

Mt Evelyn RSL News

Volume 1, Issue 2, Winter 2011 A Sub-Branch of the Returned and Services League of Australia



2011 **Meeting Dates**

June 12th
Aug 14th
Oct 9th
Dec 11th

*The Mt Evelyn RSL
Meetings are held on
the second Sunday
of each alternative
month at 2.00pm
at the:*

Mt Evelyn RSL
Clubrooms
49 Birmingham Rd
Mt Evelyn Vic 3796

Ph: 9737 0767
Email:
mtevrsl@gmail.com

Postal Address:
PO Box 182
Mt Evelyn Vic 3796

President:
Roger Boness
Ph: 9737 0830

ANZAC DAY

Once again our Anzac Day services went off well, which was a surprise seeing that the calendar was against us this year – that is our march fell in the middle of the school holidays and Anzac Day was on Easter Monday.

Traditionally the Mt Evelyn RSL has always held its Anzac Day march on the Sunday before, to free up members on Anzac Day so they could attend the march & reunions in the city. However this year the Sunday before was Easter Sunday and early indications were that few people would be around on that day, so the march was then changed to the Sunday before Easter. Even though this was the middle of the school holidays we still had a good crowd although numbers were down on previous years.

On the day we had representations from the CFA, the Scouts, St John's Ambulance and the Football/Netball club march with RSL members behind the 'Croydon Citizens Brass Band' who sounded magnificent. Once again we were proud to have Brigadier Michael Phelps lead the march and the Mt Evelyn Police did a great job in stopping the traffic. The march ended at the RSL Memorial where wreaths were laid and Cr Tim Heenan read out the names of those from the town who have died while on active service. Tom Steele once again did a great job as our bugler – his 14th year.

The ceremony then moved inside the hall where almost every seat was taken. Here we heard speeches from our Padre Richard Schoenmaker, who linked the work done by Simpson on Gallipoli with Christian values, and from Brigadier Michael Phelps, who told the story of a family member who served as a stretcher bearer on Gallipoli and then related what those men went through in a way that the youth in the room could understand. Our federal member, Tony Smith MP, read out the 'Anzac Requiem'.

As Anzac Day fell on Easter Monday we were expecting that numbers would be right down so we were all pleasantly surprised when we had over 400 attend. Our guest speaker this year was Flight Lieutenant Glenn McCormack, who grew up in Mt Evelyn and has served with the RAAF for 23 years. He came down with his wife from Canberra especially to be here. We also had Brigadier Michael Phelps, Trooper Chris McAleer & John Stroud give readings and Padre Richard Schoenmaker & Georgia representing the Scouts make special mention of our member Major Tony Geyer, who is presently on active service with the ADF in Afghanistan. Karin Ebenwaldner did a great job again as our bugler. Everyone then moved into the hall to enjoy the brilliant hot breakfast organised by the Mt Evelyn Football/Netball Club.

**Other Important
Dates Coming
Up:**

**Sunday June 12th
1.00pm**

BBQ Lunch

The President invites all members to come along and enjoy a free BBQ lunch with friends before the meeting at 2.00pm.



