *Wellbeing Toolbox* can be accessed at [www.wellbeingtoolbox.net.au](http://www.wellbeingtoolbox.net.au) and *touchbase* at [www.touchbase.gov.au](http://www.touchbase.gov.au)

**Media inquiries:** Minister Snowdon: Alice Plate 0400 045 999  
Department of Veterans' Affairs Media: 02 6289 6203 or 0413 994 704

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## **VVAA ST MARY'S EDUCATION TEAM REPORT**

A preliminary 2010 Report on the Outpost Education Team Program was published in the December issue of the Western Outpost News.

In that report the names of outpost members who were involved in E-Team presentations were noted and thanked for their contribution. Again I wish to thank those 17 members for their effort to the 2010 E-Team Program.

The final statistics and outcomes for last years project were:

- Delivered 52 school presentations involving 6325 students
- Presented 4 Community Group information sessions
- Supported 27 ANZAC/Remembrance Day School Assemblies
- Supported 17 individual students with project and research assignments through interview and guidance processes.

**School Donations:** Although the E-Team Coordinator does not request donations from schools, many however, decide to donate in any case; these donations make the E-Team a self-funding activity requiring no monetary assistance from the Outpost; without these donations it is unlikely that the E-Team could be supported financially by the Outpost and would be forced to downsize its operations. In 2010 the E-Team received donations of \$10,582.00 which gives a contribution of around \$7,000.00 to the Outpost General Funds. Again I wish to thank the E-Team members for this noteworthy outcome.

For the 'Bean Counters' in our Association its worthy of note that over six years of operation the Outpost E-Team presentation on Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War has been delivered to more than 26,000 Year 10 Students and has attracted in excess of \$28,300.00 in donations to St Mary's Outpost.

The media has reported possible changes to the History Syllabus and teaching programs in 2012. No definite information is available at this time.

For 2011 the E-Team will continue to operate as usual. Already we have more than 40 school bookings or reservations. Another busy year!!

Vin Cosgrove  
Education Team Coordinator.



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## **ANZAC & BOER WAR COMMEMORATION SERVICES**

St Marys RSL Sub-Branch & RSL Club Limited will hold the **ANZAC March** and Commemorative Service on Sunday **17th April 2011**.

The March participants are to form up at Coachmans Park, Queen Street St Marys at 2.00pm ready for a 'step off' at 2.30pm. The Parade will then proceed to Victoria Park via Queen Street where the Commemorative Service will begin. The Guest Speaker this year is Mr David Bradbury MP, member for Lindsey.

Refreshments will be provided at the St Marys RSL after the Service.

**DAWN SERVICE**: The Dawn Service will be held at St Marys RSL, corner of Mamre Road & Hall Street St Marys on **Monday 25th April** at **0530 hrs**. Breakfast will be provided in the RSL for those attending the Service.

## **BOER WAR COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE**

St Marys RSL Sub-Branch will hold a Commemorative Service on Sunday 29th May 2011 at 11.00 am. The inaugural Service was held last year and it was well attended. Colyton High School has been invited to participate in the organisation and presentation of the Service; The children are quite excited to be part of this ceremony and it will prove to be a good learning curve for the kids.

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I ran into a well known  
celebrity whilst in Pattaya  
Thailand recently, look  
familiar? See page 30 for ID

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## **St Marys RSL Bowling Club**

The bowling club invites all members and visitors to utilize the excellent facilities available with our two greens, spacious bowls lounge and function room. We have a great social bowls programme and free coaching for those interested in starting out. Bowls are available from the club, so there is no cost outlay to start your new pastime.

We also have a strong representation in both male and female pennant teams (representative) which is available to any member to enter. You don't have to be a champion bowler to play pennants. So come along and join in the fun.

