

# WESTERN OUTPOST NEWS



**DECEMBER 2019**

St Mary's Outpost the  
'Train of Knowledge'



## St Marys Veterans Centre

St Marys Outpost - VVAA  
and St Marys RSL Sub-Branch



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### Front Cover:

Remembrance Day Service at St Mary's

### **DEADLINES FOR PUBLICATION**

April 2020..... 15 March 2020  
August 2020 ..... 15 July 2020  
December 2020 ..... 15 November 2020  
Articles of a general nature may be submitted at anytime,  
please send to: john.davison@optusnet.com.au

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## ST MARYS VIETNAM VETERANS OUTPOST

### "WHERE IT ALL COMES TOGETHER"

Following up on our decision 30th May, to keep our official name as is, and, to utilise the name (St Marys Outpost ADF Support Centre) on brochures notice boards and the like, is working well and has so far been promoted on Hospital Handouts; VV Day Programs; Beer Coasters and Postage Stamps.

**22 July:** A few members of the Train were given the opportunity to attend a premier viewing of the Long Tan movie *"Danger Close"* I personally thought it was well put together although as soldiers who had walked the walk, it was easy to spot technical errors. But when all is said and done it must be remembered, it is a movie.

**1 August:** with about 40 members of the Train attending the St John of God annual Veterans Day Memorial Service, it made for a great day. The service was as usual, very well conducted and very moving. Lunch comprising of the delicious lamb shanks that followed were very well received and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

**2 August:** reminds me of the Phoenix - Concord Repatriation Hospital comes alive again! Albeit after a massive injection; the DVA announced funds to the tune of around \$6,000,000.00 had been provided to build a new wing with 6 beds dedicated to the Veteran community. After Bill Peet; Uwe Schoenherr and I, took the guided tour of the facility I was left pondering the question, why not build 6 x 4 bedroom houses that would accommodate a total of 24 veterans in private bedrooms, with shared facilities and a feeling of belonging.

**18 August:** VV Day, Our guest speaker Maj Gen (Rtd) Jim Molan AO DSC put forward an excellent overview of Australia's lack of military readiness, he also praised the actual men at section level; after his speech he spoke warmly of our very well organised veterans centre, and, commented on the fantastic turnout. We fed, watered and entertained around 300 guests, the RNSW Lancer Band group did a great job, as did the Sunset Station Singers, 5ER Catafalque Party was brought on in single file to a drum beat which was very well received, and the 201 ACU Cadet Flag Party under the guidance of Kenny Ward was very professional.

**31 August:** I attended The NSW Premier's reception at Government House, always a great place to say hello to old mates, all in all a good way to spend an afternoon.

**10 September:** The twice yearly VVAA state meeting was held in the "Train" with Sam Vecchio (State President), George Perrin and I in attendance.

**17/18/19 September:** The train was host to an ADTP education session in the pension office with 3 tutors and 6 trainees. Our trainee pension officers are becoming quite proficient and are a big asset to our organisation.

**Make a note in your 2020 diary,** that, the AGM will be held in the RSL Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2020, nominations for all positions close 16<sup>th</sup> February 2020. Eligibility to attend and vote requires that, members to be financial; for your convenience we can now accept credit card/EFTPOS payments. Membership fees for 2020 are due by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

I take this opportunity to wish members and their families a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year, Please Drive Safely.

In conclusion, once again my sincere thanks go out to all members for your continuing support in all things relevant to the Trains Successful Operation.

Tony Mullavey  
President







# Christmas Parties



## St Marys RSL sub-Branch Children's Christmas party – Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> November

Santa arrived at St Marys on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> November for the 'Kids Christmas'. About 130 children and twice that in adults had a fun day. Unlimited rides and plenty of drinks and ice creams with fairy-floss and pop-corn too. Thanks again to Sam for organising another successful event for our members and their children/grandchildren.



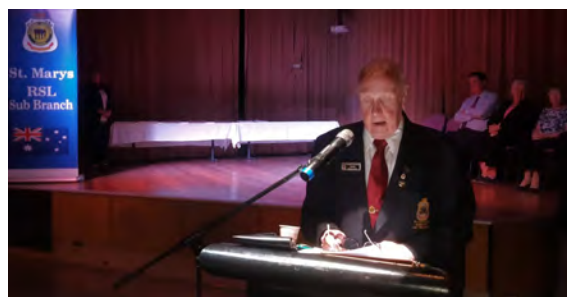
## St Marys RSL sub-Branch Christmas Party – 7<sup>th</sup> December

Members enjoyed the annual sub-Branch Christmas Party on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December. A terrific lunch ... great entertainment ... many tremendous friends to celebrate with! It's been a pretty active year for the sub-Branch and was good to finally take time to celebrate together. Thanks Sam and his helpers for again organising the Party.



## **COLIN SHEPHERD OAM MEMORIAL SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS PRESENTATIONS -12<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**

The 16th Annual Presentation of Colin Shepherd OAM Memorial School Scholarship Program was conducted on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November by the St Marys RSL sub-Branch. Congratulations to all the 18 scholarship winners and thank you from our RSL sub-Branch members for the effort students put into their entries. All entrants will have taken the opportunity to become more aware of Australia's military culture and traditions, along with its history. We wish these Year 10 students from participating schools, the very best in their studies as they venture into Years 11 and 12. Participating schools include Cambridge Park HS, Colyton HS, Erskine Park HS, St Clair HS and Emmaus Catholic College in the St Marys area as well as Gilgandra HS.



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## ST MARYS RSL SUB-BRANCH

### PRESIDENTS REPORT

Your Sub-Branch has been very busy in fulfilling RSL aims and objectives, despite the distractions at State Branch, more on that later in my report, however I believe that we have achieved these aims and objectives by: -

- looking after the welfare of our Sub-Branch members by holding regular meetings, social media access, welfare account, welfare and pension services.
- by looking after the welfare needs of serving and ex-service members of the Australian Defence Force,
- by supporting selected struggling Sub-Branch's access to welfare and pension services, assistance through the Outpost Support Centre, and involvement with the Australian Forces Overseas Fund.
- also, by promoting the objectives of the RSL within local community with the Colin Shepherd OAM Memorial school scholarships, assistance to schools for excursions to points of military/culture, and school, Rehab and aged care facilities commemorative services, and
- provide relevant and accessible opportunities for all in our community to commemorate those ADF members lost or injured in the service of Australia to attend ANZAC, Vietnam Veterans, and Remembrance Day Services.

Listed below is a summary of what your Sub-Branch has done during this reporting period.

#### July

I start this report by announcing the passing of Associate member Ross Richards (Penrith RSL Sub-Branch); earlier in July, his funeral was held at Pinegrove, on Friday the 26<sup>th</sup> of July. Ted Fish represented the Sub-Branch, with some of our members also attending. May he rest in peace.

