

## PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS NOVEMBER 2016

Thank you sincerely for supporting my re-election and also that of my team. We appreciate your vote of confidence. When I perused my annual report to the AGM, I came to the conclusion that 2015/16 was indeed a very successful, active year for us, and it was well supported by you. THANK YOU!

My annual report will be republished in the December Buzz, this affording it distribution to all our membership of the NHS in Victoria. With the move to Waverley RSL, we hope to publicize our meetings/functions etc to the wider Membership of the Waverley RSL through the folk on their extensive email distribution list, and tailoring our flyers to be even more welcoming to the wider community in general. I have no doubt that new folk will feel at ease at our gathering as indeed one of your strengths as a group is your overall sociability.

**Our February meeting at Waverley in the Sunset Room will afford the Naval family in general the opportunity to meet our new SNO Victoria, and CO of HMAS Cerberus, Captain T J Standen CSC RAN. We are delighted that Captain Tim Standen has agreed to be our Speaker.** I hope to provide full detail to you in our December THD. You will have the opportunity to say goodbye to the Bowater family at our End of year function at Waverley on November 28th. ***Have you let us know you are coming!!! For matters of catering we need to know soon, PLEASE!!***

A number of us hope to attend on board HMAS Cerberus for the final Divisions for 2016 on November 25th. The Governor General will be in attendance and it will also be a further opportunity to bid farewell to Captain Steven Bowater OAM RAN.

Around 5 years ago I caught up with my friends and NHS colleagues, Captain David McFall MN and LCDR Richard Francis RANR, at Mona Vale in Sydney. The purpose of my visit was to see the collection of fantastic models contained in David's Maritime Model Museum. They were very hospitable hosts and I had a delightful and interesting day. It is a fabulous Museum and well worth a visit. I recommend you check out the website [www.maritimemuseum.blogspot.com](http://www.maritimemuseum.blogspot.com). Also on the web is a 17 page article from the Pittwater Online news at: [www.pittwateronlinenews.com/maritime-model-museum-at-mona-vale.php](http://www.pittwateronlinenews.com/maritime-model-museum-at-mona-vale.php), complete with excellent photos, which is well worth looking at as well.

My favourite model in the collection is Le Soleil Royale, from 1670, the French 104 gun ship of the line, which was built by Keith Harris. Her beautiful stern decoration and the overall elegance of the ship is stunning! Also a favourite is the model of the steam engine that was designed and built by Thornycroft in 1929 for the Royal Navy that is still in full working order! They even have a French Prisoner of War model built of mutton bone in an English prison between 1802 and 1805. David has sent us some photos from his collection. Enjoy!



### **REX'S ODYSSEY PART 10 – September 2015.**

#### **Visit to the new Museum at the site of the Battle of Waterloo 1815.**

Whilst staying in Dusseldorf I took the opportunity of taking day trips to both Amsterdam and Brussels.

To celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo a brand new museum has been erected at the site of the battle. The Napoleonic Wars have long fascinated me and on September 10th I took the bus

to Brussels. Very minimal planning had been possible prior to embarking upon these adventures, and so using public transport I ventured forth. Finding myself on the wrong train to the suburb of Waterloo, I disembarked and with a considerable degree of luck found the right train and bus! Relying on the expertise of some friendly school children I managed to alight at the right stop and found myself at the Wellington Museum in Waterloo. This was an inn and it became Wellington's headquarters on the 17th and 18th of June, 1815. It contains many artifacts, paintings and chronological displays which give a good overall picture of the events. Wellington's bedroom still contains his bed where his ADC, Colonel Gordon died. Britain's allies are also commemorated in various rooms and in all it is a very interesting traditional museum, complete with a cannon from the actual battle in the courtyard.

The actual site of the battle is 4 Kilometers south of Waterloo and is accessible by bus and train. I found a local bus and with my fingers crossed hoped I was going the right way. As you walk towards the site of the battle the first thing you see is this huge mound called Lion Mound because it comes complete with a Lion on top.



*Part of the huge fresco depicting various parts of the battle*

Beside the mound you see a circular building. This is the Panorama Building which contains the 110m round, by 12m high canvas fresco painted by Louis Dumoulin in 1912. It depicts a key moment in the battle and is complete with sound



*The Circular building contains the huge panorama painting*

effects, which take you into that particular moment in 1815. In reality the French were stronger than the allies both in man power and fire power. ie 72,000 plus 246 cannon against 68,000 plus 156 cannon. As you stand on the Lion Mound you can visualize much of where the battle took place! For a comprehensive account of the actual battle, might I recommend you go to the website:

<http://waterloo200.org/themes/battle/walking-the-battlefield-of-waterloo/> which is entitled A Walk in Thought-a battlefield tour by Graeme Cooper, founder of the 'Guild of Battlefield Guides'.

In May 2015 a 'New underground Battle of Waterloo memorial Museum' was opened and the purpose of my trip to Belgium was to view it! It was certainly worthwhile making the trip. The museum features displays which highlight the colour and diversity of the many uniforms worn in 1815. Truly very high tech, but appealing to all generations. You learn about the tactics employed by both the Duke and by Napoleon as they converged on Mont St Jean, and you learn about the personalities and hear the stories of the leaders on both sides of this huge conflict!



*Exhibits at the new Waterloo museum*

The access ramp to the entrance is lined by the "Mur de la Memoire" remembrance wall on which are written the names of every regiment that took part in the battle on Sunday 18th June 1815. They have a 3D, 25m panoramic screen displaying key moments from the battle in a 15 minute film filled with special effects! I was very intrigued with the framed paintings on the walls, which all of a sudden 'come to life'.

The memorials roof is covered in grass as it would have been in 1815. This is also to help preserve the

battlefield which now with the added attraction of the Memorial being in full swing is anticipated to grow to 600,000 visitors pa.

I was one of the last tourists to leave the site that afternoon and made my way to the station. Upon arriving back in Brussels I had a meal and then faced a long wait to catch my bus back to Dusseldorf. Unfortunately I had to await my bus in a rather seedy area, and the bus wasn't due until 2330, which was a bit daunting. That aside I had a fantastic day in Brussels, and Waterloo and environs were well worth visiting. The Memorial Museum is fabulous!



**Catch you at the 'End Of Year Celebration' on the 28th. If you haven't made a booking, please do so soon!**

**YOURS AYE!!**

**REX WILLIAMS**