### **Social Bowls Programme**

<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Any Pairs</b>	<b>9.30am Start</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Any Pairs</b>	<b>10.30am Start</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Ladies Bowls</b>	<b>9.30am Start</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Mens Pairs</b>	<b>1.00pm Start</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b><u>Free Coaching</u></b>	<b>10.00am – 12 noon</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Any Pairs</b>	<b>1.00pm Start</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Turkey Trots(mixed Bowls)</b>	<b>9.30am Start</b>

**Contact the Bowls Office via Club Reception on 9623 6555**



Bowling Club Greens and Function area.
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## **ROOTY HILL CLUB NEWS - ENTERTAINMENT**

### **Live Music in Sydney**

Live music is what Rooty Hill RSL is all about. There is no better venue in Western Sydney, Rooty Hill RSL is only 15 mins from Blacktown, approximately 20 minutes from Parramatta and Penrith and around 25 minutes from Castle Hill.

We have your favourite live bands and best local and international shows. We strive to always bring a wide range of events and gigs each month. Our entertainment ranges from pop, rock, country, variety shows and comedy productions. Check out our monthly gig guides to see what we have coming up.

### **Free Entertainment**

The Fred Chubb Lounge is a great place for meeting friends and socialising in ultimate comfort. The best party cover bands hit the stage every Friday and Saturday night and we have new Country Rock/Pop artists every Thursday night.

Booking Office is open as follows:

Sunday to Thursday	12 Noon-10.00 pm
Friday-Saturday	12 Noon-12.00 am

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Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith VC, MG

Corporal Roberts-Smith was recently awarded the Victoria Cross for outstanding gallantry here is his citation.

### **CITATION**

For the most conspicuous gallantry in action in circumstances of extreme peril as Patrol Second-in-Command, Special Operations Task Group on Operation SLIPPER.



Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in 1996. After completing the requisite courses, he was posted to the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment where he saw active service in East Timor. In January 2003, he successfully completed the Australian Special Air Service Regiment Selection Course.

During his tenure with the Regiment, he deployed on Operation VALIANT, SLATE, SLIPPER, CATALYST, and SLIPPER II. Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith was awarded the Medal for Gallantry for his actions in Afghanistan in 2006.

On the 11th June 2010, a troop of the Special Operations Task Group conducted a helicopter assault into Tizak, Kandahar Province, in order to capture or kill a senior Taliban commander. Immediately upon the helicopter insertion, the troop was engaged by machine gun and rocket propelled grenade fire from multiple, dominating positions. Two soldiers were wounded in action and the troop was pinned down by fires from three machine guns in an elevated fortified position to the south of the village. Under the cover of close air support, suppressive small arms and machine gun fire, Corporal Roberts-Smith and his patrol manoeuvred to within 70 metres of the enemy position in order to neutralize the enemy machine gun positions and regain the initiative.

Upon commencement of the assault, the patrol drew very heavy, intense, effective and sustained fire from the enemy position. Corporal Roberts-Smith and his patrol members fought towards the enemy position until, at a range of 40 metres, the weight of fire prevented further movement forward. At this point, he identified the opportunity to exploit some cover provided by a small structure.

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As he approached the structure, Corporal Roberts-Smith identified an insurgent grenadier in the throes of engaging his patrol; he instinctively engaged the insurgent at point blank range resulting in his death. With the members of his patrol still pinned down by the three enemy machine gun positions, he exposed his own position in order to draw fire away from his patrol, which enabled them to bring fire to bear against the enemy. His actions enabled his Patrol Commander to throw a grenade and silence one of the machine guns. Seizing the advantage, and demonstrating extreme devotion to duty and the most conspicuous gallantry, Corporal Roberts-Smith, with a total disregard for his own safety, stormed the enemy position killing the two remaining machine gunners.

His act of valour enabled his patrol to break-in to the enemy position and to lift the weight of fire from the remainder of the troop who had been pinned down by the machine gun fire. On seizing the fortified gun position, Corporal Roberts-Smith then took the initiative again and continued to assault enemy positions in depth during which he and another patrol member engaged and killed further enemy. His acts of selfless valour directly enabled his troop to go on and clear the village of Tizak of Taliban. This decisive engagement subsequently caused the remainder of the Taliban in Shah Wali Kot District to retreat from the area.

