RHODESIAN LIGHT INFANTRY
REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

Australasian Branch Newsletter
October, 2009
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1. Australasian BRANCH NEWS

2009 - In REVIEW so far…….

As we have already started a new year it is time to take stock of where we are given the turbulence of the last couple of years and reflect on the status as a Branch and in our relations with the wider RLIRA global community.

When I was elected to the Chairmanship of the RLIRA Australasian Branch in July I invited all of the members to walk through the rebuilding door, as part of picking up the pieces from the past. I have had positive feedback to the call to rebuild internally as a branch and I trust the rest of the Australasian group is positive, albeit in the absence of any negative feedback.

That being said, I really want to focus on the Melbourne ANZAC reunion, as an internal rebuilding exercise. I have also asked the state representative to engage as much as possible with the state members in any way that they see fit to suit the local state conditions. What may be easy to do in Queensland may not be as easy in Western Australia. We all know that the tyranny of distance in Australia tends to restrict us to phone and email communications as opposed to more face to face contact. If you can get together in your state from time to time formally or informally, you do not need to wait for the state representative to initiate the event - just organize and let them know. This is why the annual reunions have been a success; as it is at least one event people can focus on to attend face to face, time, money and interest permitting.

I and the state representatives have not forgotten the need to address outstanding external issues from the past few years. Be assured these will be appropriately managed and addressed in consultation with the Australasian members when the timing is right for us all.

I trust that you are all having a good year so far despite the world down turn and really hope to see as many of you as possible for a great reunion in Melbourne as a build up to the 50th in Sydney in 2011.

Best wishes

Vince

APRIL

A 2009 ANZAC reunion update from Dawn in WA………..

A great ANZAC day reunion was held in Perth for ANZAC day, which was attended About 25 ouens attended, coming from UK, South Africa and the Eastern States of Australia. The dinner on the eve of ANZAC day was held at the Seasons of Perth Hotel, the guest of honour was Dave Thorne who was O.C. 3 Squadron (deploying paras).RLI was invited to lay a wreath at the main dawn service in King’s Park on behalf of the Rhodesians. The wreath was laid by John Kirkman and Jimmy Swan. We were also invited to lead the Rhodesian Contingent in the parade which reflects the high regard in which the RLI is held among our fellow Rhodesian servicemen and the RSL community in general.
Our thanks go to Shaun Ryan for bringing out the colours, it was with much pride that the ouens marched behind them. After the march we gathered at Fenians Pub for a carvery lunch, and much beer and laughter. The likes of Jimmy Swan keeping the ouens amused.

Kings Park, Perth, Australia. ANZAC day dawn service 2009 prior to the march. Note the RLI Greens.
Most of the group photo in Perth after the ANZAC march and before more cold beers!

I would like to share with you OC Transport Squadron RAF, Dave Thorne’s speech at the RLI Perth reunion pre-ANZAC day dinner.

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Ladies and Gentlemen: The RLI

Charlie Aust in his forward to the book “The Saints” says this about the Rhodesian Light Infantry: “…., the unit grew and matured in peace and war to become one of the finest Regiments of a small and determined army, which itself became the most efficient and successful irregular warfare machine ever known in Africa or indeed perhaps the world.” These are fine words and how true!!

I am a Blue Job. We were the ones who could sleep in our own beds at night. We were detached from the face to face contact that you guys had with the enemy. We were the ones who took you to the front line, dropped you into the thick of it, and then turned around and buggered off home!!

I have to let you in to a little of my background, so that you can more easily follow my involvement with the RLI and understand the deep respect I have for the RLI. In 1964, just 2 years after the birth of the RLI, I was poached from the Royal Rhodesian Air Force which I loved and had served with since 1957. I said I was poached but it was more like “seduced” by Qantas. Qantas recruited me, flew me all the way from Rhodesia to Sydney and then put me on the mighty Boeing 707. So there I was, flying one of the biggest jets of the day, all over the world and, with a great career mapped out in front of me, I was thoroughly seduced. After 10 years of this orgy, however, the untimely death of my wife caused me to make the decision to return to my parents in Rhodesia with my 4 young kids. So back I went into the Air Force, by now no longer “Royal”, just the Rhodesian Air Force.

