

# WESTERN OUTPOST NEWS



**AUGUST 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:

ANZAC Day Dawn Service at St Mary's

### **DEADLINES FOR PUBLICATION**

December 2019 ..... 15 November 2019  
April 2020 ..... 15 March 2020  
August 2020 ..... 15 July 2020  
Articles of a general nature may be submitted at anytime,  
please send to: john.davison@optusnet.com.au

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**Google: St Marys RSL Sub Branch**

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# **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

## **ST MARYS VIETNAM VETERANS OUTPOST**

**“WHERE IT ALL COMES TOGETHER”**

“50 years on” has an immense significance to more than just Vietnam Veterans; **where were you on July 20, 1969** the day man first walked on the moon? Personally, I was deployed with D Company 9 RAR on Operation Hat Dich in the AO Porphrey, and, at that time D Company were fairly static, I was fortunate enough to have a small transistor radio, so, as it turned out, I was one of the estimated 600 million people that had tuned in to follow man's lunar landing; their 396,000km journey cannot be understated. If they had encountered difficulties their fate would have been sealed; no return, no rescue.

Fast forward to 2019. The annual busy period of ANZAC Day school services and nursing home services was carried out with the usual professionalism by members of the Sub Branch and Members of the Train, my thanks to all involved.

I am happy to report that during the absence of Sam Vecchio as delegate and myself as an observer at the VVAA National Congress 14 - 17 May, the Train continued to operate without the driver and the conductor, well done people.

May 24<sup>th</sup>, I represented the Vietnam Veterans of St Marys Outpost and Vietnam Veterans State NSW at the funeral of well-known Past National President of the VVAA Ron Coxon, Ron passed on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2019, and his funeral took place in Launceston Tasmania.

May 26<sup>th</sup>, I represented the Train at the annual National Serviceman's Association Commemoration Service, it gave me a great opportunity to mingle with my National Service peers.

(Name Change) Special Meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> May. About 20% of our membership turned up at the, meeting, for those others who receive and read this magazine, the news is, that, Our Official Name (Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia St Marys Outpost Sub-Branch Inc.) remains as is by 56 votes for and 6 against; the name adopted at an earlier general meeting (St Marys Outpost ADF Support Centre) will be used on brochures notice boards and the like.

At this year's ARVN Dinner at the Crystal Function rooms and the following wreath laying ceremony at the park adjacent to the Cabra Vale Diggers Club Ltd. The Train was well represented.

The Nepean Wives of Vietnam Veterans reported that Big Morning Tea was a huge success and convey their sincere thanks to all those who attended.

At this point, I offer my congratulations to our Pension and Welfare team for their continued dedication and professionalism, and particularly welcome the new trainee pension officers, Hira, Kylie, Ian, John, and, our new front office assistant Leanne.

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

Tony Mullavey  
President

**letters  
to the  
editor**



## GUNNEDAH MURALS

Herewith photos of our beautiful murals at our museum in Gunnedah.

These murals were unveiled on ANZAC Day this year.

I think this town would be a wonderful meeting place for Vietnam Vets, both for a reunion every so often and a calling-in place for Veteran travellers.

Best regards

Max de Mestre-Allen JP



### *WW II Irish Pilot*

An old Irish World War II Spitfire pilot and flying ACE, was speaking in a church and reminiscing about his war experiences.

"In 1942, the situation was really tough as the Germans had a very strong Air Force. One day I was protecting the bombers and suddenly, out of the clouds, these fokkers appeared."

There are a few gasps from the parishioners and several of the children began to giggle.

"I looked up and realised that two of the fokkers were directly above me. I aimed at the first one and shot him down. By then, though, the other fokker was right on my tail."

At this point, several of the elderly ladies of the church were blushing with embarrassment, the girls were all giggling and the boys laughing loudly.

The pastor finally stands up and says, "I think I should point out that 'Fokker' was the name of a German-Dutch aircraft company, who made many of the planes used by the Germans during the war." "Yes, that's true," says the old pilot, "but these fokkers were flying Messerschmitts."





# DVA facts made easy

RECEIVE THE BENEFITS YOU DESERVE

**THAT TRAIN** Have you ever thought, what is the real function of “That Train”, just sitting there on the Corner of Hall Street and Mamre Road, St Marys?

The brainchild of a small but dedicated group of Vietnam Veterans in association with St Marys RSL, saw a need to establish an All Services Welfare and Drop In Centre staffed by qualified non government consultants who could assist and advise all veterans and dependents with the very confusing formal applications that are required by DVA.