Corporal Roberts-Smith's most conspicuous gallantry in a circumstance of extreme peril was instrumental to the seizure of the initiative and the success of the troop against a numerically superior enemy force. His valour was an inspiration to the soldiers with whom he fought alongside and is in keeping with finest traditions of the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force.

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The Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, Congratulated Corporal Roberts-Smith on being awarded the Victoria Cross

“It is a great source of delight to me that, as of today, there are now two serving members of the Australian Defence Force I have the great honour to salute.” Air Chief Marshal Houston said.

“Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith, VC. MG, we are enormously proud of you”

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SKY Channel

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Rock & Roll Dancing 7-10pm

**Tuesday**

Bingo 7.30pm

**Thursday**

Bingo 11.30am

Texas Hold'em Poker 6.30pm

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and **MEMBER'S BADGE DRAW**  
\$3000-\$5000 From 7pm

**FRIDAY**

Bingo 11.30am

DJ Stuart In Lounge 8pm -12.30

**Saturday**

Meat Run 4-6pm

Duo in Lounge Area 7.30pm-Midnight

Live Band in Audi 1<sup>st</sup> Sat/Month

**Sunday**

Raffle, Trivia & Music 4-8pm

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FREECALL 1800 633 635

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## **A U S T R A L I A N       H I S T O R Y**

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**Sunday, March 22, 1942. :   Nine Japanese aircraft bomb the town of Katherine in Australia's Northern Territory.**

In WWII, the first real attack of the Japanese on an Australian base occurred with the bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942. That attack scattered the naval base at Darwin and demoralised Australians. Darwin was bombed by the Japanese a total of sixty times between 19 February 1942 and 12 November 1943. Shortly after this initial attack, numerous other towns in Australia began to come under fire. Some of these raids were conducted on the northwest coastal towns of Broome and Wyndham, and in the east around Townsville and Cairns.

On 22 March 1942, the small town of Katherine, 320 km of Darwin and located in central Northern Territory, was bombed. In the only attack to be made on Katherine, nine Mitsubishi G4M1 "Betty" bombers of the Japanese Navy's Tokao Kokutai, 23rd Koku Sentai made a pass over Katherine at 12.20pm before disappearing, only to return about 15 minutes later to bomb Katherine's airfield. The aircraft dropped an estimated 91 bombs, 84 of which were anti-personnel "Daisey Cutters". Damage within the town was minor, but there was one death, an aboriginal man known only as "Roger".

\*\*\*\*\*

**MICHAEL JOHN FITZGERALD  
SOLICITOR**



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**FAX: 9283 2600  
ABN 18095746334**



### **Computer Training Classes**

Computer Classes are conducted at the Vietnam Veterans Train situated at the St Marys RSL Club in Mamre Road St Marys as follows:

Tuesday: 9.00 am - 12.00pm

Wednesday: 9.00AM - 12.00 pm (Ladies Class)

Thursday: 9.00 am - 11.00 am

Thursday classes teach Digital Photo manipulation using Photoshop Elements 5, only 5 students at a time. **Bookings essential.**

The Tuesday and Wednesday classes are informal and we teach mixed classes from the 'beginner' to the more experienced and retired seniors wanting to familiarise with current software and learn to use the Internet to send E-Mails and carry out research & other technology related issues.

**For more info call 9833 4700 or email [vietvet@tpg.com.au](mailto:vietvet@tpg.com.au)**

### **Aussie Banner & Flag Co. Pty Ltd (ABF Signs)**

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**Contact: Tom Bell 0418 447 389**

**Phone: 9623 2937**

**Fax: 9623 2934**

**[ausban@pnc.com.au](mailto:ausban@pnc.com.au)**



## PLUMBER – DRAINER – GAS FITTER

- HOT WATER INSTALLATIONS & REPAIRS
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- KITCHEN & BATHROOM RENOVATIONS
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## **PROSTATE CANCER IS THE MOST COMMON CANCER DIAGNOSED IN AUSTRALIA**

Prostate cancer is potentially curable if detected and treated while still confined to the prostate gland. Early detection can be achieved via the prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test and the digital rectal examination (DRE).

