

# Bass Hill RSL Sub-Branch

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*"The price of liberty is eternal vigilance"*

# Newsletter

Issue 84

May, 2018

**SUB-BRANCH COMMITTEE—2014—2017**

**Tel/Fax: 02 9644 3292**

- President** ..... Ron Duckworth — 0408 245 255
  - Vice President** ..... Ian Muirhead, Ross Graham
  - Secretary**..... Gary Roser JP,
  - Treasurer** ..... Ralph Hannaford
  - Minute Secretary** ..... Lee-Ann Taylor,
  - Committee** ..... Max Stone, David Tu, Brian Abbot,  
..... Ian Kennedy JP, Kevin Mahony
  - Welfare Officer** ..... Ron Duckworth
  - Assistant Welfare Officer** ..... Alan (Gadget) Parkin, Laurie Scutts  
..... Ross Graham, Kevin Mahony
  - Pensions Officer** ..... Kevin Mahony
  - FSMDC Delegates** ..... Ron Duckworth, Ian Muirhead
  - Alt FSMDC Delegate**..... Ian Kennedy JP, Ross Graham
  - Sub-Branch Trustees** ..... Ron Duckworth, Max Stone, Ralph Hannaford
  - Benevolent Fund Trustees** ..... Max Stone, Gary Roser JP, Ralph Hannaford
  - Newsletter Editor**..... Gary Roser JP - 0409 919 364
  - Bankstown City Aged Care** ..... Ian Muirhead, Gary Roser JP
  - Webmaster** ..... Max Stone
- For service ring the Secretary, Gary Roser on 0409 919 364*



**EDITORIAL** \*\* *Gary Roser, Editor*

Hello Members and Friends,  
I mention Friends as this Newsletter is posted to a number of people who aren't part of our sub-Branch but are interested in our little publication.

You might notice there is nothing about the problems addressed by the RSLNSW in this publication. Well it is just too early to publish the results of Congress this year. We would not have had time to get it in before it was due to be distributed. We await Ron and Ian's report which will be summarised in the next Newsletter.

I really hope we are on the right track to reform. I have my own ideas, just as you have yours. The *“proof will be in the pudding”*

<b>Sub-Branch Meetings</b>	
<b><u>Committee</u> Mondays 4.30pm</b>	<b><u>Sub-Branch</u> Sundays 10:30am</b>
18 <sup>th</sup> June	24 <sup>th</sup> June
16 <sup>th</sup> July	<b>NIL</b>
Christmas in July — 17 <sup>th</sup> July	
20 <sup>th</sup> August	26 <sup>th</sup> August
17 <sup>th</sup> September	23 <sup>rd</sup> September

*\*\*The editorial is entirely my own opinion and does not reflect the Sub-Branch Executive.*

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As I write this, I am preparing to go to Albury for the RSL State Congress. This could be a critical conference as it may a big difference in what we may be able to do for our Members. I will keep you informed.



What a great ANZAC Day and associate functions that we went to in April. ANZAC Services and Luncheons at various sub-Branches. At all Schools and Nursing Homes we were made most welcome. It is good to welcome back George River Grammar School to our schools functions. We are arranging to take them to Kokoda Track Walkway.

Ian and I went to Peachtree Kindergarten. Can you Imagine what it is like to try and talk to one to five year old's about ANZAC. Not easy.

Our own ANZAC Luncheon was a tremendous success. Good company all round and the raffle raised over \$800.00.

We have our Xmas in July bus trip coming up. Flyers are available at the May meeting and need to be back by the June meeting. From the rumours we are hearing, this may be the last bus we can organise. We will let you know.

At the last meeting we told you about the demand by State Branch to pay \$92,000 into the support fund. This figure is incorrect and the Trustee instructed our solicitor to make inquiries. To date no word has been heard back from State Branch. The Trustees and Executive have recalculated the amount to be paid and have made a good faith payment of \$3,300.

We await their response.