Because of my time in Qantas, I was put immediately onto the Transport Squadron’s Dakotas. I will never forget the sharp contrast between taking my sleek Boeing into London’s Heathrow or New York’s JFK with their immaculate Radar controlled Air Traffic, their pristine runways and taxiways and ground control, the air-conditioned lounges and the 5-star hotels, versus landing a Dak into: Mukumbura, Chewore and Mbalauta!! The dust, the heat, the fuel drums, the tents and the navigation!! Finding those little FAFs (that is Forward Airfields), in the Rhodesian bush, was hard enough, but finding a DZ from a Grid-Ref on a 1:50 000 map, was a quantum leap for this old airline pilot.

The next shock to my system was the smell!! The first time I was involved in bringing troops back to Salisbury for R&R from a long bush-stint, really brought home to me the extent of some of the multitude of hardships that you guys had to endure. But, as they came on board…well, until that time, I believed only moonts could smell like that!!

Despite the BO, my respect was undiminished, because I knew that a few days earlier, we’d flown out a serious casevac and although these troopies had just been fighting for their lives and although they had nearly lost one of their own, they still kept up a repartee of hilarious banter in what sounded almost like a foreign language. For example, “When we hit the bright lights, we’re gonna jol around and maybe lay a few crows from the Nurses home, ek se.”
After 14 months on the transport squadron, just as I was getting into the swing of things, I was posted to the Flying School in Gwelo where for the next couple of years, I turned numerous youngsters, some straight from school, into pilots. You may remember some of my students like: Nigel Lamb, now a Pilot with the Red Bull Air Race, Brian Gordon, KIA on op Miracle, Mike Kruger, now with his own Airline in the UK, and even an ex-troopie from the RLI, our own Dave Shirley who is with us, here, tonight.

Then in Jan 1978, I was promoted and took over as OC the Transport Squadron from George Alexander. Some of you may remember that mad, impatient Greek who could shout at the troops on the ground so loudly that he almost didn’t need a radio. By now the RLI were Parachute-trained and I was privileged to fly many Fire Force Ops with 4 sticks of RLI on board for each call-out, some with plenty of action and success but some were lemons where we could not find the enemy and we’d have to land back at the FAF with 16 disgruntled soldiers on board. Once I heard one of them say: “Ag man, I was just sommer hoping to turn some Gooks into Floppies, ek se.” Then on 19 Oct 1978, I led a formation of 8 Daks, each with 16 paras on board, into Zambia for Op Gatling. While Chris Dixon, as Green Leader, was bombing hell out of Westlands Farm, we took the SAS to Mkushi and then, after refueling at Kariba we took the RLI to CGT 2 Camp.

Now this is where I want to describe the depth of my respect for the RLI: How can anyone be so brave? To be parachuted or helicoptered into battle must be terrifying enough!! The enemy knows you’re coming; the Daks and helicopters are noisy! The enemy is ready for you. But to be dropped off over the border into enemy territory, hundreds of miles from home and safety, must be 10 times worse. And yet, even under such pressure, you guys were able to not only demolish the enemy, but also able to look out for each other.

The Troopie Statue, now on the banks of the River Lee, near Hatfield in England, has this inscription on its base: “GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS: THAT A MAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.” Those words perfectly sum-up the RLI who were also prepared to lay down their lives for their country!! What an incredible bunch of ouens you are!! “THE INCREDIBLES”!! I salute you!!

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MAY
Nothing to report

JUNE
Nothing to report

SEPTEMBER
Ian Cameron Makintosh is voted in to replace John Kirkman as the State Representative for Western Australia.

OCTOBER
AGM proposed for the Australasian branch.
Australian Branch of RLIRA looks to acquire a set of duplicate RLI Colours as part of an initiative from the EXCO of the RLRA.