**23<sup>rd</sup> July** – Mr Greg Warren State member for Campbelltown, and shadow minister for NSW Veteran Affairs and Ms Prue Car, State Member for Londonderry, came to the Train, Sub-Branch and Club LTD on a fact-finding mission, to see how the three organizations work together. Greg was very impressed with our setup and how well we interact with veterans and our local community. Prue stated to Greg, that we are the best ESO's in the business and it is something we should all be proud of.

#### August

**1<sup>st</sup> August** – Veteran's Day service at St John of God was very well attended by Sub-Branch members, I was told the lamb shanks were beautiful.

**2<sup>nd</sup> August** – Bill Peet and Tony Mullavey represented the Train and Sub-Branch at a forum held at Concord Hospital, where they outlined a new one stop health centre for Veterans, with specialist and associated services being made available, all in one location. Bill and Tony were very impressed with what is being planned.

**5<sup>th</sup> August** – Ted Fish represented the sub-branch at the launching of NSW Education Week at St Marys North PS. Ted said he was impressed with the video linkup and how it was done.

**6<sup>th</sup> August** – Tony Fryer, Ted Fish, Bill Peet travelled to Sydney and met up with Scott Vincent from RSL NSW for the Trustee's quarterly meeting. Bill gave a Trustees report by saying we are travelling along quite nicely.

12<sup>th</sup> August – Sub-Branch member David Trist, attended Erskine Park HS, to give a talk about his experiences during WW2. He covered a range of topics including the Burma Railway, the Cowra Breakout and the plight of POW's from both sides, plus other interesting subjects. David gave our members a quick rundown of his talk. Thank you to David for doing this on behalf of the Sub-Branch.

18<sup>th</sup> August – Vietnam Veterans Day – A very good turnout of both veterans and our community to commemorate this special day on the Veteran calendar, MC'd by George Perrin, and held in the auditorium this event was once again a great success, also on the 18<sup>th</sup> saw the passing of Sub-Branch member, John William Catton. John was farewelled by Sub-Branch and ex members of John's Regiment at Pinegrove crematorium on Friday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2019. Also, Life Member Lee-Anne Taylor represented the Sub-Branch by attending former member Taaui Kerehona's funeral on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August. May they Rest in Peace.

### **September**

2<sup>nd</sup> **September** – Having a few chest pains I found myself in hospital for a few days and after taking it easy for a couple of days, I'm back on deck, I'd like to thank everyone who rang, emailed or sent txt's. Thank you for your kind thoughts. Thank you to Frank Lawton for chairing the monthly general meeting and for taking on the President's role whilst I was unavailable, I appreciate his dedication.

3<sup>rd</sup> **September** – As I was unable to attend the meeting with Tania Davies MP, and to meet the new Principle of Erskine Park High School, Tony Fryer and Ted Fish gave both a brief on how our Sub-Branch will be able to interact with the general community and our local schools, in the future.

6<sup>th</sup> September - I would once again thank Reno Ciantar and his crew for volunteering to sell Legacy Badges on Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2019.

During the last week of September, Tony Fryer, Frank Lawton and myself locked ourselves away in the sub-branch office and marked this year's entries for the Colin Shepherd OAM, School Scholarships, with the last school being judged over the long weekend. Sub-Branch members were invited to be present and see the winners being announced on Thursday the 14<sup>th</sup> of November, in the St Marys RSL Club's auditorium.

### **October**

This month has been, shall we say un-eventful, in terms of extra managerial activities, but in saying that, your committee has been very busy preparing for the upcoming Remembrance Day Service. This service was held at Victoria Park, St Marys and started at 1040hrs.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> **October**, with a full bus of enthusiastic Sub-Branch members, we made our way to Randwick Army Barracks, to do the bi-annual Armed Forces Overseas Fund (AFOF) care packaging. After packing nearly 2,000 care packages in a record time, it gave us plenty of time to go to Souths Juniors for a beautiful lunch and a quick trip to the Darrel Lea outlet for a chocolate fix, I would like to thank everyone who made the effort to come along and achieve something, I do believe our troops overseas appreciate your efforts. Thank You All.

10<sup>th</sup> **October** – It is with sadness to announce the passing of Sub-Branch member John Leslie Mulheron. John was given a good farewell with a very good turn up of Sub-Branch members on Tuesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October at Pinegrove Crematorium.

Tony Fryer and myself returned from RSL NSW Congress and I have attached a summary result of the motions tabled. In addition to those 22 Motions, an additional one was accepted and supported – that was a motion for RSL NSW to lobby DVA to rescind the earlier decision that requires for many conditions/veterans, to get a new referral after 12 visits



for a particular condition, and therefore enable a GP to determine what is needed based on their assessment. The motion to rescind this was almost unanimously supported.

The big news is that RSL NSW will commence to operate under a new Constitution from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019. It is the document that was last presented as a draft Constitution on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2019. If interested to read (again), go to this link <https://www.rslnsw.org.au/about-us/draft-constitution-2019/> and select "Annexure B – New Constitution".

#### **A summary of Congress is listed below**

**27<sup>th</sup> -29<sup>th</sup> October** – Tony Fryer and I attended the NSW RSL Congress, held in Albury NSW. Sunday the 27<sup>th</sup> was registration and a social gathering, mix and mingle, finishing at 1830hrs.

Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> was broken into two sessions, the first being the President's report with Question and Answers; the second session started with a motivational and inspirational speech from NSW Governor Margaret Joan Beazley AO, QC, to the converted, followed by the Treasurers report (which was given by the Chief Financial Officer) with Question and Answers. Monday night gave Tony and I a chance to have a catch up over dinner with Ann and Sue from Gilgandra, Rob and Neil from Bundanoon, Trevor, Theresa and their daughter Malissa (Air Force Cadet) from Uralla and Glenn from Grenfill. We had a great time, and after exchanging ideas and thoughts, we departed for an early night at 2030hrs.

Tuesday the 29<sup>th</sup> was the RSL NSW AGM, which was also set for two sessions, however all items on the Motions agenda plus one from the floor were voted on (Copy of results attached, see page 11) during the morning session. With that, the afternoon session was cancelled. So, Tony and I decided to return home early, as the last day of Congress was set aside for a talk by the new CEO, Mr Jon Black, with questions and answers afterwards over a 2-3-hour period.

