

WESTERN OUTPOST NEWS



St Mary's Outpost the
'Train of Knowledge'

December 2010 Issue

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



In This Issue

	<u>Page #</u>
VVAA St Mary's President Report	3
Diggers' Helmets Offer Little Protection to Brain Injury	4
VVAA St Mary's Annual General Meeting	5
St Mary's RSL Sub-Branch President Report	6-7
The Outpost Education Report	8-9
2nd Commando Unit Open Letter	10-11
DFRDB Fair Indexation Bill to be tabled in the Senate	12
St Mary's Bowling Club	13
Rooty Hill RSL - Entertainment	14
Computer Paramedics - Computer sales and service	15
The ANZAC Centenary 2014-2018	16
St Mary's RSL Club News	17
Michael Fitzgerald Solicitor Plus Strolling for Health	18
Outpost Computer Training. Plus Aussie Banner & Flags	19
Rapid Plumbing Solutions	20
Homefront	21
Outpost Pension Officers Business Hours	22
VVCS	23
Nepean Wives of Vietnam Veterans & Allans woes in China	24
The 'Train' and Kokoda Track Memorial Vandalised	25 -26
'Kids of Vets. Plus Healthy Suggestions	27
Heavenly Celebration Funerals Plus Freedom Taxation Services	28
DVA - Cash Advance for Xmas	29
Committee	30
VVAA ST Mary's AGM Nomination Form	31

Front Cover

Ross Reid with mate Gordon Maxwell at 2008 VV Day

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Merry Christmas One and All

Greg Cant - President

Well folks here we are back in December again. It only seems like a day or two ago we were setting off on our Christmas break and now we are facing one.

Not that I am complaining about that let me assure you. This has been a particularly tough one for my wife Jude and I this year both physically and emotionally.

In the period between August and October we had to attend eight funerals of dearly loved close friends and relatives; that of course included our dear friend and yours, Ross Reid. Unfortunately I was unable to also get to the funeral of our friend and benefactor, Mark Jeffrey, as this was while I was laid up in hospital with my heart going “Boom Tiddy Boom Tiddy Boom Oh Goodness Gracious Me”.

Not to be outdone my bride of 40 plus years decided that what was good for me was doubly good for her. Thankfully we are both on the mend, but as I said we are seriously looking forward to this break.

We have had some talk during management meetings of repainting the office and in particular the Pension Office. Although I was initially in favour I must admit that I now believe it is far more important that we all take this time to recharge the batteries and enjoy the time as much as possible with friends and family.

We need to understand that none of us is immortal and anything we put off for tomorrow may never get done. So boys and girls prioritize your life and put off those things that do not really matter and attend to those that do; There will always be quiet times during the year to attend to that type of maintenance.

May I again congratulate the Train Washers and what a magnificent job they have done all year. But in particular over the last couple of months when our home was so viciously attacked by gutless cowards who like to masquerade as ‘Free Spirited Artists’

So in closing my friends may I wish you the compliments of the season. Remember please guys “Every One Else On The Road is and Idiot. Come back safe in 2011.

Diggers Helmets Offer Little Protection For Brain Injury. (Press Release)

Helmets worn by soldiers in Afghanistan provide little or no protection from traumatic brain injury, a study has revealed. Brain injury is a mystery of modern warfare and some experts believe that it is a key factor in rising suicide rates among war veterans.

A team of researchers examined the impact of a blast wave against an unprotected head, a head wearing a helmet, and a helmeted head fitted with a face shield. Results showed that the helmet offered little to protect soldiers from blast induced brain injury.

Researchers used computer simulations to gauge the effect of a blast and found that a visor on the front of the helmet would cut injury rates by dissipating shock waves.

Australian brain injury experts welcomed the research conducted by the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the United States.

Australian Brain Injury Centre director Christian King said American forces at least had statistics on brain injury rates.

He said both the US and UK were much more open about the subject than Australia.

“There has been no research done on brain injury among Australian troops and we have no statistics on injury rates.” Mr. King said.

“It is vey much a case of out of sight , out of mine.”

Mr. King said the brain only had to travel a few millimeters to collide with the skull and be damaged.

More than 16,000 Australian troops have served in Afghanistan and Mr. King estimated that up to 5%, or more than 800, could be suffering from undiagnosed traumatic brain injury.