**Tuesday May 31st
Thursday June 9th**

**Visit by students
from Birmingham
Primary School**

As part of their studies about 'my community' Grades One & then later Grades Two from Birmingham Primary School will be visiting the RSL to learn more about the activities of the sub-branch and the meaning of Anzac Day. On the day the kids will get a talk by a veteran, have a look at the memorabilia on display, be given an Australian flag and enjoy an Anzac Biscuit.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Anzac tradition is alive and well in the community of Mount Evelyn as was evidenced by the committee and members of the Mt Evelyn RSL by the number of people who participated in our Anzac March, Dawn Service & Traditional Two-up at the 'York on Lilydale'. Each generation of Australians are reminded and encouraged to remember the sacrifice of those who have died in wars. The Anzac ideals of courage, endurance and mateship that are still relevant today were established on 25th April 1915 when the Anzacs landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula. It would be remiss of me if I didn't acknowledge those who assisted in making these local Anzac events so successful. In no particular order community members who attended and purchased Anzac badges, RSL Ladies Auxiliary, John Stroud & Mt Evelyn Football/Netball Club, Padre Richard Schoenmaker & Mt Evelyn Christian Reformed Church, guest speakers (Brigadier Michael Phelps, Flight Lieutenant Glen McCormack, Trooper Chris McAleer) Cr Tim Heenan and the Shire of Yarra Ranges (especially in getting our flag pole sorted after it was stolen), Tony Smith MP, Christine Fyffe MLA, Mt Evelyn CFA, St John's Ambulance, Mt Evelyn Scouts, Buglers Tom Steele & Karin Ebenwalder, Melina & the Croydon Citizen's Brass Band, Mt Evelyn Traders, Sue & staff of the 'York on Lilydale', Ken Braithwaite from Max Brown Real Estate for two-up sponsorship, Cappy & his two-up facilitators and RSL members. RSL funds raised via Anzac activities are directed toward the welfare of RSL members and their families. Mt Evelyn RSL is pleased to announce the appointment of Laurie Hollier (ex-St Vincents) as Welfare Officer & he should be contacted on 9737 0068 as necessary. *Don't Forget June 12th BBQ!!!*

Lest We Forget. Roger Boness - President

LADIES AUXILIARY REPORT

The Ladies Auxiliary are sad to announce the passing of one of their members, Marge Spence. Marge, who was 96, was a stalwart of the group for many years and our thoughts go out to her family at the moment. Many thanks to all of those who helped out recently with the selling of the Anzac Tokens at IGA – another successful effort. Thanks to our sellers who gave up their time to man the table along with myself including: Roger, Jean, Alisa, Dianne, Matt & Wendy. Thanks also to all the staff at IGA for their support. Best wishes and a speedy recovery to Joyce Clough in hospital. Our next meeting: *Tues June 21st* Dot Ervine

Mt Evelyn RSL Ladies Auxiliary

DON'T FORGET!!

2011 subs are now due.

Full Members – open to ex-service personnel who were in the uniformed services for a period of six months or more. **\$40 a year**

Affiliated Members – open to those who have served with the emergency services or whose relatives were ex-service personnel. **\$40 a year**

Send a cheque or money order to – Mt Evelyn RSL, PO Box 182, Mt Evelyn

Mt Evelyn Viet Vet leads the charge

**From: Lilydale & Yarra Valley Leader
by Emily Ewebb 1 Apr 11 -**

WHEN Mt Evelyn RSL president Roger Boness was in Vietnam he contracted malaria and nearly died, was bitten by a snake, shot at and found himself in minefields.

Mr Boness, then 20, was conscripted to the army for national service in 1966 and was in the Vietnam War with the 106th Field Battery 4th Field Regiment from 1967 to 1968.



But if he thought being in a war was bad enough, Mr Boness said, the homecoming for Australian soldiers was hard to take.

"People didn't really respect us, not like the veterans of the wars before where people were happy to see soldiers return home," he said.

"A lot of us were really affected and I've seen a lot of my fellow serviceman die by letting themselves go, from alcoholism and ones who have had deformed children. I had heaps of problems when I came back because I was basically mad but time has helped me heal."

Mr Boness, who has lived in Mt Evelyn for 45 years, took over the helm of the town's RSL in January and said he was determined to continue to help club members and their families.

He said Vietnam War veterans were now the generation of returned servicemen depended on to keep RSL clubs thriving. He encouraged any former or existing service people to join the club or renew their membership.

Below: From 'Mt Evelyn Mail' April 5th 2011

No respect

By Russell Bennett

VANDALS have ruined a Mount Evelyn RSL centrepiece less than three weeks before the town's Anzac Day service.

A four and a half metre high flag pole at the Wray Crescent memorial was destroyed last week, infuriating local RSL members, shire councillors, and the police.