While prostate cancer is most common in men over the age of 50, younger men with a history of prostate cancer in their family can be more susceptible than those without a family history of cancer.

What is the Prostate? The prostate is a small gland forming part of the male reproductive system, its main function is to produce fluid which protects and enriches sperm. In younger men the prostate is about the size of a walnut and is located below the bladder, it is doughnut shaped as it surrounds the beginning of the urethra, the tube that conveys urine from the bladder to the penis. The nerves that control erections surround the prostate.

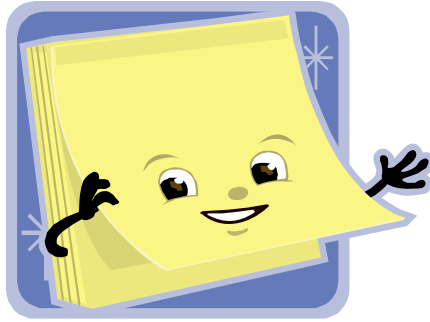
What is Prostate Cancer? Prostate cancer is an abnormal growth of prostate cells, which form a lump (tumour) in the prostate. In time it will spread to other organs, particularly the bones and lymph nodes, which can be life threatening. However, prostate cancer is usually slow growing, often progressing gradually over many years. A major problem is that prostate cancer at an early (potentially curable) stage usually does not have obvious symptoms. This makes it different from other common prostate disorders which do cause urinary symptoms.

How do I know if I have It? In the early stages of development prostate cancer is usually curable but seldom has symptoms. A routine examination by a doctor can often identify it at this stage. If prostate cancer advances and symptoms do develop, they are similar to those of benign prostate hyperplasia (BPH) and prostatitis. These can include the need to urinate frequently, especially at night; sudden urges to urinate; difficulty in starting urine flow, a slow, interrupted flow and dribbling afterwards and blood in the urine or semen and pain during urination.

What tests can I have to check? At present there are two tests for prostate cancer:

1. The DRE carried out by a Doctor.
2. PSA blood test. Only about a third of men with an elevated PSA will have prostate cancer.

Speak to your LMO about having regular tests.



## **IMPORTANT MESSAGE REGARDING DAYS OF OPERATION FOR PENSIONS AT THE VVAA ST MARYS OUTPOST**

Pension claims at the 'Train' are now carried out on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday between the hours of 9.30am to 1.00pm, however, these timings are flexible depending on availability of Pension Officers.

Anyone wishing to see a particular Officer should phone the office first to ensure they will be in attendance.

Veterans attending the 'Train' for the first time to start a claim should allow for at least two hours for the interview as initial interviews can be time consuming.

Interviews are carried out on a 'first in first served' basis

No Pension claims are carried out on Thursdays, this being kept clear for administration and maintenance.

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**“Stay In Touch With Life”**  
**Noeline Brown - Ambassador for Ageing**

Noeline says: “Retirement doesn’t mean your skills and talents can’t be put to use.” Having that regular contact with other people is also important for your mind, helping to keep you mentally active and emotionally engaged with the wider community. It helps to ward off loneliness and more serious problems like depression.

What I’m talking about is more than just having the occasional chat over the backyard fence with an old mate or girlfriend, though these things are very important too. I’m talking about staying in touch with your local community and staying in touch with life more generally. In other words, staying active and engaged with friends, family, and the local lawn bowls or golf club, in a choir, at a reading group or through a community organisations helps to improve your quality of life.

Older Australians have so much to offer, not just to friends and family, but to the wider community. You have spent the better part of five decades - sometimes more - developing various skills and talents. But retirement doesn’t mean your skills and talents can’t still be put to use.

***Consider volunteering:*** Think for a moment where Australia would be were it not for the many tens of thousands of older Australians who each volunteer some of their time to various tasks. Whether it is minding the grandkids for a few hours a week while mum gets the opportunity to go back to work or have a break. Or helping out with Meals on Wheels or local charities to take care of those less fortunate people without food, shelter, family or friends. Or whether it’s looking out for a neighbor who might be isolated or without family.