#### **November**

**11<sup>th</sup> November** - Remembrance Day – This years' service was held at Victoria Park St Marys, commencing at 1040 hrs. Tony Fryer was our MC, and Lyn Forde from the St Marys and District Historical Society, gave an address on St Marys recovering from the impacts of World War One. We had the pleasure of having our three Patrons Tanya Davies, Jackie Greenhow OAM and Greg Davies, also Prue Car State Member for Londonderry, Melisa Mackintosh Federal Member for Lindsay, and Chief Inspector Tony Mitchell from Penrith LAC. It was very pleasing to have a good turn out of school representatives, especially from our Primary Schools, also a small number of Sub-Branch members and their Wives and Partners were in attendance. An estimated 150 came to our service

Ernie Holden represented the Sub-Branch at St Marys South Public School, and thank you everyone else who attended Schools and Nursing Homes and Hospitals

2019 Colin Shepherd OAM, School Scholarships Presentation night was held on Thursday the

**14<sup>th</sup> November** in the Auditorium of the St Marys RSL Club Ltd. Proceedings started at 7pm, with the ODE. I was encouraged by the Sub-Branch members who attend, I assured them that this was a good way to see where their Sub-Branch's money is being used to further year 11 and 12 student's education. Presenting the awards were Mrs Judy Shepherd (wife of Colin), Sub-Branch Patron and Penrith Councillor Mr Greg Davis and Sub-Branch Patron Mrs Jackie Greenow OAM, where they handed out 15 scholarships to 12 very happy year 10 students and 3 to parents (who accepted for Emmaus College as these students were unable to attend). It was pleasing to get 5 of the 6 schools that take part in our scholarship program. Unfortunately, Gilgandra were unable to attend, due to distance and bush fires. I would like to thank everyone who attended, especially Ross Pearson, Tony Briffa, Paul Tarlington, Jimmy Reardon, Cyril Law, Peter Cohen and John Foeken for volunteering to serve the evening meal and interacting with the students and their families.



I would also like to thank the St Marys RSL Club Ltd and their staff for being so supportive to this Sub-Branch throughout the year, and hopefully into the future, and I would like to wish Mr Michael Wiezel all the best on his retirement on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2019. After more than 30 years of service as CEO.

By the time you get this report, Christmas will be on the horizon, so with that, I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe New Year.

Ron Blakely

President November 2019

CONGRESS 2019 - MOTIONS			
Refer detail of each Motion and its supporting argument at following link: <a href="https://assets.rslsw.org.au/web-content/uploads/2019/09/17082430/Motions-Annexure-A-RSL-NSW-AGM-Agenda-2019.pdf">https://assets.rslsw.org.au/web-content/uploads/2019/09/17082430/Motions-Annexure-A-RSL-NSW-AGM-Agenda-2019.pdf</a>			
#	Title	Yes (Y)/No(N)	
		St marys SB agreed Voting	Congress Decision
1	Membership fees	Y	Y
2	Adopt New Constitution	N	Y (69.5% - 30.5)
3	Amend Clause 16.7 of existing Constitution - Member Fees to sub-Branches. Currently 16.7 reads: State Council may only increase the annual subscriptions, payable by Members, with the prior consent of State Congress	N	N (70%)
4	Amend By-Law 2 Item 41 - Member Fees to sub-Branches. Currently this reads: Each Service Member who is a member of a sub-Branch must pay to that subBranch the Annual Subscription as determined from time to time in the By-Laws	Y	Withdrawn
5	Amend By-Law 2 Item 43 - Capitation Fees. Currently reads: The Annual Subscription is determined by Congress and circularised annually to all sub-Branches immediately after each Congress	Y	Withdrawn
6	Replace Heading in By-Law 2 under 'Subscription and sub-Branch Membership Returns'	Y	Withdrawn
7	Veterans Card Issued to Allied Veterans for permanent residents.	N	Y (72.2%)
8	Medical Practitioner Rebate	N (changed to Y at Congress)	Y (96.9%)
9	Psychiatric Treatment Waiting Times - DVA to investigate	Y	Y (97.6%)
10	Defence Pensions vs Aged/Other Pension Increases	Y	Y (100%)
11	Defence Pensions and Self-Managed Super Fund Tax - Defence pensions included in gross value of SMSFs & therefore impacting on tax for values above the cap.	Y	Y (98.3%)
12	Veteran Q on 2021 Census	Y	Y (99.3%)
13	Use of DVA File # in NSW - lobby NSW Govt to access & accept	Y	Y (96.6%)
14	RSL NSW Comments to Productivity Commission - object to "Gold Digging" view.	Y	Y (99.0%)
15	Motions Actioned with Shared Responsibility - to ensue action as intended by proposer & transparency of the result.	Y	Y (82.7%)
16	Register of Motions - to provide transparency on progress/results	Y	Y (96.9%)
17	Summary of Motions - to members within one month of Congress	Y	Y (87.3%)
18	Annual Reporting for sub-Branches - add an optional text/description of achievements relative to Charitable Purpose	N	Y (87.8%)
19	Upgrade to Regimental Square	Y	Y (99.0%)
20	Kokoda Trail Transfer of Responsibility to DVA	Y	Y (90.0%)
21	Anniversary of NS Medal to Merchant Navy - for those called up but deferred due to their Mercantile Marine service being in the public interest.	N	Y (62.0%)
22	Legal Assistance to Veterans	Y	Y (99.7%)

## **Xmas Tree 24th November 2019**

PHEW!! The prevailing extreme hot weather conditions we have experienced of late abruptly disappeared to overcast skies on Sunday 24th November and would auger well for a much cooler day and respite from the high unseasonal temperature.

For more than a decade a dedicated committee together with volunteers from the Vietnam Veterans Out-Post have given freely of their time to ensure the member's children and grandchildren would be entertained with the annual Christmas tree. The work behind the scene is arduous, but undaunted the happy band of brothers and ladies went about their allocated duties with precision just like a manoeuvre when they were in the military.

Volunteers gathered early at the venue to ensure everything required was put into operation. Presents delivered on time, placed sequentially on stage for Santa's helpers to ensure everything would go smoothly. Allocation of tickets for the goodies put in envelopes displaying the family name so there would be no disappointment. The children and adults equally shared in the rewards. Despite the inevitable increase in the waist line it did not inhibit those eager to sample the wares. Oh well diet tomorrow!

The St John's Ambulance Tent manned by experienced officers was placed in a strategic position to ensure that should a mishap occur they would handle any emergency. Like Boy Scouts (is that politically correct) they came prepared for any eventuality.

The reptile display, a favourite for the little ones, was placed in a conspicuous position to enable the fearless children to gather with wondrous intentions and without hesitation pick up the most wanted reptile und the watchful eye of the attendant and assuring their parents not to worry the reptiles' wont bite. Their sheer joy was a sight to behold. There is no better sound than the laughter of little children.

While the local Bush Fire Brigade, God Bless them, conspicuous by its absence have been inundated with horrendous bush fires which have devastated NSW and Queensland. Thousands of hectares and some 450 homes have been destroyed. It is heartbreaking!

However a replacement of volunteers from St Clair Men's Shed stepped up to the plate and stepped up the BBQ with precision and in no time at all the aroma of the cooking sausages together with the unmistakeable whiff of onions would permeate the air which attracted the first of many customers to savour the wares.

When it came to the children's entertainment, they were spoilt for choice. The difficulty was they didn't know what to try first. The water slide was inviting. Jumping castle and racing cars, running to try to decide where to go first but making up their minds was a problem. Where do they get their energy! Deciding what to try with the variety of drinks, fairy floss a selection of ice-cream and the ever popular popcorn the kids will take it in their stride, and of course the grown-ups they too are partial to the sweet things.

Just shortly after lunch the children and adults assembled in the large hall, the children settled on the floor to get into position and patiently wait for Santa to arrive. The crescendo emanating from the hall, herald the arrival of Santa, and with his HO HO HO sat comfortably in his large chair. Santa's helpers were close by to assist him handing out the presents.

