# Southport RSL Sub Branch Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 4

November 2022



REMINDER Quarterly Meeting Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November 10.30am Bring your Partner

# From the President's Desk

# VALE WARREN HULYER

We were informed on the 21st September that Warren had passed away peacefully. He was a great friend and a much-valued member of our Board and will be sadly missed.

**Appeal.** Unfortunately, the August Newsletter had been completed before the Appeal against the Judge's ruling on our case against the eviction of the Sub-Branch from the premises at 36 Scarborough Street (now known as SOPO) had been heard.

On Monday 25<sup>th</sup> July the appeal was heard at the Appeals Court on Brisbane. I waited all day for some news regarding the outcome and it was not until very late on the Monday that our lawyer contacted me to inform me that the Judge (not unexpectedly) had reserved his decision. He went on to say that our Barristers were confident of a positive result. In addition, a lawyer from the firm handling our case was in the court room and reported that from her observation, the Judge found it very difficult to understand just what the opposition were trying to appeal.

**Quarterly Meeting.** On Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> August we held our first Quarterly Meeting aligned to our new timetable. As was explained earlier, we made the decision to bring forward all our General Meetings by one month. This includes our AGM.

Some twenty-Four members attended the meeting which kicked off on time at 1030 hrs and was all over by 1105 hrs. There were several interesting questions and observations made by the members which made the whole exercise very rewarding.

Following the meeting we had the usual socialising which was made even more pleasant by the excellent food and the cold drinks. I think everyone left the well satisfied.

**Director on Secondment.** Peter Boyes OAM, one of our current Directors and the person in charge of writing all our grant submissions, was seconded to State for a few weeks on a couple of occasions during the past three months

**New Offices.** Invitations were sent to several building companies inviting them to tender for the construction of our new offices. We had a couple of visits from builders who wished to inspect the premises to better submit a tender. The tenders were due for submission by close of business, Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August. This date was extended by one week when two of the potential builders asked.

The tenders were submitted on the revised date and sent to the Sub-Branch immediately. In order to make the process of examining the tenders and negotiating with the builders, Warren Hulyer was appointed as the "go-to" contact. He and I met with both builders and went through the tenders with a fine-tooth comb, deciding to defer some items in the plans and arguing for reductions in the costs of some items.

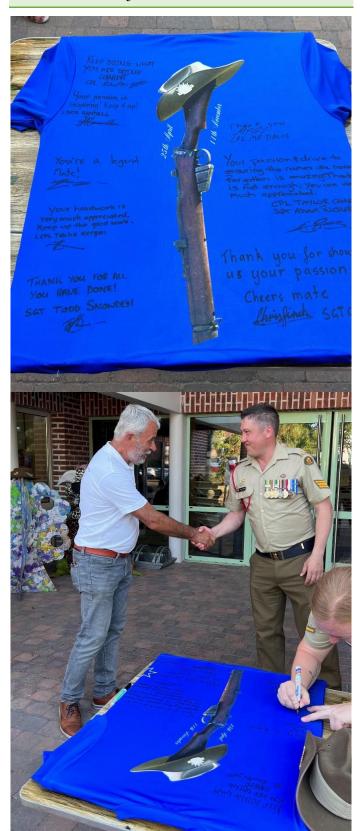
One of the problems that we came up against was the delays in getting some of the items for the construction. For example, the lift had a twenty-week lead time from the date of order. In addition, both builders were committed to other projects, making our desired timeframe of in by Christmas decidedly shaky.

Warren and yours truly continued to liaise with the builders and gradually began to decide that there was one builder that stood out with their suggestions on how to keep costs down to a minimum and the process they would use to complete the task. On Monday 29<sup>th</sup> August we had a final meeting with our preferred builder and asked that they send the contract to us. The decision to use this builder was put to the members of the Board for approval.

The actual construction phase is not due to commence until January 2023 and we are hoping the project will be substantially completed before our AGM in May.

