

# Friends of the Avenue Newsletter

January 2014

Hi Friends,

We hope that everyone has had a lovely break over the Festive Season and that 2014 will be a terrific year for you all.

So we can keep you updated on what has been happening at the Avenue and what the Afghanistan Avenue of Honour Association Inc. (AAHA) have been undertaking and events that are planned for 2014, we thought that a quarterly newsletter may be the best way to keep you informed. We appreciate that many of our 'Friends' do not live locally and may enjoy receiving some news from us.



Warren Entsch

AAHA Executive members are Ray Byrnes (President), David Osborne (Treasurer) and Annie Cork (Secretary). They are assisted by a small, but very hard-working and dedicated committee, consisting of Susan and Gordon Chuck, John Hardy, Shaaron Linwood and Craig Reedman. Councillor Rod Marti and Dean Davidson (General Manager, Community & Regional Planning) from Tablelands Regional Council (TRC) regularly attend our meetings and have been instrumental in fostering and continuing a collaborative link between the AAHA and Council. We are also honoured to have The Hon. Warren Entsch MP as our Patron.

Our aims and objectives are:

- To ensure that the Avenue of Honour is maintained at a standard befitting its status as a National Memorial.
- To plan and implement works aimed at improving the appearance, accessibility and maintenance operations at the Avenue of Honour site.
- To organize and oversee on-going fundraising activities for maintenance, improvements and activities conducted at the site.
- To raise awareness of the Avenue of Honour as a National Memorial through an active promotional campaign.
- To provide educational opportunities and resources for school children and the broader community to improve understanding of the significance of the Afghanistan conflict and its relevance to Australia's long term security.
- To ensure that the Association meets all its obligations as an incorporated body.
- To organise annual remembrance ceremonies relating to the Afghanistan war and support activities for any association or military unit that wish to hold similar ceremonies.



The Committee usually meet each month and attend to the numerous tasks that we have taken responsibility for, including overseeing the majority of the maintenance of the Avenue. The upkeep of the Illawarra Flame trees and irrigation system are the responsibility of TRC and many thanks to Don Napier and Jacob Grundling (Parks & Gardens) who are doing a great job with these duties.

We currently have a Memorandum of Understanding with Council until such time as a lease can be formally put into place. Essentially, TRC have two wonderful assets sitting side by side at Tinaburra and we have been developing a mutual working relationship with Amanda and Kris, who manage the Lakeside Motor Inn & Caravan Park. As well, we are delighted to have Chris Hartas who has recently been appointed as TRC Community Services Manager. Chris is an energetic lady who is full of enthusiasm and we look forward to working with her more closely in the future.



*Chris Hartas*



*Hugh Watson*

A local contractor has been engaged to do the mowing and a small group of volunteers meet each week at 4pm on a Thursday afternoon to carry out other sundry maintenance tasks. We are so very fortunate and appreciative of having the dedication and commitment of people who devote so much time, passion and energy into helping us, especially Hugh and Marion Watson and Ken Cork. Amongst the many other chores that these wonderful people perform on a regular basis, Hugh and Marion also reverently attend to the raising and lowering of the flags and actively participate with mini-working bees which are held each Thursday from 4pm.



*Marion Watson*



L-R (front): Martin Williams, Brenda & John van-Vegchel, Terry Twomey;  
(back) Kerry Diezmann, Ken Cork, John Hardy & Lyle Wakling

We also have a number of others who quietly and humbly assist us with ensuring that the Avenue is kept in pristine condition at all times. They regularly volunteer their time and, as many of you would have observed, these folk are at the Avenue on a regular basis and are the first ones to put up their hands when working bees are held.

As well, they frequently act as 'ambassadors' for us and spend a great deal of time speaking with the numerous visitors to the Avenue; many of whom have come from much further afield to pay their respects to the Fallen. So, a very large thank-you goes to our volunteers!!

Because so many people had approached us about their interest in the Avenue and wanted to be involved or help in some way, we decided to start a 'Friends of the Avenue' group a few months ago. Membership has grown rapidly and we currently have well over 200 people who are members of this group; many of whom are in the military or are ex-military. There are also numerous members who come from areas right across the entire country. As well, our 'Friends' have a variety of skills and quite a number have generously offered their talents, if needed.

This group meet regularly for social get-togethers which are usually held at Tinaburra in close proximity to the Avenue and we organise an occasional working bee. If you know people who may like to be part of this group, even if they do not live in this area, please feel free to pass on this newsletter to them and they can contact Annie on [corkies6@bigpond.com](mailto:corkies6@bigpond.com).