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**FAX: 9283 2600.  
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Are an organised group of war fighting, beer drinking, sharply dressed,  
one of a kind, DEFENDERS OF FREEDOM!

*Thomas Gainsborough 1779-1788*







## 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. 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-branches, 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.

**19<sup>th</sup> February** - Tony Fryer and I attended the Lane Cove Library to listen to a presentation of the 1919 Russian Campaign to gain more information for our ANZAC Theme. The talk was very informative and helped cleared up some areas that we weren't sure of.

**22<sup>nd</sup> February** - Tony Mullavey and I hosted 16 students and 2 teachers from Cambridge Park HS. They were making a comparison between monuments in Japan for their fallen soldiers and our monuments here - We both explained why we have them and the reasons for them.

March was a sad month as we once again had the sad task of farewelling another two sub-branch members, they being - Robert Leslie Ammon and John Anthony Cross. Robert joined this sub-branch on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January 2007, and while we don't know his actual date of death, he was living in a nursing home at beautiful Kingscliff NSW. John passed away on Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup> of March after a short battle with Leukaemia, John joined this sub-branch on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2004. John was a friend, a comedian, a joker, he was also an asset to this sub-branch and the Train, at his funeral, up to 150 people attended with at least 100 being fellow veterans, he will be missed by all who knew him. Our thoughts go out to the families of Robert and John, may they both rest in peace.

**12<sup>th</sup> March** - 15 sub-branch members, once again made the trip into Randwick Army Base to carry out the Packing of care packages for the Australian Forces Overseas Fund (AFOF).

**14<sup>th</sup> March** - Tony, Frank and I meet with teachers from 4 of the high schools that receive scholarships from this sub-branch. We discussed the topics and timeline required for update reports and submission dates.

**19<sup>th</sup> March** – The ANZAC Committee meet to confirm and approve the final details for the upcoming ANZAC services. Also, on that Day Tony and I meet with David Trist to discuss his speech for the Sunday service.

**20<sup>th</sup> March** – Tony and I meet with 323 AACU cadets to show them the procedure on how to fold the Australian Flag for ANZAC Sunday's service. An enthusiastic group of cadets took no time to learn the flag folding procedure and are looking forward to Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2019.

**21 March** – sub-branch members and friends gathered to farewell John Cross, at Pinegrove crematorium, he will be missed by everyone who knew him. John's wake was held at the St Marys RSL Club.

**29<sup>th</sup> March** – Frank, Tony and I carried out a letter box drop to local residents and business as required by the Traffic Management Plan; we also checked that the road closure signs had been installed, thanks to Tom Bell ABF for doing this on short notice.

**1<sup>st</sup> April** – The Management Committee meeting, meet to discuss the final plan for our ANZAC Services, also discussed was the school presentations to be given before and after Easter as well as normal management issues tabled.

**9<sup>th</sup> April** – Tony and I meet with 21 ACU cadets to show them the procedure on how to fold the Australian Flag for the Dawn service. They are very keen and are looking forward to ANZAC Day.

Our first service was on Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, as you all know we have changed the services location to the Guns with the March stepping off from Cook Park, the committee were excited to see a very large number of members, schools, sporting groups and the local community (especially the local residents and business's).

ANZAC Day and attending School and community services had been our focus through April, with school holiday's right in the middle, we had 11 day's to recover from the Sunday march and service until the Dawn service, which gave us a feeling of a reasonably quiet month.

However it wasn't, with Tony Fryer shifting into overdrive to make our services the best we have ever had. We as a team consisting of the Executive, the Committee and the sub-branch members who volunteered their time and effort, I thank each and every one of you for making both services happen. I especially thank the ANZAC planning committee for their input and dedication, also a big thank you to Frank for his MC skills, and I can't forget Reno and his Train washers for the immaculate venue, also Gary Wright and Paul Tarlington for their dedication to the Gun's. I also thank the sub-branch members who gave their spare time to carry out a combined total of 21 school and nursing home services, again a big thank you to those involved in this program.

St Marys Rugby Leagues Club borrowed our Australian and New Zealand national flags, so they too could show their respects to the ANZAC's at the start of their rugby league game on Saturday the 27<sup>th</sup> of April. It was reported that their service was a great success. Well done.

May, found everyone coming to terms with the completion of another successful ANZAC Day, and Sunday Services, plus local Schools and other community services.

Ted and Tony have been busy finalizing Aprils accounts and sending out letters of thanks to those who made a special contribution to our activities, staying on that theme, your executive is now in the early stages of planning for next year, by rebooking the companies necessary for next year.

