



RSL Hellenic Sub-Branch  
**RETURNED SOLDIER –**  
**“APOSTRATOS”**

Memorial Hall, 14A Ferrars Place South Melbourne Vic 3205 Phone 9699 9844

March 2016

Dear Veterans, Members and Friends of the RSL Hellenic Sub-Branch

On behalf of our committee, I wish you all the very best of good health and happiness for the new 2016 year. There will be many commemorations this year, such as the Centenary of the Western Front, Fromelles, Pozieres, Villers-Bretonneux and other disastrous 1916 WWI battles involving Australian forces. The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1941 WWII battle of Crete, where many ANZAC Forces fought and died. This year is also the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1966 Battle of Long Tan of the Vietnam War, where 105 Australians fought courageously against 2,500 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces. 18 Australians and 250 enemy were killed in this battle.

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*Steve Kyritsis OAM  
 President*

**The Hellenic Sub branch visit the Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial in Ballarat**



Regimental Sergeant Major of the Army Warrant Officer Class One Don Spinks OAM with Ex WWII POWs

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## Welcome from the President – Continued from page 1

Sadly, I regret to advise two of our members, WWII veteran Mr Dimitrios Makris, Mrs Eleni Harizani, Greek Australian WWII Veteran Mr Tony Raftopoulos and RSL legend Brigadier Keith Rossi have recently passed away.

A warm welcome to all our new members that have joined our Sub-Branch, we hope to see you regularly at the club. Mr Steve Hatzikoortis, Mr Arthur Baoustanos, Mr Alex Tsinaris, Mr George Psarakos, Mr Nick Psarakos, Mr Theo Pappas and Mr Dimitrios Lorandos.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the Returned Soldier “Apostratos” Newsletter.

Date	Milestones and Past Events
28 <sup>th</sup> October 2015	<b>Ohi Day</b> at the Australian Hellenic Memorial & Shrine.
11 <sup>th</sup> November 2015	<b>Remembrance Day</b>
12 <sup>th</sup> December 2015	Hellenic Sub branch <b>Christmas function</b> .
Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> February 2016	Hellenic Sub branch visits the <b>Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial</b> in <b>Ballarat</b> Victoria.
19 <sup>th</sup> February 2016	Milestone - The <b>bombing of Darwin</b> that first occurred on the 19 <sup>th</sup> Feb 1942.

Date	Future Events
Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	<b>Greek National Day</b> – Note that due to Catholic Good Friday our commemoration will be on the 24 <sup>th</sup> of March.
12:30pm Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2016	<b>Annual General Meeting</b> of the Hellenic Sub Branch. 12:30pm refreshments will be served, AGM will commence at 1:15pm.
10 <sup>th</sup> April 2016	75 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The <b>Battle of Crete</b> Commemoration of the 1941 WWII battle of Crete will occur at the Australian Hellenic Memorial & Shrine.
25 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	<b>Anzac Day</b>
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	<b>Mother’s Day</b> at the Hellenic Sub-Branch. All members and friends are invited. Lots of food, drinks and great traditional music by popular DJ George Dalaras



**Manny PANOURAKIS**

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### 2016 Greek National Day – will be commemorated on 24<sup>th</sup> March, not the 25<sup>th</sup>

This year the 25th March happens to also be the Catholic Good Friday. For that reason the 2016 Greek National Day commemorations will be held the day before on Thursday 24th March. There will be no morning church service.

The first Greek National Day service will begin 12:00noon at the Australian Hellenic Memorial (Birdwood Avenue near the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance). At 1.00pm, wreaths will be laid by dignitaries within the Shrine of Remembrance. We conclude with a light lunch back at our club rooms. All members and friends are welcome.

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 George: 0428 795 796  
 Nicky: (03) 9466 1045  
 Joanne: (03) 9852 3199

aaamerakliscatering@hotmail.com



**2015 Christmas Raffle Winners**

Congratulations to the following winners of the raffle which was drawn at our Christmas function:-

1<sup>st</sup> prize - Mr J Dimitriadis (#0376)  
 2<sup>nd</sup> prize - Mr T Archondogiorgis (#1330)  
 3<sup>rd</sup> prize - Mr J Patistas (#0835)  
 4<sup>th</sup> Prize - Mr K Patistas (#0838)  
 5<sup>th</sup> prize – Mr M Alexis (#0015)

Thank you to all that supported our raffle.

