

# Department of Hawaii “Yanks Down Under” Post AU01 Sydney, Australia March 2015



Hope one and all enjoyed our nice warm summer. If it was too hot for some of you just spare a thought for our friends up there in the eastern United States still struggling through the snow, ice and extremely low temperatures.

Hope this finds all our members and their families in our Legion Family healthy and happy and looking forward to participating in the upcoming events and commemorations in Sydney or in your areas of residence in other states and areas of New South Wales away from the “big smoke” (Sydney).

**MEMBERSHIP:** As of the end of February we have 88 members paid for 2015, this is 7 less than 2014. Five of our comrades passed on to the Post Everlasting in 2014, we gained 2 new members and 4 have not renewed. Of those 4, 2 have returned to the USA and hopefully will transfer to a Post where they settle. We're still “working” on the other two. For our 88 2015 members (so far) THANK YOU for your support of your Post.

Some have asked why we don't see more of our members throughout the year. Good question, here is the answer. Most Posts are “neighborhood” Posts or Posts where the majority (90% or more) live in the same locality. We are not so lucky. When our Post was chartered 100% resided in the Sydney area. Then some moved back to the USA with their new Aussie brides. Now, these were ALL World War 2 veterans. By 1967 when the first R&R troops from Vietnam arrived some of those WW2 vets had growing families, “children” in their late teens and early 20's and the WW2 Vet “daddy” was maturing and they started to move out of the big city to “the countryside” such as central coast NSW, Queensland etc. Additionally there were no veterans on R&R during the Korean War, R&R then, if you got one was to Japan and that's it. By 1975 our Post averaged about 45 members and in the late-1970's two Posts were chartered in Brisbane and one in Cairns. By the late 1970's Vietnam veterans moved here with their new Aussie brides and our Post began once again to prosper and by 1981 we had over 100 members. Now, our WW1 and some of our WW2 vets, yes we had two WW1 vets, have passed away and the WW2 veterans were aging and our Post was losing a lot of these original or charter members and as of this year we would have 21 who served in WW2, many are over 90, yes 90-98 in fact 10% of our members are 90 or more. Of the three Posts in Queensland only Post AU03 in Brisbane is still active. Our Vietnam veterans are in, entering or above and beyond Social Security age. Not many new veterans are moving to Australia as it is not only a bit expensive to live here but many new arrivals are shocked at the price of houses. Remember that 3 bedroom house you bought in the 1970's? \$20,000-\$25,000 is now selling for \$650,000-\$900,000 and not brand new. That in a nutshell is why our membership is declining a bit. So, where do these 88 members live? 32 live in

Sydney (3 are over 90), 29 in country New South Wales, 2 in Victoria, 2 in Western Australia, 6 in Queensland, 1 in South Australia, 15 in the USA and 1 in Thailand. Again THANK YOU for your support.



**FRIDAY MARCH 27<sup>th</sup>:** Battles of the Java Sea and Coral Sea Memorial Service and wreath laying 10:30 for 11:00 at the Cenotaph in Martin Place, Sydney. This will be the 73<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of both these battles. The battle of the Java Sea began shortly after the invasion of Malaya and the fall of Singapore on Feb. 15, 1942 with the loss of two British battleships the HMAS Prince of Wales and Renown and continued to the last engagement on March 4<sup>th</sup>. Five allied navies were involved with the loss of 33 allied ships and many personnel taken prisoner. The US Navy lost seven ships including the heavy cruiser USS Houston. The battle of the Coral Sea was fought off the northeast coast Australia May 4-8, 1942 with

the US Navy losing 3 ships, the aircraft carrier USS Lexington with loss of 218 personnel and 36 aircraft, the destroyer USS Sims and tanker USS Neosho. Australian ships in the battle were HMAS Australia and HMAS Hobart. This was the first sea battle in which opposing surface navies never sighted each other. It was also significant for the Japanese never advanced further south after the battle of the Coral Sea.

**The guest of honor will be the new Governor of New South Wales General David Hurley AC DSC (Rtd) and guest speaker, The Fleet Commander, Rear Admiral Stuart Mayer CSC BAR RAN.**

Please notify the Post Commander if you are attending and can assist with our American Legion banner.

(For our Australian comrades, a translation...honor means honour).

**Sunday April 12<sup>th</sup>:** Merchant Navy & Merchant Marine Memorial Service 10:30 for 11:00 at the Chapel adjacent to the Merchant Navy Lawn Cemetery at the corner of Necropolis and Hawthorne Aves., Rookwood Cemetery, Lidcombe NSW.

**Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup>: ANZAC Day & CENTENURY OF THE LANDING AT GALLIPOLI**

Our form up area, in Sydney, is the same as in the past few years northern end of Pitt Street Mall facing King Street (that's toward the harbor in case you left your compass at home). We may be asked to move into King Street by the Marshall's like last year. The RSL authorities say we SHOULD step off about 11:45 but that is just a guess, so we suggest you arrive at least before 11:30. There will be an Australian Army Land Rover to carry those who cannot march but remember at the end of the march you are on your own, no ride back to the Combined Services Club (if you wish) and it is in Barrack St NOT Barack St.!! We usually have 30-35 marching with quite a few members come from "country NSW" traveling anywhere from 50-100 miles. Please assist Sgt-at-Arms Bill Earls rolling up the flags at the conclusion. Hopefully as in past years we will have Army Cadets from Barker College to carry the flags.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY** to JOHN GRANT who turns 95 on March 16<sup>th</sup>, RALPH FERBER 97 on March 24<sup>th</sup> and JACK SAVAGE who will be a spry 98 on April 16<sup>th</sup>. . **GOOGONYA BOYS!!**

**March 15<sup>th</sup> The American Legion will be 97, The National Convention this year will be August 28<sup>th</sup> to September 3 in Baltimore, Maryland**



ERN FLINT was awarded an OAM (Order of Australia Medal) in the Australia Day Honors for his service to the US Army Small Ships Association of which he was President. Already has an MBE what next Ern, a Knighthood? Congrats!!

Not many travelling (yet) so far this year but in early March the Post Commander has been designated Official Baggage Attendant for the Auxiliary Unit President Sonja Raymond who will taking a short visit to the colonies.

In May and June GEORGE & KATHIE FOSTER will be off to Europe visiting various WW1 and WW2 battlefields. One in particular will be the Somme where an old friend of Kathie and her family, Tom Ellis who served in WW1 and also was a member of our Post. They have no knowledge of what unit he served in but know that he did serve in the Somme. Can anyone who remembers Tom Ellis help with any information about Tom? The records when Tom was a Post member are very scant unfortunately. Ralph Ferber or Phil O'Hearn may recall Tom. No, they weren't in WW1 just Post members way back when Tom was a member.

George will be with us ANZAC Day so if anyone remembers something about Tom pass it on and I will see George gets it.

Ed Dickey, our Post member residing up yonder in Thailand, won't be with us ANZAC Day this year, instead he is going to Hellfire Pass site of the infamous pass dug thru mountains by allied Prisoners of War on the Burma Railway during WW2. The movie Bridge on the River Kwai was loosely based upon this event.

ANYONE have some news for the next newsletter?????

**Thought for the day:** Some days you are the pigeon and some days  
you're the statue



Thank You for your Support!!

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