



# Birdwood Bugle

The quarterly newsletter of Geraldton City RSL Sub Branch  
Autumn 2025



## What's On



**FRIDAY BBQ NIGHTS**  
March 14th, 21st, 28th  
April 11th, 18th  
May 9th, 16th, 23rd

Theme meals - first Friday of the month. See bar notice for details  
Fifth Sunday of the month—Pie Night!



### \* BAR HOURS

Thursday 1200 -1400  
Friday 1700 - late  
Sunday 1200 -1500

#### \*PLEASE NOTE:

It is at the discretion of the Bar person on duty at the time if s/he remains open beyond the nominated closing times.

### MARCH

Thursday 13th: Ladies Morning Tea at Dome

### APRIL

Friday 25th: Anzac Day

### MAY

Thursday 8th: Mother's Day Lunch at Skeetas  
Sunday 25th: General Meeting

## Kids Christmas Party

Great fun was held by all - young and old alike—at the Kids Christmas party at the RSL on 1st December. Father Christmas handed out gifts to each child ably supported by his elf.



## *HMAS Voyager Commemoration*

On February 10, 1964, HMAS Voyager collided with the aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne while performing manoeuvres. The smaller ship was cut in two and sank, killing 82 crew members. This was the Royal Australian Navy's greatest loss of life during peacetime.

The 61st anniversary service was held on Monday, February 10th at 4:30pm. The service was led by Glenn Law, Bevan Suckling (RSL Northampton RSL President) gave the keynote speech, Chaplain Scott Norman bought the prayers and Bernie Harvey shared his experiences. The Naval Cadets formed the catafalque party and Lina Gederio from the Geraldton City Band played the last post.



## *President's Report - February 2025*

### **Organisational Changes**

Glenn Law has relinquished his role as our Welfare officer. I wish to thank Glenn for all his effort in helping and supporting veterans.

Glenn has taken up the role of Bar officer at this difficult time with the present staff shortages. He is also managing the BBQ meat packs and the raffle prizes.

Paul Nevill has retired from active duties with the Bar and Theme night cooking. Again, I wish to thank Paul for all the working he has done for us.

Natalie Norman, our acting secretary, is unable to continue in this role full time and is temporarily sharing the duties with Karl Edwards. We are looking for someone to take over the role as secretary.

Paul Shearer has now become our Welfare Officer.

Natalie Norman and Tanya Yaksich are now our Social organisers.

We need to remember (and appreciate) that everyone volunteers their time to carry out their duties at the RSL.



President's Report cont ...

#### Financial Matters

Our financial situation is very sound we continue to see small overall improvement in our cash position. New term deposits have been established to improve our interest returns. Our treasurer Barry is doing a marvellous job with the banking, accounts payments and bookkeeping.

#### Bar Situation

Due to insufficient trained staff, we are not be opening the bar on Sundays. I am hopeful that when we have recruited more staff, we will be able to resume Sunday trading and have a more flexible roster. The Bar officer will soon be undertaking a review of our drink prices. He will also be producing a Drinks price list.

#### Events and Activities

Australia Day BBQ this year was successful.

Theme night meals will now be held on the first Friday of the month and every other Friday will be our usual BBQ.

Our Social organisers are in the process of putting together an activity program for the rest of the year.

ANZAC day planning has begun, and two meetings have been held with CGG events staff.

The Geraldton Ladies Dart Association (GLDA) have been given permission to use our facilities every Tuesday evening for their activities and competitions.

The Sailors, Soldiers and Airman Trust recently held their AGM and elected new community members and are reviewing a new tenancy agreement between the RSL and the Trust.

#### Publicity

The next quarterly Bugle is being produced, and articles for inclusion are required in the next week.

We had a visit from the State Minister for Veterans matters, Paul Papalia MLA and our local member Lara Dalton MLA to hear about the activities the government are doing for the RSL and other Service organisations.

