



SAPPERS ASSOCIATION (NSW) INC

ABN: 62 163 057 132

NEWSLETTER

UBIQUE

Patron: Colonel Sandy MacGregor MC RFD (Retd)

March 2020

Calendar 2020

- Sappers' Autumn Slosh - TBA
- ANZAC DAY - Cancelled
- Sappers Quarterly Luncheon - TBA
- Executive Committee Meeting - Burwood RSL - Wed 10 Jun TBC
- Annual General Meeting - Burwood RSL - Sat 22 Aug TBC
- 46th Sappers Annual Dinner - TBA

President's Message

Welcome to our first Newsletter for 2020.



I trust you and yours were able to have a relaxing break over the Christmas holiday season, despite the impact of events that affected many Australians.

The past few months have regrettably imposed significant challenges on many Australian communities, as well as the ADF. The ongoing ADF commitment, and the unprecedented call-out of Reservists to support OPERATION BUSHFIRE ASSIST, have tested many uniformed members who serve our nation. The RAE, including members of the 5th Engineer Regiment, has provided sterling service to Australians who have suffered the worst effects of catastrophic bushfires and extreme weather conditions. We are indebted to each and every member who has made personal sacrifices to contribute to the recovery and re-building of devastated communities – thank you all!

Members would be aware of the terrible loss of life, as a result of last summer's bushfires. Civilians, Rural Fire Service personnel and water-bombing air crew have all made the ultimate sacrifice in contending with the fires. The Association's unofficial "poet laureate", Tomas Hamilton, has penned a draft poem, "Always", to

commemorate the service of the three American air crew who died so far from their homes, while protecting Australian homes. The poem is attached.



Our Patron, COL Sandy MacGregor, earlier this year suffered an ill-health condition, but is now making a steady recovery. Our prayers and best wishes are extended to Sandy and his wife, Sandra, as they deal with these

circumstances. We are indebted to Sandy for his ongoing support of the Association and his dedication to the advancement of the Sapper fraternity. Sandy also recently celebrated his 80th Birthday with family and friends, and I am sure you would join me in congratulating him on a life that continues to be "A Life Too Interesting" (part title of his latest book).

Regrettably, the Coronavirus has resulted in the RSL announcing that all public commemorations of ANZAC Day in 2020 are cancelled, in accordance with health authority directions (refer attached RSL announcement). You are still encouraged to commemorate the past and present sacrifices and commitment of our service personnel, in a manner that is acceptable to our health authorities, and as best as you are able. This short-term disappointment, I feel confident, will be more than compensated by future commemorative events.

In line with emerging COVID-19 health authority advice and Government directions, the previously advertised Sappers' Autumn Slosh (SAS) event on 2/3 May 2020 has been postponed. We will conduct this in the near future (probably Spring), depending in the health advice. Members will be advised of the new dates and provided the opportunity to escape suburbia and enjoy a relaxing time with mates

around a camp fire, BBQ and the Blue Mountains bush.



Members around the campfire at a previous SAS

Previous Newsletters have raised my concerns regarding the succession of the Association Committee. The majority of the current long-serving executive are fast approaching their “use by” date and service zenith. It is now time for younger members (that is, less than 70 years old) to step up to the plate to allow the orderly “passing of the batten”. The current Committee members are more than willing to mentor enthusiastic members who are initially prepared to fill “assistant” roles on the Committee. This injection of fresh ideas and new skills is essential to ensure the longevity of our



organisation. Where you can contribute to the Association in this way, I ask that you please contact any of the current Committee members by 30 June, for any further

information.

Should there not be any interest by younger members, the current Committee will need to develop future options for the Association, to be considered at our Annual General Meeting in August.

Please support the up-coming activities as best you can, and in accordance with health authorities’ advice, to maintain that wonderful Sapper *esprit de corps*.

I wish all Sappers and their loved ones a happy Easter and I look forward to seeing you at Association events throughout 2020.

