



NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2021

Volume 7 Issue 1

REMINDER
General Meeting
Sunday 14th March
10.30am
Bring your Partner

From the President's Desk

Legal Issues. As I start this newsletter, I find myself being somewhat frustrated by the lack of progress on our two legal challenges to the Memorial Club. We have been at this since the early part of 2019, almost two years ago, and still, we have no solution. Of course, the action regarding the non-payment of the \$80,000 is the longest outstanding issue and unfortunately it looks like being a lot longer before it is resolved.

There was an attempt by your Board to bring the two issues to a conclusion when first, yours truly, met with the acting President of the Memorial Club and agreed to have a meeting of both executives. The executives met and we came to an agreement that they should put their proposed solution in writing. This they did by modifying the Deed of Compromise that we had proposed some months ago. They took out anything that might have been in our favour and only put forward things that were advantageous to them. Once our lawyers saw the document and following a meeting of our Board, the Club's proposal was rejected.

Following the rejection of the Memorial Club's proposal, the Board instructed our lawyers to press ahead with our claim that our eviction from the Club was illegal.

As I write this newsletter, the current situation with the case is that it has been listed for

hearing on the 4th March, which will be after the date this Newsletter will go to the printer. Rest assured, you will be kept up to date as possible as soon as anything is known regarding the outcome of our battle.

ANZAC Day 2021. The planning for our ANZAC Day ceremonies is well underway. At present, we are looking at having a cut-down version of our two ceremonies. The Dawn Service will involve a march, but with **Veterans only**. The march will start from its traditional position at the bottom (eastern) end of Short Street. Following the Dawn Service, Veterans and the Public will be invited back to the Memorial Club for the traditional Gunfire Breakfast.

The Citizens' Ceremony will consist of a cut-down version with **Veterans only** taking part in a march from the same start point as the Dawn Service—the eastern end of Short Street. Following the Ceremony, all will be invited back to the Memorial Club where the traditional 2-Up will take place. The Bowls Club will possibly be opened early to accommodate those not wishing to attend the Memorial Club

Membership Renewal. We have recently completed our collection of membership renewals which has proven to be somewhat difficult to do. This is because we no longer can ask the Memorial Club reception to collect the fees. In this digital age, I am fairly sure most of our members have an on-line banking capacity. Therefore, we are asking that members, where possible, use electronic funds transfer (EFT) to pay their dues. To do this we advise our banking details.

BSB: 484-799 **Account Number:** 509149201

If you use this method to pay the annual fee of \$20.00, you should include your membership number as a reference. It would be a good idea to email our secretary advising that you had made the payment.

secretary@southport.rslqld.net.au

This request applies to only a small number of our members who choose to pay annually. Most of our members are life subscribers and do not have to renew each year.

Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM)

For two years in a row, now, the Sub-Branch has been proud to have one of its members receive the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Australia Day Honours List. This year it was someone we all have grown to know through his stories in this Newsletter—David Matiske. His efforts in promoting the link between the Philippines and Australia, in particular both navies, has resulted in this honour and we are all very proud of the man.

Tribute to the Late Edward (Ted) Burton

The Sub Branch sadly noted the passing of Edward (Ted) Burton in January 2021. Ted was not only a staunch RSL Member, but, over three decades, was President of the Incapacitated Service Men and Women Association (ISWA), an organisation which provided Social, Advocacy, and Wellbeing support to the Defence Community. Our own Veteran Support Centre was originally raised as a joint venture with ISWA. As President ISWA, Ted always supported the VSC. ISWA provided most of the original VSC Office Machinery and Furniture. Whilst the Machinery has been updated, ISWA furniture—chairs and filing cabinets—continue in use in the current VSC Office.

Vale Ted Burton, Lest We Forget

How a Group of Diggers were Invited into the Officers' Mess, Victoria Barracks, Sydney

by Claude Palmer

In 1960, Victoria Barracks, Sydney, had a ceremonial Guard, whose duties included the Cenotaph Ceremony at Martin Place and the Barracks Main Gate. One Saturday, the Guard

Commander (your Veteran Support Centre Advocate 3/Director) received a phone call from the Barracks Duty Officer. DO: *'There's a sheep eating the flowers in the Officers' Mess Garden'*. GC: *'Maybe he's just hungry'*. DO: *'Don't be impertinent-remove the sheep immediately'*. GC: *'Guard, no weapons, turn out! At the double, follow me!'* So, six 101 Infantry Workshop RAEME doubled toward the Mess. Sheep, happily munching away, looked up, sees Diggers coming, so bolted straight up the front steps into the Mess dining room. GC: *'Guard, get the sheep'*. So, into the Mess dining room go the Crafties and after a short chase, secured delinquent merino, removed from the Mess, and tethered him under a shady tree with water and fresh green grass. Merino munched at the grass, which it was his duty to keep short—the reason he was in the Barracks!

PHYLIS LATOUR DOYLE

The spy who defeated Nazis with hairbands
contribution by Rodney Tagg

At age 23, British secret agent Phyllis Latour Doyle parachuted into occupied Normandy in May 1944 to gather intelligence on Nazi positions in preparation for D-Day. As an agent for the British Special Operations Executive (SOE), Doyle secretly relayed 135 coded messages to the British military before France's liberation in August. For seventy years, her contributions to the war effort have been largely unheralded but, the 93-year-old was finally given her due when she was awarded France's highest honour, the Chevalier of the Legion of Honour in 2014.



