



# SITREP

## RSL Hornsby (Sub-Branch)



Email: [info@hornsbyrslsubbranch.com](mailto:info@hornsbyrslsubbranch.com)

Welfare: 02 9485 3204 or 0408 237 678

Website: [www.hornsbyrslsubbranch.com](http://www.hornsbyrslsubbranch.com)

### President's Message

Hi Everyone,

As you may be aware we were able to hold our General Meeting on the 25 October 2020. This was the first time that we were able to meet since our Annual General meeting in March. It was great to see so many of you again. Is this a sign that life is slowly returning to normal?

It was also great to see you all at our meeting on the 22 November 2020. This was our last meeting for the year and an opportunity to celebrate Christmas and catch up with friends.

Over the past months since March, your Committee has been busy working on several projects:

1. Welfare calls to members over 80;
2. Conducting an IT review of our sub-Branch hardware and software.  
Installing the office NBN;
3. Updating our Facebook page and web site;
4. Holding our first Coffee & Chat meeting;
5. Advertising in the local Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Post newspaper;
6. Ensuring the future of the Hornsby RSL sub-Branch Youth Club Gymnastics Centre; and
7. Conducting due diligence on the possibility of establishing a Veterans Centre as part of the RSL Hornsby sub-Branch



Yes, a busy time for the Committee but satisfying as we lay the building blocks for next year and the many years ahead.

We have now had two successful Coffee Club meetings and these will continue in 2021. Attendance is limited to 30 guests only so please book in early. Contact John Zeller on 0447462248 to make a booking.

Thank you to our members who have volunteered to fundraise for Remembrance Day. This is one of the two occasions each year where we raise the majority of our funds for the welfare of our veterans.

I look forward to catching up with you at our next meeting in 2021. Keep safe.

Regards

George Main

## **Vale**

It is with sincere regret that we must announce the passing of John Hutcheson MC, Graham Sheather and Kwi Hwan Jang.

John was born on 4 October 1927 and his service in the Army spanned 37 years from the end of World War 2, through Korea, Malaya, Vietnam and beyond. It included postings with the Royal Marine Commandos and the British SAS. He was awarded the Military Cross for actions in Korea. He passed away on 18 August 2020.

Graham was born on 18 September 1946. He was a national serviceman from 1967 to 1969 with Royal Australian Signals including service in Vietnam. He passed away on 29 August 2020.

Kwi Hwan was born on 27 May 1927. He served three years in the Korean Armed Forces including service in Vietnam. He was also the leader of the Korean group with the sub-Branch. He passed away on 13 September 2020.

We must also acknowledge the passing of Frederick Bowman and Leslie Hamilton whose recent deaths have not been recognised previously in this newsletter

Frederick was born on 17 June 1924 and served with the RAAF during World War 2. He passed away on 16 April 2020.

Leslie was born on 29 June 1930 and served with 30 Battalion (NSW Scottish). He had moved to Queensland 13 years ago while still retaining his membership of our sub-Branch. He passed away 6 May 2020.

## **Sick Parade**

Ron Koutchavlis has been in hospital for several weeks over our reporting period. Fortunately, he is back at home now and attended our Christmas meeting on 22 November.

## News and Activities

### Sub-Branch Activities

#### Remembrance Day

After a cancelled ANZAC Day, the sub-Branch commemorated Remembrance Day with a service at the Hornsby Cenotaph. Notwithstanding the special arrangements imposed by COVID 19 Protocols, the service was a fitting commemoration for those who died as members of the Australian Armed Forces. The address was given by the Hornsby Shire mayor, Philip Ruddock. (Photos below are from the Hornsby Shire Council Facebook page)



**REMEMBRANCE**

**SERVICE**

**LOYALTY**



### General Meetings.

After a long hiatus due to COVID restrictions, our general meetings and lunches resumed in October. It had been seven months since the previous meeting in March. 49 members and 14 visitors gathered at the RSL Club on 25 October. The visitors include the Acting State President Ray James and Mrs James.

Our final meeting for 2020 was held on 22 November. It was also our traditional Christmas Meeting.

The schedule for 2021 meetings can be found in the Upcoming Dates section and also our website.

### Coffee Club

On 28 October, the first Coffee Club meeting was held at the RSL Club with Annelle Beeby, the Care Coordinator at the Dee Why Veterans Centre, as the guest speaker. Ros Hutchinson, our own Welfare Officer, was the guest speaker for the second meeting held on 20 November.

These mornings will continue next year on a bi-monthly basis and we will have a different speaker on each occasion.

