



SITREP



RSL Hornsby (Sub-Branch)

Supporting veterans in the Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai area



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Acting President's Message

I trust that this Newsletter finds you all safe and well and that you had a wonderful Christmas and New Year as we gear up for another 12 months in a world beset with turmoil.

By now, all members should have received an email or letter from the Secretary concerning the Annual Check. RSL NSW requires the sub-Branch to confirm each member's continued 'active' membership of the RSL. RSL NSW has determined that Members are no longer required to pay annual subscriptions and the sub-Branch is no longer required to pay capitation fees to RSL NSW on behalf of members. For 2025, there is NO SUBSCRIPTION TO BE PAID.

RSL is a member-based charity of veterans that exists to support other veterans and their families. For that reason, we are encouraging each member, as and if they are able, to make an annual voluntary donation to the RSL, through our Hornsby sub-Branch, to assist the ongoing mission of support.

Our Sports and Recreation Program is alive and active with both the 10 Pin Bowling Club and the Coffee and Chat Club being well attended. The next activity is the Bowling Club to be held on Wednesday 12th February at the "Attic" recreation centre in the RSL Club at 10am. The next Coffee Club meeting is to be held on 12th March at 10am. The guest speaker will be Colin Christie who will be presenting a talk on World War 2 radios that were dropped by the RAF to the French resistance. Colin has a working model of the radio that he has restored for demonstration. Booking notice for both activities will be sent out in plenty of time for those wishing to attend.

This year promises to be a very busy one for an already active sub-Branch committee. To remain proficient, we need your support in our endeavours to provide the leadership that our members deserve.

I look forward to 2025 as a year of development for our sub-Branch.



Welcome

Since the last edition of SITREP, the sub-Branch has welcomed six new members:

- Ms Wai-Kuen Chow 50. Wai-Kuen has been serving in the RAAF since 2017.
- Mr Hyo Geun (Andy) Lee. Andy is a member of the Auxiliary.
- Christina Knights. Christina is an affiliate member and widow of the late 'Timber' Mills.
- Jinmei (Jenny) Liu. Jenny is a member of the Auxiliary.
- Mr Jason Platten. Jason was a member of RAEME in the Australian Army from 1992 to 2001 including service in East Timor.
- Mr Kurt Stahmer. Kurt was a member of RAAMC in the Australian Army from 1988 to 2014 including service in Afghanistan, East Timor and the Solomon Islands.

Vale

It is with sincere regret that we must acknowledge the passing of Aubrey Knowles.

Aubrey was born on 19 March 1924. He served in the Australian Army during World War 2 as a signaller taking part in the landings at Lae and Finschaffon and finished the war on Bougainville. Aubrey passed away on 4 December 2024.



News and Activities

Issues and Activities.

Donations in 2024

In December, the Committee agreed to donate \$6000 to RSL LifeCare Veteran Services. This brings the total funds donated in 2024 to \$21,650, being \$11,000 to RSL LifeCare Veteran Services and \$10,650 to the Veterans Wellbeing Centre Hornsby. In addition, the sub-Branch provided \$1850 in direct support to a local veteran in the Hornsby area.

This is a great outcome and thank you to all who have contributed to this result through the fund-raising efforts throughout 2024.

For 2025, the Committee has agreed that RSL LifeCare Veteran Services will be the major focus of our fundraising for the sub-Branch in 2025.

Auxiliary News

The Auxiliary now has 20 members contributing their skills and contacts to fundraising activities. The Christmas lunch at the end of November raised just over \$2,000.00. The raffles, silent auction, lolly jar and trading table were a great success.

Thank you to all Auxiliary members for their dedication and support throughout 2024.

Annual Check

As John has said, members should have received an email or letter from the Secretary concerning the Annual Check. If you haven't yet done so, could you please respond to that communication to confirm your active involvement with the sub-Branch for 2025.

The letter also invited members to make a voluntary donation towards the ongoing operation of the sub-Branch that will, in part, facilitate our ongoing fundraising activities. The Committee encourages members to assist in this way.

