



# SITREP



## RSL Hornsby (Sub-Branch)

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



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### President's Message

Hi Everyone,

I hope this Newsletter finds you all safe and well. Another successful ANZAC Day dawn service. This year's service saw the largest number of marchers in recent years with hundreds of local community groups marching. The crowd in attendance was estimated at around four thousand people.

Our Sunday commemorative pre-ANZAC Day service was conducted on the 23 April 23 which coincided with the 100th anniversary of the Hornsby War Memorial. The service included a re-dedication of the Hornsby War Memorial. The Hornsby Memorial was refurbished prior to the Sunday service.



A special thank you to the Committee members who attended the local schools and nursing homes conducting ANZAC Day services.

Members of the Committee attended the Hornsby Ku-Ring-Gai Community College open day on the 27 May 23. The College open day was an opportunity for community organisations to educate the Hornsby locals of the various services available within the district. The Community College was established some 98 years ago to assist and prepare our Veterans for civilian life after the World War I, a service that the College still provides.

The "Tank Crews in Vietnam" documentary is well underway, with a new website created for the documentary [tank169043.com.au](http://tank169043.com.au) Open the link for the latest updates on the progress with the

documentary. Toyota Australia has become a primary sponsor of the documentary by providing three off road vehicles for the documentary.

We were successful in receiving another Grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs. This Grant is from their Well Being Grant program. The Grant will provide funding for a Documentary on the effects of War and Peacekeeping operations on our Veterans throughout the Veterans life. It will record the many and varied mental and physical effects the Veterans have and are deferring due to their service.

It was an honour to represent RSL NSW at the Lifeline National Congress in mid-May. I briefed the Congress on the successful Veteran Support Program that the Hornsby RSL sub-Branch, in-conjunction with the Veterans Well Being Centre-Hornsby, established with Lifeline at Gordon some 18 months ago. As result of the address, several other Lifeline Centres will develop a similar program for Veterans.

On the 18 May 23, the Hornsby RSL sub-Branch provided and cooked a BBQ at the National Centre for Veterans Health at Concord. The lunch time BBQ was attended by Veterans attending the Pain Management Course at the Centre.

This year the Committee will be focussed on expanding the Auxiliary and conducting at least four major fundraising events.

We currently have one member of our Committee undergoing Advocacy and Well Being Training. Once completed we will be able to offer qualified support to our members and their families.

Our Coffee & Chat meetings have been extremely successful and will continue this year.

All the best and keep safe.

Regards

George Main

## Vale

It is with sincere regret that we must announce the passing of Malcolm Smeal, David Rue and Peter Blaxland.

Malcolm was born on 31 Aug 1938. He served in the Army as a National Serviceman in the 1950s, initially in the infantry but later in the artillery. Malcolm died on 15 February 2023.

David was born on 21 Jan 1942. He served in the RAN for four years including involvement in operations in Malaya and Vietnam. David passed away on 23 February 2023.

Peter was born on 8 Jul 1936. He served in the Army as a National Serviceman in the 1950s as a member of 1/15 Parramatta Lancers. Peter was also the Chair of our Trustees and had previously filled other roles in the sub-Branch. He passed away on 9 April.

Lest We Forget.

## News and Activities

### Issues and Activities.

#### ANZAC Day Commemorations

The sub-Branch led our traditional commemorations for ANZAC Day. As George has noted, there was a great attendance at the Dawn Service and this year, the Sunday Service included a rededication of the Cenotaph marking 100 years since it was first unveiled in the years following World War 1. Our two services were well attended with Emergency Services, Volunteer Organisations and Hornsby RSL Pipe Band. 226 Regional Cadet Unit provided the catafalque party, 304 Squadron AAFC assisted with the flags and youth groups, as well as local schools joining the veterans to remember service and sacrifice during conflicts past. The address at both services was given by Commodore Melinda Barnes. Dedicated sub-Branch members set up and dismantled the necessary infrastructure as well as supporting the conduct of both services.

