



SITREP



RSL Hornsby (Sub-Branch)

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

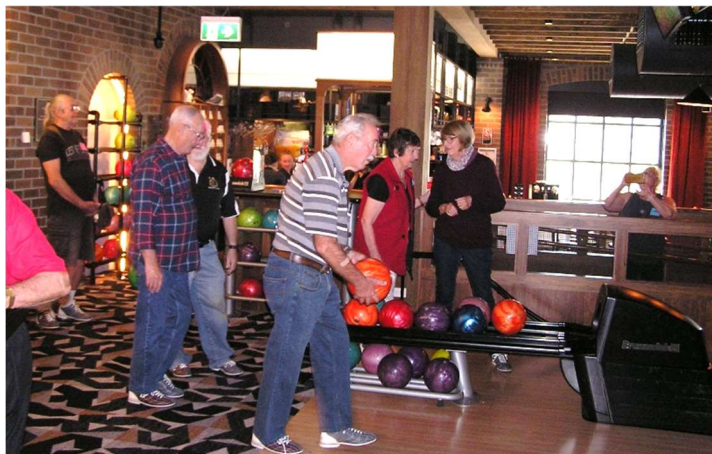


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President's Message

A big thank you to John Zeller for arranging the Sport and Recreation program for the sub-Branch. The first event was tenpin bowling at the Hornsby RSL Club. The Club opened the Attic bowling lanes up early for us at 10am and we bowled until 12 noon. What a fun morning! Approximately 20 members and their partners joined in the activity. There were lots of laughs followed by a light lunch. Tenpin bowling will now be held on the alternate months to our Coffee and Chat meetings at the Hornsby RSL Club. I encourage you all to become involved. Contact John Zeller to book a place in the Sport and Recreation program.



The sub-Branch has sponsored a Mental Health Resilience First Aid Responder course. The course was held on the 15-16 August 2023 at the ANZAC War Memorial Hyde Park. There were 22 attendees from various organisations such as Legacy, Disaster Relief Australia, Army Reserve Units, serving veterans, War Widows NSW, several RSL NSW sub-Branches and Community Support Services. Again, our sub-Branch veterans supporting veterans and their families.

Many of our members attended the various commemorative services to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War on 18 August 2023. I attended the national service held in Canberra but there were a number held in and around Sydney including one organised by the Hornsby and Northern Districts T and PI Club at the Hornsby Cenotaph. I hope that you were able to catch up with some old mates at one of these.

All the best and keep safe.

George

Welcome

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

- Mr William Seung. William served with the South Korean Air Force between 1968 and 1971.
- Mr Graham Williams. Graham served in the Australian Army from 1970 to 1996.
- Mr Adrian Gomez. Adrian is currently a chaplain in the Royal Australian Navy.
- Mr Lee Harcombe-Heath. Lee is currently serving with the Australian Army.
- Mr John Arslett. John is a member of the sub-Branch Auxiliary.
- Mr Andrew Patterson. Andrew served in the Australian Army from 1978 to 2023 including time in Cambodia, East Timor and Iraq. Andrew has also taken on the role of Trustee for the sub-Branch.

Vale

It is with sincere regret that we note the passing of Sandra Deane. Sandra had been a valuable member of the Auxiliary for many years and passed away on 19 April 2023.

While this section usually focuses on sub-Branch members, in the last few months, two events in our broader community have brought home the fragility of life.

On 29 June, James Chin Quan, the youngest son of Phil and Audrey passed away. He had suffered a severe asthma attack nine days earlier which left him in a coma from which he never recovered. Our thoughts continue to be with Phil and Audrey.

Most readers will be aware of the Taipan helicopter crash around the Whitsunday Islands on 28 July which killed four Army aviators, Captain Danniell Lyon, Lieutenant Maxwell Nugent, Warrant Officer Class Two Joseph Philip Laycock and Corporal Alexander Naggs. Readers may not be aware that Max Nugent had been a student at Barker College until he graduated in 2016. During his time at Barker, he was an active member of the school cadet unit rising to a Cadet Under Officer in his final year. We offer our sincere condolences to the families of these servicemen.

Lest We Forget.

News and Activities

Issues and Activities.

Republic Of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation

The Minister for Defence Personnel has announced that, subject to some eligibility constraints, all ADF personnel who served in the war of South Vietnam are eligible to wear the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation. Families/NOK of those who died post-Vietnam will also be eligible to apply for this device on behalf of their deceased loved ones.

The constraints are detailed in the information sheets found in the link (https://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/honours-awards/medals/foreign-awards/republic-vietnam-cross-gallantry-palm-unit-citation?fbclid=IwAR04cpVQmAA8LAueXyVqC5BdCz_pit7XeAnRcqfOljHALhJi76VvPzPR7kl). They show the units and the associated dates which define the eligibility.