*L-R: Lyle Wakling & Gordon Chuck*



## Website

Many thanks to our local IT guru, James Leech and the assistance of Gordon Chuck, John Hardy and Shaaron Linwood, we now have our [www.avenueofhonour.com.au](http://www.avenueofhonour.com.au) website up and running.



James Leech

## Honour Board



The AAHA is also very appreciative of the financial contributions that Cairns RSL Sub Branch has provided in regard to having the correct badges assigned to each of the plaques on the Honour Board. In conjunction with Susan Chuck, Cairns RSL Sub Branch President, David Clifton and Kel Ryan (Honorary Colonel, 51st Battalion FNQR) have done an amazing job with this rather lengthy process. Kel, David and their wives, Jan and Coleen, are also members of the 'Friends of the Avenue' and we are very pleased to have their ongoing support and wise counsel.



Kel Ryan

We would be very remiss if we didn't mention Gus Petersen and Fraser McCulloch from Elefantus in Cairns. Gus and Fraser have not only done an outstanding job of constructing the Honour Board, but also all the other iron-work you see at the Avenue. These two guys not only continually demonstrate to us that they have stacks of ingenuity, but they are exceptionally talented, generous and always willing to assist us.

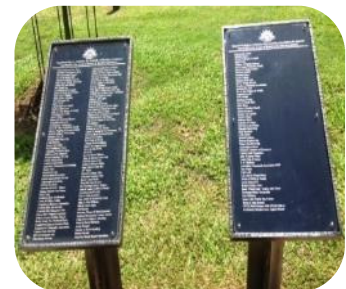
Even though Gus and Fraser are extremely busy, they have always shown that they are steadfast supporters of the Avenue. They are also very patient because they do tend to receive quite a number of 'big asks' and queries from us regarding potential new projects. Rumour has it that when Gus was recently installing the new plaques on the Honour Board and it was absolutely pelting down, he never wavered in his resolve to ensure that the plaques were installed, even though he was saturated to the bone and working in 'challenging' conditions.



L-R: Fraser McCulloch & Gus Petersen

## Benefactors' Boards

As many of you would have noticed, our Benefactors' Boards have now been updated to include the names of people/organisations who have made substantial donations since the Official Opening last June. Brett and Amanda at Pantographics Engraving Cairns have done a fantastic job with engraving these boards and they have carried out the majority of this work as in-kind donations to the Avenue. They have also recently advised us that they wish to continue updating the Benefactors' Boards at no cost to the AAHA, which we are greatly appreciative of. Thank you very much, Brett and Amanda!



In the words of our President, Ray Byrnes: *"While the Federal and State Governments did provide much needed 'start-up' grants for the project which were gratefully received, the great bulk of the funds required for construction and on-going maintenance of the Avenue has come from generous donations by private individuals and organisations. Therefore, to receive such generosity from so many people shows the strength of feeling and public support which this National Memorial has generated from its inception".*



## Remembrance Day 2013

At the time of Remembrance Day, we had only just received our incorporation and there had been a multitude of tasks that we needed to attend to, so the Committee decided that we did not have ample time or the resources to organise an official ceremony. However, a few of us decided we would still go to the Avenue and spend some quiet time and reflect on the sacrifices that our 40 brave young men gave in the fight against terrorism in the Afghanistan conflict.

To our surprise, over 70 people from all over the Tablelands, as well as from Cairns and Townsville, just turned up! Many of these folk are parents of sons or daughters who are either currently serving in Afghanistan or have been over there. Like us, they felt that they preferred to spend Remembrance Day at the Avenue and pay their respects to the Fallen.



Another wonderful surprise we experienced on the day was when six military personnel from the 5<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment in Townsville flew over the Avenue at two minutes to 11 in a Chinook. These soldiers then returned later in two taxis to lay a wreath, pay their respects to the Fallen and speak with us. Captain Tye Masterson said, *"It was our pleasure to attend your fine Afghanistan Avenue of Honour. Several of the guys who attended had not been there before and found it extremely moving, particularly because they personally knew several of the fallen men honoured at the Memorial"*.

It was such a moving experience and there wasn't a solitary person there who didn't have a tear in their eyes. The AAHA Committee and those families in attendance very much appreciated the 5<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment's participation in making our first Remembrance Day at the Avenue such a memorable and special occasion. Thanks guys!



