

Stand To

"The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance"



Lest We Forget



www.actrsl.org.au

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From the President

Welcome to this edition of Stand To. Also welcome to 2017. I hope everybody enjoyed their Christmas and New Year celebrations. On behalf of the Executive team, I extend best wishes for a safe, healthy and happy year ahead.

With 2016 (our centenary year) now passed, we can reflect on the events that occurred. In the last edition I reported on the national and centenary congresses.

The League continues its great work for the veteran family and maintains an enormous footprint on the national stage concerning veterans' matters which include; mental health, education grants, input to government via the national veterans' affairs committee and a range of other initiatives and activities.

However, the last few months have been a little ordinary to say the least. Negative media, allegations and other matters surrounding the National President's position and the functioning of the RSL NSW Branch have featured in our news outlets.

I have kept you up to date (via your sub-branch Presidents) with regular emails attaching the media releases. The final outcome is not yet known, but by late February, after observing due process, we should know the state of play relating to the National President position. I will continue to provide updates as information comes to hand.

In the ACT it has been business as usual. As each State/Territory operates in an autonomous manner, we have not been affected (in the way we work) by what has happened elsewhere. We have simply continued with core business activities – serving the veteran community and being involved with commemoration activities.

The priorities ahead include (in no particular order):

- Bedding down our Branch Constitution to align with National.
- Review of the By-Laws.
- Budget Planning/review of Governance.
- Accommodation – long term.
- Finalising arrangements for Branch to take administrative responsibilities of the Veterans' Support Centre (VSC).
- Finalising arrangements for the VSC to obtain PBI/DGR status.

→ continued on page 2

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To make a contribution to the newsletter or to sponsor a page, contact the Editor by phone +61 2 6260 6344, fax +61 2 6295 1628 or email editor@actrsl.org.au

From the President (continued from page 1)

And, of course there are always a number of other tasks that are ongoing.

Branch website

The new Branch website is up and running. Please take some time out and have look. Many thanks to the "creative team" for a great product. Of course, any feedback is welcome. The site is still a work in progress with more information to be explored and introduced.

Life Membership. Recently, RSL ACT long term member and EA to the National President, Jan Ormerod was awarded a well deserved Life Membership. Jan received her award at the National Board meeting, however, will again be recognised at the upcoming Branch Congress in March.



Jan Ormerod receiving her Life Membership award.

Service Delivery

This function is the major part of our core business. The advocates, entitlement officers and community support staff are to be admired for their excellent work and the care and support they provide to individuals and families. This is an area that will be worked on to try and involve more volunteers with home visits and lessen the load a little for support staff.

The mix of people seeking assistance covers the spectrum of age groups from our WWII veterans through to those recently separated or still serving. The number of issues relating to our elder veterans is causing some concern as the numbers of reports are increasing and beginning to stretch the resources of our community support staff.



The CEO with VSC volunteers at work.

We are fortunate that our ACT Minister includes both veterans and seniors among his portfolios. The CEO and I have paid a call on the new Minister and we are confident of his support.

Other initiatives on the Service Delivery side included a successful outdoor activity. This involved members from RSL ACT and Soldier On, ACT completing a rowing program. Those involved realised the importance of hard work, team spirit and identified for themselves a number of other personal qualities they had to call on to be able to start a very rigorous program knowing nothing and finally competing in a regatta. Very well done to all and a big thank you to Deputy President, Jim Gilchrist.



Rowing Team briefing.



Rowing Team underway at full speed.

Programs of this type will be followed up with the “Remount Horsemanship Program” being the next project. This involves members attending a two to four day program at a farm near Bowning. There is no cost to participants and participants get to know horse handling, working with stock, teamwork and a range of other skills. No pre knowledge is required and participants are assisted throughout the residential program by highly qualified staff. The program is based on the successful “Semper Fi” program involving support initiatives for marines from the United States Marine Corps. A pilot program will be undertaken in February. Anyone interested in this program/ activity should contact the CEO.



RAAF veteran and Woden Sub-Branch staffer Renee Mills at the Remount venue.

Ceremonial

Ceremonial functions and representative duties for National have also been a priority during the year. The RSL ACT is often called upon to participate in the Last Post Ceremony held at the Australian War Memorial as well as laying wreaths and reciting the Ode at major ceremonies. These include the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan and Remembrance Day services. Foreign Embassies and High Commissions also seek representation at various military anniversary ceremonies.

ANZAC Day 2017

Planning is already underway for ANZAC Day. This year RSL ACT will again march as a combined contingent. Our new banner will be paraded for the first time.