*Ron Duckworth  
President*



*Delivering the ANZAC Address  
at Bass High School*

## AN INTERESTING ARTICLE

*by our Pensions Officer & Committeeman Kevin Mahony*

On Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> April my wife and I attended the Western Districts Disabled Veterans Association lunch. Barbara Perry (ex-state MP for Auburn) was the MC. Before the lunch started she said a few words about the RSL. When she finished she asked me and a couple of others to give our thoughts on the situation.



The general consensus was that the RSL is not doing enough to encourage newly returned veterans to join. A major part of the problem is also that the RSL clubs make people believe that they are owned and operated by the RSL and the Sub-branches. As we know, they generally are privately owned profit making clubs. This is a long way from the sheds that the WW1 veterans used to meet in to talk and have a drink and run some raffles to raise some funds

These days the vast majority of the members are not ex-service men or women, and they are full of poker machines.

These days, most of the new veterans use apps, such as Face book, to communicate with each other. They see no need to join the RSL

I raised the point that if the returned veterans are not members of ex-service associations or the RSL when problems from their service arise they will not know where to seek advice. They would certainly have problems in navigating the DVA web-site. Even if a sub-branch does not have a Pensions Officer they are aware of where help can be obtained.

In addition to this, four times as many soldiers have committed suicide after returning from the Middle East as have been killed in action. Four of us from the Commando Association NSW have completed the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training course. We cannot apply these skills if we do not come into contact with those who need help. In our association we have about 400 members, but hardly any of these are those who have returned from the Middle East, and unfortunately , many of these are the ones at risk. Two weeks after last ANZAC Day, I attended the funeral of one of these returned commandos, who was not in our association or the RSL. Obviously, the RSL should come up with some ideas which will encourage returned soldiers to join a sub-branch. This will be difficult.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Another two months have passed since our last Newsletter and a great deal has happened in the March April period with schools, nursing homes and our own ANZAC Service.



With the school holidays and ANZAC Day during that period, we found that we were conducting school Services both before and after their holidays. But the message got through.

It is heartening to observe the schools are teaching our children about our military history. They all know about Gallipoli and some things about the Second World War, but not much about the other battles fought in World War One and Two and the subsequent *police actions* we took part in.

Both our President Ron Duckworth and myself who write our ANZAC addresses for schools, nursing homes and our own Dawn Service try and impart knowledge of other battles and conflicts we Australians have been involved in. This year it was about the *Rats of Tobruk*. And being ANZAC Day we (of course) included our New Zealand Allies who ended up thrashing the Axis Forces at El Alamein with our troops and other Allies. Very few children had ever heard of the *Rats of Tobruk* and were intrigued with their name and how they survived the battle. And then we brought home the bacon by saying those same Divisions were brought home and they helped stop the Japanese invading Australia in New Guinea. Many of the children already knew about the Kokoda Battle.

Our own Dawn Service was very personal to me this year. My two Daughters attended with my Grandson William who was a part of the Australian Air League contingent on the day.

*Change of pace.* If you are completely house bound and need cheering up, please let me know so I can send you out our Joke Book. Not for all Members, just for those who can't get out. *Gary Roser J.P.*

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### ***Your Welfare Officers:***

Laurie Scutts .....	02 9786 0516		0417 062 450
Ron Duckworth .....	02 9644 1635		0408 245 255
Ross Graham .....	02 9771 1813		0490 069 331
Kevin Mahony .....	02 9644 8794		0425 279 111
Alan (Gadget) Parkin	02 9785 8676		0404 567 520

## **You Know When Your Over the Hill When.....**

Gone are the days when girls used to cook like their mothers. Now they drink like their fathers.

I didn't make it to the gym today. That makes five years in a row.

I decided to stop calling the bathroom the "John" and renamed it the "Jim". I feel so much better saying I went to the Jim this morning.

Old age is coming at a really bad time.

When I was a child I thought "Nap Time" was a punishment. Now, as a grownup, it feels like a small vacation.

The biggest lie I tell myself is "I don't need to write that down, I'll remember it."

I don't have gray hair; I have "wisdom highlights"! I'm just very wise.