## WW2 Anzac Veteran Bill Rudd Honoured

The information for this article including photos were provided by Steve Kyritsis and Mr Jim Claven.

On 13<sup>th</sup> December 2015 a gathering took place to celebrate the 98<sup>th</sup> birthday of WWII Veteran Mr Bill Rudd OAM. The meeting was organised by Mr Jim Claven and representatives of Melbourne's Messinian community. The Greek Ambassador to Australia His Excellency Harry Dafaranos expressed the appreciation of the Hellenic Republic for Bill's service and communicated a personal message on his birthday.



From left to right – President Steve Kyritsis OAM, Bill Rudd OAM, The Greek Ambassador to Australia His Excellency Harry Dafaranos, our Treasurer Dennis Patisteas OAM and Mr Peter Ford from the Richmond RSL Sub-Branch.

In 1941, Bill enlisted in the Australian Army and became a sapper with the 2/7<sup>th</sup> Field Engineers Company of the 9th Division. Deployed in the Middle East, Bill was taken Prisoner of War during the 1942 Battle of El Alamein in Egypt. Whilst being transported from Benghazi Libya to Bari Italy, the Italian ship he was on, the Nino Bixio, was

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torpedoed by the Allies off Methoni in 1942, not knowing that it carried Allied POWs. The ship was eventually towed into Pylos harbour Greece. Bill survived, but approximately 400 Allied POW's were killed. Bill would eventually escape from Italian captivity and make his way successfully to Switzerland and survived the war. During the December 2015 meeting, Bill met Mr Nick Georgopoulos who was a young man living in Methoni at the time that helped bury some of the Allied dead.

Mr Rudd has dedicated much of his time to recording the story of Allied POW's in Europe and especially the tragedies of the Nino Bixio. Despite the war, Bill has lived a happy life with wife Caty and their four children.

The photo on the right shows Sapper Bill Rudd during WWII.



A business card for Melbourne Bakehouse. The top half is red with white text: "MELBOURNE BAKEHOUSE", "Nick", and "0409 407 107". Below this, in smaller white text, are "Phone 9646 0898", "Fax 9645 4344", and "210 Bay Street Port Melbourne VIC 3207". The bottom half of the card features four small images of different cakes or pastries.



10 Rosemary Court Mulgrave (03) 9561 5922

## Brigadier Keith Rossi - Victorian war veteran and RSL legend passes away



Neos Kosmos journalist Mike Sweet has been kind enough to allow our sub branch to reprint a portion of his article.

For the full story, click on the link below:-

<http://neoskopos.com/news/en/Vale-Brigadier-Rossi>

Keith Rossi AM OBE RFD ED (Ret'd) died on 20th January 2016 in Melbourne at the age of 94.

Photo by Manny Karvelas

## **Brigadier Keith Rossi passes away – Continued from page 4**

His death is mourned not only by veterans and their families, and the RSL of which he was a member for more than 70 years, but by Australia's Greek community who have lost a true friend and supporter. Brigadier Rossi was a regular attendee on behalf of the RSL at commemorative events marking the WWII Greece and Crete campaigns. He was involved in the creation of the Australian Hellenic Memorial in Melbourne's Domain Gardens as a member of the Memorial's committee from 1995.

Keith's war service began in Egypt in 1941 with the 2/2 Australian Field Regiment. Postings to Ceylon (1942) and New Guinea (1943/1944) followed, before he saw out WWII in Morotai and Borneo. After the war he remained a professional soldier and in 1970 served in Vietnam. Brigadier Rossi devoted his life to the RSL which he had joined in 1943, and became a volunteer historian working five days a week at ANZAC House in Melbourne. Victoria RSL state president, Major General David McLachlan, said his former colleague would be greatly missed.