### Fund Raising

In the lead up to Remembrance Day, our fundraising activities have resumed with the usual selling at railways supplemented by stands at local shopping centres. The sales through the shopping centres proved to be successful innovation. In total, \$7993 was raised to support veterans' services.

### Welfare Notes

Our Welfare Officer, Ros Hutchinson advises that the following may be of interest to members:

- **2020- 2021 Budget.** Govt has allocated \$11.7 billion to DVA in 2020- 2021 budget. Measures where DVA is lead agency include:
  - \$101.7 million to boost mental health support for veterans, including expansion of Open Arms & expanded eligibility of Coordinated Veterans' Care Program to certain White Card holders
  - \$64.1 million in supplementary funding to support DVA's claims processing, accessing treatment & support services ,as well as to improve data sharing & analytics between DVA and Defence
  - \$25.9 million for additional support for Totally & Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) veterans, particularly for those paying private rent
  - \$6.0 million to broaden Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Program
  - \$1.1 million to commemorate 75th anniversary of end of WW11
- **Some Useful Contacts:**
  - Open Arms:- Veterans & Families Counselling: 24 hour crisis counselling service : 1800 011 046
  - Lifeline Crisis Counselling: 13 11 14
  - Mensline Australia: 1300 78 99 78
  - Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

Best wishes for festive season to our members and families.

## Upcoming Dates

The following table shows the proposed Calendar of Events for 2021.

Month		Date	Time	Event
JANUARY	"STAND DOWN MONTH" - * NO COMMITTEE, GENERAL MEETING nor LUNCHEON			
FEBRUARY	Tuesday	9th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	Sunday	28th	11.00am	General Meeting & Luncheon
MARCH	Tuesday	9th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	Sunday	28th	11.00am	Annual General Meeting & Luncheon
APRIL	Tuesday	13th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	Sunday	18th - ANZAC SUNDAY > Hornsby "March & Service" *March Form Up by 10.30am, for the Cenotaph Service at 11.00am		
	Sunday	25th - ANZAC DAY > Hornsby "Dawn Service" * March Form Up by 4.45am, for the Cenotaph Service at 5.00am		
	* NO GENERAL MEETING nor LUNCHEON *			
MAY	Tuesday	11th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	Sunday	23rd	11.00am	General Meeting & Luncheon
JUNE	Tuesday	8th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	Sunday	27th	11.00am	General Meeting & Luncheon
JULY	Tuesday	13th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	Sunday	25th	11.00am	General Meeting & Luncheon
AUGUST	"STAND DOWN MONTH" - * NO COMMITTEE, GENERAL MEETING nor LUNCHEON			
SEPTEMBER	Tuesday	14th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	Sunday	26th	11.00am	General Meeting & Luncheon
OCTOBER	Tuesday	12th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	Sunday	24th	11.00am	General Meeting & Luncheon
NOVEMBER	Tuesday	9th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	Thursday	11th REMEMBRANCE DAY Service at the Cenotaph from 10.30am		
	Sunday	28th	11.00am	General Meeting & Christmas Luncheon
DECEMBER	Tuesday	14th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	* NO GENERAL MEETING nor LUNCHEON *			

## Heritage

### Anniversaries

The Remembrance Day commemorations marked the 102nd anniversary of the armistice with Germany which silenced the guns in Europe and marked the end of the fighting in World War 1. Germany was the last of the three Central Powers to surrender. The Ottoman Empire signed an armistice on 30 October which saw the end of fighting for Australian Light Horse in the Middle East. On 3 November 1918, Austria-Hungary Empire also signed an armistice. While this event had little direct impact on Australian forces deployed overseas, the break-up of the Empire had an impact on the lives of many subsequent Australian emigrants.

### Snippets from the Past - Remembrance Day at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery

As noted in the previous section, we recently marked Remembrance Day for 2020. Unlike ANZAC Day, 11 November is acknowledged as a day of commemoration across many countries throughout the world. While most of the Commonwealth personnel remembered on this day lie in well tended cemeteries relatively close to where they died, we know that a significant number have no known resting places. However, there is also another smaller group who lie in graves in unusual locations in different parts of the world well away from their place of death or their home country.

One such place is Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St Louis, Missouri in the United States where the remains of 11 Australian who died during World War 2 in different locations far distant from their final resting place.

Each year on 11 November, Australian Army sappers posted to the US Army's Manoeuvre Support Centre at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri make a two hour trek east along Interstate 44 to the Cemetery. They are joined by their counterparts from Britain and Canada as well as representatives from the Netherlands and the US Armed Forces. They gather around a granite plaque bearing the names of 100 soldiers (71 Americans, 16 British, 10 Dutch and 3 Australians) whose remains are interred there in a common grave.