Vietnam Veterans' Day.

As George noted, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the formal end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. Vietnam Veterans Day was commemorated with a service at the Hornsby Cenotaph on 18 August. The service was organised by Ray Davis and other local members of the Hornsby & Northern Districts T and PI Club and supported by the sub-Branch.

Centenarians Lunch

Our July monthly Veterans' Lunch was given over to a commemoration of the Centenarians within the sub-Branch. Unfortunately, most of the Centenarians were unable to attend because of illness, or frailty, which meant that Jim Horton got the whole cake!

RSL NSW Board Elections

The RSL Board elections will commence on 12 September and close on 9 October. All active service members are entitled to vote. Members may vote on line, or on a ballot requested from the Returning Officer. More details can be found at: <https://rslnsw.org.au/members-suite/2023-board-election/>

RSL NSW State Congress

The 2023 RSL NSW State Congress will be held on 22 -24 October, again at the Newcastle Convention Centre. Hornsby's delegates are Phil White and Steve Hopwood.



Welfare Notes

Wednesday Activities

The bi-monthly Wednesday Coffee Club has now been complemented by our new 10 pin bowling morning. As George has noted, the first morning was held on 9 August and was well supported. The 10-pin bowling activity is part of the RSL NSW Sports and Recreation Program.

Upcoming Dates

After the stand down month of August, our regular general meetings will resume on the fourth Sunday of the month. However, our usual November meeting, incorporating our Christmas function, has been moved to 3 December because of a clash of Club bookings.

As usual, Remembrance Day will be commemorated on 11 November with a memorial service at the Hornsby Cenotaph at starting at 10.30am.

Heritage

Snippets from the Past.

The Battle of the Samichon River - the Hook 24 - 26 July 1953

In our last edition, we noted that the armistice between North and South Korea came into effect 70 years ago at 10pm on 27 Jul 1953 but what is less well known is the heavy fighting which took place in the last two days of the conflict. The Korean War is often referred to as the Forgotten War. Most readers will be

aware of the Battle of Kapyong in April 1951, some will be aware of the Battle of Maryang San in October 1951 but probably not many, other than the participants, know about the Battle of Samichon River that took place on 24-26 July 1953 just before the Armistice. This battle involved Australian troops from 2 RAR.

2 RAR was dug into defensive positions along what was known as the Jamestown Line in the immediate area of a feature known as the Hook. The US Marine 7th Regiment was located to the battalion's left on Hill 111 and these two units bore the brunt of the Chinese attacks, which were intended to improve the communist position before the ceasefire. A section of 2 RAR's medium machine gun platoon was located in the Marine's perimeter and tasked to provide enfilading fire across 2 RAR's front. The detachment was commanded by Sergeant Brian Cooper.

The Chinese attacks began around 9pm on 24 July with massive human wave assaults. Most of the attacks were broken by the Kiwi gunners of 16 Field Regiment but the Chinese did manage to penetrate some of the US positions. At one point, the attacks were so intense that Sgt Cooper was forced to call artillery down on his position. The attacks finally petered out in the early morning and throughout the next day, the Marines recaptured their lost positions.

The Chinese attacks resumed on the evening of the 25th again with a combination of massive artillery and infantry assaults. These attacks again fell on the Marines and the left forward positions of 2 RAR. A link position between the two units, known as the Contact Bunker, was manned by a section commanded by Corporal Ken Crockford. It came under heavy attack and Crockford was forced to call artillery down on his position. Sgt Brian Cooper and his detachment, still within the Marines' perimeter, also had to again call artillery down on his position. Sgt Cooper was subsequently awarded the Military Medal for his actions during this battle.

At 3am on 26 July the attacks ceased and on the following day, 27 July the Armistice was signed and then both sides withdrew two kilometres to create the Demilitarised Zone. Two days before the Armistice, Australia lost 5 men killed and 24 wounded. The Marines lost 43 men and 316 wounded.



Two unidentified members of 2RAR stand above their front-line positions near the Hook the day after the armistice.

More detail on this, the final battle of the Korean War can be found at <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/battle-samichon-river>

Memorabilia Collection.

Our memorabilia collection is presently undergoing a significant makeover. Carolyn Parish has spent a fair bit of time cataloguing each item. While this task is still ongoing, the collection is also being rearranged with separate cabinets dedicated to a particular time period. This work is being done progressively as time permits. With this rearrangement, some items may be placed into store temporarily. Items in the collection will be rotated periodically so the whole collection can be viewed over time.