VVAA ST MARY'S
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
27th FEBRUARY 2011

**VVAA St Mary's will hold the Annual General Meeting on
Sunday 27th February 2011 in the **RSL Youth Hall at 11.00am
followed by a BBQ**

The AGM shall include:

- *Confirmation of the minutes of the preceding AGM**
- *Reports from the Executive concerning the preceding year**
- *Consideration of any notices of motion received**
- *Election of Office Bearers & Committee**

**Note 1: Copy of proceedings to be lodged with the Department of
Fair Trading within twenty-one days of the AGM**

**Note 2: A quorum at the AGM shall consist of at least three
executive/committee members and seven ordinary or associate
members.**

**Nomination forms are available at the 'Train' and
will be accepted up to and including Wednesday
16th February 2011.**

Greg Cant
President

**** You will be advised accordingly if venue changes**

St MARY'S RSL SUB-BRANCH REPORT

GARY FIZZELL - PRESIDENT

A fairly uneventful year for 2010, we managed to cover all our tasks and Commemorative events quite well.



You would have noticed the photo of our great mate Ross Reid on the front cover of this issue, Ross died just a couple of months ago after a very long and painful illness from cancer; he was a great supporter of the Outpost and served as Secretary/Asst Sec for several years particularly during my years as President, before he became too ill, although his illness did not prevent him from dropping in and doing odd jobs around the place - he never stopped until just a few weeks before his death.

I must not forget the assistance given to Ross by **Tony & Cherryl Mullavey**, what they did for Ross was well and truly 'above and beyond' the call of duty and they displayed mateship at its best. Tony spent months with Ross taking him out shopping in the wheelchair, running him backwards and forwards to the cancer clinic, painting the house, arranging for **Michael Fitzgerald** (our solicitor, who also did a great job) to come out to see Ross to organize his Will etc. Cherryl cooked meals and eased Ross' pain with massages. Tony is still, at the moment, assisting Ross' daughter Samantha with many of her tasks as the Executor of the Will. **Kevin Dunncliffe** also spent many hours sitting with Ross at the Cancer Clinic whilst he received Chemo.

A final word on Ross - he never lost his sense of humour. Earlier in the year when he received his prognosis, he called his mate, **Gordon Maxwell**, (the piper on the front page of this issue) and said: **"Mate - I have only been given 12 months to live, I would like you to play the pipes at my funeral, I can't give you a date yet, but I would appreciate it"** Gordon obliged.

On a lighter note, the school scholarships we sponsor each year were relatively successful again this year. I would like to thank **Tony Fryer** for once again carrying out much of the early preparation and for contacting the schools involved. The topics were thought provoking, however, the Scholarship Committee comprising myself, **Tony** and **Ron Kelly**, thought that the submissions by the students were not as good as in previous years. Thanks also to Ron for the follow up details which included having the Shields brought up to date with this years winners. It might be time for the Sub-Branch to re-visit the scholarships to ascertain if it is a worthwhile project in its current form. I am not suggesting dropping them, just looking at options.

The RSL Sub-Branch AGM will be held on Wednesday 9th February which will be preceded by the monthly meeting; all members will be advised by letter towards the end of January calling for nominations for the committee, so if you feel you have something to offer and have the time to spare, don't be afraid to nominate; I would like to see more Sub-Branch members who are not actively involved in any committee, either at the Outpost or the RSL, becoming involved because it seems the same handful of members are fulfilling multiple roles which seems to be a bit unfair.

The St Mary's RSL Club Ltd Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday 7th November 2010, all Board Members were re-elected unopposed with the Exception of one casual vacancy created by Owen Hanson; the vacancy was filled by Bill Heath over Chris Winmill by a 'Show of Hands' vote.

The CEO explained that the Club is still in a strong financial position despite decreased spending by Members and Visitors this year compared to 2009; possibly caused by the global financial crisis and the increased pressure on household expenditure.

In September, John Foeken, Terry Burn and I travelled to Dubbo for the 2010 RSL National Congress; holding the Congress in regional areas is an initiative of the National President, RADM Ken Doolan and the National Executive. From our perspective we thought our attendance was worthwhile because it gave our Executive a chance to meet up with the various members of the National Council as well as 'putting faces' to names of the Executives from other Sub-Branched. We also managed to meet the National President informally, at the conclusion of the Congress. I believe it is worthwhile receiving info first hand through the Congress, If it continues to be held in Regional or Metropolitan areas and Sub-Branched are invited, I would recommend that our Sub-Branch attend.

