



SITREP

RSL Hornsby (Sub-Branch)



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President's Message

Hi Everyone,

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a belated Happy New Year. Thank you for your continual support and I know that this year will be bigger, brighter. Even with its challenges, 2021 is shaping up to be a great year!

Our next monthly meeting is scheduled for Sunday the 28 February 2021. I look forward to catching up with you and sharing some good times together.

Our Coffee & Chat meetings are proving to be very successful. A light morning tea including limitless coffee & tea is provided at no cost to all attendees. Thanks to John Zeller & Ray Davis for organising the events.

Our sub-Branch will be hosting a series of free Mental Health First Aid courses over the coming months. Our aim is to offer assistance to contemporary Veterans and their families who may be experiencing difficulties settling back into civilian life. The courses are open to all serving and past members of the ADF including our sub-Branch members. More details will follow.

The Committee has invited members of the Australia - India Cenotaph Committee & Hindu Council of Australia - NSW to join us at our February meeting. Our past President, Terry James was instrumental in assisting their committee with the development of a Cenotaph and was closely involved with the dedication service of the Cenotaph. Our Committee looks to develop a closer relationship with this Ex-Service Organisation.

Over the past few months, the Committee has been working in conjunction with RSL Victoria, Western Sydney University and the Veterans Centre Northern Beaches towards the establishment of a Veteran's Well Being Centre or similar facility in Hornsby. This project will be funded from Federal Government grants or grants from other like-minded organisations. To be eligible for these grants the sub-Branch needs to incorporate or become a Company Limited by Guarantee. This will happen in the next few months with the approval of RSL NSW. This is a slow process but a necessary process to ensure the future of our project.



The form of ANZAC Day commemorations is starting to emerge but COVID restrictions may be imposed at short notice. We await confirmation from the NSW Government. We will keep you updated.

Looking forward to catching up with you.

Regards
George Main

Vale

It is with sincere regret that we must announce the passing of Bernard Clarke. Bernard was born on 24 June 1948 and served nine years in the RAN from 1966 to 1975 and then a further 13 years in the RAAF. His time in the RAN included service in Vietnam. He passed away in January 2021.

News and Activities

Sub-Branch Activities

Kicking off 2021

Our first general meeting and lunch will be held on the last day of February 2021. While this may seem like a fairly routine activity, in the context of the past 12 months, it is only the fourth general meeting since the equivalent meeting last year (the others were March, October and November 2020). Therefore, it is encouraging to see that even before the anticipated roll out of the vaccine, we are managing to resume a 'close to normal' level of activity. Hopefully, things will continue to improve in 2021.

ANZAC Day

As George noted in his message, we are uncertain about the commemoration of ANZAC Day in 2021. The NSW Branch has advised the following:

'The Sydney CBD March will go ahead this year. Participation is limited to 500 veterans in accordance with social distancing, health, and safety requirements.'

'Entry into the Sydney CBD March will be by way of a ballot process conducted via the RSL NSW website. Places will be allocated to veterans across each service branch and conflict from World War II to current operations via the ballot. WWII veterans have been notified in writing that they do not need to apply for the ballot.'

For the Hornsby sub Branch, we anticipate that we should be able to conduct a Dawn Service on the 25th in a similar manner to Remembrance Day last year. However, the usual service on the preceding Sunday will probably not be possible.

As things become more certain, we will advise members of the final arrangements. Unfortunately, all planning must acknowledge the potential for last minute restrictions such as those imposed following the outbreak of the 'Avalon cluster' last Christmas.

Coffee & Chat Club

The launching of the sub Branch Coffee & Chat Club has received a very warm response and will continue as a regular bi-monthly event commencing January 2021. The Coffee & Chat Club is to be held on the second Wednesday of every second month. Our next meeting will be on 10 March.

All are invited. There is no requirement for you to be a member of the sub Branch. Guest speakers will address a large cross-section of interesting topics. Come and join us for a coffee and chat. No charge, the coffee and light morning tea is on us. Please be aware that due to current restraints of COVID the

attendance is restricted to 30 people at this time. If you wish to reserve a spot at the meetings please contact John Zeller on 0447 462 248. Dress is casual.

Welfare Notes

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

- Safe Zone Support is an anonymous 24/7 support line to help veterans & their families who might not otherwise seek mental health care. Calls to 1800 142 072 are answered 24/7 & are not recorded. For more info visit <https://www.openarms.gov.au/safe-zone-support> .
- Australian Census (Mon10 August, 2021) will, for the first time, include a question about service in ADF. Census information will provide better data to help guide services & support for Australian veterans. The census will also help inform DVA policy responses to issues facing veterans such as health, housing and employment.