The children are patiently waiting for their name to be called, the excitement as they heard their name, helped by parents to sit on Santa's knee and the inevitable photograph. But there are a few children unwilling to go into the out stretched arms of Santa but gentle persuasion from Mum and all is well.

It is a wondrous time of the year for the children and family, the festivities inherited from their parents may it last for an eternity.

It was a wonderful day made possible by the volunteer's und the leadership of Sam. A great deal of thanks goes to these generous people who ensure that day is a success. Unfortunately due to circumstances, beyond the Vets Train control, this could be the last Christmas party. It is an indictment of the current economic times but don't despair, things have a habit of changing.

May I take this opportunity on behalf of Sam Vecchio, the Train Committee to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a healthy and Happy New Year.

**Jim Reardon**

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## BEFORE HER TIME –

### THE TALE OF NAVY'S FIRST FEMALE SAILOR

Published on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2016 by Ms Natalie Staples (Author)

Twenty-one years before the first Women's Royal Australian Navy members (WRANs) entered service due to a shortage of telegraphists during the Second World War, a young Tasmanian girl was enlisted into the Royal Australian Navy.

In a remarkable twist of fate, six year old Nancy Bentley was playing in bushland at Port Arthur when she slipped and was bitten on the wrist by a snake. With the closest doctor at Sorrell, many miles away, her desperate father rowed the child to HMAS Sydney (I), then anchored in Carnarvon Bay after conducting exercises off Tasmania's east coast, and pleaded for the ship's medics to assist.

Commanding Officer, Captain Henry Cayley, weighed the situation and so as to avoid legal complications and not breach the King's regulations and Admiralty instructions that women were not meant to board Royal Australian Navy warships, he devised a solution.

On 15 November 1920, Nancy was formally enlisted as an honorary member of the Navy. Her service number was 000001 and her official rating was mascot. She was enlisted "till fed up".

Sydney transported the child to Hobart, where she received medical treatment and visited the cinema, before being returned to Port Arthur.

During her eight days of service, the crew doted on Nancy. She was issued with a Service Certificate, a Conduct Record Sheet and a uniform. They assessed her character as being "very good" and her naval rating ability as "exceptional".

Having fully recovered Nancy was formally discharged from Naval service on 23 November 1920 - the reason given "being required by her parents".

Nancy went on to live a full life and became Mrs Nancy Jones and lived until 1999 aged 85.

In an interview given to the Hobart Mercury in the 1970s, Nancy she remembered being treated well.

"I was the crew's official mascot and everybody from the Captain down gave me VIP treatment," Nancy said.

"While I was in sick bay at Port Arthur, mum and dad were given permission to visit the ship and bought me cow's milk."

In 1986, Nancy became a life member of the HMAS Sydney Association, an invitation that is only extended to those who have served on one of the four ships so named.



Nancy Bentley, honorary member of the Royal Australian Navy, on board HMAS Sydney (I) in 1920

An elderly couple were at home watching TV.

Larry has the remote and was switching back and forth between a fishing channel and the porn channel.

Susan became more and more annoyed and finally said,

"For God's sake, Larry... leave it on the porn channel... you know how to fish!"







### **Blacktown and Districts TPI Social and Welfare Club**

Blacktown and Districts TPI Social and Welfare Club meets on the First Thursday of each month (except January) at the Blacktown RSL Club. Meetings start at 1:00 pm

The Club is open to all TPI Veterans (including Veterans under the MRC receiving the Special Rate of Disability Pension), and welcomes their Carers and Friends.

To join the Club a Veteran must be a subscribing member of the TPI Association of NSW Ltd.

Apart from the Monthly Meetings the Club arranges at subsidised cost, a function, generally each month, which could be a Bus Trip, Luncheon, BBQ.

The Club's Welfare Officers also keep in contact through Hospital and Home visits to those who cannot make the Meetings.

A Newsletter is also distributed to all members, either by email or by 'snail mail'

For further Information, please contact Committeeman:  
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**Contact Michelle for  
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ST. MARYS  
(Directly Opposite Library)

# DARWIN AND RETURN APRIL – MAY 2017

## PART 10

Back at camp Ken said he would be leaving us in the morning, he wanted to get home; his wife wasn't feeling too well. The others bought tea; I had packets of cup of soup so I had that with biscuits for tea.



I learnt later that his wife, Shirley, had a Sliding Hiatus Hernia, and that's the reason she'd not been feeling well for a some time. She'll have to go Townsville for the operation as they don't do that surgery in MT Isa.

The next morning Ken was packed and ready to leave early, he would be back in Mt Isa in 2 days. We were back to 4 again, but we were on our original schedule. Richard's tyre had gone down again and he decided he would get a new one if he could. There was a Honda dealer in town, I bought a tyre from them in 2011, Richard went to them and was fortunate enough to have a Michelin Pilot Road 4 which he bought and they put on for him, the price comparable to Sydney. I went to the hospital while this was going on and had an INR blood test which was due. I then went to the shopping mall and had a cappuccino while I waited for them. I filled my 10 litre spare fuel container before we left Katherine, it would be the cheapest fuel for a while at \$1.389 a litre.

Don said the next stop would be the hot springs at Mataranka so I let them go at their speed while I continued on at mine. At Mataranka I went to the springs, couldn't find them so went back to the park in town and had some lunch, a cup of tea and peanut butter on a biscuit. I was a bit wary; there were a lot of natives hanging around and I wasn't sure I'd be too safe. Don rang and they were at the other hot springs, so I told him I'd see them at Daly Waters our next camp over.

I didn't even think on about refuelling at Mataranka but pushed on, riding at about 90/95kph. I rode into the town of Larrimah which was the furthest south the railway went during the war, it was a large army camp during WWII. I stopped at a Memorial Cairn for A Forrest who trekked to that area from WA in 1879. I had another cup of tea and some water there, it was a very warm day. I reached the Hi Way in 8 kilometres south of Daly waters I had done 330 kilometres since Katherine and I was on full reserve. The cost of the fuel there was \$1.509 a litre, I had used 20.94 litres, my tank holds 22. At least I had my 10 litres as a backup. I would have liked to go another 40 kilometres and stayed at Dunmarra but I would have had to return there the next morning.

I met up with the others in the camping area at Daly Waters which is behind the hotel. The area was good, module block amenities which were very clean. Once I had set up camp I went for a dip in the pool which you have to get to via the hotel. I was good to get in cool off. I then went and had a shower. I shaved when I went for a shower, I cut myself and I bled like a pig. My INR reading that morning was 3; it is normally 2.5 whilst a person not on blood thinners is 1; I eventually stemmed the bleeding; it was only a small nick. I had to mop out the module though, and for the next couple of days I cut back on my blood thinning medication.

The camping area was starting to fill up. There was some other bike riders camped next to, they came from WA and we talked to them for a while. We all had a hamburger in the hotel for tea that night. Not cheap, but was a good and filling meal. We all went to bed at about 2000.