I expect this issue to be posted to you in the first week of December, our last meeting for the year will be our General Meeting on Wednesday 8th December, which will be our Xmas Dinner meeting. We will next meet on the 9th February as there is no meetings held in January. So I will take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Xmas and Happy New Year - the usual caution!! if driving, please take care because the 'silly season' can also be very perilous on the road.

I can't believe another year has gone by!

VVAA ST MARYS' OUTPOST EDUCATION TEAM REPORT NOVEMBER 2010

Another busy and successful year for the E-Team draws to a close as schools look towards the Summer Vacation. Throughout 2010, eighty schools have utilised the E-Team for Vietnam History presentations and guest speakers at ANZAC and Remembrance Day Services. Additionally fifteen individual students have been supported with study and research assignments focused on Vietnam. Further, four community group talks have been given. In total E-Team Vietnam Veterans have connected with more than 21000 students.

For the delivery of the above mentioned E-Team achievements special thanks are due to the following: Greg & Jude Cant, John Collyer, Vin & Nancy Cosgrove, Bill Cox, Bob Devaise, Gary Fizzell, Tony Fryer, Bill & Maree Johnson, John Kinsela, David Patterson, Jeff Perry, John Stanford, Don Watters, Ray Westwell.

The involvement and contribution to E-Team programs by these Outpost members are greatly appreciated by the students, teachers and parents of schools visited. Thank you is also due to many other Outpost members for their general support of the E-Team Project.

Also worthy of note; 2010 school donations in appreciation of E-Team presentations exceed \$9000.00, making the project totally self funding as well as contributing to general Outpost financial management.

Looking to the future, recent media reports have indicated that the Vietnam War Topic may be 'stripped' from the forthcoming National History Syllabus for Year 10 students. That matter is still under discussion. Advice from the NSW Board of Studies is that the current NSW History Syllabus will continue for 2011. That being the case a similar program of events and school bookings for the Outpost Education Team can be anticipated for next year.

As usual a Christmas Message will be sent from the Outpost Education Team to all schools visited throughout the year.

Merry Christmas,

Vin Cosgrove
Coordinator

Remembrance Day 2010 at the Schools



**Our lady of the Rosary
Primary School
Students and Teacher**

**Teachers and Students
From
Evans High**



2nd Commando Unit Open Letter (Name and Address withheld)

On the 21st June 2010 a helicopter went down in Afghanistan and Australia lost three of its finest young people. One of those I am proud to have been able to call a friend. He also happened to be the son of good friends. Quite simply he was the finest young person I have known.

The 10 days which followed have changed my life. They have afforded me the opportunity to become acquainted with the most exemplary group of people one could meet. The group I refer to is the 2nd Commando Unit of Australia's Army to which the three fallen soldiers belonged.

On Saturday 26th June my children and I attended the ramp ceremony where the bodies of the soldiers were returned to their families. Accompanying the bodies on the plane back from Afghanistan were the remaining members of the unit, brought home earlier than scheduled.

The dignity and solemnity of this occasion triggered emotion in all who attended but the overriding feeling in the aircraft hanger on that day can be summed up by just one word – “respect”.

At the end of proceedings I met and talked with a number of the commandos of that unit. The common thread of those talks is that Afghanistan is where they all want to be assigned. It is where they can put their training into use. It is a cause they believe in. It is where they think they can make a difference.

On Thursday 1st July I attended the funeral of that fine young man in his hometown. Over 1000 people were present, including immediate family and friends, military chiefs, political heads of our nation, and many people with whom his loss resonated.

However this was truly a ceremony about the “commando family”, made up of the commandos and their direct family. It was the commandos who provided the guard of honour; it was they who carried their fallen mate's casket; and it was they who grieved deeply.

The strength and support shown by these same men to the bereaved family has been astonishing and something difficult for those outside this unique group to comprehend. It was this commando family that had people flown in immediately to offer emotional support and to take care of every detail of the funeral. They did this because they too had been to Afghanistan. They understood; they cared; and they had respect for the sacrifice involved. Equally the young man's family has accepted its loss with dignity and courage in the knowledge that their son's death had meaning and purpose.

So who are these people called commandos? They are young Australians from all walks of life and from varying ethnic backgrounds. They are dedicated, confident, highly trained and highly disciplined people who take enormous pride in their role as elite soldiers.

When not on overseas postings they work in Australia on counter terrorism activities to keep our country safe. They also train constantly to ensure their skills are up to speed at all times.

In combat their body armour, rifle, ammunition and water weigh in at 35 kilograms yet on top of that they carry their backpack. Carrying more than their actual body weight, they jump out of planes. They endure privations that most could not envision.