An offer has been made by Michael Davies from the ACT branch and goes thus......” I am a voluntary guide at the Australian War Memorial, here in Canberra, and have been for a few years now. I am usually rostered on one of the scheduled times on Thursday mornings. I am happy to take on board any owner visiting Canberra at that time, or for that matter any other time.” Michael can be contacted on 02-62814900 or email michael.davies3@bigpond.com.au

**RECENT NEW MEMBERSHIPS**

We welcome the following new Australasian Members and look forward to seeing them at the next reunion and or local gathering

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>State</th>
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<tr>
<td>Edgar Rasteiro</td>
<td>QLD</td>
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<td>Craig Wilson</td>
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<td>Richard Bate</td>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>Hon Mem NZ Army</td>
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<td>Mariana Carinus</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>Aff Mem (Deceased brother Andre Botes)</td>
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<td>Ken Daly</td>
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**Encouraging Greater AFFILIATE Member Involvement**

Given that RLI was disbanded in 1980, it is not possible for RLIRA FULL member ranks to be continually topped-up by newly “badged” RLI, and thus, it is inevitable that the number of RLIRA FULL members will progressively thin.

To ensure that the Association continues for as long as possible with an undiluted RLI primary focus, the Australasia Branch Committee identified that we needed to begin looking at how non-FULL members might be able to assist with this aim. As the criteria for AFFILIATE membership of the RLIRA requires being a family relation to a deceased RLI serviceman, it seemed that AFFILIATE members would be the most likely non-FULL member group to be strongly motivated to maintain a primary RLI focus. After consideration the Australasia Branch Committee decided that the best way to encourage greater participation by AFFILIATE members, would be the introduction of a set of Branch specific guidelines governing AFFILIATE member involvement and thus, have recently voted to adopt the following:-

**Encouraging Greater RLIRA Member Involvement with the RSL (League)**

As will be seen mentioned later in this newsletter there are distinct advantages to being a member of the Australian RSL (League as opposed to Club) wherein, RSL stands for: Returned Services League.

The “Returned” title refers to those that have served overseas, which in Oz-Talk means operational service in “War, or War-Like” circumstances. For those who are in doubt about eligibility of ex-Rhodesian service personnel to join the RSL (League), below is advice from the Mr. Herbert “Mickey” Michaelis - National Projects Officer of the RSL National Headquarters in Canberra. And is himself an ex-Rhodesian. As Mickey is also an ex-Rhodesia Regiment serviceman, he is an Associate Member of the RLIRA – Australasia Branch.

Those who served with the Rhodesian and Southern Rhodesian forces within the prescribed periods between the Boer War 1899 to the 16 April 1980 are classified as Allies to Australia, and would be eligible to join the RSL (League). This would include service in the Rhodesian Army Regiments and
Units i.e. Selous Scouts, Greys Scouts; Royal Rhodesian Air Force and BSAP Units including PATU (Police Anti Terrorist Units). Zimbabwe has yet to be ratified by the RSL and has not been included in any terms of the Veterans’ Entitlements Act 1986.

May I suggest that you advise your Members that they may wish to apply for membership to their respective RSL (League) Sub Branches within their domicile, or State Branch if they prefer, and this would entitle them to the privileges afforded to all our Veterans. In particular it is an advantage should they require an advocate or Welfare Officer to support them on any particular issue, as well as meeting up with colleagues and mates. In some areas membership within the RSL League entitles them also to entry into various RSL Clubs where these are owned or supported by the Sub Branch or Branch. Rhodesian members may also wish to form their own Sub Branch in their States and this should be referred to their respective RSL Branch Secretary for details.

I and many others have become Full Service members of the RSL and I used my RLI discharge papers as evidence of service to join.