*Continued next page ...*

### ***Sub-Branch President's Report Continued ....***

It was agreed by the committee that we return to Victoria Park for Remembrance Day 2019, as this is the most significant location to hold this service, so Tony has booked Victoria Park through Penrith Council.

**26<sup>th</sup> May** – Tony F, Tony M, Ted, Sam and Michael W attended the annual NSAA service at Victoria Park, overall it was very well attended with quite a few catchups.

**30<sup>th</sup> May** – Tony F attended the newly formed 345 AAF Cadet Unit's Parade, held at Penrith Anglican School, Tony said he was very impressed with the new Cadet unit and we look forward to supporting them in the near future.

**7<sup>th</sup> Jun** – Tony and I had the pleasure to be introduced to the President and CEO of the USA Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund Mr. Jim Knotts by Sam Vecchio, when he visited the Train last Friday. After his commitment at the Train, Jim was given a tour of the Corridor of Honour and presented with a sub-branch pen. Jim said he was very impressed with the setup of both ESO's and how well our two organizations work so well together.

**20<sup>th</sup> Jun** – Tony Fryer, Ted Fish, Frank Lawton, John Foeken and I made our way to the Hyde Park Inn in Sydney, for a RSL NSW related version of Governance Training; this training was very informative for most of the sub-branches that attended, for others it was a good refresher.

Meanwhile Lesley Ayres represented to sub-branch at the annual Cancer morning tea, which was once again held at the St Marys RSL Youth club Hall, and run by the Wives of Vietnam Veterans support group.

**21<sup>st</sup> Jun** – Ted, Tony, Frank and I gave Ms Prue Car MP, Member of Londonderry (NSW) a run down on how we, the Train and the Club Ltd work together and who and how we support Veterans and the local community. We also asked Prue to be one of our presenters at the Colin Shephard OAM School Scholarships, and to be our guest speaker for the ANZAC Sunday service and at the Dawn service. Without hesitation Prue graciously accepted.

**25<sup>th</sup> Jun** – Today found your Management Committee, enriching our local school libraries with books that had been laid as tributes at our local ANZAC and Remembrances Day services. A total of 51 books and a 10 volume DVD set, were distributed to Students from St Clair, St Marys Senior, Colyton, Cambridge Park, Mamre Anglican and Emmaus College, with each school getting 8 to 9 books. Our thanks go to Principal Julie Tegart and Rajini of St Clair High School for playing host and putting on a scrumptious morning tea, and a big thank you to the Hospitality students who prepared and served that overwhelming morning tea.

**1<sup>st</sup> Jul** – Management Meeting - to discuss recommendations to members of feedback that we believe is essential to be added to the DC7 Draft Constitution, with the most essential item being the protection of our Trustee's.

**10<sup>th</sup> Jul** – General Meeting – The members present in a unanimous vote, agreed to send to FWMDC the recommendations made by the Management Committee, so they can be sent onto the DC7 Constitution Committee as part of Far West's feedback.

Ron Blakely

President July 2019





# ST MARYS RSL CLUB



Corner Mamre Road and Hall Street St Marys  
Ph 9623 6555 [www.stmarysrsl.com.au](http://www.stmarysrsl.com.au)



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**Members' Courtesy Bus - Saturday From 1.30 pm** Ring Reception for details.

## DINING at ST MARYS RSL –

### TERRACE CAFE

Open Daily for Lunch and Dinner  
Mon - Fri 12-3 pm \$12 Lunch Specials  
Check Board for Specials

### FORTUNA Chinese Restaurant

Open for Lunch at Noon and Dinner at 5 pm (Closed Mondays)

### TAB FACILITIES

Sports Bet

FOX Sport

SKY Channel

## WHAT'S ON .....

### **MONDAY**

- Rock and Roll Dancing 7-10 pm

### **TUESDAY**

- Bingo 7.00 pm (electronic pads available)

### **WEDNESDAY**

- Monthly Raffle 7pm 2nd Wed of Month

### **THURSDAY**

- Bingo 11.30 am  
- Texas Hold'em Poker 7 pm  
- **MEMBER'S Badge Draw** \$3000-\$5000 from 7 pm

### **FRIDAY**

- Bingo 11.30 am  
- CLUB BRASHS—Playing Retro Music 8 pm-12 am

### **SATURDAY**

- Meat Run RAFFLE 4-6 pm  
- 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  
FREECALL 188 633 635

A group of workers at an office were talking when one man said: "In my house I am the boss, I say when the laundry is done, when the cooking is done and when the dishes are washed."  
"That's great! How long have you been married?" one of his colleagues asked.  
The man replied: "Oh, I'm not married!"