#### Membership

The Committee is investigating ways to make club more family friendly. Always open to suggestions.

Ken Morris, our Warden/Compliance officer, is investigating membership service awards.

#### Sponsorship

We continue to receive the generous sponsorship from Karara Mining which is helping with our raffle prizes and subsidising our BBQ pack prices.

Thank you

Michael Reymond, President Geraldton SB

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#### *Membership*

If your membership has lapsed could you please renew it, forms are available on the bookshelf next to the bar entrance.

*Ladies, you are invited to  
Coffee and Cake at Soul Food Café and Teahouse  
65 Chapman Road (old railway station, next to Centrelink)  
Thursday 13th March, 10:30am  
Cost: free (covered by the RSL)*

*RSVP essential to: Natalie 0409 973391 or Tanya 0427 921942  
If you need a lift please contact Tanya*

## *Meet the Members – Barry Lapham*

Barry grew up in Mt Hawthorn (a suburb of Perth). He was average at school and upon leaving school he did an apprenticeship as a carpenter and joiner.

In August 1959, Barry was called up for National Service for six months, which was followed by core training at the Royal Australian Artillery at Karrakatta and Swanbourne. He did 9 months of a three year term before the government regulations changed and his service was canceled.

Barry went back working—for the PWD (Public Works Department) as a tradesman. This was to only be for 6 months as PWD day labour force disbanded.

His next job was working at the University of Western Australia doing carpentry and maintenance.

He then sub-contracted for various builders doing floors, doors etc.

Barry then took up a position working for Brisbane and Wunderlich as a contractor doing aluminum windows and shop-fronts.

In the midst of all this, Barry married Estelle and they had two children—a son, Brett, born in 1968 and a daughter, Natalie, born in 1970.

Next, on the work front, Barry was offered the position of site supervisor on a multistory construction in the city for a year. When this finished he had a temporary career change as he went selling insurance—which he wasn't good at!

Fortunately, he was offered a job as a supervisor with the State Housing Commission in June 1982. In February 1984, he was transferred to the Geraldton branch. He was one of 4 supervisors in the Geraldton office and their area covered as far out as Meekatharra.

Then, Barry applied for and gained a position as a PWD/ BMA Building Construction supervisor.

He retired in 2006 at the age of 66. In retirement he continued to do some maintenance work.

Barry loves to go offshore fishing. He played drums in dance bands and a jazz band here in Geraldton called Ain't Misbehaving. He played cricket as a young man and along with Estelle he volunteered at Marine Rescue. In fact, he still volunteers at Marine Rescue and has now completed 35 years of service.

Barry and Estelle travelled many times overseas—mainly to Asia, but also to London, Paris and Ireland.

Barry is a committed Christian and attends Lighthouse (Uniting) Church.

Sadly Estelle, passed away in 2024.

Barry is a member of our RSL committee and is responsible for planning and organizing the new windows in the outdoor area.



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## *Places of Pride film*

The Australian War Memorial's new main entrance now features a cinematic short film, *Places of Pride*, showcasing the diversity of memorials across Australia that honour the service and sacrifice of our nation's veterans.

Over 40 locations nationwide were filmed to capture a range of memorials, monuments, plaques and unique sites that commemorate those who served in times of war, conflict and peacekeeping operations.

"Our aim was to showcase the diversity of commemoration across Australia and highlight as many different types of service as possible. All states and territories are represented, as well as each arm of defence and all major conflicts," said Terri-Anne Simmonds, Head of Digital Experience at the Australian War Memorial.

Filming took place throughout 2024, with the finished film ready for the opening of the Memorial's new Main Entrance.

The film is an extension of the *Places of Pride* project, an Australian War Memorial initiative launched in 2018 to record and photograph every war memorial across the country.

