



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, and 2023 is your year for good health and wealth. I look forward to catching up with you all at our February General Meeting.

The Hornsby sub-Branch in conjunction with the Veterans Well Being Centre-Hornsby will be conducting two Youth Mental Health First Aid Courses for Veterans with adolescent children this year as well as two Mental Health First Aid Courses for Veterans. Further details of the first course are included in the Welfare Notes section of this edition.



As you will be aware, this April will see the 100th Anniversary of our Cenotaph. We were successful with our application and have received \$10,000 toward the cost of repairs in time for a rededication of our Memorial on 23 April during our pre-Anzac Day service.

The Veterans Well Being Centre-Hornsby has received a substantial Grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs to produce a documentary on Tank Crews in Vietnam. Please visit the Veterans Centre website for more information, veteranswellbeingcentre-hornsby.org

We have applied for two more Grants through the "Saluting Their Service" grant program. One grant application is to fund research and document the ongoing effects on veterans who have served in a war zone or peacekeeping operations. The other grant application is in-conjunction with the centenary of the Hornsby War Memorial. A documentary saluting the service of our local veterans from the Hornsby and surrounding communities who have served our country for the past 100 years.

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

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

Finally, our Coffee & Chat meetings have been extremely successful and will continue this year. The next meeting is on 8 March.

All the best and keep safe.

Regards

George Main

Welcome

Since the December edition of SITREP, the sub-Branch has welcomed two new members:

- Mr Christopher Cooper. Chris served in the RAN for six years including operations in the Solomon Islands.
- Mr Howard Neely. Howard served in the RAAF for two years.

Vale

It is with sincere regret that we must announce the passing of Arthur Pembroke and George Chidgey.

Arthur, "Bushy", was born on 23 Jul 1928. He served in the Army for over 30 years including time in Korea where he was awarded the Military Cross during the Battle of Maryang San. Arthur passed away on 30 May 2022

George was born on 7 Oct 1933. He served in the Army as a National Serviceman in the 1950s. George passed away on 12 January 2023.

Lest We Forget.

News and Activities

Issues and Activities.

Our Centenarians

Another two of our members have joined our small band of centenarians. James Horton and Herbert Norris both celebrated their 100th birthdays in January. Congratulations to them both.

Annual General Meeting

Just a reminder that our meeting on 26 March is our Annual General Meeting. A key agenda item for that meeting will be the election of all Executive and Committee appointments for the next two years.

Donations

RSL NSW 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 through our sub-Branch. These donations will contribute to the ongoing mission of support, both locally through our sub-Branch and Veterans Wellbeing Centre, and state-wide, through RSL NSW. RSL Hornsby sub-Branch proposes to give a substantial proportion of member voluntary donations to RSL NSW to support the continuing charitable work of RSL NSW Life Care Veteran Services.

Suggested donations are \$15 for auxiliary members and \$35 for Service and Affiliate Members. However, if you are able, the work of the sub-Branch supporting veterans would be greatly assisted with a donation above the standard. Payment details were included in Neil's recent letter to members.

Refurbishment of Cenotaph

As George mentioned, the Committee successfully applied for a Grant from the NSW Government to assist with the restoration of the Memorial last year and has received \$10,000 toward the cost of repairs. The total cost of the restoration work is \$16,000 and will be completed by the company, Artisan of Stone. The balance will be funded by the sub-Branch. Work will commence mid-February and hopefully completed in time for the rededication on 23 April 23, which is just four days short the 100th anniversary of the Memorial.

Welfare Notes

Also mentioned by George in his message, our sub-Branch in conjunction with the Veterans Well Being Centre Hornsby will be delivering two Youth Mental Health First Aid Courses for Veterans with adolescent children this year. The course teaches adults about adolescent development and the signs and symptoms of common and disabling mental health problems in young people. The first course is scheduled for 18-19 March 2023. The venue is the Anzac War Memorial at Hyde Park and the course is free for all Veterans. To enrol, please email: support@veteranswellbeingcentre-hornsby.org

In addition, two Mental Health First Aid Courses for Veterans will be conducted during the year. Course dates to be confirmed.

Finally, Lifeline and the sub-Branch will be running a "Manage your Mood" course at the War Memorial Hall Hornsby over the coming months. More information will follow.