## Date claimers - events/services planned for 2014

- ❖ Saturday night 5<sup>th</sup> April ~ Avenue & Soldier On Fundraising Ball, Mareeba RSL ~ being organised by Craig and Barb Reedman;
- ❖ ANZAC Dawn Service @ Avenue, 5am ~ being organised by AAHA & RAR (Lavarack Barracks);
- ❖ Saturday night 7<sup>th</sup> June, 6.30pm ~ Black Tie Dinner Dance at Lake Eacham Hotel, cost \$50 per person ~ being organised by Kay Moloney;
- ❖ Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June ~ Patriots Australia (Cairns Chapter) Charity Ride & Service;
- ❖ Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November ~ Remembrance Day Ceremony at the Avenue ~ being organised by AAHA & ADF (Lavarack Barracks);
- ❖ Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> & Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> November ~ 2014 Soldier On Triathlon ~ being organised by Tablelands Regional Council.





# *Patriots Australia (Cairns Chapter) ~ provided by Vice President, Kurt Cooper (Coops)*



## **HISTORY OF PATRIOTS AUSTRALIA**

Five serving members of the Royal Australian Navy started the Club in 1993. These people considered that there was a need for military personnel with a common love of motorcycles to have a contact point wherever they were posted. A place where they would be accepted, given accommodation and also share their passion for motorcycling.

We also have Patriots in New Zealand and the United Kingdom who provide the same welcome to members. The Australian and New Zealand Chapters both run in strict accordance with the Defence Department guidelines and we do not tolerate drugs, violence or illegal activities. We believe in the non-sexist policy promoted by the Defence Department. The Patriots are a family orientated Club and, as such, invite serving and ex-serving members to happily bring along their families to our functions.



Within the Club we have ex KOREA, Malaya, Borneo, Vietnam, Somalia, Gulf and Timor veterans, but this is not a prerequisite for membership. Full membership is open to all serving and ex-serving military personnel, and to others who have a direct bond with the military as supporters. Full membership is granted to persons who have served or are serving in the military and this includes Reserve Service. Full members must also be in possession of a motorcycle of any make and of 250cc or above, with the appropriate State Authority to ride that machine.

We ask our members to wear any awards and honours they have been awarded. Most members wear their badges of their units or trades. This provides a pictorial resume of that person's service. It also allows like members to have a common talking point. No person is permitted to wear any decoration, award, badge or insignia unless they have been awarded such decoration or served in the unit at that rank that the insignia denotes. The penalty for such an offence is the dismissal from our Club. Our members have worked too hard to gain such awards and decorations to allow abuses.

Some of our Chapters have the privilege of meeting at their local RSL Clubs where we are accepted as friends. Other Chapters have been permitted to hold their meetings within bases. That way we maintain a close link with the members of the ADF.

We have, in each State, our favourite charities that we support. In Victoria we have a close association with the Vietnam Veteran's Museum at San Remo and we also support military functions and base open days. Our members have, for years, attended the various state Remembrance Days, Anzac Day, Long Tan Memorial Day and HMAS Sydney Memorial Day, to name just a few.....and we are active in the local communities.



Our 'Badge' is to denote our love of the three services and those who died fighting for our country and shows the three services in our own particular style. The skull is for the members who paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country and the colour denotes red.

Over the past few years our Cairns Chapter has been supporters of local charities such as ARC disability service and The Long Ride which is an RAAF initiated event to raise funds for prostate cancer. As well, we have attended the Annual Commemoration of the Battle of the Coral Sea (Cardwell), Annual Torimba Military Muster (Ravenshoe) and Townsville & Cairns attended an ANZAC Dinner hosted by Gordonvale RSL, where the Guest of Honour was LTCOL P DSC, CO SAS Regiment Recent CO of the Afghanistan Special Ops Task Force. And, of course, we attended the opening of the Afghanistan Avenue of Honour.





# SNAPSHOTS FROM 'FRIENDS OF THE AVENUE' CHRISTMAS GET-TOGETHER



L-R: Debbie & Mac Whitaker, Craig & Barb Reedman



L-R: Tim Webster, John Hardy, John Wright & Ray Byrnes



David Osborne & Susan Chuck (Santa's little helper)



L-R: Joan Nap & Adelene Franklin



L-R: Tim Webster, Dianne Franklin-Wilson, Donna Palmer & Jon Cleary



L-R: Bryan Baumann, Kerry Diezmann, Jenny Glaze & Ken Cork



L-R: Kelly Dixon with Dave & Marie Kirk



Barb Reedman & Annie Cork



L-R: Joan Cairns, Lisa Baumann & Kathy Brenton