To access an online version of the final film, please use the following link:

<https://placesofpride.awm.gov.au/film>

(HMAS Sydney II Memorial is featured at about the 24 minute mark)

## *5 Reasons to Choose Legal Representation for Veteran Compensation Claims*

Veterans applying for compensation through the Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) for service-relating injuries and/or conditions often seek support to guide them through the process.

Here are five key reasons why legal representation may be the best choice:

### **1. Formal Legal Training & Registration**

Applying for compensation from DVA is a formal legal process, so it is important for anyone representing veterans in this process to be legally trained, registered and insured. This expertise enables lawyers to navigate complicated cases effectively, ensuring claims are supported appropriately to maximise compensation.

### **2. Access to Veteran-Focused Medical Experts**

In addition to fully qualified lawyers, legal firms specialising in veteran compensation often have an established network of veteran-focused medical professionals, including doctors, specialists, and psychiatrists who are experienced in providing expert evidence to support the legal claims.

### **3. Delays in Resolution and Outcomes**

Legal firms specialising in veteran compensation have well resourced teams and streamlined processes, offering full-time support, dedicated case management, and faster response times.

This ensures claims are prioritised and handled without unnecessary delays.

### **4. Clear Fee Structures**

Legal firms specialising in veteran compensation are required to clearly set out their fee structures and are prohibited from charging a percentage of a veteran's compensation.

This ensures that veterans know what fees they will be charged at all times and are not penalised if they receive a large amount of compensation.

### **5. Proactivity and Scope**

Legal firms specialising in veteran compensation are not bound by the processes determined by ADTP training, they are only bound by the relevant legislation.

This enables them to adopt a more proactive approach which ensures veterans receive the full scope of compensation and benefits they are entitled to. Additionally, legal firms specialising in veteran compensation often handle retrospective medical discharge claims.

## **Weighing Your Options**

As a compensation claim is a legal process, having an expert legal team to help navigate the process and maximise your compensation is highly recommended. Specialist legal representation offers a more comprehensive, efficient, and tailored approach, addressing the unique complexities of each case and delivering better outcomes.

This information is from the Veteran Benefits Australia website <https://veteranbenefitsaustralia.com/>

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## *What Time Is It?*

During the planning stages of a very large military operation, Operations HQ received a radio request for a "Time Check."

The Operations HQ lackey asks, "Who's calling?"

"What difference does that make?"

"It makes a lot of difference," says the lackey. "If you're a Reservist Unit, it's 3 o'clock. If you're an Infantry Unit, it's 1500 hrs. If you're the Navy, it's six bells. If you're the Armoured Corps, the big hand is on the 12 and the small hand is on the 3. If you're the Artillery Corps, it's Thursday afternoon."



## *Letter from Ex-Services Organisation Round Table*

Dear ESORT\* members,

In a significant milestone for the veteran community, Parliament passed the *Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2024* (the VETS Act) on 13 February 2025.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide's Interim Report highlighted that the veterans' claims system is too complex and hard to navigate.

The VETS Act, once it takes effect from 1 July 2026, will mean that the existing tri-Act system will be replaced with a single Act: an improved *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA). Importantly, there will be no reduction in benefits currently received by DVA clients.

The new system will make it easier for veterans and families to understand what supports and compensation they are entitled to. It will also make claims-processing less complicated for DVA staff.

The legislation will commence on 1 July 2026 to ensure veterans and families have enough time to understand how they might be affected and make plans for their individual circumstances. Training will also be provided to ex-service organisation advocates and DVA staff.

In the meantime, you'll find information about Legislation Reform on our website including a range of scenarios, factsheets and frequently asked questions that will help veterans and families to understand how the changes may affect them. Please note that DVA staff cannot give individualised advice on this matter. During the passage of the VETS Act through the Senate, the Bill was amended to include a new Schedule 9 which amends the *Defence Act 1902* (Defence Act) to establish the Defence and Veterans' Services Commission (the Commission). The establishment of the Commission was recommended by the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide in recommendation 122 of its Final Report. The relevant provisions establishing the Commission commence on 29 September 2025.