A 1.5-metre long piece of aluminium is now all that remains at the site.

Mount Evelyn RSL president Roger Boness, 65, said the vandalism "showed a huge lack of respect".

"The flag is not just part of the Australian tradition," he said.

"It's part of the Australian psyche and it's shrouded in history.

Mr Boness said respect for the flag was ingrained into him at a "very young age".

"Maybe the people who did this don't recognise the significance of what they've done but when I went to school we had to swear our allegiance."

Mount Evelyn has four flag poles but the town's RSL members have traditionally formed at the memorial, near Birmingham Road, for their services.

Mr Boness said it would have been easy for vandals to break the pole.

"With aluminium, it would be easy to bring a chair over or for someone to stand on someone else's shoulders and start the process, just bending it back and forth," he said.

"Once you actually kink the aluminium, it breaks easily."

Mr Boness said he and his fellow members were not merely offended by the attack.

"It's beyond that," he said.

"We're absolutely mortified.

"Even vandals should have more respect for the flag and their country.

"They should have more respect for themselves and their families."

Mr Boness said someone must have seen the vandalism happen, as the memorial faces two major roads through the town.

"We just want anyone who knows anything to come forward," he said.

Billanook Ward councillor Tim Heenan echoed Mr Boness's dismay at the incident.

"Anything that's vandalised in relation to our RSL is just awful," he said.

"It's like desecrating a grave.

"This stuff is sacred."

Cr Heenan said he had rarely seen a lower act.

"I hope whoever did it takes a long, hard look at themselves and what they've done," he said.

"This is as bad as it gets."

Mount Evelyn Police Leading Senior Constable Paul Smith said: "Any damage to property like that just shows a complete lack of respect and disregard for the community".

"It's extremely disappointing."

Mount Evelyn RSL will hold a pre-Anzac Day commemorative service at the war memorial on 17 April from 2pm, and a dawn service on Anzac Day from 5.45am in their clubrooms.

Anyone with information on the damage to the memorial's flag pole should call Mount Evelyn police on 9736 2473.

Mount Evelyn RSL president Roger Boness is fuming after the destruction of the war memorial's flag pole. 62480

Picture: Donna Oates



ANZAC Day March Sunday April 17th 2011

Left: The Croydon Citizen's Brass Band
Below Left: Brigadier Michael Phelps leads the march
Below Right: The Mt Evelyn CFA



