RAAFA welcomes industry members

John Murray and Karen Borthwick with some of the industry guests

THE doors to the new Alice Ross-King Care Centre were thrown open when RAAFA proudly welcomed representatives from industry and aged care organisations across Perth on 28 April.

Ahead of residents moving into the centre in early May, RAAFA took the opportunity to welcome industry members to see what makes the Alice Ross-King Care Centre so special.

More than 30 industry members joined CEO John Murray and General Manager – Aged and Community Care Karen Borthwick, Division Council members and staff at the event.

Karen shared the story of the journey developing the new care centre project over the past decade and her pride at being part of the team who have brought the project from planning stage to fruition.

Karen told the invited guests about the decision-making process leading to what is believed to be a WA-first in the aged care industry, with the Alice Ross-King Care Centre to follow a resident directed care model.

As part of this unique model of care, residents at the care centre will have far greater choice when it comes to their individual care needs. Residents will be partnered with a consistent team of staff for about 85 per cent of their care needs, which will allow staff and residents to form stronger relationships with each other, while meeting their care needs.

The open day included tours of the state-of-the-art care centre hosted by RAAFA staff, followed by afternoon tea in the care centre dining rooms overlooking beautiful Lake Howard in the centre of Air Force Memorial Estate.

Feedback from guests at the industry launch was overwhelmingly positive, with several guests saying they were very impressed with the new care centre and RAAFA’s vision of resident directed care.

Tony Macri from the Italian Village Fremantle said the new care centre was “an amazing building, spacious and wide open.”

Dom Rechichi, also from the Italian Village Fremantle said it is “very well finished and planned... no matter which side of the building you’re on it’s all light and airy”.

Tony Papalia from Total Project Management, the team working with RAAFA to create and realise the Alice Ross-King Care Centre vision, said he was delighted to see the project come to fruition.

“After five years being part of this project, which Michelle (Lawrence) has carried through with Karen, it is very rewarding to see it finished,” he said.

Life Membership awarded to Rene Henry

RAAFA Life Membership was awarded to Cambrai Village resident, Rene Henry at the RAAFA Annual Dinner on Saturday, 16 April 2016 with State President, David Peet making the presentation.

Rene joined RAAFA in May 1999 and with her husband Bill, moved into Cambrai Village in April 2000. From day one she has been an active member of the community.

At Rene’s first residents meeting, she joined the Cambrai Village Residents Branch and became Treasurer from the inaugural Branch Committee until 2004. She remained on the Branch Committee until 2005.

Rene started organising resident outings and with the purchase of the Village bus in 2001, day trips were expanded to include many interesting country locations. Despite her ill health Rene continues to arrange these outings.

Rene is the main organiser of the annual Cambrai Fete, which is a huge undertaking and has raised in excess of $220,000 for the benefit of the Village and residents. It is seldom that a “Garage Sale” sign is not out on weekends to raise funds for the good of the Village.

She arranges for household goods belonging to residents who have left us and have not been sold, to be sent to a local Ladies Respite Centre.

Rene also ensures flowers are sent to the families who have lost a Village resident on behalf of Cambrai.
On the tarmac

State President, David Peet

By David Peet

RAAF Pilot Graduation

PILOT course 242 graduated on 11 March at Pearce Air Base. Flight Lieutenant David Burnard was awarded the RAAFA Trophy for the Most Improved throughout the course. Flight Lieutenant Burnard has been posted to 292 Squadron to fly AP3C Orion Aircraft from RAAF Base Edinburgh.

RCS Youth Harmony

I had the privilege of attending the Royal Commonwealth Society Youth Harmony Program which was held at Government House Ballroom on 21 March. The event provided an opportunity to showcase musical talents, speaking skills, teamwork and leadership abilities.

RAAF Birthday

Once again the RAAF organised their birthday celebrations to be held at the Aviation Heritage Museum on 31 March. This cocktail event was held under the Lancaster with the Governor of Western Australia, the Honourable Kerry Sanderson AO in attendance in her new role as Honorary Air Commodore of the RAAF in full uniform. This event was organised by RAAF Pearce with representatives from RAAFA and was enjoyed by the 170 guests.

RAAF Annual Dinner

The 87th RAAF Annual Dinner was held on 16 April at the AFA Club in Bull Creek. This event was well organised and went without a hitch. Thanks must go the administration staff for their efforts in making this keynote event a great success. The dinner was fantastic and the band of Karina and Harvey were superb. After the formalities many of the guests enjoyed the toe tapping music late into the evening.

RAAF Life Membership

RAAF Life Membership was awarded at the Annual Dinner to Rene Henry from Cambrai Village for her extensive community work. Congratulations.

Alice Ross-King Care Centre

The Alice Ross-King Care Centre is now operational, with the first residents moving in on 2 May. We had an Industry Open day prior to residents moving in and also conducted a tour for the branch representatives at the May Branches Forum meeting. This Centre is one that RAAFA can be very proud of, it sets a high standard for all in our industry to meet.

McIntosh Memorial Scholarship

The Scholarship was presented to Asha Healy at a High Tea with her family and the selection panel on 20 April. Asha is from Albany and currently attends Curtin University where she is studying journalism and public relations.

ANZAC Day

I attended the Dawn Service held at Kings Park on 25 April on behalf of RAAFA in company with an estimated 40,000 people. It was an excellent service and the keynote speaker was Wing Commander Peter Kershaw, Commanding Officer RAAF Base Pearce.

A quick breakfast was enjoyed with the WRAAF Branch at the Mercure Hotel and then onto the main march through St Georges Terrace.

In company with Graeme Edwards, RSL and Ian Holthouse, State President Naval Association, we led the veterans parade to the saluting dais outside the Concert Hall where we joined the State Governor and other dignitaries. The weather at the event was not friendly and most of us sustained a very good soaking, but the crowd was very responsive and appeared to be undaunted by the terrible weather.

Appointment of RAAFA Patron

We have been honoured that the Governor of Western Australia, Her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson AO has accepted the position of Patron of RAAFA (Western Australia Division). We look forward to her future involvement.

RAAF AGM vacancies

The positions of State President, State Vice President and three Division Councillors will become vacant at this year’s RAAFA AGM in October. I ask you to consider nominating for these rewarding positions.

RAAF Association (WA Division) Inc.

2016 Annual General Meeting

By Ran Ounions

9:30am, Saturday, 29 October 2016
Langley Hall, AFA Club, Bull Creek
Registration commences at 8:30am

Notices of Motion

Notices of Motion must be with the State Secretary, Head Office, 2 Sleat Road, Applecross, 6153, before 2000pm, Friday, 8 July 2016.

