

ROYAL MARINES ASSOCIATION VICTORIA – AUSTRALIA

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Newsletter No. 3— March 2010

The third meeting for the year was held on Sunday 28th March 2010 at Ringwood RSL. Our President, Dave Wilcox, opened the meeting at 13.5 hours with a minute silence for 'Fallen Comrades, and to Remember the recent passing of two of our members, Major Bill Billett and Jack Purkiss.

Attending — D. Allen, B. Attwood, M. Bremner, F. Davies, B. Drummond, M. Gorham, C. Handoll, K. Harrex, B. Love, V. Rich, G. Roman, D. Shearwood, A. Smith, H. Tear, M. Tucker, D. Wilcox, J. Wilkinson and B. Youngs.
Mesdames: Mrs Pam Wilcox and Mrs Jacquie Bremner.
Guests of Honour: Mrs. Elizabeth and Mrs Clarice O'Reilly. (Total: 23).

Apologies — J. Barnes, A. Boyer, G. Fowler, Rev.H. McCartney, R. Potter, Maj. P. Dunlievie, B. Polkingthorn and M.Welton. (Total: 8).

Minutes — these were taken as being read.

Bert Attwood, Alec Smith: - Carried.

Matters Arising — None

Correspondance: In and out: None.

Treasurer's Report: Our Treasurer, Mark Bremner, was very pleased to report that nothing had changed and no actions had to be taken. There were no claims for expenses.

V. Rich, George Roman:- Carried

Sick Parade: Billy Polkingthorn has had more bits and pieces removed from his amputated leg. He was only home for one day when he awoke in the night to find his leg covered in blood. He was re-admitted to hospital immediately and it was found that he had been infected with golden staff. He was put into isolation wherein he is not allowed visitors. So we really feel for Billy at this time. Ralph Potter still has a poisoned foot. His dear wife, Brenda, has been diagnosed with cerebral muscular disease. Our President, Dave Wilcox, has continued bravely in enduring the spreading of his cancer and presiding at our Meetings. Tony Webster has not been at all well. He has now been moved to another part of the nursing home. However, the better news is that Pat Dunlievie is now out of hospital; Pam McCartney is also home from hospital and Taff Boyer's skin is healing up. Once again, we convey our most sincere best wishes to all those good people as they cope with their health problems. Let us remember them in our thoughts and prayers.

Social Report. As mentioned in the last Newsletter, following the Anzac Day Parade and Service, lunch has been booked at the Elephant & Wheelbarrow, on the corner of Exhibition Street and Burke Street, in which members will be interested to know that a lift is available to carry them up and down!

General Business. The Secretary read out a very kind note from Elizabeth Richards attached to which was a most generous cheque for \$100.00 She indicated that at the discretion of the RMA, it should be put towards welcomed refreshments at forthcoming functions. The members showed their appreciation with a hearty round of applause. I feel sure Elizabeth will not mind me mentioning that it was discovered that she had written the word "pounds" instead of dollars! Not to worry, our vigilant Treasurer changed the word and Elizabeth initialed it. Looking on the good side of it, Elizabeth had not forgotten our original Australian currency! How many youngsters of today would have that knowledge?

Then followed a very special part of the Meeting when Danny Allen, accompanied by our honoured guests Elizabeth Richards and Clarice O'Reilly, came forward and on behalf of them and Nobby Clarke presented Keith Harrex with a presentation case containing a Schaffer ball-point pen engraved with Keith's name and service number. The gift was given in recognition for all the good work he had put in as Treasurer over the past eighteen years. The members responded with great applause. Keith, taken by surprise, expressed his thanks with great pleasure even though he was naturally a bit lost for words!

Danny Allen later took the opportunity of announcing that the first Anzac Club had been formed at the RSL, Caulfield.

Our President Dave Wilcox announced, once again, that with regret he would be unable to attend the Anzac Day March to the Shrine of Remembrance for health reasons. He went on to say that Harry Teear would be in charge, Vic Rich would be Standard Bearer and Keith Harrex would carry the Colours. He went on to say, that the British Airborne and Royal Marines would march side by side. Hopefully, they would be led by a good band to help all to keep in step!

Members are reminded that on the Sunday prior to Anzac Day, we will attend the traditional Parade and Service at the Clock Tower, Ringwood. The assembly point will be at Target Square where the March will begin at 14.00 hours. After the March and Service at the Clock Tower, refreshments will be served on our return to the RSL, Ringwood.

It was put to the Meeting by the President and seconded by Bert Love that provided the Committee of the Ringwood RSL approved, we would like our Standard and Colours displayed with the other flags on the RSL's stage rather than have them kept in storage. If approved, Bert Love has kindly offered to make the necessary stand. Motion was carried unanimously.

It was sadly announced that the President of RAFA, Flying Officer Les Smith RAF (Retired) died last Monday and a large congregation attended his funeral last Friday at the Uniting Church, Ormond. He was 93. Having joined the RAF in 1935 he went right through the Second World War from the Battle of Britain to the landings at Arnham and more. John Wilkinson expressed his great regret at Les's passing, for he had known him for a very long time and his connection with the Airborne Forces Association.

Please note: Because it will be Anzac Day there will not be a General Meeting held on Sunday 25th April 2010.

The Meeting closed at 14.04 hours. — **Next Meeting:** Sunday 30th May 2010 at 13.15 hours at Ringwood RSL.

VALE

Bill Billett was a RM Bugler who entered the ranks in April 1954. He won early promotion and was with P Troop on the Suez Landing. He was promoted to Corporal at the age of 18 and was transferred from 40 CDO to Z Troop in 45 CDO in Platres, Cyprus. At 21 years of age he was the youngest Sergeant in the Corps, working in the Orderly Room, Stonehouse Barracks. Later, he served as the Sergeant i/c of the LC Squadron on Christmas Island. He was later awarded a commission and was 2 i/c of the Falklands Island RM Detachment. Bill also served at Poole with the SBS. When he attended the Victoria RMA Corps Dinner at Dandenong RSL in 1984, it was learned that he had served with the Australian SAS and had been promoted to Major; he had also completed harrowing active service tours in Vietnam. He had been the CO of 2 CDO at Fort Gellibrand. He held the appointment of 'Curator of Arms' at the Melbourne Museum. He was a working member of the RN and RM Historical Societies. He spent much time travelling and searching for locations of graves of well known Historical figures, like Collins RM from the First Settlers in Victoria he found his grave in Tasmania! His passing came as a great shock, but he will be well remembered for all his achievements and dedication to service.