



Special Interest Articles:

- 2012 MI RSL AGM
- RSL Achievements
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The Price of Freedom is Eternal Vigilance

The Magnetic Island RSL AGM, 2012



The Magnetic Island RSL Annual General Meeting was conducted and successfully concluded on the 11th of March, 2012.

The meeting was well attended and the new Board, previously known as the committee, has been voted in.

The meeting was supported by Steve Sergeant (NQ District Vice-President) and Shelley Andrews (NQ District Secretary)

The meeting saw the election of a brand new committee, which will now be called a "Board" in line with new Tax Office requirements.

These office bearers are:

President: Pat Trewin,

Vice President: The position was declared VACANT.

Secretary: Anton Prinsloo

Treasurer: Dave Dawson

Membership Officer: Chris Evans

Welfare Officer: Geoff Barlow

Additional changes brought about by the Australian Tax Office requirements include for a number of changes in terminology.

Please visit the Magnetic Island RSL website to view the Minutes of Meeting as a new category under the Newsletters tab.

The web site can be accessed at:

<http://rslmagneticisland.com>

Pat Trewin announced a presentation to Bette Davis (nee Bernhagen) for her service in the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service. District Vice President Steve Sergeant presented the Australian Defence Medal to Bette.

Achievements for the year 2011 to 2012

The Magnetic Island RSL has been active in supporting the community throughout the year, with a number of pleasing highlights.

The Magnetic Island State School was supported with a donation of \$200 as a bursary for its graduating students.

The Newly formed Men's Shed initiative had \$250 donated to it which will help to fund the Shed's

first year of Insurance. RSL member Al Jacob is Chairman of the Steering Committee for the Men's Shed

All in all, the Magnetic Island RSL sub branch provided \$1029 in welfare donations and \$970 in community donations.

It is only with support from the community that initiatives, services and donations such as these can be presented.



"The catafalque party is posted"

MI RSL ANZAC Day 2012

Magnetic Island RSL Sub Branch will be hosting the ANZAC Day March & Dawn Service on 25 April 2012.

An ANZAC Ecumenical Service will be held at St Margaret's Anglican Church, Endeavour Road, Arcadia, at 7:30 pm on ANZAC Eve, Tuesday 24th April.

All community members are invited to attend.

For those who are marching, assemble at the RSL at 5.10am. The Service at Alma Bay will begin at 5.30pm.

Sealink is providing an early morning ferry from Townsville; the ferry will leave Townsville at 04:00. Sunbus buses will

depart Nelly Bay at 04:30 for the RSL hall. They will also depart Picnic and Horseshoe Bay at 05:00 to Alma Bay.

For the really early arrivals a gunfire breakfast will be available at 04:45.

The march departs the RSL hall at 05:20 for Alma Bay.

Bar Prices; Heavy beer \$4, Mid strength \$3.50 and Light beers \$3.00. Softies will cost \$2.00. A bacon and Egg breakfast will cost \$5.00.

Two Up at the RSL hall after the service.

The RSL Memorial Hall will be open till 1 pm.

Thanks to Rotary

One cannot but notice the magnificent refurbishment work that has been done to the MI RSL hall floor.

On the 18th March 2012, Ron Stephen, Treasurer of Rotary, and Kay Finn President of MI Rotary presented a cheque to Pat Trewin, President of the MI RSL. A heartfelt "Thanks!" to the MI Rotary from all of us!



"Pat Trewin accepting the Rotary Cheque for the refurbishment of the MI RSL Hall floor"

Friday Market Stall Opportunities

The Asian food stalls no longer operate from the Magnetic Island RSL Sub Branch at the Friday night markets.

We will, however, still host a true blue BBQ outside on Friday Nights.

We have vacancies for stall holders and are particularly seeking food stalls and invite expressions of interest

Would you be keen to try your hand at the MI RSL version of My Kitchen Rules?

Have you, perhaps, had an urge to don that butcher's apron and cook up a

storm or to share foods from different cultures with the broader community?

Well, here is your chance!

Please contact the Magnetic Island RSL Sub branch 4758 1233 or Treasurer Dave Dawson 4778 5076 if you are interested.

If you need any information on what is required to run a food stall at the Magnetic Island RSL Friday Markets, please do not hesitate to give us a call. It's easy!

We look forward to your continued support of Friday and Sunday nights.

See you there!