Division Council Nominations

Nominations for office are to be in writing, using the Nomination Form available from the State Secretary and signed by the Candidate and the Members proposing and seconding.

The Candidate must be a RAAFA Member entitled to vote. Nominations must be accompanied by the nominee’s brief Curriculum Vitae not exceeding 300 words and a current photograph which will be utilised for promotional purposes.

Voting Procedure

Voting papers for Motions and the Division Council Election will be sent to all eligible members under separate mail out.

Postal Voting

As per Item 10.4b of the Constitution, members unable to attend a meeting may lodge a Postal Vote on any Notice of Motion and therefore voting papers will be sent to all members eligible to vote.

 Returning Officer

The Division Council appoints the Returning Officer to supervise the ballot for the vacant Division Council positions and for the counting and custody of vote papers.

Wills and Estate planning information session

RESIDENTS at Cambrai Village were invited to an information session on 31 March 2016, to discuss Wills and Estate Planning.

Anton Puzey, Barrister and Solicitor discussed the importance of having an up to date Will, when you should update your Will and who can contest a Will. Anton also discussed Estate Planning for the future, including Enduring Power of Attorney, Enduring Power of Guardianship and Advanced Health Directive.

The information provided was well received by the residents in attendance and the session was followed by a delicious morning tea.

If you missed the session and are interested in receiving further information, please contact Welfare Officer, Vanessa Priestley.

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For Submission deadlines please see page 10
CEO’s perspective

I’ve just bought a new book and I must admit that I have not yet read it. It is Hugh Mackay’s new book “Beyond Belief”. Hugh Mackay is an Australian and a social researcher. He is a psychologist with skills in the field of communication and has written a lot of books that look at our life in society and how we act and think. The titles of his books show what he is all about, one is called “Why don’t people listen?” and another “What makes us tick”. At the very beginning of his new book Hugh Mackay asks two deep questions, “what do people actually mean when they say ‘God’?” and “can we be both rational and spiritual – and what might ‘spiritual’ mean, anyway?” I suspect that Mackay will be addressing something that has always been with me as a chaplain. That is the importance of building a relationship to be able to be a friend and pastor to people who feel that the Church is pretty irrelevant to their lives, as well as to committed church going folk. It’s a cynical saying that there are no atheists in the trenches, but what exercises my mind is that goes beyond what can be physically explained. We live in a wondrous and mysterious universe. In life’s experiences we can find depths within ourselves that we were never previously aware of. For instance, dealing with grief and finding the calm that comes unsought in a time of sorrow. However spirituality is not simply an individual experience. We can only be fully human within relationships. That’s a spiritual insight in itself. Jesus said “Love one another”. The Rabbi Hillel angered “Do no harm, do good!” and even Mohammed “Wish for others what you would wish for yourself” and Buddha “Fill the world with boundless love”. The Chapel on the Cambrai Estate is called the Julian Chapel. Julian of Norwich is one of history’s great female mystical poets. She pointed out that “In God is endless friendship, spaciousness, life and being”. A spirituality that goes in practical ways to express the great message of love must have social implications. It is an absence of love that is at the heart of most human injustice and misery. For some, the Church is the channel for this healing connective spirituality, but if for you it’s just a matter of sitting under a tree, looking out at the world, listening to a Debussy Arabesque or reading the Good Book or Hugh Mackay, the important thing for us all is to get out from the Church, get up from under our tree and face the world again reconnected to life and powerfully refreshed.

The Federal Budget

The Federal Budget has now been handed down and as many have seen, and in fact brought to my attention, the impact on residential aged care providers will be quite large.

The government wants to take more than $1.2B out of the budget. So the next four years will have a considerable impact on our financial performance expectations. The management team and staff will be looking at more methods to reduce the impact of these revenue reductions by the Commonwealth.

It is the ideal time to express to your Local Member of Parliament any concerns you have in relation to the continued reduction of financial support for those who are the most vulnerable in our society. I have had meetings with the Assistant Minister for Aged Care, Ken Wyatt, along with the Board of the Aged Care and Community Services WA to raise some of the concerns we have as a sector regarding the reduction in funding.

It is important that all Members of Parliament understand the challenges that this reduction causes organisations trying to provide appropriate care for the elderly in our society.

Development plans

RAAFA growth strategies and development plans have advanced with the commencement of the consultation processes, initially at Meadow Springs and to be followed by Air Force Memorial Estate. This process will give residents the opportunity to understand the perspective the Division Council has and have input into what residents’ needs are as a result of any further development on the sites. We know the demand for housing is increasing rapidly, especially the requirements for more affordable seniors housing. This will be our primary focus on any new developments.

Head Office

The Head Office moved to 2 Salt Road, Applecross in late May. The new phone number is 9288 8400, although 9311 4444 can still be used and will remain diverted.

RAAFA Annual General Meeting

As we move toward the RAAFA Annual General Meeting in October, I would like you to consider whether you would like to take part in the decision making of the organisation by nominating for Division Council. Division Council now has a responsibility for assets in excess of $650M running a $56M per year business with 550 staff. As a significant business we need to ensure that the higher skilled and most appropriate decision makers are part of the Division Council to help the organisation progress into the next 10-15 years.

The organisation has made enormous steps to update its internal systems and processes with quality reporting now being provided to Division Council. Future developments and other programs we wish to put in place for our members will prove to be a very exciting time ahead. These issues need to be considered in the context of good governance to ensure the organisation is moving forward in a balanced way.

ACSWA

I wish to advise that there has been a sudden change in my role with our Peak Body ACSWA.

I am currently the Deputy Chairman of Aged and Community Services Australia WA (ACSWA). I have been on this board for the past four years and on various subcommittees for over 20 years.

The current Chairman, has resigned from the Board, effective immediately. As a result I have been elevated to the role of Chairman until the completion of the AGM of the members in October 2016. This also places me as a Board Member of our National Body ACSA.

This peak body represents the Not-For-Profit, aged care, community care and retirement living providers across the State.

The members of ACSWA collectively represent the provision of:

- 7,654 residential aged care beds,
- 7,119 independent living units,
- 40 day care centers,
- 5,101 community care packages, and
- over $227M in home and community care funding across WA.

I believe this role will provide additional opportunities to pursue our purpose and develop additional networks and knowledge of what is happening in the sector along with the opportunity for advocacy for those that we represent.

By Padre David

June / July 2016
CLIVE Robertson AM LGM lives on the AFME, Bull Creek with his wife Cheryl. He has a Bachelor of Applied Science (Biology) Degree from Curtin University and had a long career in the WA Public Service at the Department of Agriculture and Food, where he was the Manager of the Annual Health Laboratories.