## **OHI Day 28<sup>th</sup> October 2015**



Vietnam War Veterans Captain Jeff Jackson OAM representing the Victorian State Branch of the RSL and President of the Hellenic Sub Branch Steve Kyritsis OAM lay a wreath at the Hellenic Memorial in the Domain Gardens

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Left to Right - Jim Kallis, Major Peter Mercoulia (Ret),  
Jim Alexopoulos from the Pan Arcadian Brotherhood and Steve Manos

**Australian Ex-POW Memorial – Continued from page 1**



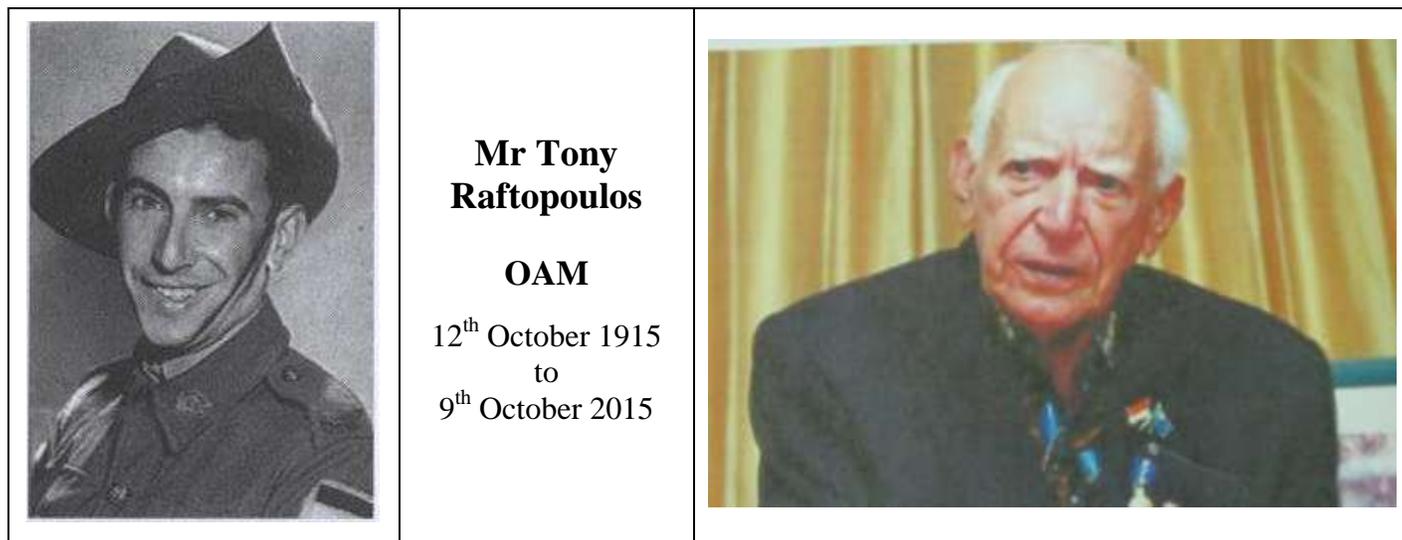
Over 36,000 Prisoner of War names appear at the Memorial, including 27 Greek-Australians, 9 of which died as POW.

Bottom Photo - Victorian State RSL President MAJGEN David McLachlan AO (Retd) lays a wreath.



**Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial in Ballarat – Continued from page 9**

We are saddened by the passing of one of the great Greek-Australians, Mr Tony Raftopoulos OAM.



Tony's story is detailed in pages 475-77 of the book, Greek-Australians in the Australian Armed Forces WWI & WWII by S Kyritsis. His brother Stan drowned in South China Sea as a Prisoner of War when the prison ship RAKUYO MARU was torpedoed by an American Submarine in 1944. The RSL Hellenic Sub-Branch would like to pass on our condolences to the Raftopoulos family. Photo on the left taken in 1944 shows a young 29 year old Tony.

**Final Reminder for the few people yet to pay:-**

**2015 RSL Membership fee (Service or Affiliate) - \$35**

New Members are welcome to join our Sub-Branch.  
Please contact Steve on 0418 571 800



On 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016 - Mr Nick Kambouris received a plaque in appreciation for his many years of support given to the Hellenic Sub-Branch.