Other events

Other events in the planning stage include:

- 2017 Australia Day Medallion Awards – 24 January.
- HATS ceremony – TBA.
- RSL ACT 91st Annual Congress.

RSL ACT 2017 Congress

This year's Congress will be our 91st. It is scheduled to be held on 17 March at the Hellenic Club, Phillip. More details will be forwarded shortly.

This will be my last Congress as RSL ACT President. I will be retiring (for the last time) and handing the baton to a new President. I'm looking forward at future opportunities to convey my appreciation to those who provided support and guidance to me over the past three years.

Appeals

The appeals conducted in 2016 were very successful. The funds we obtain from the generous public go to very good causes in supporting our core functions. We did experience some minor hiccups at the shopping malls in a couple of areas – but these were dealt with and business went ahead as usual. My sincere gratitude to the people who participated in this exercise. Please make a note in your diaries to save a date for this year's appeals by giving an hour or two in collection duties.

We did benefit from a small number of additional “bonuses” by being the selected charity at various events. Again, many thanks to those who volunteered and gave their time on these occasions.

Our BEST grant (the first for the Branch) from the Department of Veterans' Affairs was greatly appreciated and will hopefully be a source of funds we can apply for on an annual basis.

While a lot of funds go in the support of the VSC, gaining PBI/ DGR status for the VSC, will allow us to market the RSL ACT into corporate areas for donations and other financial support to ensure we can maintain the VSC's future operations.

RMC and ADFA Graduations

Each year RSL ACT presents awards at the graduation ceremonies held at ADFA and RMC. Recipients are from the second year classes. At the December ceremonies, awards were presented to:

- RMC – Officer Cadet Samuel Groot (New Zealand Army)
- ADFA – Midshipman Mitchell Robertson, RAN.

Of interest, was our last year recipients, now graduating their final year; “scooped the pool” in the list of awards this year;



Left: Officer Cadet Samuel Groot (New Zealand Army). Right: Midshipman Mitchell Robertson RAN receiving his award.

Another Centenary Celebration

On 9 September, Eric Carle (Belconnen sub-branch) celebrated his centenary. A small “party” was held where Eric received a number of congratulatory letters and gifts. He was accompanied in enjoying his cake with family members, old friends and mates from his Belconnen sub-branch. Eric is a WWII veteran who served in PNG.



Left: Eric Carle about to cut his cake. Right: Eric with Belconnen members Mac Weller, left, and Ian Sayers (Sub-Branch President), far right.

Other matters

A repeat from last edition – alongside the “big” picture issues, sub-branches continue doing well at fund raising, linking into community events such as school commemorative activities and other such activities. The information provided in the Annual Reports indicates many people working very hard in the various communities. This is recognised, and is the grass roots of the RSL – the necessary work.

As I have always stated – RSL ACT will always work with any ESO that puts veteran care first.

Vale

Sadly, there have been a number of funerals conducted throughout the latter part of 2016 where RSL ACT funeral officers have played a major part assisting the families with their grief. The officers also lead the RSL tribute for the member and provide the member’s military details at the various services.

Recruitment

Always an ongoing issue, if members are able to introduce and welcome one person to their sub-branch in the following year it will go a long way in helping the League to grow in our area and assist in maintaining the work we do.

In closing, I must again say thank you to the volunteers and staff of our Veterans Support Centre for their ongoing and tireless efforts in assisting and supporting our members with entitlements and other matters.

I ask again, anybody interested in this valuable service, please make yourself known, and we can provide all necessary information to allow you to make a considered decision. Any job you feel you can assist with – please put up your hand. You will be very welcomed onboard.

Let us remember those who may not be travelling too well at present and hope they are in good spirits and looking forward to a speedy recovery.

May I ask that we all note the following – it is the RSL purpose statement agreed by the National Board – it will help when explaining to others what we do and where we come from – as we move into our second century we must be flexible enough to mix tradition with the familiar and with the new.

The RSL was founded in 1916 to provide comradeship and support to Australia’s veterans and their families. That core mission has never changed but has continued to evolve to meet the needs of each generation of servicemen and women.

We have a branch network that covers Australia and any veteran who needs help will get it – every serving ADF member will be warmly welcomed at their RSL. We advocate for the best possible conditions for our serving men and women and for those who have served the nation in the past.

We foster respect and thanks from the nation for all those who have made sacrifices in Australia’s name and we will provide a strong voice on issues of national unity and security.

Stay happy, stay healthy, look after your mate.