The vital work volunteers do is invaluable. Volunteering builds social capital within communities and makes Australia a better and stronger country in which to live.

It has a positive impact on the individual volunteer, and the people who are assisted by community-based organisations and society more widely. ***Who would have thought*** that by helping other people you can also help yourself lead a healthier, more active life?

For more information visit: [www.health.gov.au/ambassadorforageing](http://www.health.gov.au/ambassadorforageing)  
Or call the Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853

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**The Governor King Day Club**  
**Report by Allan Greenwood - Coordinator**



Another year begins, how quickly they go these times.

We resumed the Day Club on 19th January 2011 with a reduced carry over budget of about \$4700 which includes the \$1700 we made from the Bunnings BBQ last year, thanks to the Group 90 Club.

I have applied for an upgrade of our sound and PA System to the DVA, also to the CDSE for running costs of our community bus, as yet no word on either. Fingers crossed.

We have had outings to Penrith RSL (thanks to Frank Woodford, Bob Devaise and Kevin Dunccliffe (aka the Colonel) for spending their hard earned (yeah right) in gaining these tickets for us.

An old fashioned morning tea put on by the St Marys & District Historical Society, who also presented a show about the St Marys area dating from 1788 until 1928. This was well produced and very informative. St Marys is steeped with history it is amazing what happened in this area throughout these times. So much so they are going to do a replica play for us at the Youth Hall in the coming months. Should you be interested in the history of St Marys, come along. I will promulgate (that means go forth and tell the people - Reno!) this to you when the date has been set.

A BBQ at the Henry Lawson Club went down well with members and volunteers.

The Day Club has lost three lady volunteers this year, Margaret Biggs, Lil Windley and Margaret Carlton who was with us for near on five years. This left a big hole to fill, however, our dedicated volunteers come through during these difficult times. The Club deeply thanks them for their time and effort and wishes them all well in their coming ventures. Thanks also to Ron Blakely and his good wife for the generous donations of goodies that we use in our raffles.

Thanks also to Paul Pono who volunteered to drive the bus for us when I was off the air; from all reports he has done a great job (well that's what the ladies over 85 tell me). Paul has also undertaken to drive the bus during my absence for about 9 weeks when I have my sabbatical. I will be off to Vietnam, Nepal, Tibet and other places of interest time permitting and no, I will not be climbing Mt Everest this time, maybe next time.

On a sadder note I have news that Paul Hibbard's brother Barry, has passed away recently. Our hearts and sympathy go out to Paul and family.

This photo of **Jean Graham** in period dress was taken at the recent presentation of the St Mary's historical association (23/3/2011) Everyone had a great time on the day.



Regards...Allan

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## V A L E

Two of our members have passed on since the beginning of the year namely:

**Charles Joseph Connelly:** 13 March 1916 - 6 Feb 2011. Charlie was a life member and foundation member of the St Marys RSL Sub-Branch. During his distinguished career, he served in all three Services.

Charlie's funeral service was held in Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church St Marys on Thursday, 10th February 2011. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Clare and family.

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**Barry James Hibbard:** 1 May 1945 - 18 March 2011. Barry was a member of the St Marys VVAA. Barry's funeral service was held at the Windsor District Baptist Church.

His brother **Paul** wishes to thank all those members from the VVAA St Marys and St Marys RSL who attended and participated in the funeral service, in particular: John Foeken, Dianne Foeken, Uwe Schoenherr, Ron Kelly, Tony Fryer, Mick Mahboub, Tony Mullavey, Gary Fizzell, Greg Cant.

Our condolences go out to Barry's Family and Friends.

*Nepean Wives of Vietnam Veterans Women's Support Group Inc.*  
*This is a non-profit community based support group for wives of veterans. The group meet on the second Thursday of each month at*  
*10.00 am at the*  
*St Mary's RSL Youth Club Hall.*  
*Phone: Cherryl Mullavey 9625 9363*

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## **REVIEW DELIVERS POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR VETERAN COMMUNITY**

**(MONDAY, 14 February 2011)**

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon, today welcomed the release of the *Review of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) - funded Ex-Service Organisation(ESO) Advocacy and Welfare Services Report*.