Below: Service at Mt Evelyn RSL Memorial



Right: Cr
Tim Heenan

Left: Bugler
Tom Steele



Inside the RSL Hall



Left:
Padre Richard
Schoenmaker

Right:
Tony Smith MP



Left:
Brigadier Michael
Phelps

Right:
President
Roger Boness



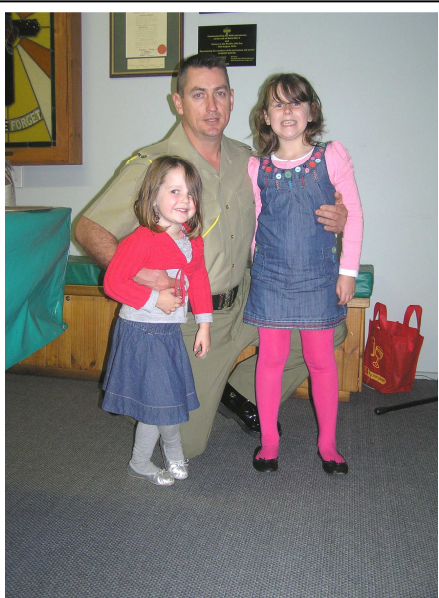
Dawn Service Anzac Day April 25th



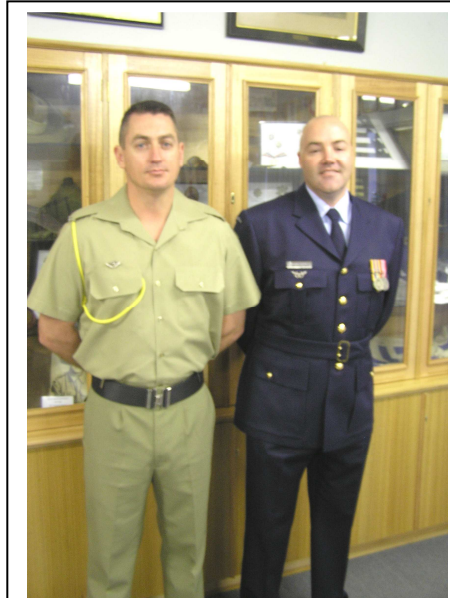
Left: Brigadier Michael
Phelps & Cr Heenan

Right: Georgia
representing the Scouts
Below Left: Tpr Chris
McAleer & his
daughters Alannah and
Caitlyn

Below Right: Tpr Chris
McAleer & Flight
Lieutenant Glenn
McCormack



All Photos by Jenny McAleer



A message from Afghanistan

As some members may be aware the Mt Evelyn RSL currently has a member on active service in Afghanistan. Major Tony Geyer (pictured right) was instrumental in the organisation of our first 'Dawn Service' in 2009. Both he and his wife Carolyn are residents of Mt Evelyn even though he has been stationed in Brisbane for the past year. He has been on active service in Afghanistan since April and he & Carolyn called in to the club for a farewell drink before he headed overseas. He recently sent a message to the members:

It's been nearly 6 weeks since I arrived in Kandahar, an interesting place with approx 33,000 people living on a handkerchief sized piece of extremely dusty dirt, beside the world's most busiest airfield. What makes living here even worse is that almost everyone has a vehicle of some description making the dust almost unbearable. We have been advised not to exercise or limit our exercise outside.



The airfield has on average 620 air movements per day, of both civilian and military aircraft. There are everything from jumbo jets down to small reconnaissance drones with the military aircraft being extremely noisy particularly on their approach.

The big surprise is the amenities here. There are 5 PX stores here ranging from US thru to French (the best pastries and pies!) and Dutch. They sell everything and fairly cheap. I can arrange to pay off a Harley Davidson while I'm here and have it delivered to my son's place in the US by the time I'm due to return home. Whilst I'm very keen on the idea, Carolyn has made it quite clear that it is not going to happen. Divorce was mentioned several times. There's even a KFC and a TGI Friday Restaurant.

Our living conditions are very tight with 4 of us living in an area about 1/2 the size of your average bedroom. I can open the door to my cupboard, but can't walk past it without closing the door. Our hours are very long, starting about 7.30am and finishing about 9.30pm each night. The job to date has been very interesting, assisting in building the Afghan Army from scratch but I'm struggling with the language, not accents etc but understanding acronyms and other terms.

We were subjected to a rocket attack on our first night, with the rocket landing in a bare patch of ground on the edge of the airfield. Apparently these are fairly regular although we've not had one since. Mostly they are only nuisance value causing loss of sleep and nothing else. I'm taking leave in early June with plans go to Italy for a week and then Greece for a week before Carolyn flies over to the US. Should be good.

We are starting to experience very warm conditions. Daily temperatures upwards of 40 are now relatively common. As you can imagine, the Canadians and the European Nations' personnel are struggling. This is spring now, I can't imagine what it will be like in summer. We've been told to expect 100 days of wind around August. Low to mid 40 degree temperatures, strong winds and dust, gorgeous! Anzac day sounded wonderful and I'm looking forward to being part of the activities next year. Please thank Padre Richard Schoenmaker and the Scouts for their prayers and thoughts.

History of the Mt Evelyn RSL

The following was written by A J McAleer as a chapter in the book *'Tracks to Trails – A History of Mt Evelyn'*. Continuing from last edition...

