



SITREP



RSL Hornsby (Sub-Branch)

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



Email: info@hornsbyrslsubbranch.com

Website: www.hornsbyrslsubbranch.com

President's Message

Hi Everyone,

I hope this Newsletter finds you all safe and well and also that Santa was generous. Happy New Year and all the best for health and wealth this coming year. 2023 was a successful year for the sub-Branch and I look forward to 2024. A big thank you for your ongoing support to the sub-Branch. Thank you to the Committee and the Auxiliary for their hard work and fundraising this past year.



This year, our focus will be increasing the Auxiliary membership. Both Kay Cater and Steve Hopwood have accepted the challenge of increasing the membership. The Auxiliary plays a very important role in the sub-Branch, as they raise funds to support the Veterans within our community. A lot of hard work is done by only a few dedicated members. We would welcome your involvement. Please contact me on 0427937717 if you wish to help.

The "Tank Crews in Vietnam" documentary editing is almost completed and should be finalised over the coming weeks. Due to the large amount of film, we have decided to produce a four-part documentary. Progress of the documentary can be seen at <https://tank169043.com.au/>

The sub-Branch, in conjunction with the Veterans Well Being Centre-Hornsby, has supported the production of four interviews with Veterans suffering PTSD. More details in the Welfare Notes paragraph of this edition.

This year we will be trialling two new menus for our General Meetings. The February meeting will be a plated meal to the table, and the March meeting a buffet. I would appreciate your feedback on the meals.

Our Sport & Recreation program has proved to be very successful. Both the Ten Pin Bowling and our Coffee & Chat meetings have been well attended. Thank you, John Zeller, for co-ordinating these events. Both activities will continue this year.

All the best and keep safe.

George

Welcome

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

- Mr Martin Care-Wickham. Martin served with RAN from 2000 to 2009.
- Mr Benjamin Francis. Ben served in the RAN from 2017 to 2022.

Vale

It is with sincere regret that we must acknowledge the passing of our members, Ron Haydon, Brian Morelli and Stan Yeaman.

Ron was born on 24 March 1934. He undertook his National Service in 1952, before serving in the Regular Army from 1952-58, including time in Korea. Ron passed away on 13 December 2023.

Brian was born on 7 December 1935. He served with the RAAF from 1953 to 1960, primarily with RAAF Photographic ARDU Detachment 2 Base Squadron Richmond. Brian passed away on 15 December 2023

Stan Yeaman was born on 11 March 1922. He served in the 2nd AIF from 1942 to 1946 including service in PNG. Stan passed away on 4 January 2024.

We also acknowledge the passing of Mrs Eunice Ramsey, the former President of the Hornsby War Widows Guild on 20 January 2024.

Lest We Forget.

News and Activities

Issues and Activities.

[RSL NSW Member Portal](#)

RSL NSW advise that, from February, online member resources on the RSL NSW website will be moved to the new password-protected Member Portal which is accessible only to RSL NSW members.

The Member Portal will house information and resources related to services and support, governance, Veteran Support Fund, awards and recognition, sport and recreation, merchandise, commemorations and events, membership forms, and ANZAC House communications. ANZAC House has been working with a reference group of members to garner feedback and input into its design.

ANZAC House will communicate directly with all members when the Member Portal is launched, and will continue to consult with members to make ongoing enhancements to the Portal.

If you have any questions about the Member Portal, please contact your Member Support Team via support@rslnsw.org.au or 1300 679 775.

Support Sought

The Committee is seeking a sub-Branch member who could assist our Treasurer with the day-to-day operation of our finances.