"...the MI RSL invite expressions of interest"

National President's Newsletter No 1 – March 21, 2012

1. Keeping RSL Members informed

The 2010 initiative of compiling and forwarding regular National President's Newsletters to State and Territory Branch Presidents improved the flow of information from the National Office to Branches, Districts, Sub Branches and Members - but has generally worked well in keeping us all informed on current issues. I am of the view that it is now time to extend the coverage of the newsletter so that our broader membership is similarly kept informed. As a consequence my 2012 newsletters will be posted on the RSL National Website. The reaction of RSL members to this further attempt to improve the flow of information will determine whether other changes will be made. Please note that the RSL annual budget submission remains posted on the League's national website. This document is revised and updated every year to take account of issues brought forward through debate at the State Branch Conferences and at the National Congress. We continue to urge action on all matters included in this budget submission at every opportunity.

2. Indexation of Military Superannuation Payments

The quest for an improvement in the indexation of military superannuation payments to DFRB, DFRDB and MSBS superannuants remains a top priority of the National Executive.

- In late 2009 the National Executive authorised the compilation a comprehensive submission to Government aimed at justifying an improvement in the rate of indexation of military superannuation payments.
- I raised this matter with Prime Minister Rudd when invited to meet with him in January 2010. He was not persuaded by my arguments for an improved rate of indexation but agreed to consider a formal written submission about the matter.
- The RSL Military Superannuation Indexation Submission was approved by National Executive and forwarded under an accompanying letter I signed and sent to Prime Minister Rudd on 22 February 2010. One week later a copy of this RSL Submission was posted on the RSL national website.
- Despite regular and frequent requests for a reply from the Minister, it was not until Monday 13 February 2012 that a reply was finalised. A copy of this letter from Minister Snowdon and its attachment are included as part of this newsletter. It is disappointing no reason was advanced for the inordinate delay of 2 years in responding given the acknowledgement that "The Government is well aware of the concern of the veteran community about superannuation indexation..."

The response is predictably disappointing given the Government's decision in the Senate on Thursday 16 June 2011 to oppose the Fair Indexation Bill. Though the outlook is bleak we have no intention of relenting in our efforts to bring about justified improvement in the level of indexation of payments to military superannuants. We will continue to use

every opportunity to raise the matter with all Senators and Members of the House of Representatives regardless of their political affiliations; and the National Executive will consider what other actions might be taken at its forthcoming meeting in Darwin on Monday 20 February 2012. An update will be provided in my next newsletter.

3. BEST Funding

At the conclusion of the meeting of the Ex-Service Organisations (ESOs) Round Table Conference on Thursday 24 November there was agreement that additional meetings were needed in the short term to try to resolve a better formula for the distribution of BEST funding. This was recorded in part in my last newsletter. As a consequence, Mr Sean Farrelly (DVA) arranged and chaired meetings on this sole topic on 9 December 2011 and again on 24 January 2012.

These meetings were well attended by National Presidents of ESOs (or their representatives) with the National Veterans' Affairs Advisor John Hodges being present with me to represent RSL views on both days. Progress is being made towards a more equitable formula for allocating BEST funding; and the benefits of considering an arrangement such as exists at the Veterans' Centres in Victoria is included in the mix.

4. Meeting with Minister Snowdon 23 January 2012

In addition to items 2 and 3 above, matters discussed included:

- The quest for recognition by ex-service personnel who served in the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces (BCOF) after the Second World War. Minister Snowdon was unequivocal in his commitment to bring this matter to a final decision in the near term. I am advised the Minister has since given similar advice to members of the BCOF Association. The Minister was left in no doubt that the RSL considers this matter must be dealt with as soon as possible – and that we will continue to support the quest by members of the BCOF Association.
- The outcome of Defence reviews following the 2011 Skype incident at ADFA. The Minister advised that this was being handled solely by the Minister for Defence. I have subsequently had private meetings with the stood aside Commandant of ADFA and with several of the most senior leaders of the Australian Defence Force. I will continue to refrain from public comment about these matters as a consequence of these private discussions.
- The advice from all RSL Branches that the League does not support a proposal to award the Victoria Cross to the Unknown Soldier interred at the Australian War Memorial. I have since written to the Chairman of the Defence Honours & Awards Appeals Tribunal advising him of this decision. This letter referred to a question without notice I was asked when I appeared before the Tribunal on 2 December 2011.
- Relocation of defence assets to the north. Minister Snowdon advised that no new information was available but that his Chief of Staff would seek information from the staff of the Minister for Defence. I hope to include more information in my next newsletter.