He served in the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps including 12 months in South Vietnam at the 1st Australian Field Hospital and 8th Field Ambulance.

Clive is filling the casual vacancy of State Vice President that became available in October 2015 following the resignation of Bill Anderson. Clive has served on the Division Council since 2013 and was re-elected in 2015 for another two year term. During this period Clive has been a member of State Executive, the Audit Committee and the Chair of the Museum Committee. The latter position is complemented by his role representing the City of Melville on the Community Aviation Consultative Group for Jandakot Airport.

Clive has extensive community experience having served on the City of Melville Council for over 25 years and has been Deputy Mayor on three separate occasions. He was the President of the WA Local Government Association and a Director of the Australian Local Government Association. He represents Local Government on the Senators Ministerial Advisory Council (advising the Minister for Local Government and Communities on seniors’ interests) and has a particular interest in Age-Friendly Communities at local and national level.

He has served on a number of State and national committees that include, the Australian Landcare Council, Gene Technology Community Consultative Committee (Commonwealth), Waste Management Board of Western Australia, Swan Canning Clean-up Project, Melville Aged Homes Board (Alchera) and Churches of Christ Aged and Community Services Board (Bethanie Group). He has been both Secretary and Chairman of the Order of Australia Association and a member of their National Executive.

Clive has a thorough understanding of corporate operation and governance; these skills will be of great value to the Division Council.

Annual Dinner

THIS year’s Annual Dinner was a success with members enjoying the more relaxed atmosphere and the chance to catch up with old friends.

Band, Karina and Harvey, provided toe tapping music throughout the evening and many members took the opportunity to get out on the dance floor.

The evening included the presentation of a RAAF Life Membership to Cambrai Village resident, Rene Henry who has tirelessly volunteered in the Village in many areas.

Bidvest sponsored dessert and Liquor Traders Australia sponsored the table wines.

The AFME Club staff excelled themselves in the presentation of the delicious dinner.

Preparations for next year’s event will start shortly and the State President looks forward to receiving input from our members.

WAAAF 75th Anniversary

THIS year marks the 75th Anniversary of the WAAAF and as part of the celebrations the ladies got together for their annual reunion lunch on 14 March.

WAAAF Branch President, June Perry said, “it was a huge success as the ladies always enjoy the opportunity to catch up”.

The lunch included current service members of the RAAF which is always a special highlight.

Nancy continues to be a member of the RSL, and she and Ray have proudly participated in ANZAC Day almost every year.

Now Nancy holds only fond memories of her time in the Women’s Australian Auxiliary Air Force (WAAAF) during WWII.

91-year-old Nancy, who has lived with her husband Ray at RAAPA for more than 31 years, loved every minute of her time with the WAAAF as a young lady.

“I was accepted into nursing when I was 17-and-a-half, but my mum said I was too young to do that and put a stop to it. I was so disappointed that I said to my dad, ‘I want to join the WAAAF, no one can stand in my way but will you sign my papers if I do?’ and he agreed to do it. So I put my age up nine months and joined up in March 1942 and that was that,” Nancy recalls.

“I joined the 9FTS in Cunderdin where I did my rookies training, and got all my jobs – I can still feel them all. We had to sleep on hessian bags full of straw in the rec hut; it was cold as charity and I thought ‘what have I gotten myself into?’ but I had such a wonderful time there.

“I ended up being in Cunderdin for nine months before I was posted to Yanchep to the Convalescent Depot, which is where I spent the rest of my WAAAF days as a nursing aid. We were called sick quarter attendants (SQAs).

“There was only one road in and out of Yanchep in those days; it was a tiny place. But we thought we had the most wonderful life out there. We’d go out to the lake after work, and used to go dancing down the coves. It was all so social, everyone knew everyone. It was such a great life.”

Despite the many great aspects of her posting, there were a few hairy moments for Nancy in Yanchep.

“The US Army had a training base at Two Rocks where they’d practice bombing. Two fishermen went into the exclusion zone one night and one was killed by accident, which was a horrible thing,” she said.

“We were evacuated twice from Yanchep, for all we knew we were under attack but it turned out to be false alarms both times, and we’d head back there afterwards. There was a lot going on that we didn’t know about and weren’t told about – we’d just think it was everyday practice.”

Nancy had been in Yanchep for about nine months when she met her future-husband-to-be, Ray, who was also posted to Yanchep with the RAAF, after previously serving in Darwin and New Guinea.

“We started dating and decided we’d get married. My folks lived down in Busselton, so we married at St Mary’s in Busselton and had our reception at the Shire Hotel in 1944. As soon as we got back from our honeymoon Ray was posted to Adelaide, so he headed over there while I carried on in Yanchep.”

Nancy was discharged in December 1944, and soon afterwards Ray returned to WA. They had four children, and have many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Over the years Nancy has continued to be heavily involved with the WAAAF Branch, and served as the Branch’s President for more than four years until the end of 1989. Due to a declining number of members the WAAAF Branch is sadly closing later this year, which Nancy says is a very sad but inevitable thing.

Nancy continues to be a member of the RSL, and she and Ray have proudly participated in ANZAC Day almost every year.

Now Nancy holds only fond memories of her time with the WAAAF.

“I’d do it all over again, really and truly. I was so happy during those years,” she said.
June recalls her WAAAF days

IT WAS an exciting time for RAAFA Estate Merriwa resident, June Green when she joined the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) as a 22 year old during WWII.

For June the chance to join the WAAAF was a welcome reprieve from her job as a typist in an insurance company, which she didn’t enjoy.

“Our doctor suggested to my parents that I take a break from my work, so that’s when I joined the WAAAF,” June says.

“It was all very exciting, I was posted to train as a cypher assistant, with her role being to code and decode messages. I fancied seeing the big city, but my old school friends lived in Melbourne so I went to Melbourne and I even got a ferry trip for free once,” she said.

June returned to Perth where she worked for the remainder of the war at AMA House in St George’s Terrace as a cypher assistant, with her role being to code and decode messages. “It was fun time. I had a chance to go flying on one of the Catalinas – the pilots took the WAAAF girls over the ocean to Rottnest, and I even got a ferry trip for free once,” she said.

After being discharged from the WAAAF at the end of the war, June began a new career as a rehabilitation nurse, and married her husband when she was 29.

She marks ANZAC Day each year, and enjoys catching up with her WAAAF friends at the WAAAF Luncheon at Merriwa.