**Update.** With the sudden passing of Warren Hulyer, the preparations for the signing of the contract with the builders was put on hold for a short time. The contract was signed on the 26<sup>th</sup> September; however, a further hurdle was placed in our way when we were informed that the GCCC had not approved the building of the offices on the top floor. There will be a meeting with the GCCC at a date which will make it hard for me to put the results in this Newsletter

**Vietnam Veterans Day.** Better known as the Battle of Long Tan Day, the ceremony in Southport was conducted by the SEAKs at the SOPO on the 18<sup>th</sup> August. The event was well attended. Following the ceremony most retired to the first floor of the club and had a few coldies and light refreshments. All in all, it was a very pleasant day, marred a little when Slim Boese, a very long-term member of our Sub-Branch took a bad tumble and had the be taken to hospital. I am pleased to advise that he did not do any serious damage.



Steve Bloxham Presenting the Shirt

#### Sub-Branch Polo Shirt on Display in Fromelles, France By Steve Bloxham

This is the story behind the signing of this shirt, which was donated by the Southport RSL Sub Branch.

Johan Vandewalle had this idea for the Australian Army Contingent, who have been part of the recent commemoration ceremonies in Flanders and The Somme, to sign the shirt and then have it framed and placed in Anzac Rest.

The signing took place after the ceremony in Fromelles in the local school where a small reception was held, with the local community putting on a few beers and food...



The Australian Army contingent was made up of members of the Army who had been awarded the Jonathan Church Good Soldiering Award 2022



"Don't forget it's my mother's birthday tomorrow."

# Women have only 2 problems.1. Nothing to wear.2. No room for all their clothes.

#### **A Small Green Island** Contribution by Claude Palmer

It is a small island, less than 40 square miles, a flat green dot in the vastness of Pacific blue. Fly over it and you notice a slash across its north end of uninhabited bush, a long thin line that looks like an overgrown dirt runway. If you did not know what it was, you wouldn't give it a second glance out your airplane window.



On the ground, you see the runway is not dirt but tarmac and crushed limestone, abandoned with weeds sticking out of it. Yet this is arguably the most historical airstrip on earth. This is where World War II was won.



This is Runway Able

On July 24, 1944, 30,000 US Marines landed on the beaches of Tinian .... Eight days later, over 8,000 of the 8,800 Japanese soldiers on the island were dead (vs. 328 Marines), and four months later the Seabees had built the busiest airfield of WWII - dubbed North Field - enabling B-29 Super fortresses to launch air attacks on the Philippines, Okinawa, and mainland Japan.

Late in the afternoon of August 5, 1945, a B-29 was maneuverer over a bomb loading pit, then, after lengthy preparations, taxied to the east end of North Field's main runway, Runway Able, and at 2:45 am in the early morning darkness of August 6, took off.

The B-29 was piloted by Col. Paul Tibbets of the US Army Air Force, who had named the plane after his mother, *Enola Gay*. The crew named the bomb they were carrying Little Boy. Sixhours later at 8:15am Japan time, the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.

Three days later, in the pre-dawn hours of August 9, a B-29 named Bockscar (a pun on "boxcar" after its flight commander Capt. Fred Bock), piloted by Major Charles Sweeney, took off from Runway Able. Finding its primary target of Kokura obscured by clouds, Sweeney proceeded to the secondary target of Nagasaki, over which, at 11:01am, bombardier Kermit Beahan released the atomic bomb dubbed Fat Man.



"Atomic Bomb Pit #1" Where Little Boy was loaded onto *Enola Gay* 

There are pictures inside the enclosure showing the loading of the bombs.



"Atomic Bomb Pit #2" Where Fat Man was loaded onto *Bockscar* 

The commemorative plaque records that 16 hours after the bombing of Nagasaki: "On August 10, 1945 at 0300, the Japanese Emperor, without his cabinet's consent, decided to end the Pacific War."

Take a good look at these pictures, folks. This is where World War II ended with total victory over Japan.

### **Syd Sharp-Shooter and the Zero** By David Mattiske OAM

For a few seconds they were only a few feet apart. But this meeting, if it could be called a meeting, was to have a profound impact on their lives.

The 19th February 1942 dawned bright and clear over the northern coastline of Australia and the Arafura Sea. Admiral Chūichi Nagumo commanding the Japanese aircraft carrier force, the same force which had devastated Pearl Harbour two months previously, turned his ships into the wind to enable his aircraft to take off. He would despatch 152 bombers and 36 Zero fighters to Darwin on the first time that an enemy attacked Australian soil.