5. Review of Military Rehabilitation & Compensation Act 2004

Advice from the Chief of Staff to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs is that the Military Rehabilitation & Compensation Commission in conjunction with the Department of Veterans' Affairs are working through the 47 submissions (including 14 from ESOs) received in

response to the 108 recommendations of the MRCA Review. The Minister for Veterans' Affairs is proposing to provide a response to the MRCA Review in the context of the 2012/2013 budget.

6. Access to Service Records as allowed under the Archives Act
At the invitation of the Chairman of the National Conditions of Service Committee, Mrs Anne Piggott, Acting Director Section 33, National Archives of Australia addressed the Committee on 5 December 2011.

Subsequently the information provided by Mrs Piggott was used when compiling an RSL Policy Options paper about this sensitive matter. This document is to be considered by the National Executive at its meeting on Monday 20 February.

Ken Doolan

GOVERNMENT receives POW RECORDS from Japan

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT receives valuable prisoner of WAR RECORDS from Japan.

Historical records of former Australian Prisoners of War (POW) held by the Japanese during the Second World War have been handed over to the Australian Government. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bob Carr, and the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon, welcomed the transfer and thanked the Japanese Government for the valuable records.

"We very much appreciate the cooperation of the Japanese Government in the transfer of these records to Australia. This exemplifies the strength of our relationship with Japan and the goodwill between us," Senator Carr said.

"The Australian Embassy in Tokyo will arrange for the records to be safely dispatched into the care of the National

Archives of Australia."

Once repatriated to Australia, more than 16 volumes, including name-identified records, will be handed over to the National Archives of Australia and carefully prepared for public access. With some of the records in a fragile condition, the Archives will undertake a rigorous process of careful examination and preparation so they can be digitised and made available to the public online.

Mr Snowdon said the records will provide families with previously unseen vital information on their loved ones and help to identify where a prisoner was held, their date of capture and date of liberation for example.

"These records will help to increase our understanding of the experiences of some of the 20,000 Australian prisoners of war held by the Japanese throughout Asia during the Second World War," he said.



"records will become publicly available towards the end of this year"

On being a POW

Keith Bettany from Adelaide, South Australia, has emailed all the RSL Queensland Sub Branches to share some information about his father who had painted over 300 pictures in Changi as a POW, mostly humorous. Des Bettany told his children that he painted to keep his sanity.

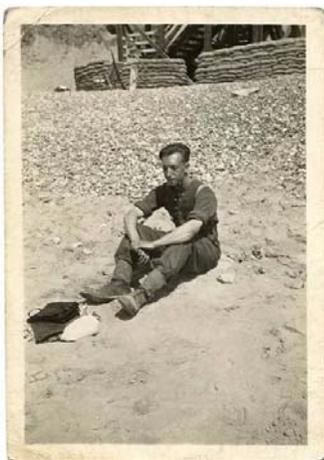
After the war he was trained as an artist and retired as the Principal of the SA School of Art. He died in 2000. These pictures have sat in his cupboard for over 60 years!! We have just scanned these and paid to have a website developed so others can view them, just in time for the 70th Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore

on 15 Feb 2012 (Lest We Forget).

The website is www.changipowart.com

The Bettany's want the younger generation to know what these men and women went through in WW11.

If you consider the site useful could you please share it with fellow members and in turn, hopefully they will share it with their children and grandchildren. There are only a handful of Ex POW's of the Japanese left and the Bettany family trusts this will serve as a fitting tribute to the fallen, to those who went through the horrors and to those still alive.



"Des Bettany"

Des' story.....

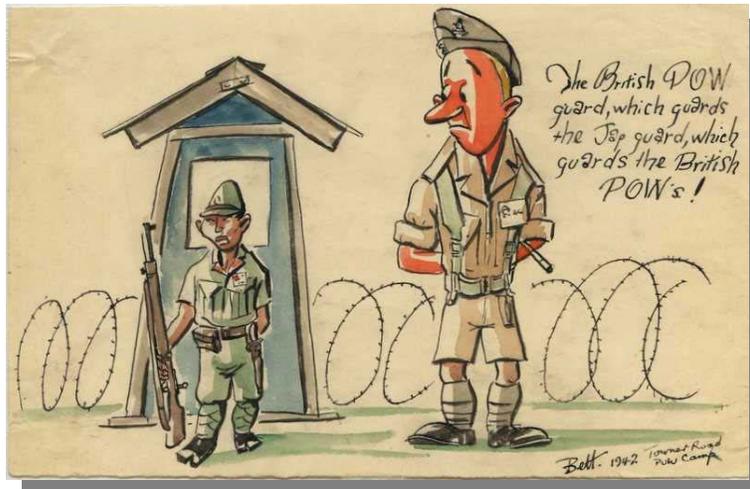
We include Des Bettany's story as a very interesting read. Enjoy!