Gratitude expressed

THE Premier, Colin Barnett and the Minister for Veterans, Joe Francis, expressed their gratitude to our Members who have contributed and continue to contribute so much towards the way of life we enjoy today and asked that their sentiments be shared with you.

“This year marks the centenary of Australia’s participation in the campaigns at Fromelles and Pozieres, where the Australian Imperial Force first fought on the Western Front. A number of Western Australian Battalions served at Fromelles including the 32nd Battalion, and at Pozieres, notably the 11th, 16th and 28th Battalions.

“In 2016 Australia also commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan and the 65th anniversary of the Battle of Kapyong and the Battle of Maryang San. We honour the service of our men and women from Western Australia who served in the Vietnam War and the Korean War.

“ANZAC Day is also a time to acknowledge our veterans from more recent conflicts. Since 1999 approximately 72,000 Australian Defence Force personnel have deployed overseas, on either “warlike” or “non-warlike” operations. This includes veterans of East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan and those who have deployed on lower intensity operations.

“Lest We Forget.”
ANZAC Day 2016

RAAFA Amity Village
Cambrai Village
Erskine Grove
McNamara Lodge
RAAFA Estates Meadow Springs
RAAFA Estate Merriwa
Perth Parade
Perth Parade
Perth Parade
Perth Parade
Perth Parade
Perth Parade
Perth Parade
Hellfire Pass
ANZAC Day holds great significance for 93-year-old Ted James, who lives at Air Force Memorial Estate.

There is an extremely strong military tradition within Ted’s family, with three generations of James’ serving Australia during times of war and peace over the past century.

Ted’s father, Walter James served as a sapper with the 3 Division Signal Company in WWI in France, as well as serving again during WWII. He passed this tradition of service on to his son, with Ted serving as a Warrant Officer – Pilot with the RAAF based in the UK during WWII.

“I joined up as an 18-year-old in 1942, and I wanted to be a pilot, as many of us who joined the RAAF wished to be,” Ted said.

“After doing my rookie training at Clontarf, I was over the moon to be designated as a pilot, and spent time training in Southern Cross flying Tigermoths doing our aerobatics and then in Geraldton flying Avro Ansons, where I got my wings.

“After we graduated we had a big do up in Northampton, and after that my love story started. I went to a church event and met a lovely young lady called Mavis. We got talking and I was quite impressed by her, so I called her the next day and asked if she would go to the pictures with me. The war separated us, but we wrote to each other for four years before I came home and asked her to marry me.”

In 1943, Ted was dispatched to the USA, where troops were transported by train from San Francisco across the continent to New York – and it was there that he and his mates saw snow for the first time, which caused quite a lot of excitement.

“When we arrived in New York though I became so sick, I had a fever for 105.2 degrees Fahrenheit,” Ted said.

“I ended up in hospital recuperating, and by the time I started feeling better the powers that be told me they didn’t need me for the time being, so I had the chance to have a little holiday in New York City. I took myself touring around the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building.

“Eventually though I was called up and boarded the Queen Mary to cross the Atlantic Ocean to the UK.”

It was there that Ted was based in Brighton, then Scotland, as a flying instructor for the RAF until the end of the war.

In the meantime, his sweetheart Mavis served with the Women’s Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) as a cypher clerk back in Australia.

On his return to Perth, Mavis and Ted married on 16 March 1946.

“I had to buy a suit for my wedding, and when I came home the only clothing I had was my uniforms. You couldn’t buy a suit in Perth anywhere because of the wartime shortages, so I went to a tailor and for the first and only time in my life arranged a tailor-made suit for my wedding,” Ted recalls.

And although Ted has never flown again after the war, his two sons, Alan and Rodney, continued the proud family tradition of military service, both serving with the Australian Army.

ANZAC Day Day for John Bailey

IT’S been almost 75 years since RAAFA Estate Meadow Springs resident John Bailey enlisted in the RAAF as an 18 year old in 1941 during WWII.

Motivated by the threat of wartime invasion, John was prepared to do his duty to serve and protect his country.

Having just turned 18, in May 1941 John enlisted with the RAAF and spent months training at the RAAF Pearce Air Base, before moving on to the training bases at Canoderoo and Geraldton learning to fly Tigermoths and Avro Ansons.

“At the time that I was awarded my wings everyone seemed to be sent to the UK to fly bombers for the air war over Europe,” John said.

“But then the Japanese hit Pearl Harbour within a day or two of me being awarded my wings, so I was immediately posted to Pearce Air Base on local flying duties with 25 Squadron.

“One of the earliest things I was involved with was the search for the HMS Sydney, which disappeared off Carnarvon in late 1941.

“No one knew what had happened, and by early 1942 it was thought that there would be wreckage or bodies washed ashore, so I spent six weeks flying along the coast between Geraldton and Broome looking for anything that might show what had happened. I never found anything, and now we know why that was, because the Sydney sank straight to the bottom of the ocean.”

After time protecting the skies over WA’s coastline, John was sent to train in Victoria, where he learned to fly Kittyhawk fighters and was posted to the RAAF 75 Squadron in New Guinea for nine months.

“We covered the whole of New Guinea. We lost about seven pilots during that time, but I was pretty lucky. I was hit a few times but always managed to get home,” he says.

“The only hazard I really had was the two ground staff chaps who looked after my aircraft. If I came home with bullet holes they’d say to me ‘for goodness sake can’t you take better care of it’? I was just the pilot, after all.

“After that I had a bit of what you might call a ‘holiday’ in Broome, where I was looking after the radar units up there, and that took me through to the end of the war.”

Following the war, John continued to work with ex-service men and women for four years with the Commonwealth Government’s Department of Post-War Reconstruction, where he was confronted with the reality of life after war for many returned Prisoners of War.

“I saw so many of these poor chaps who’d been captured in Singapore as POWs and so badly treated that those who came back were in a hell of a mess,” he says.

“I remember walking across the floor at the discharge centre at Karrakatta one day and I heard a voice call out ‘Hey Jack don’t you remember your mate’?

“I only recognised his smile. When I knew him he’d been a big man, well over six foot tall and must have weighed 15 stone, all muscle. And here was this poor emaciated soldier, what a mess was made of him. That was eye-opening.”

Although he never flew with the RAAF again after WWII, John reckons that “once a pilot always a pilot”. He has “caught the flying bug too”, and has a collection of vintage aircraft – including a Stinson Reliant, which John saw arrive in Australia brand new in 1936, a Tigermoth, Chipmunk and Stompe. The pair continue to enjoy regular flying adventures together.

For John, ANZAC Day is an opportunity for Australians to remember and commemorate the sacrifices made by service men and women in all conflicts.