On board the aircraft carrier Hiryu was Zero number 5349, tail code B11-124, flown by Sergeant Hajime Toyoshima. He was one of the highly trained Japanese pilots especially chosen for their skill, aggression, and dedication. Only the best were picked for the dangerous and difficult task of flying aircraft off aircraft carriers.



#### Hajime Toyoshima

Toyoshima gunned his powerful engine for takeoff and the Zero roared off the Hiryu, joining the force of 188 fighters and bombers as they formed up and set course for Darwin.

Toyoshima had been allotted the task, among other duties, of attacking the Royal Australian Navy ships who controlled the traffic in and out of the harbour by means of the harbour boom defence system. On arrival over Darwin, Toyoshima flew around performing his first duties over the town area, and then the attack was concentrated on the ships in the harbour. With another Zero in company, Toyoshima headed for the harbour. They came sweeping in at low level from the north west, machine guns blazing, causing damage and casualties to HMAS Kara Kara and HMAS Kookaburra. Their course took them over these ships straight at the Navy Office near the water's edge at East Point, roaring along at only 150 to 200 feet above the water.

As Germany re-armed and war clouds gathered in 1938, Syd Sharp was acutely aware that Australia needed to be prepared. He had initially joined the Army Reserves, but then decided on transfer to the Royal Australian Navy Volunteer Reserve. He was obviously capable and was soon Commissioned with the rank of Sub Lieutenant on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 1939. His Commission was signed by Lord Gowrie, a much-prized signature of a highly regarded Governor General of exceptional capabilities.

He completed the Anti-Submarine Detection course with flying colours and became an expert in that field.

With Japan looming as a threat in the north, Syd was posted to Darwin and promoted to Lieutenant, and took charge of the antisubmarine defences. His Army experience had nurtured an interest in shooting and he always kept in his office on the water front at East Point a .303 rifle.

As the morning of the 19th was a pleasant one, Syd was taking a short break sitting in a chair outside his office overlooking the harbour when he became aware of the sound of the approaching Japanese aircraft and quickly grabbed his rifle and jumped into a shallow slit trench. The destruction of the town was well under way for about thirty minutes and then the Japanese concentrated on the ships in harbour. Syd estimated that at about 1030hrs two Japanese fighters were roaring in from the northwest, machine guns blazing away at the Kara Kara and the Kookaburra. Their course took them over these ships, straight at East Point where Syd and a few others were stationed. Syd took aim with his .303 rifle and fired shots. "You're hitting him", was the call, but the Zeros roared on just a few feet over head.

The shock of the Darwin raid with massive destruction and huge casualties, and the urgent need to prepare for further attacks meant that this incident was not recorded and forgotten.

After his attack on the ships Sergeant Toyoshima climbed to a normal flying height and headed northwest. As he approached Melville Island disaster struck. His Zero's engine seized and he glided to a forced landing on that island.

Tiwi islander Matthias Ungura watched the Zero crash land, and ran to the scene, capturing the first Japanese Prisoner of War captured by the Allies. He took possession of the dazed Toyoshima's pistol and with friends sailed across to Bathurst Island and handed the luckless Japanese pilot over to Sergeant Leslie Powell of the Australian Army.



Zero number 5349, tail code B11-124 On Melville Island

Ashamed of virtually delivering the first Navy Zero to the enemy and not dying for the Emperor, Hajime Toyoshima gave a false name and said he had flown from Ambon. All Australian records show him under his assumed name of Tadeo Minami and that is how he completes his story and his tragic life.

Japanese Servicemen firmly believed that they must serve and die for their cause. To do otherwise was a disgrace for them and their families. As prisoners of war, they chafed under a heavy burden, the fact that they had been caught alive was shameful and many of them longed for redemption. Tadeo Minami was one of these.

By August 1944 nearly a thousand Japanese prisoners were held in a camp at Cowra. As a non-commissioned officer Tadeo Minami was an aggressive leader, dreaming of and plotting a breakout. The Japanese learned that Australian Army authorities were to separate the men from their non-commissioned officers. This was devastating news for the wellbeing and orderly functioning of a unit depends on the relationships between the men and their immediate leaders, particularly so amongst the Japanese.

