



News from around the Club

Breakfast meeting April 5th

We'll be having a breakfast meeting on the Thursday April 5th, the day before Easter (similar to what we do the week of Christmas).

Mega Raffle

Group 1's winner was Cheryle, group two's Greg.

CUB Visit

The date for our visit to CUB will be at 10am on April 26th. The visit includes a tour of the brewery, and beer tasting. After the tour we'll have lunch at a local restaurant. This visit will replace our regular weekly meeting.

Thanks to those who supported the MEGA meeting last week to hear guest speaker Jim Marett, President of the Tunnel Rats Association, from the comments received it was thought to be most worthwhile.

We would also seek your support for another outstanding speaker, one perhaps whom we should have kept for the next MEGA meeting.

The week after this, Thursday 18th April we have Commodore Dacre Smyth AO RAN (Ret) a recognised speaker on ships and the Navy. In 2004 Commodore Smyth was awarded France's highest honour - Knight in the Order of the Legion of Honour, by President Chirac. It is the highest award given for meritorious service to France, to citizens of France or other countries, without regard to rank.

His father Major-General Sir Nevill Smyth VC was awarded the Victoria Cross at Kharoum in 1898 and commanded the 1st Australian Brigade at Gallipoli (including Lone Pine), his courage at Gallipoli won the respect of Australian troops that was never lost, he then commanded the 2nd Australian Division in Europe. He moved to Australia in the 1920s. He was a first cousin to Baden Powell the founder of the Scouting movement

Commodore Dacre Smyth a gifted speaker is also a competent artist and writer.

Guest speaker

Our guest speaker was Jim Marett, who is Branch President of the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association.

The report about this presentation has been removed at the request of the guest speaker.



Upcoming Club Program

Thursday April 5	Breakfast	Fellowship meeting (day before Good Friday)
Thursday April 12	Lunchtime	Paula Gleeson; My UN Journey
Thursday April 19	Lunchtime	Commodore Dacre Smyth AO RAN (Retd) Topic: The Ships That Brought Us To Australia.
Thursday April 26	Lunchtime	CUB visit and lunch in Collingwood/Abbotsford

News from elsewhere

DG Bernie's Weekly Message **RAIN WILL FOLLOW DROUGHT**

I invite you to look close to home at this time as the need is great, caused by the drought that has gripped many parts of Australia. I have no ready answer but I hope to make you stop and think about what we can do for our fellow Australians who are suffering and who are in the depths of depression.

This is a poem written by a real farmer to highlight the seriousness of the depression being suffered out there on the land. His name is Murray "Muzza" Hartin and he wrote this last month in response to a request to write something for the Salvation Army to bring awareness to the general public about rural suicide.

Rain From Nowhere

His cattle didn't get a bid, they were fairly bloody poor,
What was he going to do? He couldn't feed them anymore
The dams were all but dry, hay was thirteen bucks a bale,
Last month's talk of rain was just a fairytale.

His credit had run out, no chance to pay what's owed,
Bad thoughts ran through his head as he drove down Gully Road
"Geez, great granddad bought the place back in 1898
Now I'm such a useless bastard, I'll have to shut the gate.
Can't support my wife and kids, not like dad and those before
Even Grandma kept it going while Pop fought in the war".
With depression now his master, he abandoned what was right
There's no place in life for failures, he'd end it all tonight.

There were still some things to do, he'd have to shoot the cattle first,
Of all the jobs he'd ever done, that would be the worst
He'd have a shower, watch the news, then they'd all sit down for tea
Read his kids a bedtime story, watch some more TV,
Kiss his wife goodnight, say he was off to shoot some roos
Then in a paddock far away, he'd blow away the blues.
But he drove in the gate and stopped - as he always had
To check the roadside mailbox - and found a letter from his Dad.

Now, his Dad was not a writer, Mum did all the cards and mail
But he knew the style from the notebooks that he used at cattle sales,
He sensed the nature of the contents, felt moisture in his eyes,
Just the fact that Dad had written was enough to make him cry.
"Son, I know it's bloody tough, it's a cruel and twisted game,
This life upon the land when you're screaming out for rain
There's no candle in the darkness, not a single speck of light
But don't let the demon get you, you have to do what's right.

I don't know what's in your head but push the bad thoughts away
See, you'll always have your family at the back end of the day
You'll have to talk to someone, and yes, I know I rarely did
But you have to think about Fiona and think about the kids.
I'm worried about you son, you haven't rung for quite a while,
I know the road you're on 'cause I've walked every mile.
The date? December 7 back in 1983,
Behind the shed I had the shotgun rested in the brigalow tree.

See, I'd borrowed way too much to buy the Johnson place
Then it didn't rain for years and we got bombed with interest rates.
You said, "Where are you Daddy? It's time to play our game
I've got Squatter all set up, you might get General Rain".

It really was that close, you're the one that stopped me son,
And you're the one that taught me, there's no answer in a gun.
Just remember people love you, good friends won't let you down,
Look, you might have to swallow pride and get a job in town,
Just 'til things come good son, you've always got a choice
And when you get this letter, ring me, 'cause I'd love to hear your voice.

Well, he cried and laughed and shook his head then put the truck in gear,
Shut his eyes and hugged his Dad in a vision that was clear,
Dropped the cattle at the yards, put the truck away
Filled the troughs the best he could and fed his last ten bales of hay.
Then he strode towards the homestead, shoulders back and head held high,
He still knew the road was tough but there was purpose in his eye.

He called for his wife and children, who'd lived through all his pain,
Hugs said more than words - he'd come back to them again.
They talked of silver linings, how good times always follow bad,
Then he walked towards the phone, picked it up and rang his Dad.
And while the kids set up the Squatter, he hugged his wife again,
Then they heard the roll of thunder and they smelt the smell of rain.

Lead The Way and spread this around.

Bernie Walshe
District Governor