## VVAA ST MARYS OUTPOST EDUCATION PROGRAM REPORT

The Outpost Education Program responded to a broad cross section of school and community groups across the 2019 ANZAC Commemoration period. I believe, as stated in previous newsletters, ANZAC Day is Australia Day for many of us.

Invitations to attend, lay wreaths, or give an ANZAC Address came from a pre-school setting (2 to 5 years age group), several primary school educational establishments (6 to 12 years age group), secondary school learning centres (13 to 18 years age group) both private and government, and citizen and senior citizen groups (20 to 90+ years age group).

This broad spread of our Australian community involvement in commemorating ANZAC Day and honouring the ANZAC Spirit was simply wonderful to experience.



To witness pre-school age children involved in acts of commemoration; echoing the teacher's words - *Gallipoli, rosemary, poppies*; then colouring in ANZAC pictures and making simple wreaths using coloured paper cupcake cases and rosemary cuttings was equally a beautiful ANZAC experience. To observe primary aged students of the rich cultural mix of modern Australia laying wreaths with the utmost reverence and care is truly emotional and totally respectful to our fallen comrades from Australia's wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations across the years. To participate in and observe also the thoughtful and totally dignified services organised and conducted by secondary students was another clear indication that the ANZAC Spirit and acts of remembrance and commemoration are flourishing within the population of our country. To see and join our senior citizens, including a 96 year old WW2 Catalina Flying Boat Pilot, gathering and parading, airing their medals or respectfully wearing loved ones medals, carrying photos of the fallen and past comrades, standing in solemn reverence for the Ode and Reveille assures all that 'We ARE remembering them' and 'We Australians are clearly NOT forgetting them'.

To join the boisterous crowd of all mature age groups gathering around a 'Two Up' game and responding to the words 'Come in Spinner' was another colourful act of 'We will remember them'.

In summary, ANZAC Day had a feel that is difficult to describe in words for veterans and all those who are linked to ANZAC by birth or association but perhaps simply put - it makes one proud to be Australian!



UWS Hawkesbury Pre-School  
Resting Soldiers



UWS Hawkesbury Pre-School  
focused on the ANZAC story



World War 1 Reflection  
Hyde Park ANZAC Memorial

The RSL and Schools Remember ANZAC Commemoration Service at the Hyde Park ANZAC Memorial was, as always, a beautiful and respectful service remembering Australian servicemen and servicewomen across our military history. The service is conducted entirely by school students. This year the ANZAC Address was given by Harry Hicks, a Year 12 student from Bede Polding College, South Windsor. (The Outpost Education Program has presented at Bede Polding College across thirteen years.) Students from government and non-government schools gathered for the service around the Pool of Reflection in front of the Memorial. More than 100 school groups formed an impressive column of wreath bearers as they moved from around the Pool of Reflection to the steps of the Memorial

The NSW Governor, The Honourable Major General David Hurley AO DSC (Ret'd) addressed the gathering as part of the service and commended students for their attendance and participation in the beautiful service. NSW RSL President James Brown gave the closing address thanking and congratulating all in attendance.

For those who have not attended an RSL and Schools Remember ANZAC Service at the Hyde Park Memorial I encourage you to do so.



Children starting to gather around Hyde Park  
Memorial Pool of Reflection for RSL and Schools  
Remember ANZAC



Some of the over 100 wreaths laid at the RSL  
and Schools Remember ANZAC Service

Following the RSL & Schools Remember ANZAC Service my wife Nancy and I visited the Memorials eight walls of the Hall of Service displaying soil from 1701 New South Wales towns, cities, suburbs and homesteads given as a place of address by First World War enlistees, each one engendering pride of place of birth and place in our military history. Nancy was thrilled to see her home town of Kyogle featured where the soil was collected from the Kyogle Cenotaph, bringing back memories of many years of ANZAC Day Commemorations and her father's WW2 Pacific Island service. In my case, it was the little village of Tabulam where the then Lieutenant Harry Chauvel gathered men (and horses) together to form part of the Light Horse Brigade of WW1. A brass plaque attached to a rather large sandstone slab, the very spot where "The Home Soil" for The Hall of Service was sourced displays the Tabulam Honour Roll listing the names of Tabulam and District Men who served in WW1, WW2, Korea and Vietnam. I feel honoured to know my father is listed with the WW2 men (Cosgrove, V P) and to be the only Tabulam man (Cosgrove V J) to be listed under the Vietnam War.