“We never miss it,” he said. “I have a special wreath that I lay on behalf of the Australian Fighter Squadrons.”
At Merriwa we look at all of our residents as part of a big family who travel the road of retirement together, helping along the way when required. Our community residents all have a common goal … to enjoy each day and reap the benefits of our working years.

This all begins by down sizing into a two or three bedroom home where all the maintenance is done for you, including the lawns. Having access to a fully maintained swimming pool, heated therapy pool, tennis courts, bowling greens and numerous social clubs is just a small part of the advantages of living at Merriwa. A licensed Club on the premises offering meals and a social atmosphere to entertain or discuss the world’s problems is also a big plus.

Security in this day and age is often on the top of your list when considering retirement, not just financial security but also security of you and your belongings. Merriwa is a gated community with 24 hour, 7 day a week security. The Estate also has a distress system in your home which is monitored 24 hours a day and neighbourhood watch has nothing on your neighbours, ensuring you are safe and secure at all times.

Financially your expenses drop when you occupy one of our units as there are NO council rates, NO water or usage rates and NO building insurance.

Your retirement will never be lonely as the comradeship among the residents is such that there is always someone to talk to (or to listen to), always something to do with numerous clubs covering a plethora of interests and many diverse activities for every taste and if all else fails, there is always the Men’s Shed.

A bus will take you to local shopping centres twice a week, we have a doctor, podiatrist, hairdresser and Welfare Officer on site for your convenience as well.

Retirement is a new chapter in your life and we believe the best chapters are yet to be written.

New interests, new friends and new adventures await you, so don’t wait, start the journey to make Merriwa your retirement destination.

Merriwa memorial chapel

By Ellen Cox

The magnificent Chapel near the entrance of the RAAF Estate Merriwa continues to serve the Estate well.

It is a most fitting memorial to the Royal Australian Air Force. It stands as a testament to a successful project jointly undertaken by RAAF and many volunteer residents of the Estate.

A Chapel Committee was formed in June 1998 under the auspices of Alan White, the Estate Manager at the time, and chaired by Laurie Haskey. The Committee undertook to choose the furnishings and fittings and general management of the Chapel, bringing together all denominations.

The altar, lectern, and other major items were made by residents and are fine examples of their dedication and craftsmanship.

The main stained glass windows are memorials to various aspects of the Royal Australian Air Force.

The Chapel was officially dedicated on Monday, 22 February 1999 with the history recorded by Doris Roberts. The history lists all the generosity of the contributors, gifts, volunteer skills and labour used to complete the Chapel.

This Chapel icon was a major focus for fund raising and voluntary effort by the residents and is a lasting legacy to all residents of the Estate and a wonderful testimony to community determination and spirit.

Copies of the history of the Chapel are available at the Chapel and the Merriwa Estate library.

Merriwa: A destination and a journey

Rethinking, downsizing, or sense of security, these are all issues we think about as we grow older and sometimes finding an answer to all three of these is not as simple as once thought. However, the answer can be just ONE answer if you know where to look or who to talk to. RAAF Estate Merriwa is just one such solution.

Believing that retirement is a new chapter of your life and not the END of your useful existence is an important factor in a successful retirement plan. Sure, you can keep your big house with all the chores and yard to maintain and devote your retirement to an everyday mundane existence OR you can step it up and downsize your house, chores, commitments and upszie your existence with new friends and experiences.

Wheels helping deliver meals

It’s a small but committed team who are behind the wheels that deliver the meals at RAAF Estate Merriwa.

Merriwa’s Meals on Wheels coordinator Kath Taylor and volunteer Kate Donati are two of the 20 volunteers who take rostered turns to deliver delicious meals to residents across RAAF Estate Merriwa.

The meal delivery service started about six weeks, and they select their meal options ahead of time,” Kath explained.

Weeks, and they select their meal options of eating nutritious pre-prepared meals in services with residents who enjoy the option years ago, connecting Merriwa’s kitchen across RAAFA Estate Merriwa.

Kate said she enjoyed the social aspect of delivering meals to residents.

“Everyone is so lovely, it’s nice to meet new people and I find that a lot of people want to stop and have a chat with us. It’s a real pleasure and I really love being part of it,” Kath explained.

“Everyone is so lovely, it’s nice to meet new people and I find that a lot of people want to stop and have a chat with us. It’s a real pleasure and I really love being part of it,” Kath explained.

Active aging the order of the day

ONE of RAAF Estate Merriwa’s oldest residents is 99-year-old Georgie Higginsbathom, who embodies the active aging lifestyle message!

Georgie continues to live independently in her own home, and credits her daily cycles on her stationary bicycle at home to helping her keep fit and healthy as she enters her 100th year.

“Anytime I go anywhere people are always surprised about my age. They ask me ‘what’s the secret?’ But I don’t really think there’s a secret, I’ve just been active all my life,” Georgie says.

“I have a young mind, maybe that’s it.” And active she certainly has been throughout her life – in her younger years Georgie loved ballroom dancing, Irish dancing, table tennis and even played women’s football.

Georgie is originally from Ireland – and her father worked as a riveter on the Titanic in Belfast as a 16 year old boy.

Georgie moved to Australia in 1951, where she and her family originally settled in the Blue Mountains.

In NSW, Georgie was active within her local tenpin bowling club, and netted herself a number of trophies which are still proudly on display in her home.

She has four daughters, eight grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren.

Since moving to RAAF about 12 years ago (one of Georgie’s daughters also lives on the Estate) she has continued to enjoy keeping fit, and still plays carpet bowls with Merriwa’s avid group of indoor bowlers.
Mudlarks take on the Roaring 20s

MERRIWA’S favourite musical performers, The Mudlarks, have been gearing up to take on the ‘Roaring 20s’ as part of their latest stage production.

With jazz bands, musical numbers, tap dancers, the time warp and an Aussie finale, the Roaring 20s production is set to be another popular performance for RAAFA Members.

The Mudlarks’ musical director Lenore Greive explained that The Mudlarks were first formed in 1995, to fundraise for the Lodge at Merriwa. Since then the musical maestros have grown bigger and better, and now are celebrating their 21st birthday this year.

“I’ve been part of the Mudlarks for the past ten years. Most of our members are from Merriwa Estate and Cambrai Village, but we do also have a few social members from the outside community,” she said.

“We all have great fun, we really enjoy it and want to keep it going, but it’s important to acknowledge that we really do rely on the support of the RAAFA Community. We rely on our wonderful sound man and backstage man to take care of the technical side of things, and we also rely on our costume ladies Rosemary and Anne to support our wardrobe. Of course we are all volunteers ourselves too.”

