



BULLETIN 16 - 21 October 2021



Roger Rigby provided one of the most interesting presentations in the history of our club. Roger was born in Leeds England and migrated to Australia in 1981. On retirement, 10 years ago, Roger and wife Carol moved to Nelson Bay. Roger on observing a school excursion exploring WW2 history in the area embarked on a study of local wartime activities of Australian and allied troops. At the peak of the Allied Pacific campaign in World War 2, more than 20,000 American and British troops were based in the Shoal Bay area of Port Stephens. Shoal Bay's famous Country Club was requisitioned to become a headquarters for part

of the amphibious warfare training area Joint Overseas Operations Training Services.

The Royal Australian Navy called its training establishment HMAS Assault, and the ships HMAS Westralia, HMAS Manoora, HMAS Kanimbla and USS Henry T. Allen were frequently in the port, along with more than 130 other vessels of varying sizes. The Westralia (a commandeered civilian vessel) was used as temporary accommodation until shore facilities were built. Roger outlined the development of HMAS Assault which consisted of many buildings including the main operation centre which became a community hospital and currently community arts centre following the war. It has been estimated that



about 2,000 allied troops a month passed through the training centre until it closed in October 1943. The troops learned the skills they would need to mount landings from amphibious craft. They made actual landings at such peaceful places as Zenith, Wreck and Box beaches.

Roger's interest extended to the gun placements and tunnels

Tunnel Evidence Summary

1. An eye witness saw trucks coming and going into a tunnel.
2. Multiple eye witnesses played in air vet tunnels
3. Advised by US Navy of an underground Torpedo Maintenance Depot
4. Need for Secret Base to modify the US type 14 torpedo.
5. Large amount of andesite tailings on shore line
6. Road down to shore line from tunnel site
7. Large andesite rocks found with wedging drill marks
8. Artificial sand hill built to camouflage entrance
9. Large amount of hardened rock mix near entrance
10. Heavy duty power line leading to tunnel entrance
11. Large heavy duty rail wagon wheels used on jetty out to deep water
12. Photo of a submarine anchored off Fly Point

reportedly dug under Fly Point and Shoal



Bay. Roger has found significant evidence of the tunnels. He commented on the explorations of Charles Tennyson and Mark Rawson who were granted permission by Port Stephens Council to undertake archaeological investigations and begin excavating in the vicinity of a former defence site at

Fly Point in Nelson Bay. Roger cited the above incidents as evidence of the tunnels.

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LUCKY WINNERS:

H&T: Don Whatham

RAFFLE: Craig Paroissien.

BIRTHDAYS:

22 Oct: Fiona Whatham & Marianne McBean, 28 Oct: Mary Michel & Peter Buckley

ANNIVERSARIES:

23 Oct: Ian & Debbie Brigden

DUTIES 28 Oct:

Speakers: Craig Paroissien – Behind the Badge & Isaac Charles - NYSF

Welcome: Warwick Mathieson

Introduce Speakers: Geoff Diemar

Thank Speakers: John Stuhmcke

Bulletin: John Cropley.

Photos: Phill Smith

Binoculars: Dieter Greiter

Next meeting – **Apologies/Extras to Phil Smith on Wednesday by noon Ph 0401 450 239**

COMING EVENTS.

Sunday 24 Oct: Bunnings BBQ – AM: John Stuhmcke, Lesley Freeman, Sue Williams. PM: Don Whatham, Chris Bartlett plus friends and family of Isaac Charles.

Thursday 28 Oct – Club meeting -Craig Paroissien - Behind the Badge, Isaac Charles – NYSF.

Thursday 4 Nov: – Club meeting – Stephen Keating – Photography in the Digital age. Dinner Ladies in the Club Bistro.

Saturday 6 Nov: - Bunnings BBQ – community BBQ for Karuah Landcare Group.

Wednesday 10 Nov: Board meeting

Thursday 12 Nov: Club Assembly – Board reports.

Saturday 27 Nov: Bunnings BBQ – community BBQ for Port Stephens Koalas

Saturday 4 Dec: Club Christmas Party at CWA hall at 4.00pm

Thursday 9 Dec: Club AGM – Nominations for President, Secretary, Treasurer and Directors to Secretary Chris ASAP.

Fri to Sun 18 to 20 March 2022: D9670 Conference at Newcastle. Bookings open. Accommodation available Stockton Caravan Park inquiries VP Don