A breakout was organised immediately. During the night of 4/5<sup>th</sup> August, 1944, Minami blew a bugle to start the breakout. Hundreds of Japanese charged the barbed wire fences. Hundreds were killed by the guard's fire; many simply took their own lives in the wild confusion. They gave their lives to redeem them from the disgrace they had brought upon themselves and their families. Tadeo Minami was caught in a hail of machine gun fire and lay wounded. He was not fatally wounded but used a kitchen knife which he thrust into his throat and died the death he so desired. With his comrades he is buried in the Memorial Gardens erected at the former camp site at Cowra, a place of significance in Australian and Japanese history.

Lt. Syd Sharp went on to other important posts in the Navy at Cairns which was an important base for the counter offensive against Japan.

After the War he remained an active officer in the Reserves, and became famous as the Commodore of the Royal Australian Naval Sailing Association in 1969 and 1970.

Because of his renowned skill in sailing craft, in the early 1960's, Syd was asked if he could accept a guest on his yacht for a Saturday race on Sydney Harbour.

The guest wished to enjoy a sail as he had not done so for many years. On enquiring who was the mysterious guest, Syd was informed it was Vice Admiral Sir John Collins.

Syd gave the proper reply. He was welcome, but as Syd was the officer in charge his orders would have to be obeyed at all times. Needless to say, our famous Admiral appreciated the common sense of "Captain Syd" and a pleasant cruise was had by all.

After a successful business career in Sydney, Syd and his charming wife Linda surveyed the growing Gold Coast. They bought a handsome 12<sup>th</sup> floor water front unit where Syd can gaze out on the mountains to the west or, more likely, to his beloved salt water ocean in the east.

Did Syd actually shoot down Tadeo Toyoshima?

The marvels of the internet reveal a volume of information about practically everything and anything, including a large quantity of information on the first great raid on Darwin, including pictures of Hajime Toyoshima's Zero. It is not badly damaged and looks in fair shape for a crashed aircraft. Its fuselage and wings are not torn about as if hit by anti-aircraft shell bursts. After examination it was found that "Imperial Japanese Navy A6M2 Zero, Serial Number 5349 coded Bll-1244 was hit in the oil tank by a single .303 rifle bullet over Darwin Harbour. When the engine seized and the propeller sheared off, pilot Flight Sergeant

Hajime Toyoshima crashed landed his damaged aircraft on Melville Island."

If there was any doubt about the effectiveness of Syd Sharp's shooting this is now dispelled.

Lt. Syd Sharp now goes down in history as the only man during World War 2 to shoot down a Zero with a single shot from a .303 rifle.

#### **National Wattle Day**

The first day of the Australian spring - 1 September - was proclaimed by the Governor-General of Australia, Bill Hayden, in 1992 to be Australia's National Wattle Day for everyone across Australia to celebrate at the same time. This national day was a unifying gesture as many individual wattle days were celebrated on many different dates in different states and territories from July to October when the local wattle flowering is at its best.



Wattle Day was first celebrated in more than one state on the same day in 1910, with events taking place in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia. The First World War (1914-1918) saw a desire to sell sprigs of wattle and wattle badges to raise money for troops overseas, and later for maimed soldiers.

National Wattle Day is celebrated as a day to commemorate the country's land and people. It is a day that allows all Australians to come together and celebrate what it means to live in Australia and be Australian.

It is also a day to be grateful for all the Australian service men and women that have sacrificed and continue to sacrifice their lives in order to afford us the freedoms we have today.

#### **39239 PTE. D.G. HOGG KIA 3-12-1917 WW1 Casualty** by Steve Bloxham OAM

During my recent visit to Belgium, I visited the NZ Memorial. This New Zealand Memorial to the Missing is located within the Buttes New British Cemetery, Belgium and includes the names of 388 men who served with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the First World War. In addition, the cemetery includes 95 known NZEF graves.



During the Third Battle of Ypres, also known as the Battle of Passchendaele, 39239 Private Donald. G. HOGG was KIA 3rd December 1917, with his name being amongst the missing, so It was an honour to pay my respects to Donald on behalf of the Sub-Branch.



The Sub Branch has in our collection, Donald's medals, which consist of: War Medal & Victory Medal.