If God wanted me to touch my toes, He would've put them on my knees.

Last year I joined a support group for procrastinators. We haven't met yet.

Why do I have to press one for English when you're just going to transfer me to someone I can't understand anyway?

The people I hang around with are not scared of getting pregnant. And I don't have acne. Life is great.

At my age "Getting lucky" means walking into a room and remembering what I came in there for.

Actually I'm not complaining because I am a Senager. (Senior teenager) I have everything that I wanted as a teenager, only 60 years later.

I don't have to go to school or work. I get an allowance every month. I have my own pad. I don't have a curfew.

Coffee Crimes



"I see you've fixed the drip!"



"It's hard to believe you've never put up wallpaper before."



"As you can see, the genius fixed my washer."



"Is there a reverse switch on the drill?"



"I told you it wouldn't stay up there."

# The Flight of the Crow

## the greatest escape story never told

By Tony Wright

15 March 2018 — 5:17pm *Tony Wright is the associate editor and special writer for The Age and the Sydney Morning Herald*

It was the greatest escape of World War II, led by an Australian - and you've most likely never heard of it or of its planner, Ralph Churches, known as The Crow.

The Flight of the Crow, however, is a celebrated event in Slovenia, where it is commemorated every year.

And why wouldn't it be so?

One hundred and twenty British, Australian, New Zealand and French prisoners of war, all of whom Churches had helped break out of their captivity, were led from the southern Austrian border across German-occupied Slovenia to safety in 1944, protected all the way by guerrillas of the Slovene Partisans.

And yet it has never been made into a Hollywood movie or become the subject of a bestseller, like other great escapes, and those who took part spent most of the rest of their lives in quiet obscurity.

Blame the Official Secrets Act, which British authorities demanded the escapers sign when they reached safety, apparently to protect the secrecy of their freedom route.

More pointedly, blame the Cold War that settled on the world after World War II.



*Josip Broz Tito  
May 1944.*

It meant the West had little time for stories that gave credit to Josip Broz Tito and his communist Partisans, even if they were among the most successful resistance fighters of the war.

Tito rose to become president of communist Yugoslavia after the war: the wrong side of the Cold War ledger so far as the West was concerned.

No matter, apparently, that his Partisans had rescued across Yugoslavia an estimated 3500 Allied military personnel over 3½ years of World War II, including



around 1800 members of American and British air crews shot down, and about 1200 POWs.

The Flight of the Crow, however, remains the biggest single escape from a German POW prison.

It is named after Ralph Churches, an Australian soldier nicknamed Crow because he was the only South Australian, or “crow-eater”, in his unit, and more romantically, because he dreamed of flight.

Churches subsequently detailed his adventures and the escape in a book he called *A Hundred Miles as the Crow Flies*, which was self-published in 1996 and sold poorly. With the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary approaching next year and the Slovenian government posting the picture of a crow every 50 metres along the old escape trail, the book is about to be re-released by Churches’ son.

And finally, a British documentary crew has made a film called *The Crow’s Flight*. It is the first of a series called *Great Escapes of WWII with Monty Halls: The Freedom Trails*, and will be broadcast on Sunday at 5.30pm on SBS.



*February 1945: Tito, second from right, with (from left) US General Lyman Lemnitzer and British Field Marshal Lord Alexander at the White Palace in Belgrade. The Cold War put an end to this alliance. Photo: Camera Press*

The documentary's makers have interviewed former Partisans, escapees and prison guards to ensure accuracy of a story that has been challenged from various quarters over the years. They even managed to track down the logbook kept by a British

captain named Saggars, who was in charge of a secret airfield in Slovenia which recorded the names of all the British, Australian, New Zealand and French soldiers who flew out of Slovenia to Italy. The number, which has only now come to light, was 120 - more than even the 100 Churches had estimated.

..... *Continued*

Continued .....