The amendments include two important review provisions in relation to the establishment of the Commission.

The first of these is Section 5 of the VETS Act, which provides that the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee will review the legislation establishing the Commission and report by 29 August 2025. As you would be aware, on 17 January 2025, the Government appointed Mr Michael Manthorpe PSM as the Interim Head of the Defence and Veterans' Service Commission. Mr Manthorpe will work with the Senate and the Government during this period on the review of the legislation prior to its commencement.

The second of these review provisions is new Section 110ZLE of the Defence Act, which provides for an independent review of the operation of this Part to be undertaken 36 months after commencement of the relevant provisions on 29 September 2025.

These review processes will provide the opportunity for the veteran community to be further consulted on this important legislation.

Lastly, in addition to the passage of the VETS Act through Parliament, I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to a motion that was passed by the Senate on 13 February 2025 supporting a Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee inquiry into advocacy services for veterans. I will provide further information about this process in due course.

I would like to thank all the veterans, Defence personnel, families, advocates and experts who have been involved in the legislation reform process. Your feedback has genuinely been vital in developing the pathway to, and the nuance of, this legislation. Legislation reform is a concrete step towards improving how we deliver services, in response to the Royal Commission.

Yours sincerely

Alison Frame  
Secretary  
Department of Veterans' Affairs



## *Naval Association of Australia – Geraldton Sub-Section*

2024 closed with our Christmas Lunch at the Geraldton Hotel and a day at the races a week later. Both events were very enjoyable and involved a lot of eating. A thank you to Gary for organizing both events.

Breakfast on the foreshore near the Horizon Dome was held in late January. Members had the opportunity to bring their own and/or BBQ. Most availed themselves of the Zuma Coffee Cart which sold yummy toasties and, naturally, coffee.

The H.M.A.S Voyager Memorial Service was held late afternoon on the 10th February with the Naval Cadets in attendance. This event was run jointly between the RSL and the NAA.

Our final race day for this season is Thursday 20th March. Our next General Meeting is programmed for Saturday 05th April preceded by the AGM. A number of our members are away travelling so we wish them well and a safe return.

*Pat McLeod, President NAA Geraldton Sub-Section*



Ena (aged 95)









## QUOTES FROM BRITISH MILITARY ANNUAL STAFF APPRAISALS

1. His men would follow him anywhere but only out of curiosity.
2. I would not breed from this Officer.
3. This man is depriving a village somewhere of its idiot.
4. This Officer can be likened to a small puppy - he runs around excitedly, leaving little messes for other people to clean up.
5. This Officer is really not so much of a has-been, more of a definitely won't-be.
6. When she opens her mouth it seems only to change whichever foot was previously in there.
7. Couldn't organise 50% leave in a 2-man submarine.
8. He has carried out each and every one of his duties to his entire satisfaction.
9. He would be out of his depth in a car park puddle.
10. Technically sound but socially impossible.
11. The occasional flashes of adequacy are marred by an attitude of apathy and indifference.
12. When he joined my ship this Officer was something of a granny; since then he has aged considerably.
13. This Medical Officer has used my ship to carry his genitals from port to port, and my officers to carry him from bar to bar.
14. This Officer reminds me very much of a gyroscope, always spinning around at a frantic pace but not really going anywhere.
15. Since my last report he has reached rock bottom and has started to dig.
16. She sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them.
17. He has the wisdom of youth and the energy of old age.
18. This Officer should go far and the sooner he starts, the better.
19. In my opinion this pilot should not be authorised to fly below 250 feet.
20. The only ship I would recommend for this man is citizenship.
21. Couldn't organise a woodpecker's picnic in Sherwood Forest.
22. Works well when under constant supervision and cornered like a rat in a trap.
23. Not the sharpest knife in the drawer.
24. Gates are down, the lights are flashing but the train isn't coming.
25. Has two brains; one is lost and the other is out looking for it.
26. If he were any more stupid he'd have to be watered twice a week.
27. Got into the gene pool while the lifeguard wasn't watching.
28. If you stand close enough to him you can hear the ocean.
29. It's hard to believe that he beat 1 000 000 other sperm.
30. A room temperature IQ.
31. Got a full 6-pack but lacks the plastic thingy to hold it all together.
32. A gross ignoramus, 143 times worse than an ordinary ignoramus.
33. He has a photographic memory but has the lens cover glued on.
34. He has been working with glue too long.
35. When his IQ reaches 50 he should sell.
36. This man hasn't got enough grey matter to sole the flip-flop of a one legged budgie.
37. If two people are talking and one looks bored, he's the other one.
38. One-celled organisms would out score him in an IQ test.
39. He donated his body to science before he was done using it.
40. Fell out of the stupid tree and hit every branch on the way down.
41. He's so dense light bends around him.
42. If brains were taxed he'd get a rebate.
43. Some drink from the fountain of knowledge; he only gargled.
44. Takes him 1½ hours to watch 60 minutes.
45. Wheel is turning but the hamster is long dead.