Heritage

Snippets from the Past - Impressions of Gallipoli

Once again, we approach the anniversary of the ANZAC landings on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Like a number of other Australians, my wife and I were able to visit the Peninsula in the centenary year, 2015. As an ex-sapper, my focus was on the anniversary of events in June rather than the 100th anniversary of the 25th April. Consequently, we avoided the restrictions which were imposed for the ANZAC Day commemorations. Nevertheless, it was a 'Bucket List' trip and a great opportunity to 'walk the ground' that has become a legend. The visit left us with many memories but the following are two very personal impressions.

Everything around ANZAC Cove was very close and the Turks dominated the heights. This was no more apparent than when we visited the site of the Turkish headquarters. The most obvious and visible structure seen from this location is the white Lone Pine Memorial (see adjacent photo – a small object in the image but very obvious on the ground). The Turks had good visibility over critical parts of the ANZAC positions. The closeness of the front lines in many places compounded this problem. Probably, the Turks didn't need too many forward observers.

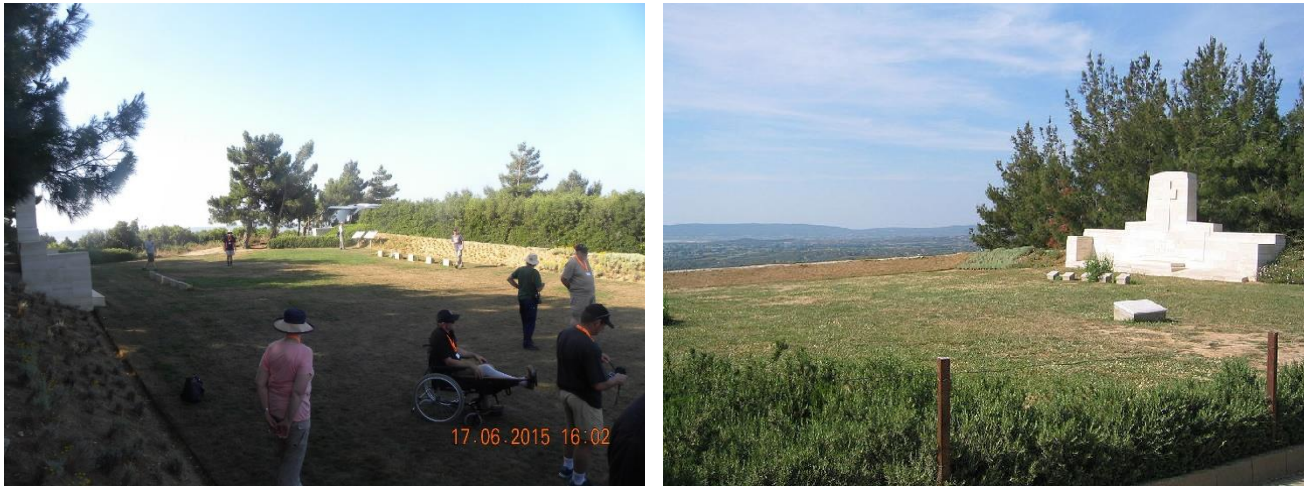


Many places around ANZAC Cove are poignant but I found the Nek to be particularly evocative. I have no family links to any member of the 3rd Light Horse Brigade who participated in the attack so the sense of overwhelming sadness which I felt was difficult to explain. Maybe it was because it had been dramatized in the film Gallipoli but probably more so because of its size. It was tiny!! Every account describes the area as narrow but seeing it in

reality and knowing that over 300 Australians became casualties in a very short period of time makes it

particularly haunting. When looking at George Lambert’s well-known painting, I always had the impression that the artist was notionally around the middle of the Australian line but now I appreciate that the artist has attempted to capture the whole of the Australian charge from its extreme right.

The photos below show the area of the Nek memorial from both sides and the people in the left photo give a sense of scale. It seems to be about the same width as the scene depicted in Lambert’s painting.



It’s hard to believe that soldiers were ordered to attack across this piece of ground but the courage of the second, third and fourth waves, knowing what they faced, defies belief. But attack they did!!

Embarrassing Memories

We return to the theme of Centurion mishaps with a photo provided by our well-known former Cent driver. This one probably comes under the heading of “Bugger!!”.



Editor’s Note

Any feedback on content and style is appreciated. Please take care and thanks for reading.
Phil