Mr. Michaelis has advised he would be happy to provide advice to any of our members, and may be contacted on:
Work Tel: 02-2 6232 4373 Mob: 0415440159 Email: michaelis@netspeed.com.au

Melbourne 2010 RLI reunion

General Reunion Overview

1. Accommodation Group Discount Deal – Parkview Hotel St. Kilda Road

MELBOURNE
St Kilda Road Parkview Hotel
562 St Kilda Road
Melbourne VIC 3004 Australia
T: +61 3 9529 8888
Toll Free: 1300 785 453
F: +61 3 9525 1242
E: hotel.pv@viewhotels.com.au
www.viewhotels.com.au

To make a direct on-line booking with the Parkview Hotel at the RLI Reunion special rate

Accommodation 24 and 25 April 2010

$159 Bed & Breakfast for 2
$129 Room only

2. Pre-Anzac Day Dinner

Dinner 24th April 2010

30 – 40 max (numbers to be confirmed)

Mezzanine – Exclusive Use

6.30 p.m. Arrival for 7.00 p.m. Dinner
$50.00 per head

Cash Bar at Bar Prices less 10% (from Mezz bar only, regular prices from Lime Bar)

**Dinner Menu (proposed)**

**Entree**
Vietnamese salt & pepper squid with a tomato, apple and celery salad and a mild chilli dipping sauce
Bread Rolls & Butter

**Main**
Grilled 300g scotch fillet served with roast chat potatoes, grilled tomato and a port & red wine jus
or
Portuguese chicken breast oven baked and served with a corn & potato cake and spiced coriander sauce
or
Cauliflower and cheddar cheese puff pastry pie served with tomato relish and salad

**Dessert**
Sticky date pudding drenched with butterscotch sauce and served with double cream

Brewed Coffee & Tea

**Dinner Agenda (proposed)**
18.30 – Arrival, drinks on the Mezzanine
19.00 – Seating, order taken for main course
19.30 – Entree served
20.00 – Speech (Speaker TBA)
20.20 – Main course served
21.00 – Speech
21.20 – Dessert Served
21.40 – Tea & Coffee
22.00 – Finish

3. Dawn Service
TBA
Immediately following completion of a Dawn Service, it is traditional for many to go directly to a “Gun-Fire Breakfast” which are simple “Bangers and Mash” type affairs, and normally put on by service clubs where it is often provided free of charge to those wearing medals.

We have still not yet been able to identify an entirely suitable nearby “Gun-Fire Breakfast” location.

**To Confirm Dawn Service Attendance, please contact:**

TBA

**4. The Anzac Day March**

This will start in the City of Melbourne in Swanston Street, into St. Kilda Road for about 1.5 Km’s to the Shrine of Remembrance www.shrine.org.au Timings and forming up still TBA.

**5. Post March Venue**

TBA

**Family Involvement**

Originally Anzac Day participation was the prerogative of veterans only however, over the years this has evolved into a more family orientated even. As said before the RLI needs more Affiliates to continue its legacy as long as possible and any involvement from family now will assist in preserving this legacy. So bring your family along to be included in as many of the events as possible.

**Reunion Dress Advice**

**General:** A semi-formal Jacket & Tie arrangement would be the most appropriate for Anzac Day functions and, whilst there are no hard & fast rules, some sort of conformity of attire would be highly preferred, particularly as it is planned that the RLI will be marching in an RLI specific sub-group of the Rhodesian contingent.

During the TV broadcast of the 2007 Sydney Anzac Day march, voice-over commentary made special reference to the smartly turned out and Green-Bereted RLI group.

Recommended attire:

- Dark suit or, Blazer (preferable with RLI pocket badge) with dark or grey trousers.
- White shirt.
- RLI tie.
- RLI Beret & Badge.
- Medals (own on the Left, family member on the Right).
- Rhodesian Combat Infantry Badge.
- Para Badge (if applicable).

**Blazers:** For those chaps who still have RLI blazers, these would be entirely suitable to wear on the day. Unfortunately for most of us, the Blazers have not survived the passage of time or, seem to have mysteriously shrunk over the years! A versatile alternative would be to purchase an “off the rack” black coloured blazer ( has to be black as RLI blazer badges currently available only come with black material surrounds), and tack-stitch onto it an RLI blazer badge. By lightly stitching on the badge, it can be easily removed so that the blazer can be utilized for other functions. Very good quality wire bullion RLI blazer badges can be obtained for about $40.00 from: Ken Palmer in Perth: faggamoto@optusnet.com.au

**Berets:** If again your original berets have not survived the passage of time, same colour green berets can be purchased for approximately $35.00 from either:

The NZ Rhodesian Services Association CQ Store: http://www.rhodesianservices.org or,
Beret Badges