Throughout the seventies members worked hard at fundraising activities which included raffles, social functions, smoke nights, Xmas Parties and running the gate at the local popular Sunday market. Often they supported other community groups and sent local servicemen in Vietnam Xmas parcels and sponsored a number of local children to the Somers Camp for holidays.

The Anzac Day March however has always been the main annual event for the sub-branch. Since 1969 the march has traditionally been held on the Sunday before Anzac Day and has progressed down Wray Crescent to their meeting rooms. Throughout the seventies the 'Mitcham Pipe Band' headed the march but since then they've used the 'Box Hill Pipe Band', the 'Salvation Army Band of Mooroolbark', the 'Croydon Citizens Band' and the 'Air League Band'. Other community groups including the CFA, Police, St John's Ambulance, Brownies, Guides, Cubs, Scouts, the Air League and the Walking Stick Club have marched proudly with members. They have also had an interesting collection of guest speakers including most of the Shire Presidents and Councillors from 1969 onwards, Bill Borthwick MLA, Tony Lamb MHR, Bob Halverson MHR, Dr Michael Woolridge MHR, Sir Billy Snedden, Capt Ian Hamilton, Major Brian Jarvie and Dr Billy Hardy.

In 1972 Mr T Lowe took over as president and remained in that position until he retired due to ill health in 1981. W Searle, R Davies, J Price, W Sibley, B Packer, R Hester, T Reid and V Mishkinis were other office bearers during that period. In 1973 the branch moved their meetings to the Mt Evelyn Public Hall and was quickly appointed the Hall Committee, during which time they raised enough funds to have a heating system put in the building. In 1978 the Lions Club moved in to share the running and the proceeds of the hall and in 1982 they took over the Hall Committee duties. *To be continued.....*



MT EVELYN FURPHYS

- Andy Franks reckons the last newsletter was the best he's seen at the club.
- Although his health is not the best at the moment Ralph Proctor says to give his best to everyone.
- If you get a chance make sure you check out the Ralph Proctor display at 'Mont De Lancey' in Wandin. It has items pertaining to his service with the RAAF in Europe in WWII.
- Congrats to new grandparents!! Laurie Hollier has just become a first time grand-dad twice over and Major Tony Geyer & his wife Carolyn have recently visited the USA to see their first grandson.
- Since the last newsletter some people have asked where they can get a copy of 'Tracks & Trails – A History of Mt Evelyn', from which the chapter on the history of the Mt Evelyn RSL comes from. The 'Mt Evelyn Post Office' have copies for \$25 or ring Paula on 9736 2935.

If undeliverable return to:

The Mt Evelyn RSL Sub-Branch
PO Box 182
Mt Evelyn Vic 3796

Club Opening Hours

*Every Friday Night
7.00pm – 10.30pm*

Celebrate the end of the week with a visit to the clubrooms.

Andy & Marie have a well stocked fridge and Peter is always on hand to make a brew if you so desire.

Friday night football will be playing on our big screen TV and don't forget we also have a pool table, dart board and indoor bowls.

While you're visiting make sure you check out the fascinating display of military memorabilia that members have donated over the years. This has all been exhibited in our new display cases and arranged by an historian from Museum Victoria.

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Hall Hire

The RSL is a great facility for anyone who requires a place for clubs or social groups to gather. Most of the time this facility lies idle and the RSL could be making (albeit a small amount of) money from hiring it to interested parties. We would greatly appreciate your input if you know of anyone who might be interested in hiring the hall on an ongoing basis. However no birthday parties for the under 21's!

Vicki at the Mt Evelyn Community Link is in charge of administering hall bookings and she can be contacted directly on 9736 1177.

Afternoon Delight

The social club operates the club rooms every
Thursday afternoon from 1.00pm to 4.30pm.

If you're looking for something to do of a Thursday afternoon in Mt Evelyn why not call in for a chat.

Editor: Anthony McAleer
Ph: 9736 4384
Email: antmca@bigpond.com

*Email me if you want to
receive newsletter faster via
email – and save the club on
postage costs.*