Our fund raising associated with ANZAC Day was particularly successful with over \$10,400 being raised by the Auxiliary and sub-Branch volunteers, to support veteran services locally and further afield. A special thank you to all who contributed for their efforts.

The photos on the two following pages provide an impression of the Sunday service. Unfortunately, there is no photography from the Dawn Service.





Photo Rod White



Photo Bill Tripcony



Photo Bill Tripcony



Photo Bill Tripcony



Photo Bill Tripcony



Photo Bill Tripcony





Photo Rod White



Photo Bill Tripcony



Photo Office of Alister Henskens MP



Photo Bill Tripcony

### Other ANZAC Day Commemorations

George also noted in his message that in the weeks which surround ANZAC Day, the members of the sub-Branch Committee were busy supporting commemoration services at other locations, primarily schools and aged care facilities, in the area. These two photos from Carolyn Parish were taken at an ANZAC event at Little Wallabies Pre-school in Turramurra. The kids had made a thank you board, recognising the service of veterans (now in the sub-Branch office) and Carolyn spoke to the kids about her service.





### Vietnam War commemorative medallion and certificate

To acknowledge the 50th anniversary of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, the Department of Veterans' Affairs will produce a Commemorative Medallion and Certificate of Commemoration.

The medallion and certificate will be made available to every living veteran, widows of veterans and other family members of veterans of the Vietnam War. Please note that only one medallion is available per Vietnam War veteran. While Australia can never repay the debt owed to the 60,000 who served in Vietnam, this medallion and certificate are a small but meaningful way to honour their service and to recognise the sacrifice of those who never returned home.

See DVA for details and how to apply at: <https://www.dva.gov.au/.../commemorative-services...>

### Quilts.

Four quilts were presented to members of the Hornsby sub-Branch and Auxiliary at our AGM at the end of March in recognition of their service to RSL NSW. The quilts were presented by Pauline James, President of the NSW RSL Auxiliary, to George Main, Ivan Brisot, Graham Leach and the talented creator of most of the quilts, Jenny Leach. Congratulations to the recipients.



### Welfare Notes

The Committee has registered the Hornsby sub-Branch with the RSL NSW Sport and Recreation program. Our program will initially commence with Ten Pin Bowling at the Hornsby RSL Club bowling alleys. Bowling will be held on the alternate months to the Coffee Club. More information to follow.

## Heritage

### Snippets from the Past.

The first six months of this year mark anniversaries of the conclusion of two significant post World War 2 conflicts, specifically, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Korean war armistice and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in Vietnam.

### Korea

At the end of World War 2, the Japanese occupation of Korea came to an end with Soviet forces occupying the north and the US in the south. The two Korean governments which emerged reflected the style of government of the occupying powers.

On 25 June 1950, the Korean People's Army of North Korea invaded South Korea. The South Korea's capital, Seoul, was captured within days. The United Nations Security Council declared North Korea the aggressor and established the United Nations Command, a joint force to support South Korea. This Security Council resolution was made possible by the absence of the USSR who were boycotting the Council at the time. The USSR never did that again!

Australia was one of 21 members of the United Nations to send military forces to help South Korea. The entry of Communist China in support of the North Koreans meant that the war dragged on for three years, stalemating back around the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

On 27 July 1953 an armistice was signed by officials from the United States, North Korea and China which lead to the cessation of hostilities. However, a peace treaty has never been signed.

Each of Australia's three defence services was involved in the Korean War. It was the first war for the newly formed Australian Regular Army. It was the only time that the RAN undertook carrier operations in a conflict and it was the last time that RAAF aircraft were involved in air-to-air combat.

Almost 18,000 ADF personnel served in Korea including 340 who were killed. A further 1216 were wounded and 29 became prisoners of war (POWs). Australia retained some defence personnel in Korea until 1957.