The Mudlarks stage two productions each year, including a popular Christmas show at the end of each year.

“We like to keep things fresh, so we try to really change it up each time we perform,” Lenore said.

“We always say we aren’t the world’s best singers and dancers but we are the most enthusiastic.”

Laughter Yoga

FROM whopping great belly laughs to kookaburra imitations and every kind of chortle, chuckle and cackle in between, Air Force Memorial Estate’s new Laughter Yoga group gets a giggle out of laughter.

So what is Laughter Yoga? Quite simply, it’s a gathering where residents can spend time laughing, giggling and laughing some more. Air Force Memorial Estate resident Trevor Muller set up the group earlier this year, and each Monday at Orion Terraces leads a small group of fellow residents through a range of simple physical movements and vocal exercises, all the while encouraging lots of laughter.

“There are so many benefits to Laughter Yoga, the big one being that it relieves stress, which causes damage to the immune system. Some people find that once they start Laughter Yoga, some of their ailments start to resolve themselves,” Trevor said.

“We have about 12 people who come to our Monday sessions, and we always welcome newcomers.”

According to Laughter Yoga International, this practice helps release endorphins, which make us feel good and can relieve pain. It can also provide cardiovascular exercise, and increases oxygen supply to the brain, lower blood pressure and produce a feeling of relaxation and wellbeing.

The “World” comes to Merriwa

AFTER months of planning, our Travel Expo came to fruition on Monday, 14 March 2016, with over 112 people attending and representatives from ten travel companies making it a great success for all.

Representatives from Cosmos, Globus, Avalon, Princess Cruises, Kings Travel, Villa Carlotta, Hello World, Carine Travel and Edmond and Frank Pimm gave of their time to whet the appetite of even the most ardent traveller. After all presentations were complete, the audience were given the opportunity to talk one on one with all our representatives and ascertain information relevant to them.

Residents from Merriwa Estate, Cambrai Village and family and friends all went into a draw to win $300 travel vouchers donated by Travel Associates and Villa Carlotta. The lucky winners were both from Cambrai, so hearty congratulations goes out to Suzanne Edmond and Frank Pimm.

Attendees were treated to information and great deals on cruising, New Zealand holidays, Australian travel including the Indian Pacific and Ghan and Escorted tours. There were lots of brochures to peruse and to get your inchy feet working overtime.

Between the brochures, giveaways and sample bags, everyone left with new destinations to place on their bucket lists and the knowledge of how to get the best deals from these professionals who freely give of their time to come and inform us.

The end result was a very successful and informative morning leaving all with a thirst to get those travel shoes on and take off. The bar opened to offer residents and guests a special menu and many took advantage of this and stayed back to continue to discuss their travel plans.

Most representatives requested that they be included in any future ventures of this type as they felt the one on one contact was beneficial, not only to themselves but also to our residents. The organisers agreed but time will tell if we make this an annual event.

Youth Focus challenge

By Robert Parker

IN EARLY April 2016 the Chief Financial Officer, Robert Parker, was a participant in the annual charity bike ride known as the Hawaiian Ride for Youth. The ride has been going for over 13 years, with major property developer/owner Hawaiian Investments as naming sponsor for most of that time.

The ride is in support of Youth Focus, a WA based charity which provides support and counselling to youth in the areas of depression and suicide.

The ride raised $2,240,000 and a cheque was handed over to the Chief Executive of Youth Focus, Fiona Kalaf, at the end of the ride in Kings Park on 9 April 2016. Over its life, the ride has raised in excess of $13,000,000.

The ride involves 140 riders and over 40 support personnel. It is a five day journey from Albany to Perth with three separate pelotons setting out from Albany on different routes to Perth. The peloton stop at 19 high schools along the route and riders and staff meet with students to help raise awareness about depression and youth suicide.

Robert says that all riders must undertake a rigorous six month training regime, involving three rides a week, starting at 5.30am in Shenton Park. Most Saturdays involve a lengthy 130km over five hours ride up in the hills east of Perth. “It’s a great way to keep fit, whilst fulfilling an important social responsibility at the same time” says Robert. “A good, strong long macchiato at the start to resolve themselves,” Trevor said.

“An I’m in for next year? Well it’s a bit early to commit just yet. I’m still enjoying not having that alarm go off at 5.00am, three times a week!”

If you would like to support Youth Focus, please visit their website at www.youthfocus.com.au.
Notes From Branches and Groups

Aviation Museum Branch
John Harris
It was agreed at the members meeting held 14 April that the Branch will now hold its meetings bi-monthly, second Thursday of the month.

Upcoming events
Thursday, 9 June, General Meeting, Meg Olive Room, 7.00pm.
Thursday, 11 August, General Meeting, Meg Olive Room, 7.00pm.
Thursday, 13 October, General Meeting, Meg Olive Room, 7.00pm.

Merlin magic
SOME Merlin magic has been in the works at RAAFA Aviation Heritage Museum, thanks to the generosity of the local community.
A project to create a functioning new propeller for one of the Museum’s Merlin engines has come about thanks to a fortuitous chain of events.
“Since we received our running Merlin engine we have wanted to install a prop for the front of the engine, to set it apart as a unique feature within the engine display at the Museum,” Museum Manager John Park said.
In their search for a suitable prop for the engine, the Museum team scoured other similar Aviation Museums across Australia and the UK with no success.

“I even contacted a couple of engineering firms here in Perth and the only one that got back to me quoted $10,000 for a custom-made propeller, which obviously wasn’t within the reaches of the Museum,” John said.
But then luck struck – one of the Museum volunteers mentioned he knew someone who might be able to lend a hand. And so it was that Igor Mironenko, a professional boat propeller designer, met with John to discuss how he could help.
“Igor offered to design the prop for free and we arranged for the Museum to purchase the necessary materials and have the prop made,” John said.
“So we took Igor’s designs to Cameron Engineering in Bunbury, who came back to us with a very reasonable quote of $1000 for the material and machine-work.
“The parts were made and anodised for another $88, and then we were extremely thankful to Cameron Engineering who waived the fee as an in-kind donation to the Aviation Heritage Museum.”
After $12 for bolts, the propeller cost a grand total of $100.
“We are absolutely delighted with this result. The Merlin is now up and running and we are making arrangements for the engine to be displayed appropriately within the Museum,” John said.
“We would like to give our very sincere thanks to Igor Mironenko and Cameron Engineering for donating their time, expertise and materials to work with us to bring this project to fruition. This project is a true example of the fact that community spirit is alive and well.”