Amongst the commandos I had the pleasure to meet was a 34 year old father of two whose back is so worn out that he will have no choice but to resign at year's end. Another is recovering from serious injury and at a mere 29 years of age realises he also will have to leave. Yet another is walking around with grenade fragments in the back of his head as a result of an accident on the range. The first medic to the scene of his accident was the young man whose funeral he had attended earlier that day.

The inspiration for me to pen these words is not so much the commandos themselves for I know they seek no recognition. It is rather the fact that it is illegal for them to be photographed or even identified in the media as a commando. That is, while they are alive. Out of the 16 Australian soldiers lost in Afghanistan, 12 have been commandos.

Everyday Australians therefore have no idea who these people are. These people who die for us; who suffer life-long disabilities for us; who protect us from sinister influences within our very own borders.

In an age when we idolise so-called celebrities – TV performers, sports people, actors – I pose the question “where have we gone wrong?”

On a personal level it is this commando family that has inspired me to strive to do better, to put in more effort for those in need in our society, and to focus less on material wants.

On a national level is it not time we started to redress the unhealthy pastime of idolising those who are simply working at what they enjoy and who happen to feature on our television screens or in the media?

Is it not time for more of our young people to work harder in pursuit of their own goals and to pay more respect to the teachers and elders who endeavour to help them?

Is it not time for families to work harder at developing a work ethic for themselves and their children in order to make a better contribution to our country?

Is it not time for older Australians to work harder for those less fortunate and for all Australians to show more respect to each other regardless of their heritage?

I have met my heroes. They will hereafter be my inspiration. But I can't tell you who they are.

Mr Stuart Robert MP
Shadow Minister for Defence Science, Technology and Personnel/Federal Minister for Fadden

Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson
Shadow Minister for Veterans Affairs /Liberal Senator for Victoria

Wednesday, 17th November 2010

DFRDB Fair indexation Bill to be tabled in the Senate: The coalition will take action on military superannuation reform.

On behalf of the Coalition's spokesperson on military superannuation, Mr Stuart Robert MP, the Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson, will tomorrow table a Bill in the Senate to index DFRDB pensions in line with the Coalition's 27 June 2010 commitment.

The DFRDB Amendment (Fair indexation) Bill 2010, will enable DFRDB superannuants aged 55 and over from 1 July 2011 to have their pensions indexed at the higher rate of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), Male Average Weekly Earnings (MTAWE) or the Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index (PBLCI).

Mr Robert said the introduction of the Bill confirms the Coalition's resolve in taking the crucial first step towards reforming military superannuation arrangements.

"The Coalition made a commitment to veterans and ex-service personnel and we are going to see that commitment through", Mr Robert Said.

"I call on those independent members who have previously voiced their support for the provisions contained within this legislation to support this Bill and to support those veterans and ex-service personnel who have given so much to their country".

The Shadow Minister for Veterans' Senator Michael Ronaldson, said that he had listened to the considered views put forward by the veteran and ex-service community and was pleased to be able to introduce the Bill on behalf of the Coalition.

"The issue of military superannuation reform has been raised with me during every meeting I have held with veterans and ex-service personnel. With this Bill, the Coalition meets our election commitment to change DFRDB indexation arrangements and to help support our veterans and ex-service personnel", Senator Ronaldson said.

"This is in stark contrast to the Gillard labor Government, which promised much to those in the veteran community but has repeatedly failed to deliver due to their own self interest and poll driven policy paralysis."

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.