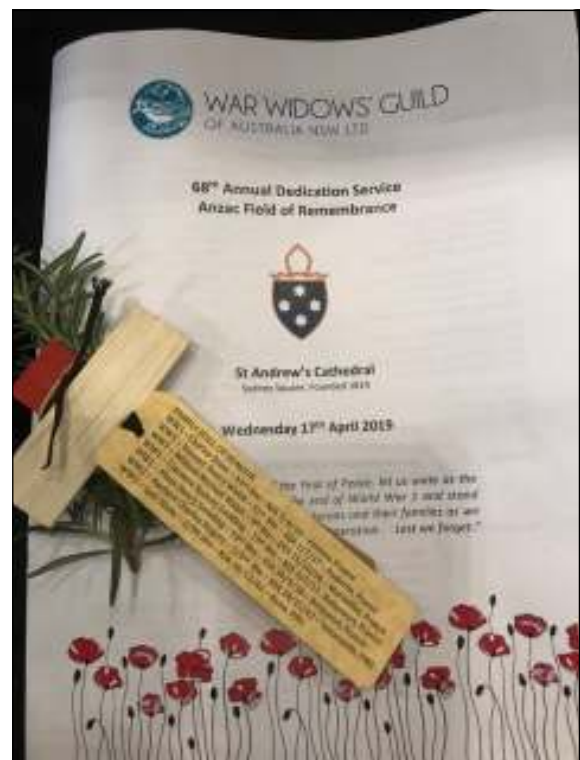
Flag Bearers - War Widows' Guild Service



Army Band / The OZY Youth Choir  
Honouring Defence Service - St Andrew's Cathedral



War Widows Guild - 68th Annual Dedication Service -  
ANZAC Field of Remembrance Crosses



The Outpost Education Program has a list of 35 school/college bookings in place for 2020. Several more are anticipated. The Vietnam War Topic continues to be a favoured option for Year 10 teachers and students.

Thank you to those Outpost members who support the program of school presentations and those who acted as guest speakers at the 2019 School ANZAC Services.

Vin Cosgrove OAM

Venus is the only planet that rotates clockwise. (Since Venus is normally associated with women, what does that tell you? That women are going in the "right" direction, perhaps?)





### **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 the Hon Secretary: John Davison at  
mobile: 0411737446 or email: [john.davison@optusnet.com.au](mailto:john.davison@optusnet.com.au)



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Mobile: 0418 250 242

Office address:  
196 Queen Street  
ST. MARYS  
(Directly Opposite Library)

# DARWIN AND RETURN APRIL – MAY 2017

## PART 9

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 push 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 330kilometres since Katherine and I was on full reserve. The cost of the fuel there was \$1.59 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 McDougall 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 2 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.

After encamping and having a biscuit for lunch it was time to join Don in the pool. It was a very warm day; I wouldn't like to be there in summer, so a dip in the pool was most welcome. Thank goodness the pool had a roof over it, we would have been burnt very easy.

I went for a walk around the Hotel, which was the main building in town, not the only one. I couldn't find out why it was called the Heart Break Hotel. I did find out why it is Cape Crawford even though it's 150km inland. The hills around the town look like it could have been the coastline millions of years ago, hence Cape.

Out the front of the hotel were the fuel pumps and in an area there were some old single cylinder Lister diesel engines and a couple of old truck chassis. No doubt they would have been used locally in the past. Also on the lawn out the front was a helicopter. I sat and talked to the helicopter pilot who was sitting on the veranda. He did flight over The Lost City which is one of the local attractions.

*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 10 in the next issue ....

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**For you who need to know everything . . .**

- ◆ The liquid inside young coconuts can be used as a substitute for blood plasma.
- ◆ No piece of paper can be folded in half more than seven times. Oh, go ahead . . . I'll wait.
- ◆ Donkeys kill more people annually than plane crashes or shark attacks. (So, watch your ass!)
- ◆ You burn more calories sleeping than you do watching television.
- ◆ The first product to have a bar code was Wrigley's gum.
- ◆ The King of Hearts is the only King WITHOUT A MUSTACHE.



## 50 YEARS ON 1968 - 2018

**Vietnam Veterans Commemoration Day 2018** is now behind us, the well-deserved tributes to our fallen comrades in arms have served once again to remind us of the supreme sacrifice made by 521 Australians, so that we, our children and our children's children might live a better life in a country without oppression.

Fortunately, in our relatively free society there is an opportunity to research most of our war efforts in Vietnam, however, in some instances the Australian Government is still in denial, holding that – **“It never happened”**.