Born in the Lancashire mill town of Burnley the year after the First World War ended, Des grew up the second of 4 children. While attending Secondary Boys' School and Technical College, he developed an interest in art and music. The musical and entertainment bug must have bitten, as in his spare time he began entertaining the children in a local cinema with his harmonica and art work, as 'Uncle Desmond'. Many years later he was to form a successful harmonica trio.

Lance Bombardier Bettany fought in France and Belgium with the 88th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, manning 25 pounder field guns, and after evacuation from Dunkirk, served in various locations in southern England, in preparation for the anticipated German invasion.

In the Malayan campaign he fought the Japanese at Ipoh and Alor Star. In the company of the Australian 8th Division and the Indian 9th Brigade, he saw most of the major actions in Malaya until capitulation in Singapore in February 1942.

From his first camp at Towner Road, Des was among the many POWs working around Singapore to clear up and salvage damaged equipment for the Japanese war effort. Later moved to Changi gaol, Des joined working parties which among other tasks were required to clear swamp country to build an airfield, on the site of the current Changi International Airport. One work party had the task of breaking up damaged vehicles into spare parts, sometimes with totally inappropriate tools. Des had carried small sketch books with him, and recorded aspects of the voyage out, the actions in Malaya and Singapore, in various media including pencil, ink, water colour and pastel. As well as documentary sketches, he kept spirits up



by producing a series of cartoons, some of which satirised his captors. Des met Murray Griffin (Australian war artist) and Ronald Searle, who both continued to produce works of art undercover and sometimes with primitive materials. Colours ranged from white, ochre and brown to Indian red. These were dried, ground with bottles and mixed with rice water, and worked very well. Sets for theatre productions were old tents, made into flats and backdrops. In contrast to much of the POW art which survives from this period, Des's work finds uplifting humour in the day-to-day existence of the POW. There are serious works documenting incidents which occurred during the various campaigns, but the spirit of much of the work is one of light-heartedness, helping Des to keep a sense of optimism in the face of a brutal captor.

There are also touching works of nostalgia.

Not all of his POW art survived the war. A sketch book of political cartoons, drawn at a time when the war was going badly for Germany and Japan, was discovered by Japanese guards in the possession of a fellow POW to whom Des had lent the book. It was finally discovered in 1994 and designated an official war grave.

Des studied art in Leeds and was appointed to the South Shields School of Art in the north-east of England, eventually becoming Acting Principal, as well as teaching night classes at a local secondary school. He had married Irene Kay in 1946, and, disillusioned by the way politics was affecting art to a very hot South Australia in February; his first art teaching post was at the technical high school in Whyalla, on the edge of the desert. Later, in 1999,

"These pictures have sat in his cupboard for over 60 years!!"

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Des Bettany's Story.... continued

some of his work appeared in a regimental history by Dr. Stephen Bull 'Lancashire Gunners at War: The 88th Field Regiment, 1939 – 1945'.



ANZAC Cove sea wall construction

The construction of a sea wall at Anzac Cove has commenced - a joint venture between the Turkish government and Australian engineers - at the site of the ill-fated landing on April 25, 1915.

The federal government supported the work to repair the road above Anzac Cove when it was announced early last year and Minister for the Centenary of Anzac Warren Snowdon said the sea wall was necessary to protect the battlefields around Anzac Cove.

The Gallipoli Peninsula continues to face the very serious threat of naturally occurring erosion, with engineers noting that the coastline was receding at a rate of 2m every 10 years.

"Without action, the situation will continue to worsen and the area is likely to succumb to further deterioration and ultimately have an adverse effect on the historic battlefields," a spokeswoman said.

"Drainage is a critical element of the

roadworks because it ensures the integrity of the road and the stability of surrounding slope - and subsequently the entire beach at Anzac Cove.

"The Australian government has been assured the work will be undertaken with care and consideration for the natural landscape."

The spokeswoman said staff from the Australian embassy in Ankara and consulate in nearby Canakkale were regularly visiting the site and monitoring.

The works at Anzac Cove will be completed well before Anzac Day next year. They include the construction of a concrete gravity wall, which will vary in height from 1.2m to 1.8m along the back of the beach.

Surveys of the area were conducted to ensure the works do not disturb the battlefields or surrounding Ari Burnu or Beach cemeteries.



"Gallipoli Peninsula continues to face the very serious threat of naturally occurring erosion"

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