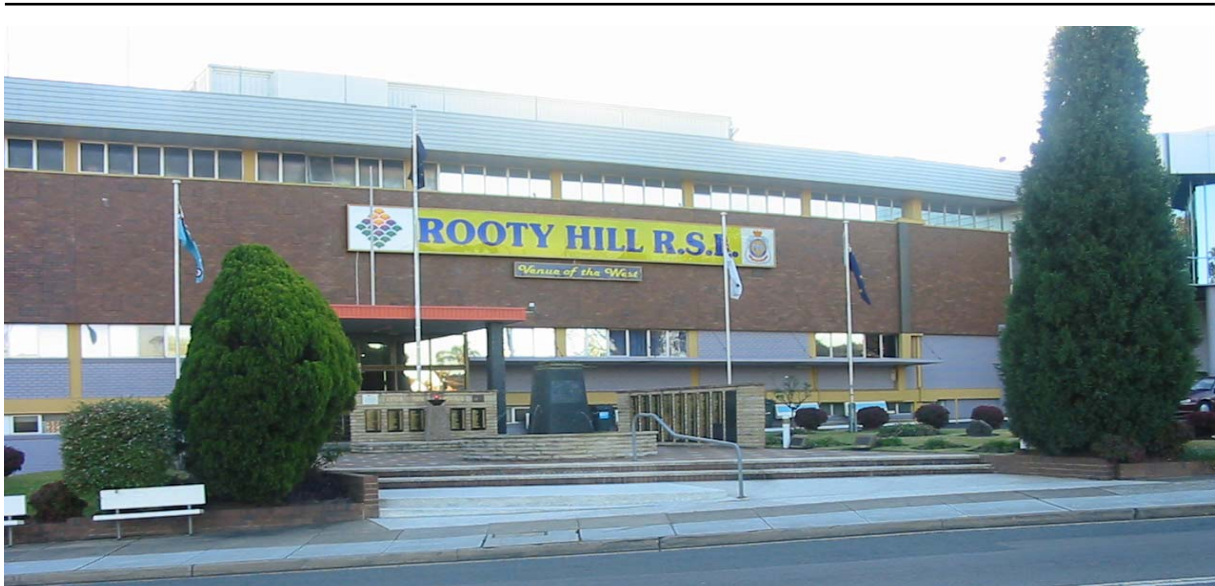
Social Bowls Programme

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

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 Bands and Country Music.

Looking for the best free entertainment close to Penrith, Blacktown and Castle Hill?

Whether you like to sit back and relax with friends or get up dance the night away we have music every Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

Thursday is dedicated to up and coming country music stars, who are giving country music a great new twist with a Country Rock style filtering through from all over the world.

Friday and Saturday night is party night. The best cover bands transform the Fred Chubb Lounge with the best cover songs and some original material you will want to hear again.

Unless otherwise stated the entertainment starts at the following times:

Thursday and Friday entertainment starts at 8.00pm

Saturday entertainment starts at 8.30pm

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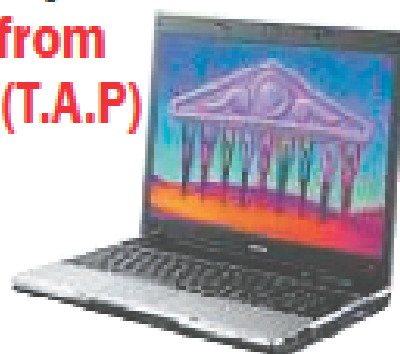
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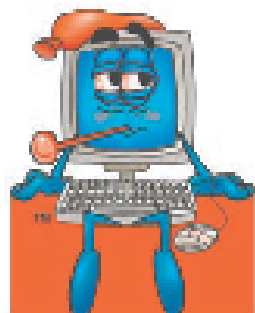
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THE ANZAC CENTENARY 2014-2018

The ANZAC Centenary provides the opportunity to recognise not only the significant events of the First World War, such as the landings and battles at Gallipoli and the Western Front, but those that followed on the Kokoda Track, the plight of POW's, of those who fought on the Coral Sea; in fierce air battles over Europe and in the Pacific skies, battles like Kapyong and Long Tan; those who protect the innocent, making and keeping peace in places like Somalia and Timor Leste and those who fight today in the deserts of Iraq and the formidable terrain of Afghanistan. The centenary commemorations are an opportunity to recognise our history and the impact it has on our nation and our future.

Together, Australians will remember those who have fought and served in all the wars and conflicts of the past 100 years - from the ANZAC's in the First World War to the men and women serving in Afghanistan today. We will recall the experiences of those who stay behind - the families, friends and communities who suffered the loss of those who would never return.

The Australian Government has appointed a National Commission on the Commemoration of the ANZAC Centenary, with its key role being to call forth ideas from all Australians about how we should commemorate this important chapter in our history in local communities and nationally.

The planning for the ANZAC Centenary is around six principle themes:

- Century of Service
- Community engagement
- Infrastructure and capital works
- Education, public awareness and community access
- Commemorative services
- International relations and cooperation.