Similarly, The Vietnamese government keeps a tight grip on its own version of history, the winners' side of the story. In Vietnam today, as in many other countries that are healing from civil war, the Governments version of history seems more important than truth.

Allied troops know very little about their old enemy and have much to learn. They rarely hear stories from the other side. In this year of reflection on the events of 1968 – both in Vietnam and the political ramifications that saw a very divided country back home. – Now 50 years on, and, to portray the then enemy in human terms, it is time to listen to these voices.

In Vietnam, many veterans and their families seek some kind of closure, so many decades after the war. Speaking about their experiences is one way they hope to do that. Now, at the end of their lives, the North Vietnamese veterans we met showed a genuine need for reconciliation with their former enemies.

**“I never talk about the war. Nobody ever asks. People don't want to hear about it.”**

### Scenerio:

A North Vietnamese war veteran sat in his living room and began to remember the events of 1968. His wife was next to him. Around them were four interviewers, note takers and a Vietnamese interpreter. Several Communist Party officials, police officers and government representatives sat silently in the background, listening to stories they had never heard before. This was typical of the scene **Raul Roman** saw repeated more than 100 times in a three-year effort to document the lives and memories of North Vietnamese veterans and their families.

*(Credit: Raul Roman, Mr Roman is the executive director of a non-profit journalism organization.)*

### **The following are “Stories and Feelings” from the other side.**

On the first days of the Tet offensive in 1968, **Nguyen Nhu The**, led a small team to destroy a crucial bridge. During the operation, his team was killed. He was shot in the leg and captured by American troops; he was held in multiple prisons until 1973.

*“The worst conditions were at the prison on the island of Phu Quoc. I was starved, beaten and tortured. They hit me in the legs with water pipes and hung me from my arms for 24 hours at a time. I lost my hair. Things only improved after a team of Americans came to investigate the prison conditions.....”*



Nguyen Nhu The, aged 73  
Photo—Philip Penta/Dawning

A Google search of images (**Island Prison 1968 Phu Quoc** ) will show the extremes of the barbaric torture of inmates.



**Pham Dinh Rong's** main role during the war was to transport goods and weapons along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which was constantly bombed. During the Tet offensive, he was stationed in Hue, the scene of one of the bloodiest battles during the conflict.

*"There were a lot of helicopters roaring in the sky in Hue. A smoke bomb landed near us. The gray smoke blinded us. We could not breathe. We had to hold wet tissues to our noses. We were hungry. I could only hear the roar of the helicopters and the sound of the shootings."*



**Pham Dinh Rong, aged 75**  
Photo-Raul Roman/Dawning



**Nguyen Van Bien, aged 73**  
Photo-Nick Parisse/Dawning

**Nguyen Van Bien**, enlisted in a North Vietnamese artillery brigade with which travelled on foot for over a month to reach a final encampment in Laos. There he lost the outer three fingers of his right hand and sustained wounds to his neck and jaw while being shelled by American troops.

*"Forgiveness is important. But it is easier to forgive when you don't see your enemy face to face."*

**Pham Thi Phuc** married **Tran Huu Naghi**, a decorated North Vietnamese soldier who was shot through the neck and sprayed with Agent Orange during the Tet offensive. Of their four children, two suffer severe health problems.

*"The effect of Agent Orange on my children has broken my heart. One was born with a cleft palate and her jaw doesn't line up. People are afraid of her and tell her she shouldn't speak at all. My second daughter was abandoned by her first husband because she could not conceive."*



**Pham Thi Phuc**  
Photo-Susanne Ruttinger/Dawning



**Pham Van Ti, aged 82**  
Photo-Rafe H Andrews/Dawning

**Pham Van Ti** assisted in the transportation and storage of weapons during the Tet offensive in the battle of Quang Tri. While transporting weapons, his team was attacked by an American unit, and he lost five comrades. His memory was affected heavily by the trauma of the war. He now lives at home with his wife, tending to their garden and raising chickens.

*"I have come to appreciate the normal daily life we have here. I do everything with my wife. I am grateful to be living a life of simplicity."*

**Vu Van Liet** served in the North Vietnamese Army for nine years, leaving his wife and five children behind.

*"During my first three years of service, I was able to receive letters from my wife. But as the fighting intensified, I lost contact with her for the next six years. I didn't know if she and my children were alive. When I returned home, I was so relieved. She had raised our five children alone with the help of her sister and my mother, but I hardly knew them anymore."*



Vu Van Liet, aged 82  
Photo-Nick Parisse/Dawning



Pham Thi Phinh, aged 73  
Photos-Susanne Ruttinger/Dawson

The first day of the Tet offensive, **Vu Dinh Dang** was part of a team of soldiers that took a citadel in Binh Dinh Province. He was wounded during the fourth day of fighting. After seven days, they evacuated the citadel. His unit had lost 150 men. His wife, **Pham Thi Phinh**, lost her brother in a battle in Quang Ngai. The couple said they are still looking for his body.