Churches, a mapmaker unfortunate enough to be attached to General Sir Thomas Blamey's command headquarters during the disastrous Battle of Greece, was captured by Germans on May 6, 1941, while he and three others were trying to sail a dinghy to Crete. After a spell starving in a prison cage in Greece, where he contracted dysentery and malaria, he barely survived a four-day journey on a cattle train to Maribor, a few kilometres from Austria's border with Slovenia.

He would spend the next three years as a prisoner of war in the Stalag 18D prison and its camps around Maribor, all the while preparing himself for escape.

Churches carefully learned the German language until he was fluent in colloquial Viennese German, and as the elected camp leader (Vertrauensmann, which literally means "confidence man", because his

job was to represent his men to the Germans), he lulled his captors into a false sense of contentment by bribing them with luxuries such as coffee, cigarettes and chocolate gathered from his and his colleagues' regular supply of Red Cross parcels.



*Ralph Churches, who became known as "The Crow".*

In his postwar life back in Australia, Churches took pleasure in the TV spoof of POW life, *Hogan's Heroes*, because he recognised so many of his own experiences in it, says his son, Neil Churches, who lives in the Melbourne suburb of Kensington.

Indeed, Ralph Churches built such a relationship with one of the camp's kommandants, Unteroffizier (sergeant) Johan Gross, that he wrote he was reluctant to escape under Gross' watch for fear the poor fellow would suffer dreadful punishment by his German superiors.

Churches resolved to ensure this "kindly, decent, middle-aged family man" who'd "done everything he could to make our detention as decent and comfortable as he could" was spared. He took a punt, went to Gross and declared that he had spent eight months as camp kommandant, and that he should seek a transfer.

“He looked at me hard through his thick-lensed glasses for some seconds,” Churches wrote. “I returned the look with the best poker face I could muster. At last he said ‘thank you Mr Camp Leader, I will do as you suggest’.”

The next kommandant was a disciplinarian and “screamer”, relieving Churches of any pangs of conscience over his fate.

In later life, Ralph Churches - who had experienced an actual wartime POW camp - enjoyed watching *Hogan's Heroes*.

As Churches plotted, a fellow POW, Englishman Les Laws from the Royal Engineers, had got in touch with a representative of Partisans operating in the hills beyond the POW work camps around Maribor.

Each day men were taken by train to work sites, assigned - among other tasks - to the job of re-laying train tracks. Laws had talked the Germans into allowing him to supply the prisoners with water, which he fetched from a hillside cottage where he formed a relationship with a young Slovene woman. One day, he was approached by a Slovene man who offered to introduce him to a group of Partisans.

Churches’ plan for a solo escape suddenly expanded to include Laws. Soon enough, two of their mates were also initiated into the secret. And then all eight in their hut were in on the plan.

Each day, Churches gathered Red Cross stores and smuggled them out to a growing getaway stash in the forest near the work site.

On August 30, 1944, the little band of escapees - seven of them, as one of the mates couldn’t get away from his work gang - simply walked off the railway job site, led by a Partisan contact named Anton. Churches’ last act was to bribe a guard with cigarettes.

Deep in the forest, they were met by armed guerrillas and led through meadows to a village named Lovrenc, recently captured by the guerrillas. Slivovitz was served and dancing ensued. They were, at least for the moment, gloriously free.

Into this heady atmosphere Churches introduced a proposal to the Partisans. Would they be prepared to mount a raid to free all the other POWs on the work site outside Maribor? He estimated there were 80 men at one site and nine at another.

The Partisans, apparently keen for the notoriety, agreed. They even agreed there would be no bloodshed unless necessary - Churches and his mates didn’t want old, harmless Austrian guards to be harmed.



*A picture of the escape march through Slovenia given to Ralph Churches years later by Karol Cholnik, latterly of Bacchus Marsh in Melbourne. Churches can be seen wearing his slouch hat and Cholnik is leading the column.*

Churches and Laws were told they had to accompany the fighters if the raid was to go ahead. And so, a few minutes after 8 o'clock on the morning of August 31, Churches, Laws and almost 100 Partisan guerillas ambushed guards, a scattering of civilians and all the POWs minutes after they'd alighted from the train that had brought them to the railway work site at a place called Ozbalt, almost 30 kilometres from Maribor.