Welfare Notes

“My War Never Ends” Video

As George mentioned, the Veterans Wellbeing Centre - Hornsby in conjunction with the sub-Branch have prepared four videos, which provide a poignant and thought-provoking journey into the lives of our Veterans, as they share their personal stories of the invisible wounds of war. This powerful video documentary, “My War Never Ends,” delves into the profound mental and physical effects of combat and peacekeeping missions, exploring the enduring challenges faced by these brave individuals. The first three of the four interviews are on the Veterans Well Being - Centre website <https://veteranswellbeingcentre-hornsby.org/video-page-2/>

Upcoming Dates

Just a reminder about the sub-Branch’s planned activities over the next few months:

February	Sunday	25th	11.00am	General Meeting and Veterans Lunch
March	Tuesday	12th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	Wednesday	13th	10.00am	Coffee Club
	Sunday	24th	11.00am	Annual General Meeting and Veterans Lunch
April	Tuesday	9th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	Wednesday	10th	10.00am	10 Pin Bowling RSL Club - L2 "The Attic"
	Sunday	21st	11.00am	ANZAC Sunday March/Service. Form up by 10.30
	Thursday	25th	5.00am	ANZAC Day Dawn Service Form up by 4.40am
* NO GENERAL MEETING or LUNCHEON *				
May	Wednesday	8th	10.00am	Coffee Club
	Tuesday	14th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	Sunday	26th	11.00am	General Meeting and Veterans Lunch
June	Tuesday	11th	6.00pm	Committee Meeting
	Wednesday	12th	10.00am	10 Pin Bowling RSL Club - L2 "The Attic"
	Sunday	23rd	11.00am	General Meeting and Veterans Lunch

Heritage

Snippets from the Past.

Rabaul at the end of the War

The Vale section of this edition acknowledges the passing of Stan Yeaman. As previously mentioned, Stan served in the Second AIF during World War II and at the end of that conflict, Stan was serving in Rabaul. Another of our members, Horace Taylor, was also serving in Rabaul at the same time and has provided us with several photos of that period. Horace had been on Bougainville when the war ended and, shortly thereafter, was sent to Rabaul. His photos can be found on our website, <https://hornsbyrslsubbranch.com.au/gallery.php>



The neutralisation of Rabaul, and management of Japanese forces after the surrender in August 1945 is an interesting, yet frequently overlooked, aspect of Australia's military history. Rabaul is located at the northern extremity of New Britain, on what is known as the Gazelle Peninsula. Rabaul had been captured in the initial Japanese onslaught in January 1942, and the town quickly became the headquarters and logistic centre for

the Japanese operations in PNG and Guadalcanal as well as a major naval and airbase.

While there had been some early consideration of its recapture, by the middle of 1943, the Allied effort was concentrating on Rabaul's neutralisation. US forces landed at several locations in western New Britain, but did not advance beyond the perimeters they had secured. In October 1944, the Australian 5th Division replaced the US army division, and the noose around Rabaul was tightened with the intent of confining the Japanese forces to the Gazelle Peninsula. At the same time, air and submarine operations effectively isolated Rabaul by early 1945. The garrison, originally estimated to be around 30,000 and later found to be about 100,000, received no supplies from Japan and, of necessity, had become self-sufficient in food production.

After the cessation of hostilities, Australian troops reoccupied Rabaul on 6 September just before the formal surrender of Japanese forces, to Lieutenant General Vernon Sturdee, on HMS Glory on the 7th. Sturdee directed that the Japanese troops construct 13 camps for their accommodation, and continue their food production to ensure self-sufficiency. Japanese troops from outlying areas were concentrated in these camps, and



Horace's photo above captures one of these movements. More of Horace's photos can be found on our website, and a Japanese perspective of this period can be found at [http://ajrp.awm.gov.au/ajrp/AJRP2.nsf/Web/1/Chapters/\\$file/Chapter7.pdf?OpenElement](http://ajrp.awm.gov.au/ajrp/AJRP2.nsf/Web/1/Chapters/$file/Chapter7.pdf?OpenElement)

The first repatriation of Japanese personnel took place on 28 February 1946, when 2,500 troops were embarked on the Japanese aircraft carrier Katsuragi. Horace recalls that the repatriations were completed in late 1946, often taking food and tools back to a devastated Japan, before the Australians were allowed to return home for demobilisation. Other sources suggest that some repatriations continued until around 1948.

Regardless of the end date, the management and repatriation of such a large number of Japanese troops is a credit to the Australian forces involved including Horace and Stan.