*"Not finding my brother's body has devastated our family. We've gone back to the field that he was killed in, but we cannot find him. I want to find his body and bring him to our cemetery because he belongs to our village."*

**Nguyen Manh Hiep**, has converted his house on the outskirts of Hanoi into a museum of war memories – one of the most important private collections in the country. He was a captain for the North Vietnamese Army at the Battle of Hue in 1968 and was wounded. His collection includes Vietcong black plastic sandals, United States Air Force helmets, letters and pictures, but the most precious object to him is a green cotton blanket that he used during his convalescence in the jungle.

*"Young people in Vietnam don't want to learn about the war," he said. "It's difficult for us to talk about it. Vietnam has moved on."*



Nguyen Manh Hiep, aged 69  
Photo-Raul Roman/Dawning

A closing thought! When my time is up, have I done enough?



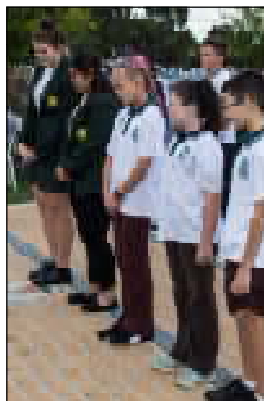


## ANZAC SERVICE - SUNDAY 14<sup>th</sup> APRIL - ST MARY'S





## ANZAC SERVICE - SUNDAY 14<sup>th</sup> APRIL - ST MARY'S



# ST MARYS RSL YOUTH CLUB

## ACTIVITIES FOR ALL



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**ST MARYS RSL YOUTH CLUB**  
**(NEXT TO RSL CLUB)**



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This fine ship was rescued from perhaps a fate of spare parts and was dismantled and rebuilt to the zero time condition you see today with the help and assistance of **Australian Native Landscapes Pty Ltd** and **Hellmuth Pty Ltd**. This ICON of the Vietnam War is perhaps the greatest example of her type in Australia, set in the livery of an American Army VIP transport "slick" she has been restored to the highest of airworthy standards. "EAGLE ONE" is a living reminder of the brave and dedicated crews that rode this magnificent machine into combat. The owners of "EAGLE ONE" are humbled and honoured to be able to fly and display this incredible "Grand Old Lady".

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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

Little Johnny walked into class. His teacher held out her hand and asked sternly, "Where's your homework?" "My dog ate it," Little Johnny answered seriously.

The teacher crossed her arms and said, "Johnny, I've been a teacher for eighteen years. Do you really expect me to believe that?"

"It's true, Miss, I swear!" insisted Johnny. "I had to force him, but he definitely ate it!"



## 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



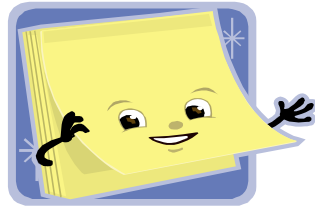
Little Johnny was at Sunday School.

This particular lesson, they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny Listened intently as they explained how Eve was created out of one of Adam's Ribs. Later in the week his mother noticed him lying as though he was ill, and Asked:

"Johnny what is the matter, are you feeling okay?"

Little Johnny responded: "I have a pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife!"





### **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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## A SHORT HISTORY OF JAPANESE POW'S DURING WORLD WAR 2

*Author: David Trist, WW2 Veteran of 58/59<sup>th</sup> Battalion;*

*Member St Marys RSL sub-Branch. 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019*

The treatment of the 140,000 Australian and other Allied soldiers captured by the Japanese during World War 2 is well known. Many of the Allied POWs died during their captivity. They were used by their captors in harsh conditions in mining and railroad building. Many died.

However, little has been published about the treatment of the Japanese who surrendered to the Allies at the end of WW2. About 1.6 million Japanese surrendered to the Chinese Nationalist and Communist forces and also the Soviet forces in August/September 1945. The Chinese Communist forces used some of the captured Japanese soldiers in their fight against the Chinese nationalist Government.