## *Central Bureau and the end of the war*

Central Bureau consisted of intelligence personnel from Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and the Netherlands. Attached to General MacArthur's headquarters, its role was to support his South-West Pacific Area Command. Australian service personnel were from the Army, RAN and RAAF.

The organisation was initially located in Melbourne before moving to a large house called *Nyrambla* in Brisbane in late 1942. The Australian personnel were responsible for traffic analysis, which required them to study the ebb and flow of messages between Japanese army and navy units, and to keep track of who was sending messages and who was receiving them. The American personnel were responsible for cryptanalysis, which required them to break Japanese codes and ciphers in order to read encrypted messages.

Central Bureau was also responsible for communications security. In support of this effort, members of the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS) were set up in the garage at *Nyrambla*. Here, they sent and received encrypted communications using British TypeX encryption machines, communicating with units deployed in the Pacific and with Australian, US and UK signals intelligence counterparts around the country and the world. These women were known as the 'Garage Girls'. They also decrypted intercepted Japanese communications.

In May 1944, following the Allied invasion of Hollandia in Operation Reckless, Central Bureau moved there. In October they moved to Leyte and at the end of the war they were based in San Miguel on Luzon. After the war, they were transferred to Tokyo.

On August 14, Emperor Hirohito sent a message through Swiss diplomats that Japan would capitulate under the terms of the Potsdam Declaration. On the morning of August 15, MacArthur was notified of the emperor's offer of surrender. However, at this point it was still just an offer. MacArthur and General Akin summoned the Central Bureau Australian army officer Major Stan "Pappy" Clark to Manila to make contact with the Japanese. After trying to contact Radio Tokyo and various Japanese army frequencies Clark was finally able to make contact with a Japanese diplomatic station in Singapore. Following this, a secret Japanese delegation was organised to travel to Manila to meet MacArthur. Akin offered Clark a commission in the US Army to come to Japan, but Clark refused, saying "I've had enough. I want to go home".

Central Bureau continued to intercept Japanese communications in the days following the end of the war, providing information on how Japanese forces were reacting to the surrender. Other intercepts regarded information on the condition and treatment of Allied prisoners-of-war. Dufty claims that although these intercepts were "clear evidence" those prisoners had been mistreated; they could never be used in a war crimes trial without jeopardising Ultra's secrets.

### **Sources**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central\\_Bureau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Bureau)

<https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/asd-stories/2022-03-15-asds-origin-story>

*Mark Gilligan*



### *Writing Your Will*

RSL WA have partnered with an online business called Gathered Here. You can go online and write your will for free.

Here is some information from their website ....