Daly Waters was another of the airfields used in WWII, and was the first International Airport in Australia, Qantas used to refuel there in 1926. Aircraft were serviced here and was

a back up to the other airfields that were built during the war. The hotel was a main supply post to drovers, the first one being built in 1893. It is still a supply of sorts to travellers, many who want a drink or two. Inside there is a collection of many things, banknotes, thongs, caps, cloth patches and women's bras, all either hanging from the ceiling or from the walls. Outside the hotel there is a red street light, permanently red, the most isolated in Australia. Also worth seeing is the Stuart Tree, even though it is only a stump, John McDouall Stuart carved the letter S into it in 1862 on his 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt cross the country south to north 1862. The Overland Telegraph reached there in 1872.

After we had decamped we rode to the old airport, the hanger is still there but inside is a bit of a wreck. In 2006 I rode out onto the landing strip and took photos, but now it is fenced off with a sign saying it is still in use.

We then went the 8 kilometres to the Hi Way Inn, where we had a cup of coffee. Don also learnt that there were extra wide loads on the road to Cape Crawford, the way we were going. The other three have UHF radios so can talk to the truckies and know what's going on or coming whatever the case may be. I only have VHF, and could only talk to Don, when he was in range.

It's 270 kilometres to Cape Crawford, a long haul with nothing between, especially in the heat of the day. It is actually Number 1 Highway, which goes from Normanton to Borroloola via Burke Town, but most use the alternative Number 1 via Mt Isa because it is bitumen. The road isn't in good condition even though it is bitumen. There has been a lot of rain up north and this road was showing it. It was wavy and groovy; some bad patches where the road was completely washed away and plenty of potholes. It was single lane bitumen for the most part, but there were wide sections and these were sign posted usually 5 kilometres in advance. In those sections they had rebuilt the road with stones, not real good on big road bike pulling a trailer.

The other 3 were well ahead of me when I saw the flashing light of an escort vehicle. I was on a wide section, so I pulled to the side of the road. The escort vehicle stopped alongside me and the driver said to pull right off the road. I could see why, the loads being carried were wider than the road. There were two of them, machinery from the mines near Borroloola. I learnt later they were going to Camooweal. They couldn't go from Cape Crawford to Barkly because there were a couple of narrow bridges just out of the Cape.

Because of the condition of the road I kept my speed down to about 80kph. I saw 2 herds of cattle being mustered into corrals along the way, with cattle road trains ready to load them. They could have been going to other pastures or to be shipped overseas.

About half way to the Cape I caught up with others that were stopped and resting. They had been there a while and were getting ready to leave, I would catch them again later so I had a cup of tea and had a stretch and rest too.

I eventually arrived at Cape Crawford where Richard waved me in to the Caravan Park behind the Heartbreak Hotel. They had booked me in when they got there, so all I had to do was find somewhere to set up my camp. They had selected a spot over toward the road to Barkly, I set mine up near a power outlet. That made it easy for me to boil the kettle for a cup of tea and also for filling my thermos.

An adventure by Ross Pearson, known to you all as a member of the Veterans  
Outpost, St Marys RSL Sub-Branch and a member of the Ulysses M/C.

Part 11 in the next issue ....

# ST MARYS RSL CLUB



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### **MONDAY**

- Rock and Roll Dancing 7-10pm

### **TUESDAY**

- Bingo 7pm (electronic pads available)

### **WEDNESDAY**

- Monthly Raffle 7pm 2nd Wednesday of the Month

### **THURSDAY**

- Bingo 11.30 am

- Texas Hold'em Poker 7 pm

- **MEMBER'S Badge Draw** \$3000-\$5000 from 7pm

### **FRIDAY**

- Bingo 11.30 am

- CLUB BRASHS—Playing Retro Music 8 pm-12

### **SATURDAY**

- Meat Run RAFFLE 4-6pm

- Rock'n'Roll Bands, Shows and Lounge Music 7.30 pm - Midnight

\*\*\*\*Check "WHAT'S ON BOARD" for Details\*\*\*\*

Is gambling a problem for you? G-Line (NSW) is a confidential anonymous and free counselling service  
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A father of five took all of his children to the local fair.

He won a toy on the hoop-la and decided to give it to one of the kids for being so well-behaved.

So he called them all together and asked who they thought should get the present.

"Who is the most obedient?" he asked. "Who never talks back to mum? Who does everything she says?" After a small pause, the five small voices answered in union:

"Okay, Dad. You can have the toy."







## EDUCATION PROGRAM REPORT NOVEMBER 2019

Around 59,000 Australian Defence Service personnel saw Active Service during the Vietnam War. For many their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service tour dates and/or significant battle dates have come and gone, for others their Anniversary Service date will happen over the next few years up to 2022. Spare a thought though for the four RAAF Ambassadorial security guards who were left on Tan Son Nhut airfield alone for a short time after the Australian Ambassador and staff were evacuated by RAAF C-130 Hercules aircraft just prior to the fall of Saigon to the communists in 1975.

When the Outpost Education Program commenced operation in 2004, Vietnam War information in the form of books, documentaries, dvds etc was limited. Not so nowadays. Information abounds in a variety of media forms. Across the year I have read several new publications including *'Operation Baby Lift'*, (author Ian W Shaw). The book documents information on the incredible story of the inspiring Australian women who rescued hundreds of orphans at the end of the Vietnam War. The Australian operation bringing Vietnamese orphans out of Saigon was code named 'Operation Baby Lift'. 'Operation Baby Lift' was hampered by policies and politicians (including PM Gough Whitlam) at both ends, Australia and Vietnam. American involvement in the baby lift operations was significant. Sadly, a giant American C-54 Galaxy transport plane carrying 294 people including 243 South Vietnamese orphans crashed shortly after take off from Tan Son Nhut (Saigon) killing around 144 on board. Miss Margaret Veronica Moses and Miss Lee Makk, Australian social workers (both former nuns) from the 'Friends of All Children' were among those who perished. A very sad ending for two gallant and committed Australian women. The book "Operation Baby Lift" mentions Matron Vivian Bullwinkel of WW2 fame. Vivian Bullwinkel was the only one of 22 nurses to survive being machine gunned by Japanese soldiers in the Bangka Island massacre (1942) after being captured when the vessel 'Vyner Brooke' was sunk while endeavouring to escape from the fall of Singapore.



Vivian Bullwinkel survived three and a half years in a series of Japanese prison camps, living through bouts of tropical diseases and near starvation to be one of the lucky ones to return to Australia. Remaining in nursing as a civilian after the war she rose through the ranks of her profession and at age sixty in 1975 was regarded as one of the finest nurses and medical administrators in Australia. Matron Vivian Bullwinkel played a significant role in Australia's 'Operation Baby Lift'.

Also many Vietnam Veterans will be aware that 'Weary' Dunlop of WW2 Burma Railway fame did a short visit to Vietnam with some involvement in medical programs during the Vietnam War. Another very significant WW2/Vietnam connection.