#### **Remembering the Battle of Milne Bay**

#### For Claude Palmer

The Battle of Milne Bay in August and September 1942 was a turning point in Australia's War in the Pacific, and a major morale boost for Allies fighting the seemingly unstoppable Japanese. For the first time, a Japanese amphibious invading force was forced to retreat.

In May 1942, American General Douglas MacArthur selected Milne Bay as the site for a new airbase to provide air patrols over the eastern seaward approaches to Port Moresby and launch air raids against the Japanese at Rabaul.

The Japanese underestimated the island's defences when they invaded, with the first wave of almost 2,000 marines landing 11kms to the east of the base on 26 August. The two light tanks in support were not enough to make up for the lack of knowledge of the island's layout. Nine thousand Allied troops, including two Australian infantry brigades, artillery, and two RAAF Squadrons with P-40 Kittyhawk fighter bombers, were awaiting them. American engineers were also present.

At first, the Japanese troops were successful in pushing back the 61st and 2/10th Battalions of Australian troops. However, they soon began to suffer heavy casualties from bombing and strafing attacks by P-40s of No 75 and No 76 Squadrons. In spite of this, they continued to advance until 28 August. Around 800 more soldiers joined the ranks for the final assault. However, the waiting Allied troops were prepared with mortar, artillery, machine guns and manpower, which overwhelmed the Japanese. Despite several surges, the Japanese could not break through and on 31 August withdrew. The Australian forces pursued them.

As the Japanese retreated, some made it to waiting Imperial Japanese Navy cruisers while many more attempted to cross the island to reach Japan's base at Buna. However, more than half were killed in the assault or while trying to reach Japanese lines. Australia lost 187 men in the battle, and America lost 14.

Milne Bay remained an important Allied staging area into late 1943.

"Some of us may forget that, of all the Allies, it was the Australians who first broke the spell of invincibility of the Japanese Army." –Field Marshall Sir William Slim.



Before the crowbar was invented, crows had to drink at home.

#### Supermarine Spitfire Mk.IX MK329 Wing Commander. J.E. Johnson

As some of you may know, I am a collector of scale model die-cast aircraft, most of which are from the WWII era. While I have not purchased any models for quite a while, I still look at what becomes available. This following story is about a scale model released recently by Corgi. It tickled my imagination, so I thought I would share it with you.



Spitfire Mk.IX MK329

Wearing full D-Day identification markings, Spitfire MK329 JE-J 'Junior' was the personal mount of RAF ace pilot James Edgar 'Johnnie' Johnson, one of the RAF's top scoring fighter aces of WWII and one who's impressive tally of 34 confirmed aerial victories was scored exclusively against Luftwaffe single engined fighters. Flying extensively in support of the D-Day landings, Johnson and the squadrons under his command would be employed in aggressively clearing the skies of northern of Luftwaffe fighter France opposition, something they proved rather effective at doing. In fact, by D-Day, Johnson was one of the most successful Allied air aces still flying operationally, with his victories showing no sign of abating. Johnson and his No.127 (RCAF) Wing were one of the first fighter units to be sent to operate from forward landing bases in France following the successful Normandy landings, which is where the unusual story of this particular aircraft comes from. It appears that Spitfire Mk.IX MK329 was something of a hybrid machine and not the one Johnson actually flew in combat, but more of a hack airframe.

It is reputed that once his unit had been sent to operate in France, he used this Spitfire to fly back to the UK on unofficial 'Beer Runs', returning to their temporary home with two beer kegs attached under the wing of his aircraft. This practice was frowned upon by the RAF top brass, so units came up with ingenious ways restrictions, around the using standard external fuel tanks which had been thoroughly washed out for the purpose of transporting their beer. however, despite their verv best endeavours, the beer still had a nasty aftertaste of fuel. It is thought that as Johnson was particularly highly regarded by both his men and his superiors, a blind eye may have been turned on his unofficial Spitfire sorties and the refreshing ordnance they ferried. There are few details regarding the actual production and service career of Spitfire MK329 in existence, which Johnson described in his memoirs as being a collection of components from various different Spitfires, something of a mix and match airframe. This is borne out by the fact that its serial MK329 is very similar to that of his usual and favoured combat mount around that time, Spitfire MK392 - is this the reason why he referred to this aircraft as 'Junior'?