For more information about the themes, the ANZAC Centenary and how to become involved, visit:

www.anzaccentenary.gov.au

TAB FACILITIES

Sports Bet

FOX Sport

SKY Channel

TERRACE CAFE

Check Board for Specials

Open Daily for Lunch & Dinner

Serving Light Meals, Snacks, Sweets & Coffee

Monday

Bingo 11.30am

Rock & Roll Dancing 7-10pm

Tuesday

Bingo 7.30pm

Thursday

Bingo 11.30am

Texas Hold'em Poker 6.30pm

DJ Stuart plays 60's, 70's & 80's in the Lounge
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 1st Sat/Month

Sunday

Raffle, Trivia & Music 4-8pm

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Strolling To Health

It takes only 30 minutes a day but could cut your risk of falling victim to up to two dozen illnesses, including dementia and cancer.

Taking the time for a brisk daily walk could also have other major health benefits by slowing down the rate our bodies deteriorate with age.



Researchers found that being fit and active ranks alongside not smoking as the most powerful choice we can make to stay healthy.

**MICHAEL JOHN FITZGERALD
SOLICITOR**



**Level 8
65 York Street Sydney 2000**

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**FAX: 9283 2600
ABN 18095746334**



Computer Training Classes

Computer Classes are conducted at the Vietnam Veterans Train at the St Mary's RSL Club in Mamre Road St Mary's as follows:

Tuesday: 9.00 am - 12.00pm
12.00pm - 2.00 pm

Wednesday: 9.00AM - 12.00 pm (Ladies Class)

Thursday: 9.00 am - 11.00 am

Thursdays class Digital Photo manipulation using Photoshop Elements 5, only 5 students at a time. **Bookings essential.**

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

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HOMEFRONT

Preventing Falls: Falls are not an inevitable part of ageing. Most falls can be prevented. A range of actions have been found to be effective to reducing falls, and injuries from falls. One in three people aged 65 and over report falling at least once each year.



One quarter of these people sustain significant injuries and 5% sustain a fracture (usually humerus, wrist, hip and pelvis). Strength and balance exercise has shown to reduce falls by older people.

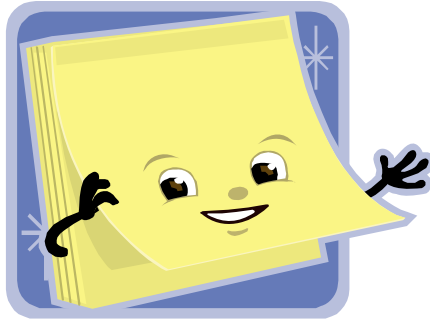
Falls and accidents are a key factor in causing otherwise avoidable admissions to hospital.

Homefront is a falls and accident prevention program available for all Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) gold and white card holders. A free Homefront assessment is available each year and the department makes a financial contribution towards the cost of recommended items and modifications. Homefront aims to maintain the health and independence of the veteran community and reduce potential medical and hospital costs by reducing the incidence of falls and accidents in and around the home.

Following the home assessment DVA will make a financial contribution, currently \$203, towards the cost of recommended aids and minor home modifications that will reduce the risk of falls and accidents. The recommended minor home modifications and/or aids and appliances are generally low cost items such as the provision of non slip treatment on steps or floors or extra lighting. The Homefront assessor also provides information about local community and Government services that are available to assist veterans and war widows to remain living in their own home for as long as possible. A Homefront assessment can be arranged by telephoning 1800 80 1945.

There are currently 272,000 Australian veterans that are eligible for the Homefront program. More information, including interesting statistics, are available on DVA's website:

http://www.dva.gov.au/health_and_wellbeing/health_programs/homefront/Pages/intro.aspx



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.

VETERANS & VETERANS FAMILIES COUNSELLING SERVICE (VVCS)

Although VVCS was founded by (and for) Vietnam Veterans and their families, the range of services VVCS offers has expanded to not only support Vietnam Veterans and their families, but to support those involved in all conflicts and peace operations.

Those eligible for VVCS service now include:

- Australian veterans of all conflicts and peacekeeping operations as defined by the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA);
- All children of Vietnam veterans (regardless of age) with psychological, emotional and social needs arising from the impact of their parents' operational or warlike service;
- Partners and dependent children (under 26 years of age) of veterans with issues arising from the veteran's service;
- War Widows and Widowers;
- Ex-partners, within five years of separation;
- Ex-service personnel with a mental health condition that is a DVA accepted disability and their family members; and
- Current serving members of the ADF who have been formally referred by the ADF under the Agreement of Services (AfS).

There is an (AfS) between the DVA and the Department of Defence which was reviewed and re-signed in December 2008. This AfS enables any ADF personnel (through formal referral) to attend VVCS counseling or group programs.