Kind regards,

PETER EVEILLE
State President

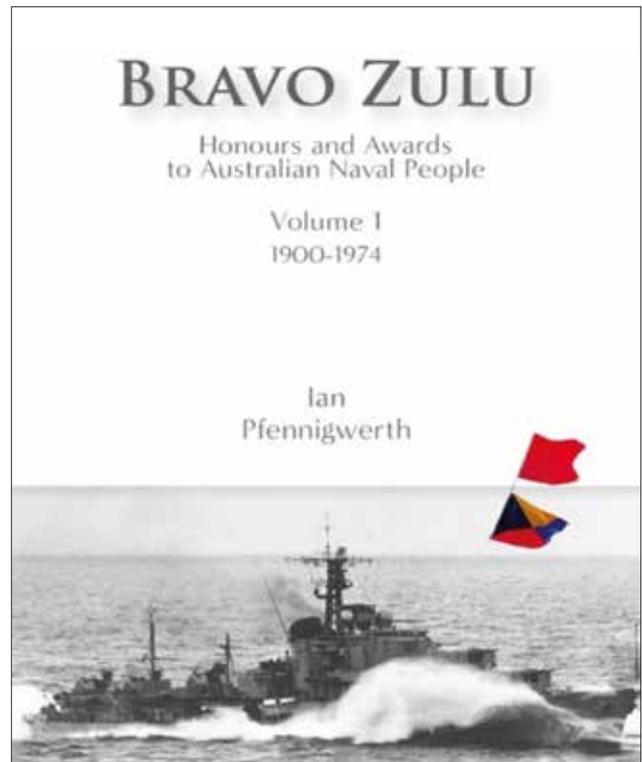
Bravo Zulu: Honours and Awards to Australian Naval People: Volume I, 1900–1974

Between 1900 and 2014, over 4,000 Australian naval people received honours and awards for their efforts, courage, sacrifice and service to the nation.

Whether a George Cross for defusing mines during the World War II UK 'Blitz', an American Silver Star for flying helicopters into intense enemy fire in Vietnam, a Distinguished Service Medal for the Iraq War or a Conspicuous Service Medal for quietly 'just getting the job done', Bravo Zulu recounts the stories of the men and women recognised for their Royal Australian Navy service. Some give insights into running of our Navy; others recall inspiring feats of courage under fire or bravery in risking their lives in saving others, on and off duty.

For the past seven years Ian Pfennigwerth and a team of dedicated volunteer researchers have explored the background of these honours and awards – Imperial, Australian, and foreign. The book is written so that no knowledge of things naval is necessary to appreciate the significance of each award while becoming acquainted with the history of Australia's naval forces – and enjoying a good read. Volume I, covering the period 1900 to 1974 has now been released and it will be officially launched by the Chief of Navy.

With almost 800 pages, 24 maps and 250 illustrations, through the recipients' stories the book traces the formation and development of the RAN, its fortunes during World War I, its resurrection from the depths of the Depression, and its fine fighting record during World War II. Post-war the stories tell of our Navy's growth toward independence, the exploits of its men in Korea, Malaysia, Indonesian Confrontation and Vietnam, and its development of ships and weapons system like the famous Ikara anti-submarine missile. There are also stories about the loss of Voyager and of spectacular feats in naval flying and diving. The 74-page Index of recipients of honours and awards links each award to the text.



Reader comments have been extremely positive:

"Congratulations on an outstanding piece of research. I enjoy very much going through the volume. The Naval family is in your debt."

"Superlatives do not do justice to Volume I – I am more than impressed."

"I'm utterly overwhelmed by "Bravo Zulu" – grand in concept and splendid in execution. Heartiest congratulations."

Bravo Zulu Volume I comes in two editions; the hardcover retails for \$75 and the paperback sells for \$65. Postage is \$13.00 for domestic purchasers. Overseas postage rates depend on the purchaser's delivery address.

The book is available through the author's website at www.nautilushistory.com.au

Volume 2, covering honours and awards to December 2014, is expected to be released in mid-2017.

Kaleen Primary School 'scoops the pool' in Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Anzac Day Schools Awards

Belconnen Sub-Branch supports several schools in the Belconnen area. The support ranges from meeting and talking with the students, to participating in Anzac and Commemoration Day services held in the schools. One of the schools the Sub Branch works with has had outstanding success in the DVA Anzac Day Schools' Awards competition.

The quote from the DVA website on the competition:

The Anzac Day Schools' Awards promote initiative and creativity in the way schools commemorate Anzac Day. This year, 68 schools from around Australia entered. Each state and territory winner will receive \$2,000 and the national winners will receive an additional \$1,000 to the state prize.

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One of the schools the Sub-Branch supports is Kaleen Primary School. This year the school was the State winner in the primary category and then went on to win the National award.