Upcoming events
Monday, 6 June, Pinjarra Trots, bus leaves 11.45am.
Tuesday, 21 June, Tea and Talk, by ‘Peel Scoters’.
Friday, 24 June, Wannadour Tour, Fremantle Maritime and Army Museums.

MER Branch
Judy Bland
jgb41@bigpond.com

ANZAC Day
Congratulations to Vice President Fay O’Brien and Secretary Jim Carethers and all who assisted at the Dawn Service. This was the second year that we hosted this event and it is a welcome addition to the Estate.
A Calendar of Events is being prepared and will be available in the near future.

Upcoming events
Tuesday, 19 July, High Tea, Village Hall.
Details and ticket information will be in the Village Chatter.

Merriwa Branch
Joyce Johnson
joycejohnson54@gmail.com

Theme night
Tuesday, 5 April saw the first of our theme nights. An Italian theme was highlighted in the food and décor with the night proving very successful. Anticipation is high for our next adventure into the cuisine of other countries.

Bi-monthly meeting
At our bi-monthly meeting in April residents took part in the decision making processes of the committee, were informed and received answers to their burning questions.

Movie nights
Movie nights continue to be successful on the second Tuesday of each month with good attendances. The added bonus of the bar being open from 5.30pm is just one more attraction for this event.

ANZAC Day
ANZAC Day ceremony and breakfast was again well attended with over 100 looked into breakfast and many more from the community at the ceremony. Grey skies did not dampen their resolve as they rolled up for this annual event.
Members of the Merriwa Residents’ Committee attended a delayed ANZAC service at Queens Primary School on Thursday, 28 April. It was a delight to see young people run this event themselves and take pride in the heritage left to them by the ANZACS.

Devonshire tea
At our Devonshire Tea in April guests were treated to some sumptuous treats. A highlight of the day was the piano accompaniment by Eunice Moore from Cambrai Village which added a wonderful ambience to the occasion.

Quiz night
We are planning a quiz night (or afternoon) for residents and their family and friends in coming months, stay tuned for details.

Upcoming events
Monday, 6 June, Resident Committee Meeting.
Sunday, 12 June, Sunday Roast.
Monday, 13 June, Residents’ Bi-Monthly meeting, Main Hall, 9.30am.
Friday, 1 July, Christmas in July, Main Hall, 5.30pm.
Monday, 4 July, Residents’ Committee Meeting.
Sunday, 10 July, Sunday Roast.

WRAAF Branch
June Perry
Upcoming events
Sunday, 29 May, Bomber Command Commemoration Ceremony, AFME, 10.00am.
Friday, 3 June, Peace-Air Base, Graduation Ceremony of 243rd RAAF Advanced Pilots Course. Members are looking forward to the visit.
Monday, 13 June, General Meeting, Meg Olive Room.

WRAAF Branch
Judy Bland
jgb41@bigpond.com
We will be hosting the WRAAF National Reunion in 2016, this will be held in Adelaide on 6-8 April.

Upcoming events
Tuesday, 7 June, General Meeting and Casuarine Supper, Meg Olive Room, 7.00pm.
Tuesday, 5 July, General Meeting and Annual General Meeting, Meg Olive Room, 7.00pm.
Tuesday, 19 July, Christmas in July, 35 Lakesview Drive, Edgewater. For details contact Laeraine, 9306 2681.
Wednesday, 16 October, 65th Anniversary of the formation of WRAAF Luncheon, Langley Hall, AFA Clubs.

SUBMISSIONS FOR AIR MAIL

Deadlines are:
1 July for August/September issue
2 September for October/November issue
4 November for December/January issue

All Scribes, please note that articles of interest are always gladly received and accompanying photos need to be of a high resolution. You are most welcome to submit prior to the deadline.
Please send articles electronically to airmail@raafawa.org.au in the first instance or via snail mail to Julie Stearne, RAAFA, 2 Seaat Road, APPLECROSS WA 6153.
**Volunteer rewarded**

One of our mild mannered volunteers was caught off guard on 30 March when the State Vice President, Clive Roberton caught the AFME shopping bus and presented him with a Certificate of Service.

**Eric Morris** joined RAFA in January 2002 and came to love on AFME in June 2006 with his wife, Jean.

Every Wednesday, Eric assists with the Estate shopping bus and has done so for many years. The bus is a vital service for residents, allowing them to be safely transferred to and from various shopping precincts with a minimum of fuss. On Wednesdays, the bus visits the Bull Creek and Southlands Shopping Centres. Eric devotes a few hours every Wednesday morning to assist the residents get on and off the bus and he loads their carriers, storing them safely for the journey.

Eric also carries the passengers shopping up to their units providing as much help as they require.

The Memorial Estate Residents Branch and especially the shoppers are thankful for his contribution.

Eric Morris has been rewarded with a Certificate of Service. He has dedicated his time to the AFME shopping bus and presented him with a Certificate of Service.

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**Pole walking takes off**

Pole walking looks to be the latest fitness craze to grip Perth residents – and a group of RAFAA Members are going to be at the forefront of the charge.

An enthusiastic group of Air Force Memorial Estate residents enjoyed a presentation by the Seniors Recreation Council of WA in May, organised by Welfare Officer Carena Slattery.

Pole walking is a low-impact ‘total body’ version of walking, where people use specially-designed walking poles (similar to ski poles) to support their walking movement.

The Seniors Recreation Council of WA team also gave a demonstration about exergaming – the combination of ‘exercise’ and ‘video gaming’, using the Xbox Connect application.

Carena said that pole walking and exergaming could both have positive outcomes for seniors’ health, mobility and fitness, as part of a healthy lifestyle.

“We already have a few avid pole walker enthusiasts at RAFAA, which is great to see. Any form of activity is good for seniors – and pole walking is great because it’s a gentle activity that you can take at your own pace,” she said.

‘Exergaming is a new field for seniors, but it can be really effective to help develop people’s fitness levels. It is great for hand-eye coordination and developing social skills. Dementia is a key area where exergaming has proven to be very successful.”

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**Between the Dances’ Launch**

**BETWEEN** the Dances is an eclectic collection of short stories from women who lived through WWII. Revealing personal conversations with over 300 remarkable women, it highlights the irony of women embracing challenge and opportunity presented by this devastating war.

2015, the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII, was an ideal time to explore how women contributed to the war effort, all while worrying about the welfare of their men, yet relishing the next dance.

Melbourne-based author Jacqueline Dinan, interviewed women around Australia to collect their unique accounts of ‘doing their bit’. As nurses in war zones, members of the services, workers on the land and in factories, volunteers in community service, managers in organisations, housewives juggling a ration book, and others overseas who endured the Blitz or internment by the Japanese.