Sincerely, Brian Malouf

RAE Assistance to Bush Fires

When the Federal government issued a callout for military assistance to help fight the bush fires in NSW and Victoria, The RAE was at the forefront of that assistance.



To make the job safer, a Bushmaster is used to pull down a tree near Wonboyn Lake (top) as Spr James Denton and LCpl Stephen Bayliss, both of SER, cut it with a chainsaw. It was one of 2570 dangerous or fallen trees removed by the regiment. Photos: Sgt Max Bree

“Always” Tanker 134 Tomas (Paddy) Hamilton 25 Jan 20

Three heroes left to do their job, three did not return
Every task cheating death, peril at every turn
Experience their master, flown with upmost care
Passing through the gates of hell, where most others did not dare

They rose into the hostile sky, of gale and smoke and dust
The high noon of their destiny, the wind’s deadly gust
Staring down nature’s wrath, they had done it all before
No time for complacency, in a fire storm’s war

No one will ever know, the loss their families feel
For sadly that for many, some wounds never heal
A scar upon the bushland, a reminder of their plight
A place down by the snowy, now a sacred site

The flag upon a casket, a tribute well deserved
Taps, a sad reminder, of the nation they had served
The eagle and the kangaroo, will pause to shed a tear
A century of mateship, with those we hold so dear

Three heroes left to do their job, three did not return
Many miles across the sea, loving hearts will yearn
Three heroes left to do their job and mounted heaven’s stairs
Three heroes left to do their job, forever in our prayers

Title “Always” “from the film of the same name

From The Treasurer' Desk

Membership Renewal Reminder

A number of our members have their Association membership falling due on 30 June. Reminder emails will issue prior to the expiry date but, if you wish to check your expiry date beforehand, please send me an email.

That address is jeffjames1947@gmail.com

Of course you can renew before 30 June. I will provide payment options when I respond to your email.

Jeff James Treasurer

THE DEADLIEST JOB IN WWII

My high school assignment was to ask a veteran about World War II. Since my father had served in the Philippines during the war, I chose him. After a few basic questions, I very gingerly asked, "Did you ever kill anyone?"

Dad got quiet. Then, in a soft voice, he said, "Probably. I was the cook."

ANZAC Day 2020



R S L N S W

Following discussions with the NSW Government, RSL NSW has made the decision to cancel all public ANZAC Day commemoration services across the state. Given the significant concerns around the spread of COVID-19, it would be irresponsible to allow such large gatherings as we see each year on ANZAC Day to go ahead.

"Tread Gently"

Tomas Hamilton 7/5/17

Tread gently on this foreign field, for it lies soaked in blood

That flowed across this battlefield, a tragic crimson flood

The names of those who fell near here, are muttered now by few

A brave and selfless sacrifice, the living would all rue

Tread gently on this foreign field, I am every mother's son

Who saw my face at every dawn and each setting sun
She kept her lonely vigil, till eternity claimed her soul
Her tears no longer wash my name, upon an honour roll

Tread gently on this foreign field and dare not caste your scorn

On all that I could have been and descendants now unborn

For we all charged like Lemmings, for country and for crown

And in the flower of our youth, we were all cut down

Tread gently on this foreign field and remember all those lost

Their legend, part of history that came at too great a cost

For the horse that stands unbridled and an empty chair at home

Memories of the loved ones, who lie beneath this loam

Tread gently on this foreign field, the wretched path I trod

Now I lie without a name, that is known only to God
A farmer's plough may strike my bones and I might find a grave

But weep you not for my past, it's your future you must save

Sappers' Quarterly Luncheons

These luncheons have been organised by John Pritchard over the years and were a wonderful opportunity for Sappers to get together for a yarn, meal and liquid refreshment. However, with the spread of COVID-19 and the closure of Clubs and Restaurants John has decided to suspend the lunches till at least July 2020.