# Current Board Members

# **Membership Renewal**

Most of our members are life subscribers and so do not have to pay any annual membership fee. There are still some of our members that choose to renew their membership each year. For these few we ask that you use EFT to pay your fee.

**BSB**: 124 022 Account No: 23303576 Reference: Your RSL Membership Number

Fees due by the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023.

### Menin Gate 29 July 2022 by Steve Bloxham OAM

It was an honour to lay a wreath on behalf of the Sub-Branch on the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup> July at exactly 8 o'clock, at the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing in Ypres Belgium.



The site of the Menin Gate was chosen because of the hundreds of thousands of men who passed through it on their way to the battlefields. It commemorates casualties from the forces of Australia, Canada, India, South Africa and United Kingdom who died in the Salient.

The memorial bears the names of 54,389 officers and men from United Kingdom and Commonwealth Forces (except New Zealand and Newfoundland) who fell in the Ypres Salient before 16 August 1917 and who have no known grave.



#### We must never forget our fallen Lest We Forget

# Veterans' Health Week

Every year DVA sponsors a week of functions promoting the health and wellbeing of all serving and ex-serving members of the ADF. Last year we held our contribution on the same day as our monthly morning tea and had a marvellous turnout. This year we were forced to hold the event during the week commencing 3<sup>rd</sup> October. This was well advertised; however, the turnout was very disappointing.

The theme for this year was healthy eating and we had engaged the services of a well-known dietitian organisation to give us a talk. There were other activities including barefoot bowls to get the aches and pains sorted a little.

# **SEAKs Association**

In late September, the SEAKs Association, who had been welcome at the old Memorial Club since the mid-1950s, were ordered to leave the premises at 36 Scarborough Street. Like the Sub-Branch, they were not given any chance to question the eviction and given very little time to pack up their property and leave.

Their property is now temporarily stored in the same facilities that we use and they have now made their "Headquarters" with us at the Bowls Club. They have already held one of their monthly meetings at the Club and have been welcomed by the Club management, and will be holding their ceremonies at the Broadwater Cenotaph from now on.

**Merdeka Day.** When this commemorative day was mentioned to me, I had no idea what it was.

It turns out, it is the day that Malaya gained its independence from Great Britain on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 1957. It is the day that the Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association hold a ceremony to commemorate their involvement in campaigns in those countries. This year I was invited to attend their gathering as a guest of the SEAKs and we took a bus to Wynnum where a very enjoyable ceremony and lunch took place.

#### 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bali Bombing

On the 12<sup>th</sup> October across the nation, there were commemorative functions to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bali Bombing. One of the major events held on the Gold Coast was at the Allambe Memorial Gardens, Nerang. It is here that a most impressive monument honours all the Australians that were killed in that terrible tragedy, and in particular the eight victims from the Gold Coast.

The commemoration took place in the evening at the Garden Chapple in the Gardens which was packed to overflowing. There were several performances by Balinese Dancers that really set the tone for the night, some heartfelt addresses by dignitaries and families of the victims, and wreaths laid by the VIP's and others.

It was my honour to be invited to the event to represent our Sub-Branch and lay a wreath.



### **Rotational System of Elections**

At the 2016 AGM the Rotational System of Elections was fully implemented. It is probably time to remind our members just what this entails.

Basically, there are but two rules to remember. First, the elections are called for positions, not people. Second, each position has a three-year term and a maximum of three consecutive terms.

The table below illustrates this process, showing the positions that will come up for election over the next four AGMs—indicted in **red**.

Position	AGM			
	2023	2024	2025	2026
President				
Deputy President				
Secretary				
Treasurer				
Director 1				
Director 2				
Director 3				
Director 4				
Director 5				
Director 6				

Meeting Dates			
Meeting	Date		
General	Sun, 14 Aug 22		
General	Sun, 13 Nov 22		
General	Sun, 12 Feb 23		
AGM	Sun, 14 May 23		
General	Sun, 13 Aug 23		
General	Sun, 12 Nov 23		
All meetings start at 10:30			

Someone said "Nothing rhymes with orange."

I said "No It doesn't."



"When I told him it would be nice to have my breakfast in bed once in a while, he told me to sleep in the kitchen."





"Maybe your account's overdrawn!"

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