Minister Snowdon said the Government would implement all 45 recommendations from the Review which offered many positives outcomes for Australia's ex-service community and prescribed a framework to ensure veterans, war widow/ers and their families have access to quality advocacy, welfare and support services.

"The Review recommended important changes to help standardise ESO advocacy and welfare services and improve transparency and accountability in the way funds are distributed to the ex-service organisations that support Australia's veteran and defence communities," he said.

The Review covered the Building Excellence in Support and Training Program (BEST), Training Information Program (TIP), and the Veteran and Community Grants (VAC) program.

"As the needs of the veteran and defence communities change, so must these support programs. The Review delivers on the Government's commitment to move to a more evidence-based decision-making process and an equitable distribution of funds.

"The Review has also taken into account the valuable contribution of the volunteer workforce which always has the welfare and interests of the veteran community as its priority." Mr. Snowdon said.

ESOs will be encouraged to work closely together to ensure that appropriate advice and support is provided to veterans and defence members. Support for the TIP program will be strengthened by ensuring that advocates, and pension and welfare officers are provided with the standard of training and support they require to undertake their important role.

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## **VVAA St Mary's Has A New Web Site**

The VVAA St Mary's has a new interactive web site on:

**[vvaastmarys.com.au](http://vvaastmarys.com.au)**

Information which can be accessed on the web:

Welfare: A general description of what the welfare officers do, what their objectives are and their area of operation.

Pension: A profile of some of the Advocates.

Train Washers: A Group of members who meet each Thursday and carry out maintenance of the 'train' - they are under the direction of our 'Stationmaster' Mr. Reno Ciantar.

Education: The Education Team is run by Mr. Vin Cosgrove and his wife Nancy. A comprehensive report with photos is updated regularly by Vin highlighting the activities of the 'team'.

Computer Classes: Computer classes are conducted at the 'train' each week, check the web for more details.

RSL Sub-Branch: Relevant info on the Sub-Branch is also available.

There is much more on the web so have a look, let us know what you think, we also welcome comments and items of interest.

## **NOTICE** **KIDS OF VETERANS**

**The kids of veterans now have a web site with all the information on joining and updates on activities, you can also email Leanne:**

**Web: [veteranskids-nsw.ning.com](http://veteranskids-nsw.ning.com)**

**Email: [kidsofveterans-nsw@hotmail.com.au](mailto:kidsofveterans-nsw@hotmail.com.au)**

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**Freedom Taxation Services supports the VVAA St Mary's Outpost**

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## Many Veterans Still Waiting For Compo From Maralinga Atomic Tests.

For the information of those who may not be aware of the Maralinga Nuclear test carried out in the 1950's here is a brief overview:



On 3 October 1952, the United Kingdom tested its first nuclear weapon, named "Hurricane", at the Montebello Islands off the coast of Western Australia. A year later the first nuclear test on the Australian mainland was Totem 1 (9.1 kilotons) at Emu Field in the Great Victoria Desert, South Australia on 15 October 1953. Totem 2 (7.1 kilotons) followed two weeks later on 27 October.

The British government formally requested a permanent test facility on 30 October 1953. Due to concerns about nuclear fallout from the previous tests at Emu Field, the recently surveyed Maralinga site was selected for this purpose. The new site was announced in May 1955. It was developed as a joint, co-funded facility between the British and Australian governments.

Prior to selection, the Maralinga site was inhabited by the Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara Aboriginal peoples, for whom it had a "great spiritual significance". Many were relocated to a new settlement at Yulata, and attempts were made to curtail access to the Maralinga site. These were often unsuccessful.

Two major test series were conducted at the Maralinga site: Operation Buffalo and Operation Antler.

Operation Buffalo commenced on 27 September 1956. The operation consisted of the testing of four nuclear devices, codenamed **One Tree**, **Marcoo**, **Kite** and **Breakaway** respectively. **One Tree** (12.9 kilotons) and **Breakaway** (10.8 kilotons) were exploded from towers, **Marcoo** (1.4 kilotons) was exploded at ground level, and **Kite** (2.9 kilotons) was released by a Royal Air Force Vickers Valiant bomber from a height of 35,000 feet. This was the first launching of a British atomic weapon from an aircraft.