The Russian Soviets captured about 594,000 Japanese in 1945 and treated them very harshly. 60,000 of their Japanese POWs died in captivity. The last Japanese soldier was repatriated from Russia to Japan in 1990.

Until late 1946, the USA used 70,000 of the several millions of their surrendered Japanese soldiers at work in the Philippines, Okinawa and Central Pacific, dismantling and disposing of military facilities.

The British retained until late 1947, 113,000 of the 700,000 Japanese who surrendered to them in 1945 in Burma and Malaya. The British used some Japanese soldiers to support their actions with the Dutch and French against the nationalist uprisings against their colonial masters in Vietnam and Netherlands East Indies (Indonesia). 81,000 of the Japanese who surrendered, died before their final repatriation in late 1947.

In South West Pacific, about 300,000 Japanese were moved from New Guinea, Solomons, Nauru and other Pacific Islands to Rabaul.

In Bougainville about 20,000 surrendered Japanese were first congregated in the Fauro Islands and then moved to Rabaul.

War crimes trials were held in Rabaul (and other places). Firing squads executed the guilty war criminals.

Shipping was scarce and final repatriation was not effected until late 1946.

Australian troops used the POWs to clear Rabaul of military equipment and dispose of the thousands of tons of explosives into the sea. Japanese Naval vessels including destroyers and aircraft carriers were used to repatriate the POWs.

Australians organised a full scale race meeting in Rabaul on Australia Day in January 1946, using the Japanese officers' horses.







## 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:

Tuesday: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm  
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 Tuesday and 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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I told him that the odds of two serial killers being in the same car were extremely unlikely.  
He didn't even ask me to slow down before he jumped.





## ST MARY'S GOVERNOR KING DAY CLUB

Sponsored by St Marys RSL  
Sub-Branch  
"An RSL Service to the Community"



From February this year we have had a very busy schedule, we have had several entertainers including Chris Vineberg, John McQue and Ron Bromfield and Jerry. We have also had numerous guest speakers from Vital Call, Continence Foundation and also a solicitor and Lynne Garland from Guardian Funerals to name a few. We try to keep our Seniors informed of their rights etc.

We have also had several outings for meals, some of the places were Warragamba Dam and the Workers Club for lunch, the Penrith Rowing Club for a meal, Wine tasting and morning tea at Ebenezer. We also had a delicious dinner at St Marys RSL Club.

We have hired a coach to take us Birkinghead point for a shopping day at the end of July.


We have a very full calendar for the rest of 2019 and our members really enjoy the different meals we serve and mixture of entertainment and activities at a minimal cost to them.

We appreciated the club fixing the air conditioning as the hall is very comfortable for our members.

We would really love to have some new members and especially volunteers as we are really down in numbers.

Kind Regards

Gail James



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## REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ADF

.... this may surprise and shock you!

*Please, someone tell me this is just a GEE-UP designed to infuriate all those who have served or are serving.*

### Subject: Australian Defence Force Equality

There is no doubt Australia's defence capability is now considered a Soft Target !!!

Extract from the Australian Defence Force recruiting brochures - read the selection criteria for the '**Application**' and the '**Fitness test**' - and then think about what the sentence in red says.

Discover career opportunities in the Australian Defence Force

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You will be asked to provide your:

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- ◆ Job preference(s)
- ◆ Your gender



When applying you do not have to state your sex but can if you wish use the word 'trans' in area where this is required to be nominated. The definition of the word trans is as follows:

*"Trans is an umbrella term that includes, but is not limited to, the following identities: transgender, transsexual, a person of trans experience, gender queer, androgynous, third gender, agender, non-binary gender, two-spirit, and any other non-normative gender identity,"*

You will also be asked to do a fitness test as the Defence Force requires people to be fit for active service. All applicants will be treated equally.

- ◆ Take a fitness test

During the Pre-Entry Fitness Assessment you will need to show us you can:

- **Do push-ups:** (Navy: Male-15 Female-6, Army: Male-15 Female-8, Air Force: Male-10 Female-4 , (Trans - exempt)
- **Do sit-ups:** (Navy: Male 20, Female 5, Army: Male 45, Female 10, Air Force: Male 20 Female 10 (Trans - exempt)
- **Complete a beep test:** (Navy: Male Level 6.1 Female 4.3, Army: Male Level 7.5 Female 5.4, Air Force: Male Level 6.5 Female 4.3 (Trans - exempt)





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



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to all the advertisers that support this publication.

**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:	John Foeken	0409 329 688
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John Davison - Editor

# DAWN SERVICE - ANZAC DAY - ST MARY'S - 2019