Upcoming Dates

ANZAC Day observances

Our regular Dawn Service will be conducted at the Hornsby Cenotaph. Our preceding Sunday march will be held on Sunday 23 April and, as mentioned previously, will include a rededication of the Cenotaph to commemorate its 100th anniversary.

Final details will be given at our meeting on 26 March. Details will also be included in the sub-Branch website and Facebook.

Heritage

Snippets from the Past.

In April, we will mark the 100th anniversary of the Hornsby Cenotaph with a rededication of the memorial. It was not the first commemoration of those from the Shire who had served. Even as the battles on the Gallipoli



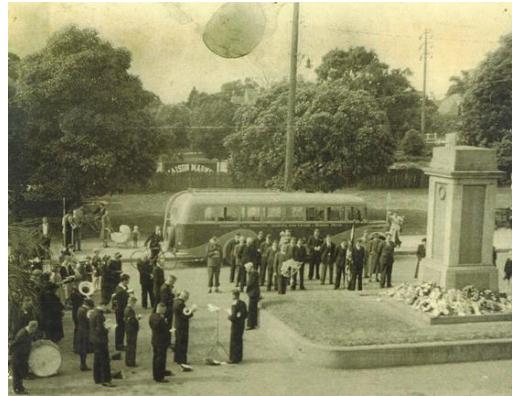
Peninsular were continuing, Hornsby Shire Council, on 2nd October 1915, approved a large Roll of Honour Board to be erected on the footpath on the corner of Coronation Street and Peats Ferry Road opposite the Post Office. The Honour Board was quickly erected with 230 names representing those men that had already enlisted in the first 15 months of conflict. Two years later by October 1917, over 400 names were inscribed on the Honour Board.



With our sub-Branch formed in 1919, the members at the time, together with the wider community were keen to erect a more substantial memorial at Hornsby. Fundraising took

several years but the goal was finally achieved. The Memorial was erected at the intersection of Peats Ferry Road and William St and the original Roll of Honour Board was dismantled once the new structure was opened.

On 27th April 1923, there was an enormous crowd gathered despite heavy rain and to mark the importance of the occasion, all shops in Hornsby were shut. The Governor General, Lord Foster, was welcomed by the President of Hornsby Shire, Councillor PA James, and received a guard of honour, consisting of the Military, Boy Scouts and cadets from Baker College. Councillor James noted it was the first occasion Hornsby had been favoured by a visit by the King's representative.



As this photo from 1968 shows, since 1923, the Cenotaph has become the focal point for commemoration services on the Sunday before ANZAC Day, at dawn on the 25th April and at 11am on the 11th November. In addition, it has been used for special one-off commemorations such as our recent commemoration of the 75th anniversary of VP Day.

I confess to a vested interest including the photo from 1968. It shows the mounting of the catafalque party provided by cadets from then Normanhurst Boys' High Cadet Unit (now 226 Cadet Unit). Yours truly is the

cadet on the right. As cadets, we actually used real rifles in those days.

The Cenotaph was moved slightly around 2007 to facilitate the rail bus interchange and the memorial was refurbished in 2013 and, as noted earlier, further work is being undertaken prior to the 100th anniversary commemoration.

Hopefully, it will continue to honour those from our local area who have served their country in times of war and other operational missions for the next 100 years.

Embarrassing Memories

In the last issue, I included a photo of 3 Tank Battalion, part of the 3rd Tank Brigade, training with their newly issued Matilda tanks at Goulburn in 1942. My father was a member of the unit when he took the photo. However, around the same time, it seems there was some concern about the quality of soldiers serving in that formation and, for some reason, the Regimental Medical Officers (RMO) were asked for their opinion. The following is an extract from the response from the RMO of 3 Tk Bn (typos and abbreviations included):

- 1 Our personnel are physically fit Class 1 - so is the average gorilla, but a gorilla has not the intelligence to handle tks and neither have many of our men.
- 2 Most of our men have lots of guts, but little brains - they would make good inf or laboutr bn. They are mostly farmers' sons with the horse and buggy and rifle and bayonet mentality.
- 3 No orgn except the army would put such men in control of a piece of machinery worth £25000.

I'm sure our tank crews who served in Vietnam were much smarter!