A further publication worthy of mention, *'WHERE SOLDIERS LIE, The Quest To Find Australia's War Dead'* (author Ian McPhedrand) was an interesting read. A quote from the cover panel:

"Some 35,000 Australian soldiers and airmen are still Missing in Action from the wars of the 20th century. 'Where Soldiers Lie', tells the moving story of the dedicated 'bone hunters' who employ painstaking detective work and cutting edge

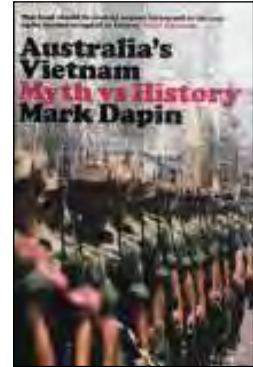


science to solve the mysteries of Australia's missing and bring solace to their families and the veteran community.

From the jungles of Vietnam and the decade-long search for the 'missing six', to Korea, Papua New Guinea and the sombre battlefields of the Somme, Flanders and Fromelles, McPhedran follows the small, determined band of investigators and scientists on their missions to locate and identify our nation's unrecovered war casualties."

Jim Bourke of 'Operation Aussies Home' fame and his team changed the attitude of Government and Defence. It is most encouraging to know that today we have a team (small though it may be) continuing to search for our missing war dead.

Book number three to catch my interest across 2019 among other publications was *"Australia's Vietnam Myths Vs History"*, (author Mark Dalpin). This book is a good read for anyone interested in why myths become accepted as history. I make no personal comments. That's up to you!



**VIETNAM VETERANS DAY REMEMBRANCE SERVICE 2019** at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial, Anzac Parade, Canberra, Sunday 18th August. A good number of ageing veterans and their families gathered at our beautiful memorial in crisp but comfortable weather for the service. The keynote speech on behalf of Vietnam Veterans was given by Air Vice Marshal (Ret'd) Chris Feeble AO, CSC; patron of the Vietnam Veterans and Veterans Federation ACT Inc.

Accompanying photos show the gathering and sights at the memorial. A most memorable occasion confirming we will and do remember the 521 Australians who gave their lives for our beliefs and values during the Vietnam War. Lest We Forget!

A noticeable group at the service was the family (brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews) of Pte Frank Topp (ARA - 19 years of age) who was killed in action at the Battle of Long Tan. The family had photos taken at the National Memorial. Later in the day the family gathered at the Australian War Memorial's Last Post Service specifically recognising and commemorating Pte Frank Topp's service to Australia. My wife Nancy and I were pleased to also attend this service and offer our condolences following the ceremony. It was obvious to us that the loss of a loved one 50 years ago in the Vietnam War still weighs on the emotions of family.

It is a matter of record that Pte Topp and fellow infantry soldier, Pte Colin Whiston (NS - 21 years of age) were collected from the Reinforcement Unit, Nui Dat on the afternoon of the 17th August to join 5 section, 11 platoon, D Coy 6RAR. Very sadly both men were killed in action in the opening engagement of the Battle of Long Tan. They had been in the field on operation for less than one day.

A quote from Bob Buick, Sergeant, 11 platoon, D Coy 6RAR, confirms this sad reality.... "Infantry can really only live from day to day as they never know what will happen next".

In early August the movie *'DANGER CLOSE - Never Accept Defeat'* was released in Australia. No doubt many veterans and family viewed the movie. If not, it will be released in early December on DVD. I look forward to purchasing my own copy for further viewing. All comments to date have been very positive. Veterans will have noted the transfer of Pte's Topp and Whiston from the Reinforcement Unit by landrover and



transiting to D Coy 6RAR in the movie. Memories for those who moved through the Reinforcement Unit on the way to joining a Permanent Unit.



Vietnam Veterans Day 2019 - National Memorial  
a good crowd in attendance



Vietnam Veterans Day 2019 - National Memorial  
commemorating individual's sacrifice



Vietnam Veterans Day 2019 - National Memorial  
Wreaths and Tributes



Last Post Closing Ceremony - AWM  
Pte Frank Topp, KIA Long Tan

A few 2019 statistics regarding the operation of the Outpost Education Program to finish this report.

- \* The Education Program has completed 15 years of operation.

...../18



- \* 43/school/college invitations were responded to across 2019; including very memorable outreach visits to Gilgandra High, St Joseph's College, Aberdeen, Illawarra Christian College, Cordeaux Heights, Monaro High School, Cooma and the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.
- \* Individual school/college presentations now range from 2 to 4 hours duration. The longer presentation format is increasing in popularity.
- \* The total number of presentations across 15 years of operation exceeds 835. Impressive by any assessment!
- \* The total number of senior students who have participated in Outpost Education Program presentations across the year's numbers more than 72000. A figure the Outpost can be proud of!
- \* Total donations to the Outpost in appreciation of the program since it commenced tallies to over \$115,000.00 by my reckoning. It's worth repeating again that these donations cover all Education Program administration and running costs and leave 'money in the till' for other important Outpost programs.



Girls enjoy role play/dress up



Student appreciation

To conclude, sadly our Vietnam Veteran ranks decline each year.

Our thanks go to all members and loved ones who have or continue to support the Outpost Education Program.

Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy 2020.

Vin Cosgrove OAM  
Co-ordinator,  
Vietnam Veterans Outpost Education Program



It was that time, during the Sunday morning service, for the children's sermon. All the children were invited to come forward. One little girl was wearing a particularly pretty dress and, as she sat down, the pastor leaned over and said, "That is a very pretty dress. Is it your Easter Dress?"

The little girl replied, directly into the pastor's clip-on microphone, "Yes, and my Mom says it's a bitch to iron."





## Final Parade for 2019 – 7<sup>th</sup> December

## A cartoon illustration of two young boys boxing. The boy on the left has brown hair and is wearing green shorts and red boxing gloves. The boy on the right has dark hair and is wearing red shorts and red boxing gloves. They are both in a boxing stance, facing each other.

[illegible]

**IF YOU, OR A VETERAN YOU KNOW,  
IS FEELING**



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VISIT THE VETERANS CENTRE, LOCATED IN**

**“THAT TRAIN”**

**CNR MAMRE ROAD and HALL STREET ST MARYS**



**THE BEST TIME TO ACT IS NOW!**

#### **FOOD CHALLENGE.**

A sign on the window of a restaurant says” We will give you \$1500.00 if we fail to fill your order.’ Customer decides to put the policy to the test by ordering elephant’s ears on rye. The waitress takes his order to the kitchen. Seconds later, the owner comes out of the kitchen, goes to the customer’s table and slams down \$15000.00 on the table. ‘You got me,’ he tells the customer, but I want you to know that this is the first time we’ve been out of rye bread.’