The accounts are enhanced by poignant, amusing and insightful anecdotes along with scores of previously unpublished and unique photographs from personal albums.

You are invited to attend the launch of ‘WWII Women Tell Their Stories’. To be launched by Hon Lizia Harvey MLA, Deputy Premier; Minister for Women’s Interests.

**Date:** Thursday 21 July 2016

**Time:** 10.30 – 11.30am

**Location:** Aviation Heritage Museum, Air Force Memorial Estate, Bull Creek

RSVP essential for yourself (and a guest) by Monday, 13 June, 03 9499 5169, texting 0413 621 100 or events@bigpond.net.au

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**Bull Creek AFA Club**

**Phone:** 9311 4460

**Trading Hours**

**Bar**

Monday to Thursday, 11.00am to 6.00pm

Friday, 11.00am to 10.00pm

Saturday, 3.00pm to 6.00pm

**Specials**

Monday and Wednesday, Happy Hour drinks, 4.00pm

Monday to Friday, morning coffee and afternoon tea with muffins and cakes, 9.30am to 5.30pm

Monday lunch, $10.00 roast of the day

Monday, 4.00pm to 5.30pm

Tuesday lunch, $10.00 fish and chips

4th Wednesday, A la Carte dining night (bookings at bar)

**Counter lunches**

Monday to Friday, 11.30am to 1.30pm

**Dinner dance**

Friday, 5.30pm to 10.00pm

Closed Monday, 6 June, WA Day Public Holiday.

Residents requiring transport out of volunteer buggy hours, please contact the bar and we will organise pickup.

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**Cambrai Club**

**Phone:** 9304 5401

**Trading Hours**

**Bar**

Tuesday and Wednesday, 4.00pm to 8.00pm

Friday, 12noon to 2.00pm

Friday night opening times may vary, contact Club for details

2nd and 4th Friday, 5.00pm to 8.00pm

**Specials**

Tuesday and Wednesday, Happy Hour, 4.00pm

Wednesday, morning tea, 10.00am to 11.00am

Tuesday and Wednesday, Dinner, 6.00pm to 8.00pm, Picardy Restaurant

Friday, Happy Hour, 5.00pm when function on

**Events**

Alternate fortnights on Friday, either a Buffet or Sundowner. Book early as both events are popular. Don’t forget to invite family and friends. We look forward to seeing you.

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**Merriwa Club**

**Phone:** Club 9400 3640

Kitchens 9400 3642

**Trading Hours**

**Bar**

Tuesday to Saturday 12noon to 6.00pm

2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month, Movie Night, bar open until 8.30pm

Closed Sundays and Mondays

**Specials**

Wednesday, Happy Hour, 4.00pm

Thursday, morning tea, 10.00am to 11.00am

Thursday, games night, Chase the Ace, 4.00pm to 6.00pm

Friday, Happy Hour, 4.00pm

Friday, Dinner, Main Hall, 5.00pm to 9.00pm

Saturday, coffee and cake, 2.00pm to 3.00pm

Saturday, fish lunch $9.00, 12noon to 1.30pm

**Counter lunches**

Tuesday to Saturday, 12noon to 1.30pm

Closed Monday, 6 June, WA Day Public Holiday.

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**Meadow Springs Club**

**Phone:** 9582 5375

**Trading Hours**

**Bar**

Monday, 10.30am to 2.30pm

Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 10.30am to 6.00pm

Wednesday, 10.30am to 8.00pm

Saturday and Sunday, contact bar staff.

**Specials**

Monday to Friday, morning tea from 10.30am. A variety of scrumptious cakes available at low prices.

Monday, Roast Lunch, $12.00

Tuesday, best fish and chips lunch in town, $10.00

Wednesday, Chase the Ace, bingo, horse racing and evening meal. Small and regular size meals available.

Thursday, Happy Hour, 4.30pm, Sports Bar.

**Counter lunches**

Monday to Friday, 11.45am to 1.30pm

**Updated menu and wine list**

Wonderful additions to the menu include vegetarian quiche, pie of the day and bacon and egg burger. Our wine list has also been updated.

**Events**

Please contact the club for bookings. Our friendly staff are looking forward to having you join us.

Friday, 10 June, Dinner, 6.30pm. A la Carte Menu, with pre-dinner drinks from 6.00pm.

**Motel**

Time for a getaway? You can book a stay in one of our motel units for just $75.00 per night (including continental breakfast). Bookings on 9582 5375.

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**Royal Australian Air Force Association**
ANZAC Day Thai style

By Irene Smith

I HAVE just returned from a most amazing educational and inspirational twelve day trip to Thailand on the Quiet Lion Tour, which was established by cPOWs and their families. The “Quiet Lion” is the nickname of Sir Edward “Weary” Dunlop, who from 1942 to 1945, together with his medical colleagues, gave devoted service to thousands of sick and dying prisoners-of-war and Asian labourers who were forced to construct and maintain the Burma-Thailand Railway.

Equally, I was privileged to be on and share the experience of the tour with Amity Village Resident, Neil MacPherson OAM. Albany was certainly waving the flag on ANZAC day at the dawn service at Helfire Pass, and ANZAC ceremoney at Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, as 99 year old Harold Martin from Albany, also an ex-POW was at the service. Only two old Harold Martin from Albany, also an ex-POW was at the service. Only two

My most profound experience was walking, in 41 degrees, the 4.5km Burma Railway Heritage Trail from Hinthok Road, through Hinthok Cutting then to Helfire Pass Museum. Even though I have read the books, watched the films – this walk hit me so emotionally as to the reality of what those incredible men endured – the bridges, the embankments, the undulating landscape, the h jagged cuttings through solid rock with tap and hammer, the conditions, the heat, the expectations of 18 hour days, with only a handful of rice, minimum clothes, crude tools, cruel taskmasters. 415km of railway built by prisoners of war and Asian labourers in 18 months.

It also made me proud to be an Australian – understanding that some of the greatest attributes our Auscie POWs had was their mateship, their sense of Humour, and their rural backgrounds, or outdoor way of life. I heard so many stories – from Neil, Harold and the sons of other POWs – and all of them, despite the adversities and atrocities of the time, shine with wonderful examples of humanity, compassion and mateship.

ANZAC Day was the finale of this awesome tour – and it will be an ANZAC Day I will never forget.

Etched in my psych now is being in Helfire Pass as dawn gently breaks, the only sound the line.

As dawn gently breaks, the only sound the line.

Etched in my psych now is being in Helfire Pass as dawn gently breaks, the only sound the line.