Phyllis Latour Doyle

Doyle first joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force at age 20 in 1941 to work as a flight mechanic. But SOE recruiters spotted her potential and offered her a job as a spy. A close

family friend, her godmother's father who she viewed as her grandfather, had been shot by the Nazis and she was eager to support the war effort however she could. Doyle immediately accepted the SOE's offer and began an intensive training program. In addition to learning about encryption and surveillance, trainees also had to pass gruelling physical tests. Doyle described how they were taught by a cat burglar who had been released from jail on *"how to get in a high window, and down drain pipes, how to climb over roofs without being caught."*

She first deployed to Aquitaine in Vichy France where she worked for a year as a spy using the codename Genevieve. Her most dangerous mission, however, began on May 1, 1944 when she jumped out of a US Air Force bomber and landed behind enemy lines in Nazi-occupied Normandy. Using the codename Paulette, she posed as a poor teenage French girl. Doyle used a bicycle to tour the region, often under the guise of selling soap, and passed information to the British on Nazi positions using coded messages. In an interview with the New Zealand Army News magazine, she described how risky the mission, noting that *"The men who had been sent just before me were caught and executed. I was told I was chosen for that area (of France) because I would arouse less suspicion."*

She also explained how she concealed her codes: *"I always carried knitting because my codes were on a piece of silk — I had about 2000 I could use. When I used a code, I would just pinprick it to indicate it had gone. I wrapped the piece of silk around a knitting needle and put it in a flat shoe lace which I used to tie my hair up."* Coded messages took a half an hour to send and the Germans could identify where a signal was sent from in an hour and a half, so Doyle moved constantly to avoid detection. At times, she stayed with Allied sympathizers but often she had to sleep in forests and forage for food.

During her months in Normandy, Doyle sent 135 secret messages — invaluable information on Nazi troop positions that was used to help Allied forces prepare for the Normandy landing on D-Day and during the subsequent military campaign. Doyle continued her mission until France's liberation in August 1944.

Following the war, Doyle eventually settled in New Zealand where she raised four children. It was only in the past 15 years that she told them

about her career as a spy. In presenting the Chevalier of the Legion of Honour to Doyle in 2014, French Ambassador Laurent Contini commended her courage during the war, stating: *"I have deep admiration for her bravery and it will be with great honour that I will present her with the award of Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur, France's highest decoration."*

The Siege of Tobruk what it means to me

by John Riebeling

There are several significant anniversaries this year, however, the Siege of Tobruk has a special mean for me. Most of you know me as John Riebeling, however, my full name is **Edwyn John Riebeling**. I was named after my father's brother, Edwyn Charles Riebeling, Corporal in the 2/28th Battalion, Tobruk. Originally, I was told my name came about because my uncle had been posted missing in action just prior to my birth. I found out many years later that this was not true.

The truth Was that my uncle was actually captured some months after I was born. But in the months prior to that momentous event (my birth), the reports reaching Australia about the situation in Tobruk must have made my father think that he would never see his brother again.

My uncle was captured while on patrol when he walked around a sand dune and found himself confronted by a German tank. He was somewhat worried about what would happen to him because at the time he was wearing a German uniform and carrying a German sub-machine gun. Much to his surprise, and I guess relief, when the tank commander poked his head out of the turret, he was wearing a British uniform.

It would seem that both sides would make use of captured equipment—including uniforms and weapons.

My uncle was transported to Italy and then to Germany where he sat out the war. He returned to Australia, married and worked for the Western Australian Government all his life, ending up the State's Registrar General.

The Canny Scotsman

A Scotsman (wearing his kilt and a bonnet) walks into offices of private bankers Coutts & Co in the Strand, London (Bankers to the Royal Family since 1820) and asks to speak to the Manager. He informs him that he is going abroad on business for two weeks and needs to borrow £5,000.

The Manager tells him that Coutts & Co would only be delighted to meet his requirements but that he will understand that since he is not a client of the Bank, it would need some modest security for the loan.

So the Scotsman opens his sporran, takes out the keys and documents of a brand new Ferrari parked in front of the bank and hands them to the Manager saying "Will this do?" He also produces the car's log book, and after a phone call everything checks out fine. The Manager agrees to accept the car as collateral for the loan; the cashier hands out £5,000 while the bank's porter drives the Ferrari into the bank's underground garage for safekeeping.

Over lunch Manager tells his colleagues the amusing little story of how a simple-minded Scot from North of the Border secured a loan for £5,000 offering a £120,000 Ferrari as collateral and they all enjoy a good chuckle as they sip their Port.

Two weeks later, the Scotsman returns, repays the £5,000 and the interest, which comes to £15.41. The manager says, "Sir, we have been more than happy to have had your business and this transaction has worked out very nicely, but we are just a little puzzled. While you were away, we checked you out and found that you are in fact a wealthy property investor. What puzzles us is why would you bother to borrow £5,000 from us?"

The Scotsman replies: "Where else in London can I park my Ferrari for two weeks for only £15.41 and expect it to be still there when I return?"

Oooh man! – ya canna beat a canny Scot!

One Day

a Poem by Tracy Burgess

*One day they'll throw the Photos out
Of times that used to be
They won't remember who we are
Or what we used to see
They have their own photos now
And a brand new family tree
Too busy seeing all they have
To look back and see
The life that made theirs happen
To look back and see me*

Current Board Members

John Riebeling – **President**
Ken Orr – **Deputy President**
Michael Burg – **Treasurer**
Rodney Tagg – **Secretary**
Claude Palmer – **Director & Advocate**
Craig Thomas – **Director**
Peter Boyes OAM – **Director**
Kevin Lloyd-Thomas – **Director**
Joe Piers – **Director**

Veterans' Morning Teas

Every third Wednesday of the month we host a morning tea for our veterans. The event is open to all veterans, their families and supporters. It is held at the Southport Bowls Club, at the corner of Queen Street and Marine Parade. Look forward to seeing you and having a conversation with coffee and nibbles.

Southport RSL Sub-Branch Inc.

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