In November 2015, we were saddened  
by the passing of

## **Mr Dimitrios Makris**

Aged 95

A WWII veteran who participated in the large  
Allied Battle of El Alamein, Dimitrios was  
respected and well liked at the RSL.

We will dearly miss him.

The RSL Hellenic Sub-Branch would like to  
pass on our condolences to  
his wife Georgia and the extended Makris family.

### **2016 ANZAC Day Parade**

All Hellenic Sub-Branch RSL veterans and members are invited to march in the ANZAC Day parade. **The RSL has not yet confirmed the start point. Please standby for any changes once we're advised,** but most likely it will be assembly 11:15am at the Princess Walk staging point for an expected 11:30am start. Princes Walk is beside Federation Square on Swanston St and opposite Flinders St train station.

Parade cars have been arranged for our more senior members who find the march a little challenging. Again this year, a bus will be leaving from our South Melbourne Clubrooms to the march start point, at 10.50am sharp. At the conclusion of the march, the bus will pick up members at the corner St Kilda Rd and Park St. We conclude with a light complimentary lunch back at our club rooms.

The Hellenic Sub-Branch would like to  
congratulate

### **Mr Bill Koutras**

for receiving a  
Victorian Multicultural Award  
for his many years of volunteer service with  
The Greek Community.

The Award was presented at Government  
house on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2015 by well-  
known celebrity Helen Kapelos





Top Left - President Steve Kyritsis and committee member Lt Col Athanasios Masouras (Retd) lay a wreath.  
Top Right - Chief of Army Lieutenant General Angus Campbell DSC, AM chatting to Ex WWII POWs



Top Left - Survivor of the sinking of HMAS Perth and Ex-Prisoner of War Mr David Manning. Before he read the Ode to Remembrance he mentioned how... *"Our ship was sunk, I survived, but we were taken prisoner"*.



On the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016, we were saddened by the passing of

### **Mrs Eleni Harizani**

Wife of Mr Dimitrios Harizanis who continues to represent the Hellenic Sub branch at many commemorative events in Greece.

The RSL Hellenic Sub-Branch would like to pass on our condolences to Dimitrios and the extended Harizanis family.

Pictured below is our Hellenic Sub branch representative Mr Dimitrios Harizanis with the Chief of the Hellenic National Guard in Cyprus Lieutenant General Georgios Basiakoulis at a recent commemorative event in Greece.



## John Luca has recently returned from his RAAF 6 ½ month deployment

Sub Branch Member John Luca has recently returned from his RAAF 6 ½ month deployment at a US Airbase in the Middle East. Sergeant Luca and his squad were responsible for refuelling coalition planes, estimated to be around 5,000,000 gallons of aviation fuel during his deployment. Asked why he looked a little leaner and browner,



**JOANNIDES**  
FUNERALS  
*Μας εμπιστεύεται η Ελληνική  
παροικία για 35 χρόνια.*

**ΙΩΑΝΝΙΔΗΣ**  
ΓΡΑΦΕΙΟ ΤΕΛΕΤΩΝ  
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John described the 35 degree temperatures most days, tipping 47 during the warmest periods. He also presented the sub branch with a flag that was flown on a mission over the Horn of Africa and certificate signed by the US pilots and crew members. See next page for a copy of the certificate, the original is proudly mounted in our sub branch for all to see.

Thank you John Luca.

# Certificate of Authenticity

*This Australian Flag Was Flown In Honor Of*

## Greek Hellenic RSL Club



*On 3 September, 2015 the 908<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron flew this Australian Flag over the Horn of Africa from a base in the United States Central Command's Area of Responsibility during a combat mission.*

  
Eric M. Butler, Capt, USAF  
Aircraft Commander

  
Jonathan C. Lee, Lt, USAF  
Co-Pilot

  
Gennady D. Freyger, MSgt, USAF  
Flight Engineer

  
Juan D. Upegui, SSgt, USAF  
Boom Operator



*To honor those who served at home and abroad. We will never forget September 11, 2001.*