Medals
ALL medals to which one is entitled should be worn on the day. If your medals have been lost, genuine medals and replica copies can be purchased. Again a good source is eBay www.ebay.com. where prices for genuine RGSM’s vary widely however, they generally go for around $60.00 and, Zimbabwe Independence (ZIM) usually cost considerably less. Also, from time to time, the NZRSA CQ Store has stock of full size replica RGSM’s and ZIM’s available http://www.rhodesianservices.org

Replacement Medal Ribbon
The NZ Rhodesian Service Association CQ Store http://www.rhodesianservices.org sells ribbon for both medals at a cost of around $10.00 per 15 cm length.

RLI Ties
Andy Tattam (ACT Chapter Representative) is generously self-funding a production run of RLRRA design ties. Ties are now available for AUD$30.00, inclusive of postage within Australia & New Zealand. If interested in a tie, send an email: Andy Tattam, at: mail@plaspress.com.au

Parachute Wing Lapel Badges
Small metal & enamel pin-back parachute wing lapel badges (2 x 1 cm) can be purchased for $7.00 (inclusive of postage) from: Tony Young: aussie-rli@skymesh.com.au Limited stock available.

Rhodesian Combat Infantry Badge (Unofficial) and Combat Infantry Badge lapel stick pins
CIB’s cost AUD$20.00 each, inclusive of local Oz/NZ postage. Mini CIB’s are available for $10.00 (inclusive of postage) and there is plenty of stock. If interested, for Australia Residents, contact Tony Young: aussie-rli@skymesh.com.au Plenty of stock available. NZ or other overseas residents contact Hugh Bomford: hbomford@clear.net.nz

RLI Solid Silver Cufflinks:
One set of solid silver cufflinks, boldly featuring the RLI crest is available for sale at $100.00 per pair. If interest is sufficient, production of further sets can be organized but, it should be born in mind that about 4 weeks has to be allowed from time of order, until delivery. I have been reliably informed that the photo does not do the cufflinks justice! There are currently no Cufflinks in stock If interested, contact Tony Young, at: ozemedic@bigpond.net.au

2. International News

It has been reported that Sergeant Colin Mason died whilst working in Afghanistan in early October.

3. Historical

ANZAC DAY - DESCRIPTION & SIGNIFICANCE
Most countries have a specific day set aside for reflection of the sacrifices made during war such as, Remembrance Day in the UK and, Veteran Day in the USA. However, nowhere else is in the world does anything come even remotely close to what takes place in Australia & New Zealand every Anzac Day wherein, throughout both countries, residents of every city, regional centre & small town, hold commemoration events.

Anzac Day was originally established to remember the sacrifices & outstanding achievements by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (A.N.Z.A.C.), during World War 1. WW1 made a significant and lasting impact upon the psyche of the populations of Australia & New Zealand as maybe demonstrated by the fact that virtually in every town, no matter how small, memorials to sacrifices made by residents of those communities can be found. These memorials form the focal point of Anzac Day commemorations, with the program of events in each location following a similar pattern. As might be expected, the larger the city or town, the larger the turn-out is for Anzac Day events. Whilst remembrance of the Gallipoli campaign holds centre stage at Anzac Day commemorations, following WW2, Anzac Day has evolved to recognize the sacrifices made by Australian & New Zealand forces in all subsequent conflicts in which they were involved.

During recent years, Anzac Day has further evolved and now, veterans from conflicts in which Australia or New Zealand were not necessarily involved are officially encouraged to partake in Anzac Day ceremonies. This invitation includes, forming their own contingents and marching in the main Anzac Day veteran’s parade along with their Australian & New Zealand counterparts. By participation in Anzac Day events, this provides non-Australian or non-New Zealand veterans a venue to commemorate sacrifices & achievements of their ex-service personnel. Since the early 1980’s small contingents of Ex- Rhodesian service personnel have participated in Anzac Day formalities in various cities throughout Australia.