In 2007 the VVCS was renamed VVCS-Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service, ensuring the benefits of the service founded by Vietnam veterans are shared with all Australian veterans and their families, now and into the future.

**A Letter From Allan in China - Having All Sorts of Difficulties
With The Locals.**

“Just had to do this while it is still fresh in my mind.”

“I awoke this morning looked out the window and could barely see 100 metres. So I says to myself I gotta get out of here. So off I go in search of a travel agency. I reckon I asked 19 million of these dumbshits if they knew where a travel agency was - you guessed it not one person could tell me. So after about 3 hrs walking around I got this bright idea that I would go to probably the biggest airport in the world, as about 1 million people pass through there each day I reckoned there would be literally hundreds of agencies trying to get some business. Guess what? Not one to be seen. I asked the Beijing Tourist Information Centre ...Duh!! They did not know what I was talking about but tried to book me into a hotel, after about ten minutes with them I was directed to the general information desk, you would reckon they would speak fluent English, Nooooooo!! They sent me to a ticket counter the woman asked me where I wanted to go. I said *I don't know until I sit down with someone and see what's available*. She said if I do not know where I am going she can't sell me a ticket. So I said I want to go to Katmandu, she says, “Where's that?” I said it's in Bloody China for Christ Sake. Alas no it's not it's in Nepal which is classed as an international flight and I need a visa, also, I have only a single entry visa to China they won't let me back in but I could stay in the airport.



Anyway after two and a half hours with no interpreter or anything in the joint I finally got onto a woman who spoke English and interpreted for me. They still couldn't understand what a travel agency was. I said to her could she Google Travel Agency Beijing again, the dumbshit didn't know what Google was (I explained) and alas about three thousand travel agents in Beijing came up. She then asked me which one did I want, I stated the obvious and said the one closest to the airport, she rang the number and guess what? The guy could speak English, however, it was too late in the day to go see him I made an appointment to see him in the morning.

To top the day off (I live about 5 minutes from the airport) and the bloody taxi driver got lost - and they wonder why a man drinks!!

Regards to AllAllan



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***

GRAFFITI VANDALS STRIKE AT THE 'TRAIN' & OTHER WAR MEMORIALS

Just before Remembrance Day vandals struck at the Veterans 'Train' and plastered their ugly scribbblings all over the carriages, which was bad enough, but our worthy 'Trainwashers' had spent weeks painting the carriages and had them looking absolutely tip-top ready for Remembrance Day.

However, not to be outdone, our group got stuck into the repainting and had them once again in great shape. We have been reasonably lucky with this type of ugliness, having been 'hit' four times in eight years; although the actual painting is done by the volunteers there is a fair amount of cost involved such as purchasing some of the paint, (a great deal was donated by Bunnings North Penrith) but we had to upgrade the Security which has been a rather costly exercise.

The Police appear to be powerless to stop this nonsense because first of all, apparently, they have to catch these creatures in the act, and even then a conviction is unlikely even though we photographed their 'tags' and presented them to the police; they have however, promised to patrol the area more vigorously at night - so let's hope this brings some results.



**BACK TO
NORMAL**



(Memorial Vandalism - From previous page.)

Acts of Vandalism on The Concord Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway.

Similar acts of Vandalism to the Veterans 'Train' was the vicious nature of the attack on the 16 stations out of the 26 (much worse than the 'Train' and more expensive) which were sprayed with graffiti and saw bollards smashed with a blunt object tells us that it was not a random act but rather one which was deliberate and premeditated. It caused public outrage and many from the veteran and general community would like to have a piece of the vandal/s.

Perhaps what makes it all the more painful is that the memorial had only recently been brought back to a pristine condition after months of construction work to upgrade the pathway. It was looking its best for ANZAC Day and the veteran and general community were justifiably proud.

The graffiti have now been removed, however there is still some way to go before the bollards are repaired. The NSW Police and the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway Board of Directors are hopeful that the arrest will lead to a conviction.

Something the general public was not aware of is that only a few weeks before, 10 newly planted advanced rhododendrons were stolen and the electrical cables to the cameras were severed. We believe that these acts were not carried out by random louts.

We can be thankful to Premier Kenneally and Minister Terenzini for giving the Memorial a sum of \$10,000 towards repairing the damage.

It is quite obvious from the both these reports from the Vietnam Veterans at St Mary's and the above report from the Kokoda Memorial Walk, which are similar in content, i.e. both had recently had extensive work carried out and suffered extensive damage requiring expensive repairs, that this type of vandalism requires more severe penalties instead of being treated as minor offences, as it appears to be.

