# ROYAL MARINES ASSOCIATION
# VICTORIA – AUSTRALIA

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Newsletter No. 4 — April 2009

The last meeting was held on Sunday 26th April 2009 at Ringwood RSL. The President opened the meeting at 13.24 hours with a minute silence for 'Fallen Comrades".

Attending — B. Attwood, Maj. P. Dunlevie, B. Drummond, C.Handoll, K. Harrex, A.Hewitt, & Mrs V. Hewitt, Rev. H. McCartney, V. Rich, G. Roman, A. Smith, H. Teear, M.Tucker, D.Wilcox, B. Youngs. (Total: 15)

Apologies — G. Fowler, M. Gorham, B. Love, A. Redman, D. Shearwood, Wm. Polkingthorne (Total: 6)

Minutes — these were taken as being read. There were no matters arising. Vic Rich and Alec Smith: Carried.

Correspondance: In: Kathleen Woolford 20/4/09
Stuart Gill, British Consul General 19/4/09
AATTV Newsletter 9/4/09.

Correspondance Out: David Walters 1/4/09
Mike Bennet 6/4/09
Stuart Gill 24/4/09
Eliz. Richards 24/4/09

Alfred Hewitt and Harry Teear: Carried.

Treasurer's Report — Keith Harrex gave a detailed account of the Association's financial position which resulted in a healthy balance in the Bank. Alfred Hewitt asked if it had been raised in the past that the bank balance figure should not drop below a certain figure. The Treasurer assured the meeting that it had always been observed, and such situations would always be looked after. The Treasurer moved that his report be accepted.

Alec Smith and Cyril Handoll: Carried.

Expenses —The Secretary was reimbursed for postage of the April Newsletter.

Social Report — None.

General Business — The President was extremely happy to report that following an e-mail he had received from Stuart Gill, British Consul General in Melbourne, in which he mentioned that his father, William Gill (88), a proud Member of the RMA in Eastbourne, was on holiday here and would very much like to meet with us. His father was a veteran of the Battle of the Atlantic and was serving in HMS *Dunedin*, a Royal Navy Light Cruiser, when she was torpedoed and sunk in November 1941. Only sixty-seven men survived from the ship's company of just fewer than five hundred. The survivors endured four days and three nights adrift in the South Atlantic before being rescued by a passing American merchantman. A day was hurriedly arranged to invite them to lunch on 21st April at the Ringwood RSL, where several of us had a most memorable occasion with Stuart Gill and his father, Bill. Sadly, Bill lost his wife, Isobel, two years ago. She had been a Leading WREN, and was on the instructional staff and Secretary to the Adjutant in 1944, dealing with the transference of Naval personnel to the Royal Marines, at Farrington.

Before and during lunch, most interesting conversations took place over a variety of subjects. Unfortunately, Stuart's wife, Maggie, was unwell and sent her apology. They were both born in Sussex, they met at school, got married some years later and have two daughters, Elizabeth (23) and Claire (19), both living in the UK. It was not long before some of us realized where we had met Stuart before! It was at the Commemorative Service of the Sub-Mariners Association on the 17th August last, just days after he had taken up his 4-year-term of office as British Consul in Melbourne.

After lunch, Stuart kindly presented to us a copy of his book, *Blood in the Sea*. He told us that it took some time for him to persuade his father to talk about his wartime experiences. This led to many other avenues in his research of HMS *Dunedin* and the breaking of the Enigma Code. It took him seven years to write the book, which was published by Cassell in 2003. Naturally, many members have shown great interest to read this book!

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Forthcoming Events —

Falkland Islands Commemorative Service will be held on Sunday 14th June 2009 at Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital Memorial Garden. Our thanks go to Albert Boyer who has kindly agreed to produce once again the most attractive Service sheets for this occasion. Assembly will be at 12 Noon, the Service will commence at 12.30 hours. Refreshments will be served afterwards in the Acacia Room. Please mark this in your diary. Last year the attendance was extremely poor. Let us make up for it this year! If the weather is cold or wet, the Service will be held in the Memorial Chapel as it has been on past occasions. Dress for the occasion will be Full Rig — Blazers, Berets, Ties, Medals, Shoes highly polished! Having heard young Nicholas Elliott play his 1938 bugle so well twice recently at the Ringwood RSL, it was decided to invite him, with his parents' permission, to play the *Last Post* and *Reveille* at the Falklands Commemorative Service.

Dave Wilcox and Michael Tucker: Carried.

It was decided at the Meeting that we should invite, as Honoured Guests, Stuart and Maggie Gill to our forthcoming Corps Luncheon in October.

Alec Smith and Harry Teear: Carried.

Sick Parade — Pat Dunlevie reported that Bill Polkington attended the Anzac Commemoration at Ringwood RSL on Sunday 19th April, but it proved a bit too much for him so he returned to hospital. Several weeks ago, he had the lower part of one of his legs amputated. Regrettably, this was necessary because of its worsening situation. In the original operation some time ago, Bill had plastic bone inserted. Unfortunately, infection set in and osteoporosis developed. Having returned home recently, Bill had a most unfortunate fall and was admitted to hospital again. What terrible bad luck! Naturally, we all wish Bill a speedy recovery. The Rev. Hugh McCartney reported that Arthur Redman seems to be recovering slowly, and that his memory is extremely good. Likewise, we send Arthur our best wishes for his continued recovery.

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The Meeting closed at 14.24 hours.

The Next Meeting will be held on Sunday 31st 2009.

To complete the Anzac Commemoration, our President and Secretary were invited to attend the Senior section of the Tintern School, Ringwood on Monday afternoon, the 27th April. Before an audience of three hundred smartly dressed boys and members of the staff, David Wilcox gave a short address about how he entered the Royal Marines in the closing months of WWII, the vigorous training and the strict discipline that all Marines had to undergo, and how, to this day, they were so proud to serve Queen and Country. Michael Tucker followed by saying that as he viewed all the boys, his memory went back to his own school days during the Second World War when they were being bombed in England, and later when he was called up for National Service in the Royal Air Force. Afterwards, everyone filed out to the huge quadrangle where a minute's silence was observed and one boy played the *Last Post* and *Reveille* as the Australian flag was raised.

There was some concern at our last meeting as to the whereabouts of the Sykes Fairbairn Dagger! However, all's well that ends well! When Peter Beasley delivered the suitcase of Memorabilia to leave outside the backdoor of Bert Attwood's address, he decided it was too risky to leave the dagger, so returned home with it! However, on Wednesday 13 May, Dave Wilcox and Michael Tucker drove to Moe to bring it back with other Memorabilia, now safe and sound at their addresses!