In Sydney, which has the largest and most spectacular Anzac Day parade, a Rhodesian contingent marches under the Rhodesian Flag and a banner identifying who they are and, setting out the **Battle Honours** of the Rhodesian Armed Forces. Whilst Anzac Day is indeed an event that honours sacrifices made and remembers the fallen, to veterans who have experienced firsthand the rigours & emotions of combat, the day has far deeper & complex significance. Although most would be reluctant to publicly confirm it, for veterans, Anzac Day is also a kind of proud affirmation of having once been warriors and what they have experienced!

**The Dawn Service**

Dawn Service’s mark the beginning of Anzac Day commemorations, are usually held at the local war memorial and take the form of a solemn out-door church service. The Dawn Service originates from the battlefield routine of pre-dawn Stand-To’s. After WW1, returned soldiers sought the comradeship they felt in those quiet peaceful moments and so, informally began gathering at their local war memorials in the dark before dawn to remember and honour fallen comrades.

The Dawn Service is a moving ceremony which rapidly became a common form of Anzac Day remembrance. The first recorded official dawn service was held at the Sydney Cenotaph in 1927. Dawn services were originally very simple affairs & in many cases, were restricted to veterans only. Just before dawn the gathered veterans would be ordered to "stand to" and two minutes of silence would follow. At the end of this time a lone bugler would play the "Last Post" and then concluded the service with "Reveille".

Over the passage of time, Dawn Service ceremonies have become more elaborate, incorporating hymns, readings, pipers, buglers, rifle volleys and now, are attended by both veterans and others.

**Gun-Fire Breakfast**

Immediately after completion of the Dawn Service, most attendees then adjourn to the local Service Club, Community Hall or other suitable venue where, a hot breakfast is usually provided free of charge. The origin of the name Gun-Fire Breakfast is that, this was the term used for the traditional
Stand-to heart-starter of coffee with a tot of rum. As a consequence, the consumption of alcoholic beverages is also a feature of the Anzac Day Gun-Fire Breakfast.

**Pre-March Gathering**
In cities & towns which hold large Anzac Day parades, it is often necessary to have the various march contingents step-off at staggered intervals. In Sydney for example, the parade consists of many thousands of veterans, whilst the first contingent may step-off around 1000 hours, the last contingents do not step off for another 2 hours. In many instances, veterans who intend to march in the parade arrange to meet friends early at their respective contingent form-up area, and use the time before step-off to catch up on news, have a few drinks etc.

**The Main Parade**
Main parades involvement for most groups consists of a short 30 minute march by veterans or their representative, formed up in service/nationality contingents, down the main street/s of respective cities & towns, which are lined with spectators, to a place where all form up as if on parade, normally within the vicinity of a war memorial.

Parades are attended by a range of VIP’s who deliver short speeches reminding all of the significance of Anzac Day, and expressing thanks for the service & sacrifices made by veterans. In the larger cities, the main parade is made up of many separate unit specific & group contingents, interspaced with brass or bagpipe marching bands. In smaller towns, the parade might consist of a single mixed unit group, normally accompanied by a band.

Originally, only veterans were allowed to march in the parade however over the years, this rule has been somewhat relaxed so that now, a family member can march in place of a deceased veteran and, wear their medals for them on their behalf.

One of the more touching aspects of the day is that often before, during and after the parade, you will see bemedalled veterans approached by children who hand the veterans small homemade thank you cards, sprigs of rosemary which is a symbol of remembrance or some other small token of admiration. Sprigs of Rosemary are also freely available from volunteers who wander around with trays/baskets of the sprigs…….it is good idea to bring along a couple of safety pins to attach the sprigs to your blazer.

**Post March Lunch & Drinks**
At conclusion of Parade ceremonies, groups break-off and go to pre-arranged venues where they have lunch and generally spend the remainder of the day talking over drinks with old friends and making new acquaintances.

It is accepted that Anzac Day is a time for veterans to “let their hair down” a bit, and thus a degree of high-jinks is overlooked….this includes the operation of normally illegal **Two-Up Schools** which, is an old fashion form of gambling used by Australian troops in the field. **Two-Up** gets its name from the two pennies that are used in the game, that are flipped in the air and bets are laid on which way the pennies will land. EG: Both heads up etc.