Without a shot being fired, the Partisans, Churches and Laws got away with more than 100 POWs in tow - British, French, 12 Australians and nine New Zealanders.

Over the next two weeks, with German troops on their trail, the band - a column of around 200 at its peak - trudged up and down mountains, almost freezing at night, fording rivers and keeping to the shelter of forests to avoid German patrols and surveillance flights. Churches wore his Australian slouch hat every day.

Farmers and villagers sympathetic to the Partisans prepared stews in steaming coppers for the travellers at night. After a firefight between the Partisans and a German patrol, some of Churches' and Laws' comrades, fearing for their lives, wanted to return to prison. But on they went.

After two weeks and a journey of 285 kilometres, the escapees and their protectors reached Semic, a village almost on the border with Croatia which had become an outpost Allied base with an airstrip used by both the British and Americans and protected by Partisans.

Five nights later, the entire band of escapees - 120 in all on the recent logbook evidence, plus a number of wounded Partisans - were taken out by four Dakota aircraft and delivered to freedom in Bari, Italy. It was September 18, 1944.

Each man was offered a three-word telegram. Churches sent “ESCAPED SAFE WELL” to his wife, Ronte, who he’d married a few days before shipping out of Adelaide.

Laws and Churches were debriefed by a colonel from the Intelligence Corps, who was clearly no fan of the Partisans, who demanded to know why, if the Partisans were so clever, hadn’t they got even more prisoners out?

Laws and Churches protested, but the colonel continued: "I still say, a hundred mile as the crow flies. I can’t understand why more of our fellows aren’t doing it."



*Ralph Churches with his service medals.*

“I did my block,” Churches recalled later. “I said, ‘Maybe, sir, it’s because they’re not bloody crows.’ He bridled a bit and he went ‘Humph. Oh, of course, you’re the Australian, aren’t you?’”

Churches kept his public silence until 1984, when he was released from the stricture of the Official Secrets Act at the request of the Yugoslavian government, which wanted to celebrate the story with a film.

By then, however, one of the former Partisans and a scout for the escapers, Karol Cholnik, who’d become a market gardener at Bacchus Marsh outside Melbourne, had tracked down Churches and presented him with a photograph taken during the Crow’s Flight. Cholnik was leading the band, and the third figure in the picture, wearing a slouch hat, was Ralph Churches. It was the first time Churches’ son, Neil, learned anything of the greatest escape.

Ralph Churches, who became a highly successful insurance salesman and manager, died in 2014.

He had been awarded a British Empire Medal, while Laws got a Distinguished Conduct Medal.

The British citations were identical: “For gallant and distinctive conduct in the field,” while the Australian authorities, who appear to have gone out of their way to downplay the achievement, simply stated Churches’ award was “For devotion to duty”.

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/europe/the-flight-of-the-crow-the-greatest-escape-story-never-told-20180314-p4z4e4.html>

# ANZAC DAY 2018

Photos by Dat



*Reps from  
Australian  
Air League  
Moorebank*



*Local Member for Bankstown  
Tania Mihhaliuk with her  
husband Councillor Alex  
Kuskoff and their children with  
Committeeman Kevin Mahony*





*Secretary Gary Roser and Member Trevor Philip at Georges Grammar School*



*Member Greg Bown with Veteran of 7 Division, Dick Payten at Georges Manor Aged Care*



*President Ron Duckworth & Committeeman Ian Kennedy with Legacy President Alan Rawlinson at Bass High School*