These 100 Allied servicemen were POWs who died at Camp Fukioda in Japan around 1944-45. Each was cremated and the ashes were interred in separate urns in a common grave. The name of each person was recorded but when the grave was uncovered after the Japanese surrender, it was found that the urns had corroded and the individual ashes could not be identified. As US personnel comprised the majority of the ashes, it seems the decision was taken to repatriate all remains to the United States. Because the US servicemen came from various parts of the country, the relatively central location in St Louis was chosen. The ashes were interred in the common grave and the granite plaque was dedicated on 28 September 1949 (photo opposite)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P00277.003

The three Australians commemorated on the plaque are:

- Pte James Stewart Nicoll, 1 Coy, AASC who died of pneumonia on 26 Jan 1945. He was born in Dundee Scotland in 1918 and enlisted in Melbourne in June 1940. He was driver.
- Pte Charles Frederick Ward, 2/40 Bn AIF who died on 1 Jan 1945. He was born in Melbourne in 1917 and enlisted in Royal Park Victoria.
- Pte William Thomas Leonard, 1 Coy, AASC who died on 23 Dec 1944. He was born in Newcastle in 1921 and enlisted at Victoria Barracks in Sydney.

However, another eight Australians are also buried at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. Six were passengers on a US B-24D Liberator "Big Ass Bird II" which departed Darwin on 18 March 1944 heading for West Papua. In addition to the six Australians, the aircraft had a crew of ten Americans. Five of the six Australians are identified as Army personnel attached to Z Special Unit and sixth was a member of the RAAF. It is unclear if he too was a member of Z Force. It appears that the group was to be parachuted into West Papua. However, sometime after midnight, the bomber disappeared. The Australians killed in the crash were:

- Sgt. Henry William Clapinson, RAAF;
- Cpl. Arthur Wesley Filewood, AIF "Z" Special Unit;
- LSgt. Kenneth Dreis Ireland, AIF "Z" Special Unit ;
- Cpl. Ernest Charles Marshall, AIF "Z" Special Unit;
- Cpl. James Norman McPherson, AIF "Z" Special Unit; and
- Cpl. Godfrey Charles Mitchell-Burden, AIF "Z" Special Unit.

The aircraft was located in January 1948 by an Australian search team near FakFak in West Papua. All on board had been killed and the remains were interred in the Galala War Cemetery in Ambon, Indonesia. Only the pilot was individually indentified, and he was originally interred in a temporary American cemetery in Manila, Philippines. Sometime after 1948, all the crew members and passengers were transported for permanent burial in the United States.

The remaining two Australians were both members of the RAAF who appeared to be working with the US Army Air Force at the time of their deaths. Both died in New Guinea. Like the Z force personnel, they were probably on board US aircraft at the time of their respective deaths.

Flt Sgt William Alexander MacKay died on 30 Jun 1943. He was born on 8 Jul 1913 at Southport and enlisted in the RAAF in Brisbane in 1941. He was a wireless operator/ air gunner and appears to be a member of 41 Radar Direction Finding attached to the 63 Bomber Squadron, USAAF.

FO Gerard Michael Keogh died on 30 Aug 1943. He was born on 26 Mar 1903 at Sale and enlisted in the RAAF in Melbourne. At the time of his death he was posted to RAAF Headquarters in Melbourne.

## Embarrassing Memories

This vignette comes from Tony Mills, our memorabilia custodian from his time in the RAN.

In 1986, units of the RAN were involved in a 'show the flag' tour of major Australian and international port cities to mark the 75th anniversary of the Australian Navy's foundation. As part of celebrations, HMAS Perth was to visit Hobart.

As HMAS Perth was berthing in Hobart, she came in too fast, bouncing off the starboard side of HMAS Stalwart, which had already berthed. Perth then rammed the wharf and the two-storey CH Smith chandlers building, narrowly missing the Welcome sign.

Then Leading Seaman Tony "Timber" Mills was located on the starboard side of the main deck as part of Procedure Alpha. For the benefit of those readers with a background in another Service, Procedure Alpha is an old naval tradition where the ship's personnel line the upper decks to show that the ship is entering Harbour in peace with its guns 'unmanned'.



### Editor's Note

Any feedback on content and style is appreciated.

Best wishes for Christmas and hopefully a much better 2021. Please take care and thanks for reading.

Phil