The school's entry in the Awards competition revolved around Year 6 students. They focused their learning about Anzac Day on the question, 'What is the Anzac spirit and why is it still relevant in 2016?'



Belconnen RSL Sub Branch members with the teacher-in-charge of the Awards competition entry and senior students with Award Certificates.

Teachers immersed students in research based activities designed to develop the students' understanding of the Gallipoli campaign and how it related to the tradition of ANZAC Day. Using the Monash University website, "100 Stories" as a tuning activity, students viewed new videos stories each day depicting soldiers who had served at the front. Following this, using the "Discovering ANZACs" website (National Archives of Australia), each student selected an Australian soldier to research and created a profile of their service.

Students selected research projects to describe the significance of ANZAC Day, the events leading up to our involvement at Gallipoli and the facts of the campaign. Each student chose three images that they believed best showed what life, or death was like for the ANZACs.

The students described each photograph and explained why they had chosen it, and how it made them feel. To conclude, students were asked to reflect on their new understanding of the spirit of ANZAC, and why it continues to be such an essential part of our Australian character.

Really importantly, and amongst other activities, the Year 6 students then led peer support lessons across the entire school (Preschool-Year 5). Using specifically purchased fictional texts, Year 6 leaders developed lesson plans designed to give the younger students an understanding of why we commemorate ANZAC Day, and why it is so important to Australians.

And it continues. The school is now planning a Remembrance Garden in front of the school.

The Sabotage Diaries by Katherine Barnes

Katherine Barnes is a prize-winning author whose book *The Sabotage Diaries* was published by HarperCollins Australia and New Zealand in 2015 and HarperCollins 360 in the UK in 2016. www.harpercollins.com.au/9780732298791/

The Sabotage Diaries tells the story of Katherine's father-in-law Cecil Edward ('Tom') Barnes, who was parachuted behind enemy lines in Greece in 1942 with a small, hand-picked band of Allied soldiers to carry out a secret mission for the Special Operations Executive. Tom, a civil engineer, led the demolition party that sabotaged the Gorgopotamos railway viaduct, thus blocking Rommel's supply lines – an event still celebrated annually in Greece.

This operation was just the beginning. Tom remained in Greece until early 1945, becoming one of two Area Commanders for the Allied Military Mission to Greece and leading several more major sabotage operations amid the political rivalries and power struggles of the Greek resistance organisations. He was an important eye-witness to events that shaped post-war Greece and the material in his diaries, never before made public, gives a unique insight into the experiences of a special operations operative on the ground behind enemy lines.

A New Zealander, Tom married his Tasmanian fiancée after the war and settled in Hobart.

The Sabotage Diaries is a non-fiction book that reads like fiction, with a first-person narrative reconstructed from Tom Barnes' diaries, reports and letters, as well as his many photographs. A review in the UK's *Sunday Express* compared *The Sabotage Diaries* to *The Guns of Navarone*, describing it as a 'thrilling and informative salute to an unsung hero of the Second World War.*'

A brief video can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/168019231> and a Facebook page is at 'The Sabotage Diaries'.

Author Bio

Katherine Barnes holds a PhD in Australian Literature from the Australian National University and is a Commonwealth public servant. Previously she taught creative writing and English literature at the University of NSW, Canberra. Her earlier book *The Higher Self*, a study of the Australian poet Christopher Brennan, won the Walter McRae Russell prize for literary scholarship on an Australian subject in 2007 and was shortlisted for the New South Wales Premier's prize for literary scholarship in 2008.



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* Charlotte Heathcote, 'Making history: Our pick of past masters', UK *Sunday Express*, February 14 2016, www.express.co.uk/entertainment/books/642418/History-read-book-February-2016

LEST WE FORGET

The Perth Mint has released a gold and a silver commemorative coin to mark the Centenary of the Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) and to acknowledge its proud tradition of commemoration and providing care, advocacy and financial assistance to past and present servicemen and women of the Australian Defence Force.

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Remembrance Day Commemoration

A Remembrance Day Commemoration was held at the Goodwin Aged Care facility located at Farrer. A number of residents attended including Mr Terry Perrot a former National Serviceman and Mr David Knight formerly of the Royal Navy. In particular on this occasion Mr David Knight did a splendid job of reciting the poem "In Flanders Field". David also laid a wreath and laid a single Poppy and recited another poem "Poppy In Hand". Other former servicemen recited the Lord's Prayer and the Prayer of Remembrance.



Attending the commemoration were friends of Terry and David seen here in this photograph at a morning tea held prior to the service. (Photo courtesy of Trish from Goodwin Farrer.)



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