### Vietnam

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formal end of Australia's involvement in Vietnam is the second anniversary which we acknowledge in the first half of 2023. A significant number of our sub-Branch served at various times throughout the conflict but the formal end of Australia's involvement was less well defined.

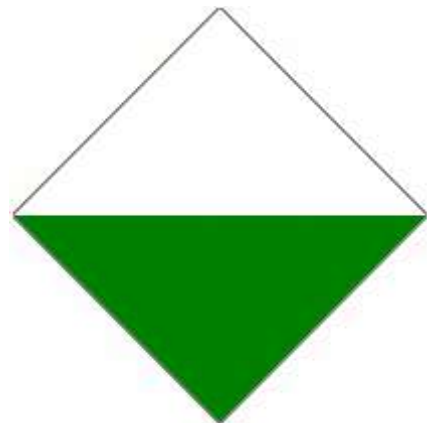
The drawdown of Australian forces began in 1970 when 8 RAR was not replaced at the end of its tour. On 18 August 1971, the Australian and New Zealand governments decided to withdraw their forces from South Vietnam with phased withdrawal commencing in October of that year. On 16 October, Nui Dat was handed over to SVN forces and 4 RAR (less D Company Group including assault pioneer and mortar sections) sailed for Sydney on 9 December 1971. D Company (plus) remained at Vung Tau to guard the rear elements. Task Force Headquarters and 1 ASLG were returned to Australia on 12 March 1972.

Australian advisers remained in country training SVN forces when the newly elected Labor government announced that these forces would be withdrawn by 18 December 1972. On 11 January 1973, the Governor General announced that combat operations in South Vietnam had ceased. Australian troops continued to guard the embassy until July 1973.

Almost 60,000 Australians from Army, Navy and Air Force served in Vietnam with 521 dead, over 3000 wounded and six MIA. Unlike the Korean War, the conflict continued for a further two years until North Vietnamese forces invaded South Vietnam, defeated the ARVN and captured Saigon in April 1975. In the final weeks of the conflict, RAAF elements were sent back to Saigon to assist with the withdrawal of Australian embassy personnel.

### Memorabilia Collection.

Every year just prior to ANZAC Day, there is a clean of our memorabilia collection. This year, one item, which until now, had not been given much prominence was a colour patch of the 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> AIF.



The 20<sup>th</sup> was part of 5 Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Division and was raised at Liverpool in New South Wales in March 1915. 5 Brigade recruited personnel, including its commander the then Colonel William Holmes, who had commanded the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force which captured German New Guinea in 1914. The 20<sup>th</sup> left Australia in late June, trained in Egypt from late July until mid-August, and on 22 August landed at ANZAC Cove just as the August offensives were petering out. In the final four months of the campaign, 5 Brigade manned battalion positions at Russell's Top, Pope's Hill and Quinn's Posts. After Gallipoli, the battalion went to France, arriving in April 1916. On the night of 5 May, the 20<sup>th</sup> had the dubious distinction to be the first Australian unit to be raided by the Germans. The German raid was successful and apart from the casualties, two trench mortars were captured by the Germans. These were still regarded as secret weapons at the time and their loss was a significant embarrassment to the AIF. Later in 1916, it endured the hell of Pozieres in 1916 and in 1917 was part of second Bullecourt (3-4 May) in France, and Menin Road (20-22 September) and Poelcappelle (9-10 October) in Belgium. Finally, the battalion was one of many Australian units rushed to stop the German offensive in early 1918 and then it was part of the victorious battles in late 1918. It was disbanded on 20 April 1919.

While it is probably unlikely, it is possible that the wearer of this colour patch could have served from Australia's earliest battles in World War 1 until its final battles in France.

Over the course of the war, members of the battalion were awarded one VC, one CB, two CMG, 9 DSO, one MBE, 24 MC including four bars, 19 DCM including two bars, 103 MM including six bars, six MSM, 38 MID and 13 foreign awards

Even the smallest items have a significant story to tell.