# Minchinbury Community Hospital

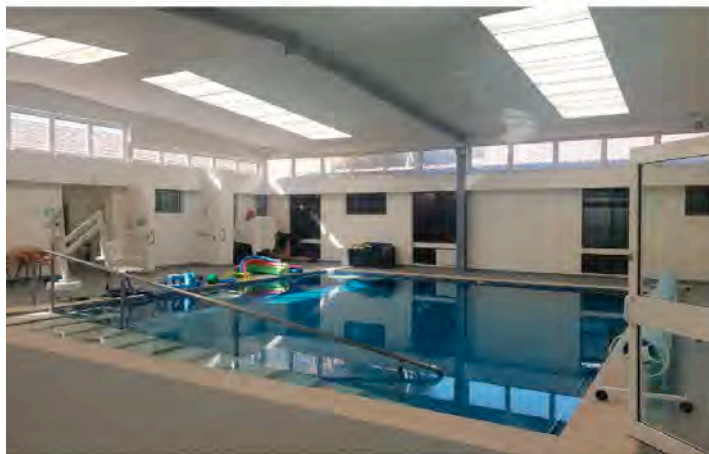
**Rehabilitation | Surgical | Medical**

## Physiotherapy and Hydrotherapy

Minchinbury Community Hospital offers inpatient and day patient personalised rehabilitation services to suit your needs. Our team of caring professionals are here to assist patients reach their individual goals and work in conjunction with their families to meet any of their concerns.

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Minchinbury Community Hospital has been providing expert rehabilitation and nursing care to the local community for the past 10 years.

The hospital is within easy reach of all major arterial roads including M4 & M7 with free onsite parking

LAUGH A LITTLE EVERY DAY...

There's always a lot to be thankful for if you take time to look for it.

For example, I am sitting here right now thinking how nice it is that wrinkles don't hurt.





## ST MARYS RSL BOWLERS CLUB

The bowlers club invites all members and visitors to utilize the excellent facilities available with our two greens, spacious bowls lounge and function room. We have a great social bowls programme and free coaching for those interested in starting out. Bowls are available from the club, so there is no cost outlay to start your new pastime.

We also have a strong representation in both male and female pennant teams (representative) which is available to any member to enter. You don't have to be a champion bowler to play pennants. So come along and join in the fun.

### Social Bowls Programme

Tuesday	Any Pairs	9.30am Start
Wednesday	Any Pairs	10.30am Start
Thursday	Ladies Bowls	9.30am Start
Friday	Mens Pairs	1.00pm Start
Saturday	<u>Free Coaching</u>	10.00am – 12 noon
Saturday	Any Pairs	1.00pm Start
Sunday	Turkey Trots (mixed Bowls)	9.30am Start

Contact the Bowls Office via Club Reception on 9623 6555

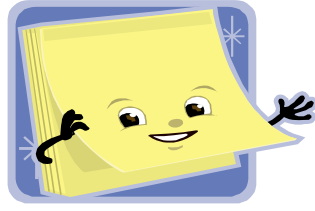


### THERE'S ALWAYS ONE.

The scene: At an exclusive restaurant, a wine wanker is sitting with a group of his friends. He boasts he can identify any wine when he is blind folded. A dinner napkin is produced and his eyes are covered. One by one, glasses of wine are duly handed to him for tasting. "Lafite-Rothschild 1958," he declares, followed, followed by "Bernasteler badstube 1951!" Infuriatingly, he is always right. Finally, someone hands him one he can't identify. After he takes a sip, he spits it out, and, ripping of the blindfold off and splutters furiously. "This is fresh urine. Plain, fresh, urine!" A cynical voice at the end of the table is heard to say, "Yeah 'knowitall', but whose?"







### **IMPORTANT MESSAGE REGARDING DAYS OF OPERATION FOR PENSIONS AT THE ST MARYS VETERANS CENTRE**

Pension claims at the 'Train' are now carried out on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday between the hours of 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, however, these timings are flexible depending on availability of Pension Officers.

Anyone wishing to see a particular Officer should phone the office first to ensure they will be in attendance.

Veterans attending the 'Train' for the first time to start a claim should allow for at least two hours for the interview as initial interviews can be time consuming.

Interviews are carried out on a 'first in first served' basis

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## ST MARY'S GOVERNOR KING DAY CLUB

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Sub-Branch  
“An RSL Service to the Community”



## Nepean Wives of Vietnam Veterans, Women's Support Group Winter Report

**President:** Maree Johnson

**Phone:** (02) 96237126

Registered Office  
C/O VVAA St Marys Outpost  
Cnr Mamre Road and Hall Street  
St Marys NSW 2760  
(All Mail To the PO Box)

**Secretary:** Maureen Clements  
**Treasurer:** Kay Hibbard

**Phone:** (02) 96753998  
**Phone:** (02) 98323562



## ST MARYS RSL WOMEN'S AUXILIARY

For more information contact:  
Honorary Secretary - Kerry Squires  
Email: [kerrysquires@gmail.au](mailto:kerrysquires@gmail.au)



## SUNSET STATION SINGERS





## COMPUTER TRAINING CLASSES

Computer Classes are conducted at the Vietnam Veterans Train situated at the St Marys RSL Club in Mamre Road St Marys as follows:

Wednesday: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm (LadiesClass)

Thursday: 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Thursday classes teach Digital Photo manipulation using Photoshop Elements 5, only 5 students at a time **Bookings essential.**

The Wednesday classes are informal and we teach mixed classes from the 'beginner' to the more experienced and retired seniors wanting to familiarise with current software and learn to use the Internet to send E-Mails and carry out research and other technology related issues.

**For more info call Keith 9833 4700 or  
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# THE STORY OF THE VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORPS - WORLD WAR TWO

**Author:** David Trist, WW2 Veteran of 58/59<sup>th</sup> Battalion; Member St Marys RSL Sub-Branch

## Source of information:

‘On Guard with the Volunteer Defence Corps’ – published 1944 by the AWM.

At the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Congress of the RSL, held in Hobart in November 1937, the following resolution was adopted:

“this Congress deems it necessary that a national volunteer defence force be raised from ex-servicemen and others between the ages of 41 and 60 years, for local defence and to relieve existing forces from certain necessary duties in the event of a national emergency”.

In December 1938, after a relatively negative first response from the Minister for Defence, the Government appointed a committee to examine the proposal.

It wasn't until 6 weeks before WWII broke out, that *'The RSL Volunteer Defence Corps'* (RSL VDC) began its formation. The Corps was raised and maintained during its early years, by the Returned Soldiers League, through its members who had served in WWI. Retired Generals and other senior WWI officers returned to its service. They included, for example:

- ◇ General Sir Harry Chauvel (who led the historical Australian Cavalry charges in WW1) was appointed as Inspector in Chief.
- ◇ Brig Gen Wilson, Queensland Commander
- ◇ Maj Gen Gordon Bennett, NSW.
- ◇ Maj Gen Sir John Gellibrand, Victoria.
- ◇ Brig Gen Leane, South Australia.
- ◇ Brig Gen Bessill-Browne, Western Australia.
- ◇ Lt Col Mullen, Tasmania



By the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939, RSL VDC personnel, who had gained the appropriate military skills in WW1, formed a so-called garrison battalion of experienced ex-servicemen, ready for full-time garrison duty. They were used particularly in the coastal artillery to release the younger soldiers for front line duties. The Garrison Battalion was eventually incorporated into the Australian Military Forces (AMF).