The NSW Rail system is also under attack from these imbeciles costing NSW millions of dollars, so why aren't these offences treated more harshly? It's time the Courts and Police got fair dinkum.

Don't Forget Beets!

Adding beetroot juice to your shopping list could be a step towards keeping dementia at bay. Drinking it highly concentrated can boost blood supply to areas of the brain important for maintaining cognitive function including memory, research found.

Tests on US volunteers suggest this is produced by high levels of nitrates which are converted into nitrites. Previous research showed this is also important in lowering blood pressure.

Lead researcher Daniel Kim-Shapiro, director of Wake Forest University in North Carolina, said: "We wanted to show that drinking beet juice also increases perfusion, or blood flow, to the brain".

ALCOHOL RISK TO SENIORS

If you're a senior who enjoys a drink, here's something to keep in mind. Research shows that as you age, alcohol dramatically slows your reflexes. A study of 13 healthy men and women with an average age of 62 found that just two single vodka and orange drinks were enough to make them struggle while completing an obstacle avoidance test.

"We found that alcohol levels considered to be safe for driving seriously hamper the ability to successfully avoid sudden obstacles in the travel path" Dutch researcher Judith Hedeman said.

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

Email: kidsofveterans-nsw@hotmail.com.au

Heavenly Celebration Funerals believe that families want honest and comprehensive answers regarding their funeral arrangements. Our funeral home Web Site provides you with vital information to help relieve some of the burdens of this difficult time.

At Heavenly Celebration Funerals, we pride ourselves on providing quality products and dignified service at an affordable cost. We understand that the emotional and financial burdens can be overwhelming and our goal is to alleviate as much stress as possible during this time.

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Freedom Taxation Services supports the VVAA St Mary's Outpost

LUMP SUM ADVANCE FOR XMAS

Xmas is a great opportunity to spend time with family and friends , but it can also create some financial stress as a result of a spike in expenses. Many pensioners seek a lump sum advance to help them meet the additional costs of Xmas. The maximum and minimum amounts you can receive in a 13 fortnight period are:



	Minimum	Maximum
Single	\$342.55	\$1027.65
Couple (Each)	\$258.20	\$774.60
Illness Separated (Each)	\$258.20	\$774.60

If you are on the maximum rate of service pension, you can have up to three advances of the minimum amount in a 13 fortnight period. If you are planning to take an advance at Xmas as well as another advance before then, contact DVA to ensure you will be able to take both advances.

You can only receive the maximum advance once every 13 fortnights. So, if you have received the maximum advance since July, you will not be eligible for another advance before Xmas and you will need to consider making alternative arrangements. If you need more information about an advance you want to obtain, contact DVA on 133 254 or 1800 555 254 (For regional callers) VAN Parramatta 9893 9892

Pension Rise: Pensions increased from 20 September. The maximum rate of single service pension including pension supplement has increased by \$15 to \$716.10 per fortnight and the maximum rate for couples has increased by \$11.30 to \$539.80 per fortnight. TPI by \$23.60 to \$1092.90; EDA to \$603.30 and the 100% General Rate has increased to \$388.30

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.

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:	Brian Abson	9833 4700
Treasurer:	Ted Fish	9833 4700

Management Committee Comprises:

The Executive plus:

Reno Ciantar Vin Cosgrove (Education Co-ord)
Terry Burn John Foeken JP (Welfare Co-ord)
John Mulherron Neville Wood
Tony Mullavey Keith Woolfenden
John Taylor A/Sec. Tony Fryer
Burke Rogge Gary Fizzell

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

VVAA ST MARY'S OUTPOST VETERANS CENTRE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
NOMINATION FORM

Notice is given that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Outpost will be held on Sunday 27th February 2011 at 11.00am . The meeting will be held in either the RSL Auditorium or the RSL Youth Club. Whichever is available.

Nominations for Executive and Management positions will be accepted up to 16th February 2011.

This page can be extracted, filled out, and returned to the VVAA St Mary's Secretary. Don't forget to sign it and have a witness sign as well.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NOMINATED BY</u>	<u>SECONDED BY</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
<u>PRESIDENT</u>			Accept/Decline
<u>V/PRES.</u>			Accept/Decline
<u>SECRETARY</u>			Accept/Decline
<u>A/SEC.</u>			Accept/Decline
<u>TREASURER</u>			Accept/Decline
<u>MGMT</u> <u>COMMITTEE</u>			Accept/Decline

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