All four Buffalo tests were criticised by the 1985 McClelland Royal Commission, which concluded that they were fired under inappropriate conditions.

In 2001, Dr Sue Rabbit Roff, a researcher from the University of Dundee, uncovered documentary evidence that troops had been ordered to run, walk and

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Crawl across areas contaminated by the Buffalo tests in the days immediately following the detonations, a fact that the British government later admitted. Dr Roff stated that "it puts the lie to the British government's claim that they never used humans for guinea pig-type experiments in nuclear weapons trials in Australia."

Just 15 veterans of British tests of atomic bombs in Australia and their widows have been granted disability pensions or war widow pensions under the much hyped compensation package. The Australian veterans of Maralinga and Emu Field in South Australia and Monte Bello islands off WA fear they will be dead before much of the \$24.2 million announced in last year's Federal Budget can be divvied up.

More than 15,000 people served at the site, with at least 11,000 already dead. A recent study found those present were 23 per cent more likely to get a cancer than the general population. One former serviceman said while the compensation was welcome it was too little too late. The participants of the tests were told the radiation from bombs was not dangerous.

Until recently the veterans were unable to claim any compensation from the Department because the period did not occur in wartime. This changed with the 'Clarke Review', which brought the veterans under the Veterans' Entitlement Act (VEA). A spokesman for the DVA said 131 had made a claim, with 32 being determined; the secrecy surrounding the tests and the poor standard of record keeping meant claims were slow to process, the spokesman said.

The Australian Veterans and Defence Services Council (AVADSC) wrote to the Repatriation Medical Authority (RMA) saying, "given the spirit of the Budget message" it should only be required that veterans show they were present at the testing site.

The authority said it already allowed for a "generous" interpretation about what level of exposure causes cancer.

Let's hope those still waiting for Compo after all this time, get a positive result.

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A Penguin of course, bet you thought it was someone else!!



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**St Mary's RSL Sub-Branch**  
**Corner Mamre Road and Hall St.**

The RSL Sub-Branch monthly meeting is held the second Wednesday of each month at 6.30 pm in the auditorium, refreshments provided. The office is open most mornings between 10.00am-12noon and can be contacted on **9623 6555**.

**St Mary's RSL Sub-Branch Committee**

President:	Gary Fizzell	0418 114 976
V/President:	Terry Burn	0407 834 499
V/Pres:	John Foeken	0409 329 688
Treasurer:	Ted Fish	02 9623 6555
Secretary:	Ron Kelly	0411 543 719
A/Secretary:	Tony Fryer	0414 557 692
Committee:	Greg Cant	0425 208 622
	Michael Wiesel	02 9623 6555

**VVAA ST MARY'S OUTPOST COMMITTEE**

**PHONE: 02 9833 4700 FAX 9833 4022**

President:	Greg Cant	0425 208 622
V/President:	Uwe Schoenherr	0414 063 957
Secretary:	Sam Vecchio	9833 4700
Treasurer:	Ted Fish	9833 4700

**Management Committee**

The VVAA St Marys Outpost Management Committee meets each month at the 'Train' to discuss important points relevant to the proper management of the Outpost, which will then be raised at the Bi-Monthly General Meeting.

This newsletter is produced and printed at the VVAA St Mary's Outpost in association with the St Mary's RSL Sub-Branch. it is provided free of charge to members of both associations. Views and statements made within the magazine are not necessarily the views of the St Mary's RSL Sub-Branch or the VVAA St Mary's; the Editor and the organizations are not giving legal, accounting or other professional advice and therefore do not accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the opinions or information contained in the magazine. We believe that the sources are accurate at the time of publication. Care should be exercised by readers who attempt to use this publication as a source of reference material for any purpose other than its intended use, which is light informative reading on topics of interest for the veterans of both associations.

Gary Fizzell - Editor

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