# ANZAC LUNCHEON 2018

*Photos by Dat*







# The Below Article appeared in the Navy, Army and RAAF Newspapers

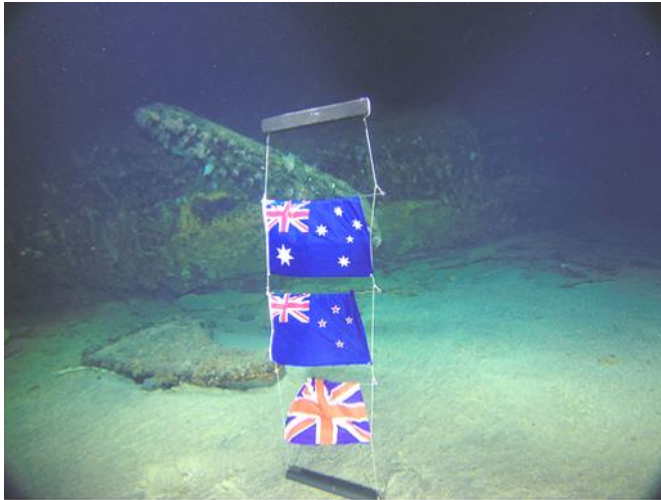
[www.defence.gov.au/news/navynews](http://www.defence.gov.au/news/navynews),

[www.defence.gov.au/news/armynews](http://www.defence.gov.au/news/armynews)

[www.defence.gov.au/news/raafnews](http://www.defence.gov.au/news/raafnews)

**NAVY**

*Photos of the Wreckage of Australia's First Submarine  
AE1 found in the waters off the coast of the Duke of  
York Islands, Papua New Guinea*



Flags commemorating the lost crew of HMAS AE1

Image courtesy of Paul G. Allen, Find AE1, ANMM and Curtin University. © Navigea Ltd.

**The first Allied and Royal Australian Navy submarine lost in World War I has finally been found after a 103-year search off the coast of Papua New Guinea.**

"Australia's oldest naval mystery has been solved," Defence Minister Marise Payne said.

"It was ... a significant tragedy felt by our nation and our allies."

HMAS AE1 was holding 35 crew members when it went missing off the coast of the Duke of York Islands on September 1914.



HMAS AE1 - starboard propeller, after hydroplane, hydroplane guard and resident grouper.

Image courtesy of Paul G. Allen, Find AE1, ANMM and Curtin University. © Navigea Ltd.

Twelve previous private and government-funded expeditions over the years failed to find the vessel, which was a grave to so many.

The latest, 13th and final search began on board the vessel Fugro Equator last week.

"The boat and her crew, who've been on eternal patrol since 1914 ... have now been found," Ms Payne said.

"I truly trust that this discovery will bring peace of mind to the descendants of the families of the crew who lost their lives on board and perhaps in time it may also enable us to discover what caused the submarine to sink."

The submarine was the first of its kind for the Australian fleet and was 55 metres long.

"For the Navy, it demonstrates the persistence of a view that fellow mariners always have and that is, we always seek to locate and find where those who sacrificed so much for their country actually laid at rest," Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Timothy Barrett said.

The previous searches helped to narrow down where the wreck might be and improvements in technology helped discover the final locations.

A deep drop camera allowed the search party to confirm they had found the missing submarine.

"The final confirmation in this particular case, having found an image on the seabed, was to put a camera down alongside that wreck and actually be able to determine that it had the features that we say belonged to AE1," Vice Admiral Barrett said.

The exact location of the wreck will be kept under wraps for now, with the Australian Government working with the Papua New Guinea Government to preserve the underwater site and to form a plan for a lasting commemoration.

The search party was jointly funded by the Australian Government, the Silentworld Foundation, The Australian National Maritime Museum and Find AE1 Ltd.

*<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-21/hmas-ae1-submarine-found-after-century-long-search/9278782>*

*& <https://images.defence.gov.au/assets/archives/5044-HMAS%20AE1/>*

## Army's next armoured fighting vehicle announced

The Australian Government has announced that the next generation of Army's combat reconnaissance vehicles will be built by Rheinmetall.

The armoured vehicles will deliver improved firepower, protection, mobility and communication systems to ensure our soldiers can fight, win and survive while operating in an ever-changing threat environment.

Army's next generation of fighting vehicle will be more capable than any other vehicle Army has operated. These vehicles will have digital warfare and information networking capabilities that will provide operational commanders with advanced knowledge and understanding of the battlefield.