John further advises that with the closure of Club York restaurant in January, a suitable replacement will need to be identified.

At Ease



We were inspecting several lots of grenades. While everyone was concentrating on the task at hand, I held up a spare pin and asked, "Has anyone seen my grenade?"

Executive Meetings

We welcome all members who may wish to attend the Sappers Association Executive meetings. Unfortunately we needed to cancel the March meeting but the next meeting is still scheduled to be held at Burwood RSL, on Wednesday, 10th June 2020 preceded by a meal and drink at the Restaurant starting at 1800.

If you are planning on coming, please let the Secretary know so that he can keep you advised of any last-minute changes.

Well Done General

You see this guy right here? His name is General Cosgrove, and he gave one of the best comeback lines in the history of comeback lines.



General Cosgrove was interviewed on the radio recently. You'll love his reply to the lady who interviewed him concerning guns and children. Regardless of how you feel about gun laws you gotta love this! This is one of the best comeback lines of all time. It is a portion of an ABC interview between a female broadcaster and General Cosgrove who was about to sponsor a Boy Scout Troop visiting his military headquarters.

FEMALE INTERVIEWER: So, General Cosgrove, what things are you going to teach these young boys when they visit your base?

GENERAL COSGROVE: We're going to teach them climbing, canoeing, archery and shooting.

FEMALE INTERVIEWER: Shooting! That's a bit irresponsible, isn't it?

GENERAL COSGROVE: I don't see why, they'll be properly supervised on the rifle range.

FEMALE INTERVIEWER: Don't you admit that this is a terribly dangerous activity to be teaching children?

GENERAL COSGROVE: I don't see how. We will be teaching them proper rifle discipline before they even touch a firearm.

FEMALE INTERVIEWER: But you're equipping them to become violent killers.

GENERAL COSGROVE: Well, Ma'am, you're equipped to be a prostitute, but you're not one, are you?

The radio went silent and the interview ended.

Give that man (another) medal!!!!



Better Than Recipe

During KP duty, my sergeant ordered me to prepare 100 gallons of soup for that night's dinner. When I told him I had no clue how to make soup, he handed me a cookbook and instructed, "Follow the directions carefully."

Not long after, I had a large kettle of soup simmering. The sergeant came in, grabbed a spoon, and took a taste. "This is really good," he said. "Are you sure you followed the recipe?"

Our Office Bearers 2018/2019

President	Brian Malouf (9839 6129 W)
Vice President	John Hanley (0424 841 581)
Secretary	Sjouke Havenaar (9624 7689 H)
Treasurer	Jeff James (9533 5238 H)
Committee	John Ray, Warren Page, David MacLaurin



COMBAT ENGINEERS

...we blow up people that blow up people

Note: Any opinion expressed by any contributor is not necessarily the opinion of the Association or its Executive Committee.



ANZAC Day 2020 Cancellation

Following updates from the NSW Government, RSL NSW has taken the difficult decision to cancel all public ANZAC Day commemoration services across the state. Acting State President Ray James has advised that the risk to the general public and our sub-Branches is too great.

“Given the significant concerns around the spread of COVID-19, we simply cannot allow such large gatherings as we see each year on ANZAC Day to go ahead. This is not a decision we have taken lightly. The RSL has a responsibility to act in the best interests of veterans and the general public.”

This impacts the ANZAC Day March, Consular Star Ceremony, Commemoration Service and Sunset Service.

While these traditional commemorative services will no longer go ahead, ANZAC Day is still a day of recognition and for many Australians, the most important day in our commemorative calendar.

“ANZAC Day as a marker of our respect and admiration for ANZACs past and present will still be observed” said Ray James. “Exactly what form this will take will be different from previous years, but as custodians of commemoration, the RSL will still honour the service and sacrifice of our brave servicemen and women. In these challenging times, we will remember them.”

Thank you for your understanding.

Yours sincerely,

Jeff O'Brien
State Secretary

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