The Federal Executive of the RSL, at a meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 1940, decided to recommend to the Government that additional, Australia-wide, home defence groups of volunteers be quickly established. Commando and guerrilla type duties as well as traditional infantry responsibilities were offered.

In October 1940, 5,000 men of the RSL VDC marched through Adelaide. The following month 6,000 were reviewed by the Governor General in a Sydney march and General Chauvel reviewed a march of 2,000 in Perth. By the end of 1940, 37,120 volunteers, unpaid, mainly ex-World War One members of the RSL, made up the many units of the RSL VDC. Its units were established in all the States and Territories.

At the end of 1940, Army Headquarters pressed the War Cabinet for a big call-up of civilians for the AMF and AIF. Until 1940, only the 18 to 25 year-olds had been called up for service. The Government decided to extend this call-up to older classes of men with tens of thousands



recruited. Consequently, the military authorities had so many recruits for the AIF and the AMF, that the issue of uniforms and arms for the RSL VDC was still not possible. Some obsolete Boer War rifles were issued to RSL VDC units and volunteers took their own rifles and shot guns to parades. The Military Board suggested distinguishing arm band for the RSL VDC until uniforms were available.

The RSL, in early 1941, requested that the RSL VDC be taken over by the AMF. It was decided that “the RSL Volunteer Defence Corps be constituted as adjunct to the AMF under the operational and administrative control of the Army.”

Colonel Murphy CMG, DSO, who was the President of RSL NSW, was then appointed Director of the AMF Volunteer Defence Corps. He was placed on the staff of the AMF Adjutant-General.

General H.G. Chauvel, Inspector-in-Chief, stated - “On 15<sup>th</sup> May 1941, a well-trained and properly organised force of over 50,000 men was handed over to the Army. Drawn from every part of Australia and from every walk of life, the RSL Volunteer Defence Corps was truly representative of the people of Australia.”

The importance of the RSL VDC to Australia’s overall wartime manpower could be assessed as each Australian army infantry division in WW2 had 9 battalions in 3 Brigades with about 10,000 infantry troops. Associated transport, engineers, artillery and headquarters etc. took the total divisional strength to about 15,000.

The Australian Army, in the early days of WW2 consisted of four AIF infantry Divisions - 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>. and three AMF infantry Divisions the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> Divisions

The 8<sup>th</sup> Division was in Malaya and the other 3 AIF Divisions were mostly in the Middle East. The 3 AMF divisions were stationed around Australia and New Guinea. The RSL VDC with its 50,000 part-time soldiers was the equivalent of more than two additional Infantry Divisions and was available to meet the real threat of Japanese invasion in 1942-43.

### **David Trist’s connection with the VDC**

“In 1941 when I was working in my first job at the Commonwealth Bank at Queanbeyan NSW, a unit of the VDC had been formed in the town. It comprised about 30 men, most of them first world war veterans but with a few under 18 year-olds. We paraded on Saturday afternoons and on Sundays.

Our CO, Joe O’Rourke, was appointed as an army Captain. He had been an NCO at Gallipoli.

The Sgt Major was an ex-British Army Warrant Officer and he marched and drilled us as if we were part of the Royal Guards. On Mondays he resumed his job as the local newsagent.



One of our troops was a local publican, Spendelove [Spendy], who illegally used to let the unit into his pub after the Sunday parade. I had my first French green absinthe at the pub, as recommended by the ex-WW1 diggers. I also learnt the words of some bawdy marching songs, as sung on WW1 route marches.

I learnt to throw Mills Bombs, fire a Boer War carbine and slope arms. I did not get an army uniform but my skill with hand grenades later proved useful in the jungle.

We guarded the Canberra War Memorial at weekends and the secretive Harman [ACT]

Naval Wireless Station, which was mainly staffed by attractive WRANS [to the joy of the old diggers].

The Dutch Air Force, who had escaped the Japanese drive into the Netherlands East Indies [Indonesia], were billeted in Queanbeyan and we had some liaison with them, and their Timorese ground crews. They did anti-submarine patrols off our South Coast.

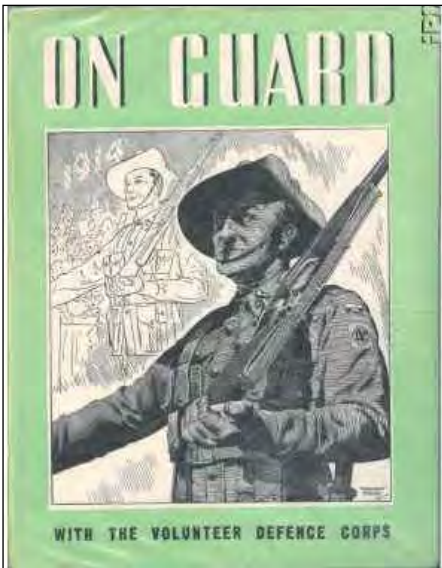
When I was 18, I volunteered for the AIF and left the VDC. I told the recruiting officer at Cowra that I was fully trained and accordingly was quickly moved on to the 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion in Sydney.

It didn't do me much good, as for the next few months, that battalion was used for wharf labouring at Darling Harbour, loading American Liberty ships with ammunition - mostly heavy boxes of 25-pound artillery shells which had to be man handled.

Some of us were sent to Cowra during the POW break-out. We guarded a long convoy of trucks with hundreds of Jap POW, on a very dusty trip to their new POW camp at Hay.



Members of the Volunteer Defence Corps training with a 3.7-inch anti-aircraft gun emplaced on Kensington golf links in Sydney.



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**St Marys RSL Sub-Branch**  
**Corner Mamre Road and Hall St.**

The RSL Sub-Branch monthly meeting is held the second Wednesday of each month at 6.30 pm in the auditorium, refreshments provided. The office is open most mornings between 10.00am-12noon and can be contacted on **9623 6555**.

**ST MARYS RSL SUB-BRANCH COMMITTEE**

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V/President:	Frank Lawton	02 9623 6555
Treasurer:	Ted Fish	02 9623 6555
Secretary:	Tony Fryer	0414 557 692
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**ST MARYS VETERANS CENTRE COMMITTEE**  
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John Davison - Editor



## REMEMBRANCE DAY –2019



Ron and Mick lay tributes



Our Patrons



School Students



Inspector Tony Mitchell and Melissa McIntosh MP

The Remembrance Day Commemorative Service at Victoria Park, St Marys was held on a very warm late morning, and with a very good attendance. Thank you to Lyn Forde (President St Marys and District Historical Society) for reminding us how very difficult time were a century ago when St Marys was endeavouring to revive from the Great War. We certainly have much to be thankful for. The Service saw a great turnout from 13 local schools - we certainly appreciate that our school's teachers uphold these important points of remembrance. Thank you to all who assisted in the operation of the event to make it special for all attending.



Erskine Park High School Band