*A gift in your Will allows you to make a meaningful contribution for future generations. Even if you haven't been able to donate during your lifetime, a gift in your Will provides a way to support a cause close to your heart.*

*Big or small, your gift will help us continue to support veterans with a range of services well into the future. Together, let's ensure a bright future for all Australian veterans.*

If you would like to go online and write your will and/or leave a bequest in your will to the RSL, go to the following link— <https://www.rslwa.org.au/get-involved/gift-in-will>



## *Geraldton Legacy Group Report*

At our Annual General Meeting on 16th November 2024, I was elected as Group Chairman taking over from Legatee David Dunn. Thank you, David, for your contribution to the group over your term as Group Chairman.

Our Christmas Pudding sales were again popular with funds raised being used for the ongoing work of Legacy in supporting our War Widows and children of ex-servicemen.

The Laurel Club ladies continue to meet socially on the first Monday of each month, however they cancelled the February meeting due to the hot weather conditions. Thank you, Barbara, for your efforts in arranging these social get-togethers.

The next fund-raising event for Legacy will be our annual badge day. This year it will be held on Thursday 24th April.

I would like to sincerely thank Geraldton RSL for allowing us to use Birdwood House for our monthly meetings and for the monthly social event for the Laurel Club.

*Jeff Klar      Group Chairman, Geraldton Legacy*



### **Laurel Club Ladies**

Meet on the 1st Monday of every month (regardless of public holidays) at Birdwood House - 10:30 am  
Tea and Coffee available prior to meeting.

**All War Widows Welcome.**

### *Contacts*

#### **Executive Committee:**

##### **President:**

[Mike Reymond](#) 0427 569 515

##### **Vice President:**

[Karl Edwards](#) 0417 952 916

##### **Treasurer:**

[Barry Stinson](#) 0408 222 653

##### **Secretary:**

#### **Committee:**

##### **Bar Manager:**

[Glenn Law](#) 0427 442 504

##### **Public Relations Officer:**

[Scott Norman](#) 0409 573 391

##### **Assistant Public Relations Officer:**

[Natalie Norman](#) 0409 973 391

##### **Welfare Officer:**

[Paul Shearer](#) 0498 486 270

##### **Membership Officer:**

[Mike Marsh](#) 0458 806 311

##### **Warden:**

[Ken Morris](#) 0427 010 548

#### **Committee:**

Barry Lapham

Tanya Yaksich

Andrew Broadley

#### **Committee Meetings**

Monday 1700 hrs

10th March

14th April

12th May

9th June

### *Hospital Visitation*

If you know someone who is in hospital; and would like visit please call Gillian Sharp (0439 956244) and she will go and see them.

### *Geraldton and District Senior Citizens Action Group (Inc) News*

#### **Seniors Action Group meets every**

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month for a meeting and lunch (\$15)

Venue: QE2 Centre, Durlacher Street      Time: 10am Morning Tea

Come and Join us, have fun and make new friends

Next Lunch Meeting is Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2025

**CARPET BOWLS:** All day Mondays from 8.30am

**DARTS:** 9am Monday Mornings

**TABLE TENNIS:** 1pm Monday Afternoons

**CARDS:** 1pm Friday afternoon

AGE GROUP: 50 YEARS AND OVER.      Cost \$5

**ALL WELCOME**

### **Birdwood Military Museum President**

[Barry Stinson](#)  
0408 222 653

#### **Secretary**

[Mark Gilligan](#)  
9938 1911

#### **Treasurer**

[Mike Marsh](#)  
0458 806 311

### **THE NEXT EDITION**

Contributions for Winter Bugle 2025 (sent out 1st June 2025) can be emailed to Bugle Editor [editorbirdwoodbugle@gmail.com](mailto:editorbirdwoodbugle@gmail.com) or dropped into the RSL at Birdwood House. Deadline for Autumn Bugle is 25th May 2025. No articles can be accepted after that date.

Earlier makes it easier for the editor to get the Bugle assembled, printed and circulated on time. Items generally should not exceed 400 words with pictures and 500 words without pictures.

**Sender**

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