This bigger and better protected armoured fighting vehicle will provide Australian troops with increased firepower and protection on the battlefield in the decades ahead.

The Department of Defence completed a comprehensive tender process over three years, during which the vehicles were rigorously and extensively tested across Australia.



The process was designed to secure the best outcome for Defence. Rheinmetall's Boxer was assessed as the most capable vehicle for Australia.

As part of the LAND 400 Phase 2 project Rheinmetall will deliver 211

Combat Reconnaissance Vehicles with the first vehicles ready for training in 2020.

Rheinmetall's Boxer will replace Army's current reconnaissance vehicle, the Australian Light Armoured Vehicle (ASLAV) that has been in service since 1996 and seen extensive operational service.



## WW1 Digger Identified

Private Edward Attfield, regimental number 1701, was formally identified by an Australian Army Identification Board on 29th August 2017.

PRIVATE Attfield, a World War One Australian soldier was previously recorded incorrectly as an illegal absentee.

On Anzac Day 2018, a new headstone provided by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission was unveiled by Defence staff from OPERATION Mazurka and the Australian Ambassador to Egypt, Mr Neil Hawkins. The most direct descendant of Private Attfield was presented with his newly struck medals as part of the Balnarring, Victoria, Anzac Day activities. The family chose to include the inscription "I once was lost, but now am found." onto the newly installed headstone.

*Private Edward Attfield's great niece, Mrs Beverley Warren, holds a photo featuring Private Attfield who was formally identified by an Australian Army Identification Board on 29th August 2017.*

*Photograph by ABIS Bonny Gassner*

My wife asked me to pass the lip balm, By mistake I gave her the super glue and now she wont talk to me.

*My hospital visiting hours are 10am—12md & 3pm-8pm*

The Australian Defence Force's (ADF) ability to effectively contribute to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and security operations in South East Asia is again the focus of a major international military exercise in the Philippines.

Jointly hosted by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and US Pacific Command, Exercise Balikatan 18 is designed to enhance regional military cooperation, interoperability and the participating nations' ability to respond effectively during times of disaster or humanitarian crisis.

Chief of Joint Operations, Vice Admiral David Johnston, said the ADF's ongoing support to the annual exercise is another example of Australia's commitment to regional security and stability.

"This exercise allows us to build on our already strong relationship with



*Royal Australian Air Force Sensor Employment Manager, Flight Lieutenant Steve Finley (left), describes the RAAF AP-3C Orion's Electro Optical Camera to Philippines Air Force 2nd Lieutenant Rhonette Bihasa while RAAF Airborne Electronics Analyst, Sergeant Troy Cousins, operates the Electro Optics Camera for Philippines Air Force 2nd Lieutenant Marc Hel Geonanga during an Orion maritime surveillance patrol in the Sulu Sea as part of Exercise BALIKATAN.*

both the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the US military's Pacific Command," Vice Admiral Johnston said.

"The word Balikatan, translates as 'shoulder to shoulder' and that certainly characterises the spirit of this exercise."

Balikatan 18 includes a command post exercise, a humanitarian and disaster relief program as well as a range of military training activities. The exercise involves approximately 60 ADF personnel, a Royal Australian Air Force P-3 Orion Maritime Patrol Aircraft and an Army contingent.

Vice Admiral Johnston said this was the 34th year Balikatan was staged and the fifth time the ADF was an active participant.

"The United States, the Philippines and Australia have a longstanding relationship dating back to WWII resulting in a significant, ongoing contribution to regional security," Vice Admiral Johnston said.

"Our recent support operations following natural disasters in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Tonga demonstrate that regional cooperation during times of natural disaster is more important than ever.

"Exercise Balikatan 18 is a valuable opportunity for participating nations to prepare for real world challenges."

Exercise Balikatan 18 concludes on 20 May 2018.

Q. What did the neck tie say to the hat?

A. You go on a head, I'll just hang around.

Q. What do you call a fly without wings.

A. A walk.



**LAST POST**



**WE  
ARE  
ALL  
HERE**

*Rest In Peace*

**STOP PRESS**