Upcoming Dates

The 2025 Calendar has been sent out to members and can also be found on our website home page <https://hornsbyrslsubbranch.com.au> The following is a 'look ahead' for the next three months.

Month		Date	Time	Event
FEBRUARY	Tuesday	11 th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	Wednesday	12 th	10.00am	10 Pin Bowling Club – L2 "the Attic"
	Sunday	23 rd	11.00am	General Meeting & Veterans Luncheon
MARCH	Tuesday	11 th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	Wednesday	12 th	10.00am	Coffee Club
	Sunday	23 rd	11.00am	Annual General Meeting & Luncheon
APRIL	Tuesday	8 th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	Wednesday	9 th	10.00am	10 Pin Bowling Club – L2 "the Attic"
	Friday	25th - ANZAC DAY - Hornsby Dawn Service		
		* March Form Up by 4.40am, for the Cenotaph Service at 5.00am		
* NO GENERAL MEETING nor LUNCHEON *				

Heritage

Snippets from the Past - The Campaigns of 1945

In 2022, SITREP examined how Australia faced the dire threat of the Japanese onslaught in 1942. Three years later, the situation had changed considerably. The ADF was a very different force than the one that struggled to address the changed strategic circumstances of early 1942. The campaigns in PNG had come to a successful conclusion by the end of 1943 and, with the exception of the north west corner around Wewak and the islands, New Britain and Bougainville in the east, the Australian territory of New Guinea has been cleared of Japanese. However, the focus of the war against Japan had moved elsewhere. In the southwest Pacific, MacArthur's objective was the capture of the Philippines and the island-hopping campaign was closing in on the Japanese mainland. While some Australian naval and air force elements supported the US operations in the Philippines and Hollandia (now Jayapura, West Papua), the Australian Army was largely uncommitted. Some manpower was released to support war related industries and the

size of the Army was set at six infantry divisions (three AIF and three militia) and two armoured brigades. The RAAF strength was around 50 squadrons plus the Article XV squadrons serving in Europe. The size of the RAN was restricted to existing vessels plus those already under construction.

Despite these restrictions, Australia by 1944 possessed a formidable fighting force and was faced with the strategic quandary of how to best to employ it. The logical role would have been to continue to support the reconquest of the Philippines but MacArthur had made it clear that Australian forces would have no role in that campaign. Similarly, there was no role for Australian forces in the island-hopping campaign closing up on Japan. A recommitment of land forces to western European was not politically viable while Japan was still fighting. Australia forces could have been committed to the Burma theatre but, in reality, this campaign also had little direct impact on the war against Japan other than a way to draw Japanese troops from the defence of the homeland.

Instead, the Australian government chose to 'clean up its backyard'. The Australian army began a new series of campaigns in 1944 against isolated but still significant Japanese garrisons stretching across the islands to its north, involving more Australian troops than at any other time in the war. How necessary these final campaigns were for Allied victory remains the subject of continuing debate. They were controversial at the time and remain so to this day. The Australian Government authorised these operations for primarily political, rather than military, reasons. It was believed that keeping the Army involved in the war would give Australia greater influence in any post-war peace conferences and that liberating Australian territories would enhance Australia's influence in its region. Critics of these campaigns argue that they were unnecessary and wasteful of the lives of the Australian soldiers involved as the Japanese forces were already isolated and ineffective. However, the final word comes from Gavin Long, author of the Official History for the campaigns of 1945.

"Always a realist and therefore the more keenly aware of the probably doubtful value of the tasks to which he had been relegated, nevertheless the battle wise Australian soldier fought on to the end with much the same devotion and skill that he had shown in the decisive battles of earlier years."

SITREP has already examined the New Britain campaign in the March 2024 edition. The other three campaigns, Bougainville, Aitape/Wewak area and the final series of campaigns in Borneo will be the subjects of Snippets from the Past over the next three editions.



Australian tank landing at Tarakan on 6 May 1945