



Scouts in ACTion

Australian Capital Territory Branch

May 2014

ANZAC Day with a French Twist

By Darren Kriticos - Audax, Group Leader at Les Explorateurs Scout Group

Well done to all the Scouts who attended the ANZAC Day sleepover and Dawn Service - it was a truly remarkable day. This year the Les Explorateurs youths and families added a French Twist to our ANZAC Day services. Sixteen of us attended the Dawn Service at the War Memorial, and 9 youth members attended the midday service at the French Embassy, participating in the wreath laying service. Several other members attended other ceremonies including one as far away as Christchurch, New Zealand!

At the French Embassy ceremony our youth members presented dignitaries with wreaths to be laid at the shrine of remembrance. When the Australian and French national anthems were played, without prompting, our Scouts sang the words. We were soooo proud of them! In both cases I think they put the adults to shame.

At the conclusion of the ceremony the dignitaries spontaneously came over and shook the hands of the youths, offering some kind words of appreciation and encouragement. The fact that our children were so good at singing La Marseillaise, drew considerable appreciative comments from the French Embassy and Alliance Française staff during the reception.

I think our Scouts certainly advanced our Groups aim of building credibility, and strengthening our relationship with the French community in Canberra. They certainly also shed a very positive image of Scouts in general to the assembled dignitaries. B-R-A-V-O to our Scouts!

From the Chief



Since our last Scouts in ACTion our Branch members have been very active and once again in the spotlight. 30 Joeys and Cub Scouts, 2 Rovers and 4 Leaders represented us at the tree planting at the National Arboretum with the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. 3 Leaders (with their partners) were asked to attend the Prime Minister's reception for the royal couple in the Great Hall of Parliament House. Hundreds of our members attended either the Dawn Service or the March on ANZAC Day (and some did both!) Others were involved in a commemorative service at the French Embassy.

The significance of our participation in these events is remarkable. The connections that we have made in the community are the driving force behind the invitations that we have received to participate in these events. Hard work and commitment by our Scouting ANZAC Day organisers for both the March and the sleepover have demonstrated our capability as a youth development organisation. True, the Duchess of Cambridge does have Scouting connections but I believe it is just as much a recognition by both levels of government that Scouts (particularly Scouts ACT) is a valued and important contributor to the community and so should be invited to participate in such important events.

We cannot stop here. Our next challenge is to continue to demonstrate to the community that we are the premier youth development organisation, that we are not only relevant to the life of the community but that we should be consulted in the area of youth affairs. Somehow, looking at the calibre of people we have and the young adults ready in the wings, I am sure that Scouts ACT will not be short of official engagements for some time.

Antarctic experience

By Peter Stevenson, Branch Commissioner Adult Training and Development



Recently I had the opportunity to travel to Antarctica on a voyage known as the Australasian Antarctic Expedition 2013-14. Many of you may know a little about the trip as we became very newsworthy over the Christmas and New Year period when our ship the "Akademik Shokalskiy" became stuck, or beset, in the Antarctic pack ice near the Mertz glacier. A spectacular helicopter rescue followed and then a wandering trip home on the working ship Aurora Australis, via the Casey base region.

The purpose of the trip was to broadly repeat Mawson's sea journey science programs of approximately 100 years ago. Results are being compared to assist with issues such as climate change, given the Antarctic's significant role in driving oceans behavior and therefore our weather. We left from Invercargill in NZ and travelled to the Commonwealth Bay area of East Antarctica. The science program included measuring sea temperatures, salinity, and depth; detailed bird observations including penguin populations; the darting and studying of seals; the collection of continental rock samples; and the taking and studying of ice cores.

We were able to enjoy many spectacular sights including icebergs, sunsets and sunrises, penguins, seals, and whales. We experienced daylight 24 hours a day and clear endless skies and crystal clear seas, as well as some rougher seas on the southern ocean. The weather was mostly good often getting to around zero degrees, with the occasional storm and gale thrown in. When the wind blew it became cold quickly. We spent some time in the zodiacs and on the ice, a friend and Scouting colleague of mine, Steve also attended the expedition and we cross country skied for a few days (to the envy of others). We also flew the Scout flag within the Antarctic Circle.



