

## PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS – DECEMBER 2016

***Christmas Greetings to you all. May 2017 be a happy and healthy new year for you and your families.***

With our change of venue for our meetings I feel we have new opportunities for growth, whilst consolidating our loyal membership. Notification of our various activities through the Waverley RSL Mailing list of 900 email addresses, not only is very generous of the RSL, but is an offer which provides us with access to like minded folk. In reality the ball is now in our court and it is up to us to capitalize on this splendid opportunity.

The Sunset room is superb location and it has excellent facilities. Our 'End of year function' in November was a great success, and Pattie Wright's address is available both on the NHS of A and also Navy Victoria Web sites, as a pod cast. It is certainly worth listening to again. During our meeting we took the opportunity to bid farewell to our SNO and CO of HMAS Cerberus, Captain Stephen Bowater OAM, and his wife Julliene. We have enjoyed their company amongst us for the last three years and wish both of them 'God Speed'!



***19 years as Treasurer is a tremendous feat! Recognition of such sterling service was given by our National President, Secretary, and committee with a certificate of Life Membership, of which I had the honour of presenting to our treasurer George Bird at our 'End of Year 'function. Life members are a pretty exclusive group of folk and it gave me great personal pleasure to recognise both George and Betty, during the presentation. The compassion shown by both Betty and George to their friends and colleagues, going through tough times is legend.***

We begin our activities for 2017 in February with an opportunity for our 'Naval Family' to meet our new SNO and CO of HMAS Cerberus, Captain Tim Standen CSC RAN. Captain Standen joined the RAN as an Apprentice Air Technical Communications sailor at the age of 16. Over the next 37 years he had numerous postings, including squadrons, Flights, Ships, RAAF and Tri-Service organisations, conducting maintenance and attaining qualifications on the AG-4 Skyhawk, Macchi jet trainers Squirrel, Sea Hawk and Sea King helicopters, as well as aviation ground navigation aids, airborne EW systems and fundamental communications theory. Promoted to PO in 1989, to CPO in 1994 he spent three years working in the Project SEA 1411 acquisition project office. Promoted to WOATV in 1998 he spent three years as Assistant Aviation Engineer Officer (AAEO) in 817 SQN. Captain Standen served in the INTERFET intervention in East Timor, a deployment he found particularly rewarding in that the immediate and visible beneficial effect the INTERFET realised for the people of East Timor at the time.

A period of long service leave followed in 2000 and he returned from leave in 2001 with duty at HMAS Albatross as the Warrant Officer-aviation support workshops contact liaison officer in Naval Aviation Systems program Office.

Commissioned to the rank of LEUT in Jan 2003, LCDR in 2004, CMDR in 2009 and CAPT in February this year, his current position is Director Maritime Safety Bureau.

What I have written is just a brief resume of Captain Standen's career in our RAN. Monday February 27th is when you learn more and meet with him. A number of us will enjoy our evening meal in the Warramunga

Restaurant when it opens at 1730. Our meeting will begin upstairs in the Sunset Room at 1830. **The title of the SNO's address will be: 'An introduction by the new Commanding Officer of HMAS Cerberus, Captain Tim Standen CSC RAN'.**

Captain Standen is keen to meet our Melbourne Naval Family and it is our intention to encourage other Naval organisations to join at 1730 or be there at 1830. Either way they are welcome!

### **REX'S ODYSSEY PART 11- SEPTEMBER 2015**

On September 1st, I left Portsmouth bound to Caen in France. I had booked two tours, one of the British Sector and the other, the American.

Unfortunately time restraints prevented me from taking the Canadian sector tour. I was based in Caen and was told by the locals that 80% of the city had been destroyed during the Battle for Caen, from June-August 1944. The Allies had planned to take Caen on the first day, however German resistance was strong. The Memorial de Caen Museum (Peace museum) was



established by the City of Caen on top of the site of the bunker of General William Richter, the Commander of



the German 716th division. Opened on D Day 1988 it is an excellent museum. When I was there it had a huge statue out front based on the famous black and white picture of the American Sailor sweeping a girl off her feet and kissing her during VJ Day 'Victory over Japan' day, August 14th 1945, celebrations in Times Square. I was informed that it is a temporary exhibit.

**American sector tour:** We visited Omaha beach, saw where the US Rangers scaled the cliffs. We saw gun emplacements; explored bunkers; saw the remains of the two Mulberry harbours which were wrecked by the three day storm which began on June 19th in the English Channel; and visited the beautiful American cemetery.



The next day I was very fortunate in that I was the only one booked on the British tour and had an excellent guide all to myself. Having enjoyed CMDR Jim Speed's accounts of his adventures as a Beach Commando I thought a lot about Jim and his colleagues on Sword beach. We are so privileged to have Jim's eye witness account as a-pod cast for posterity. The current Pegasus Bridge over the Caen canal, is a recent one, and is situated nearby the original. You can view an interesting museum, and we marvel at the bravery of the glider pilots

who made the initial attack. My guide and I visited cemeteries, memorials etc.. Although badly damaged during the war, there are still a number of medieval buildings still standing in Caen, and there are some of the buildings that go back to William the Conqueror, when he was Duke of Normandy. In fact, William is buried in the Abbey of Saint Etienne in Caen.

**YOURS AYE!!**

**REX WILLIAMS**