There were about fifty passengers on our ship, approximately half were scientists or advanced science students, the rest helping along the journey. They were an interesting group of many talents and experiences and had stories about scaling Everest, ocean sailing, other visits to Antarctica and providing ongoing care for Mawson's Hut. We learnt and shared from a broad range of lectures on science and other subjects. We were well looked after by the Russian crew, and later by the crew of the Aurora.

We did not get to do all that was planned and we were home nearly three weeks late, affecting other plans. The Antarctic has its own idea of weather and timeframes, and it is the humans that have to adapt.



Cotter Shield 2014

By Skip, Scout Program Advisor



The meteorologists called it a 'rain event' with the highest average rainfall for the month of April since 2008. However, a little bit of rain was not going to dampen the enthusiasm of over 400 Scouts and supporting Venturers, Rovers and Leaders at Cotter Shield 2014.

With the rain bucketing down on the preceding Thursday-Friday the decision was made to delay but not postpone this annual Scout section activity until Saturday morning when it was predicted that the showers would ease and the weather would improve for the remainder of the weekend.

Early Saturday morning, 27 Scout Troops from the ACT and Gundaroo NSW commenced the occupation of Camp Cottermouth setting up camp in the drizzling rain. By mid-morning camp sites were established and Cotter Shield was in full-swing with 57 patrols commencing their rotation around the eight activity bases. The Scouts tested their skills in archery, first aid, fire lighting in wet conditions, catapult and chariot construction, medieval games, castle sieging with the Rovers and had the opportunity to try out crate stacking, the flying fox and climbing wall at the new tower facility.

The theme for Cotter Shield 2014 was 'Medieval Tournament' with many Scouts, Leaders and activity bases enthusiastically adopting this theme with fancy dress, shields, banners and swords!

At the end of the weekend the victorious winners of the Cotter Shield were the 'Screaming Thylacines' of BSA Troop 2012 and the 'Albatross of the Round Badge' of Kama Scouts who took home the Cotter Stick.

Cotter Shield wouldn't have been possible without the fantastic efforts of the Leaders and Rovers who organised the various activity bases and night activities, and also the Venturers, Rovers and Leaders who assisted with the running of the bases over the weekend. A big BRAVO to you all.



A night to remember

By Bill Davidson, Group Leader at Amaroo Scout Group



The Amaroo Scout troop visited Parliament House for a tour of the building and had discussions with the Assistant Minister for Defence, the Honourable Stuart Robert MP and Shadow Assistant Treasurer The Honourable Dr Andrew Leigh MP (who is also our local federal member and a display of government at work in the Senate and House of Representatives). Unbeknownst to us, Brent our Scout Leader, had arranged a special event, the farewell of the Governor General and Chief Scout of Australia Her Excellency the Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO.

So not only did the troop have a behind the scenes tour of parliament house, observe both houses of parliament in action and talk to both the Assistant Minister for Defence and our local member, they also got to form an honour guard in the Marble Foyer of Parliament House for one of the Chief Scout of Australia's last official functions. In addition to talking to the Chief Scout they got to chat with the Prime Minister and his wife, the Opposition Leader and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

In another first for the Group, we welcomed three new Scouts into the troop in Parliament House. Two of our Cubs, Ruby Bardsley and Elise Fisher, undertook their linking ceremony and Arshara Byrne was invested. As icing on the cake, we also presented Dave Smith with his Certificate of Adult Leadership signifying completion of his training as a Scout Leader after transferring from our Cub section.



We would like to thank Brent and David for organising the night, the leaders and parents that came along and helped out, but most of all the Scouts who listened, learnt and represented the Group and Scouts Australia with pride. BRAVO!



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