



Official Magazine of  
**WODEN VALLEY  
SUB-BRANCH R.S.L.**



# The SERVICEMAN

First Published in January 1962

WINTER EDITION

AUGUST 2016



12 Metres underground and hand carved into the Sandstone inside the  
*'Chambers of the Black Hand'* Opal mine in Lightning Ridge, NSW,  
along with hundreds of other carvings by local artist Ron Canlin.

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**Note:** Unless specifically stated otherwise, the experiences and opinions expressed in any article are those of the author and do not represent the official position of, or endorsement by the RSL, or by 'The Serviceman' as a journal. No responsibility is accepted by the RSL, the editor, or the publishers and printers, for the accuracy of information contained in this journal. The RSL is not liable for inaccuracy in any advertisement and does not accept responsibility for any claims made by advertisers. Any material considered misleading or inappropriate will be withheld at editorial discretion.

# The SERVICEMAN

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE WODEN VALLEY RSL SUB-BRANCH INC.  
RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA

**Editor:**  
**Bob Cremer**  
PO Box 415  
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## OFFICE BEARERS 2016-17

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**Receptionists: [Shared]:** Florence Sofield, Lynnda Liversey, Renee Mills

The Sub-Branch meets on the last Tuesday of each month except April and December at the Canberra Southern Cross Club, Corinna Street, Phillip at 7.00PM. Membership Subscription is due on January 1<sup>st</sup> annually and should be posted to PO Box 415 Woden ACT 2606.

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

*Bob Cremer*



Almost half-way through our 100<sup>th</sup> year of as the Returned and Services League of Australia. The 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Branch Congress having just concluded, following on from the National Congress held in Melbourne.

We have a new National President, Mr Rod White AM RFD and Mr Robert Dick, President of RSL Tasmania as the new Deputy President.

The battle of the Somme, 100 years on, Commemorations 50 years since the Battle of Long Tan and many others occurring during 2016.

At the ACT Congress on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2016, Life Memberships were awarded to AVM Mac Weller AM, President, Belconnen Sub-Branch, Mike Taylor, and myself. As usual I stood with Dave Mills, camera at the ready, prepared to take photos of the named recipients as announced by ACT RSL CEO James Davidson, and was incredible surprised when my name was called. It was the last thing expected but consider it a great honour to have been considered. Additionally, 50-Year Certificates were awarded to Murray James Nicholls and John Kevin Rice, and accepted by Gina Bowers, President of Gungahlin, to be awarded at a future date. A Certificate of Appreciation was also awarded to Ron Stacey, Belconnen Sub-Branch.

Just returned from a quick five day visit to Lightning Ridge, a place we had never been to before and to see what was there and maybe even to find a large, valuable opal. The countryside is stunning at the moment after all the rain and very green and the weather was good compared to what we were told was happening in Canberra. A visit to the 'Chambers of the Black Hand' opal mine to see an amazing display of sandstone carvings on all the walls and to check out the local area and the artesian bore baths - very hot. All very impressive although we were told to come again in the middle of Summer when the temperature is 50+ and see what you think.

A booklet from the Gilgandra RSL, and prepared and published by the local Museum and Historical Society about 'The Coo-ee March' from Gilgandra to Sydney should make an interesting article in a future edition.

*The Canberra Times 30/6/1996*  
**Public Notices**  
Person required to clean small officers  
Casual rates  
Ph: 015-008629

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Jim Gilchrist*



Since the last edition of *The Serviceman*, we have held our Sub-Branch AGM, and some of us have attended the Congresses and AGMs for RSL National and ACT Branch. As I said at our AGM, I feel privileged to be the president of our Sub-Branch with its long history of supporting the objects of the RSL, especially in the Woden Valley. I also look forward to meeting the challenges we will inevitably face in the coming years if we are to maintain the standards that former members and committees have set. I welcome back to the Board all but one of last year's directors and thank them for

their continued commitment, especially those who have taken on new roles. I also welcome Anthony John to the Board and look forward to hearing his views on how best we can continue to meet the needs of the Veteran Community as it continues to evolve. I iterate my thanks and those of my fellow directors to Wayne Delahoy who moved recently to the Albury Wodonga area to start the next phase of his life.

At the National level, we welcome a new President, Rod White from NSW, and the re-elected Deputy President, Robert Dick from Tasmania. One of the last achievements of the outgoing President, RADM Ken Doolan [Retd], was to steer a new National Constitution through the AGM. I believe this final effort was indicative of the strategic approach and foresight that Ken provided to the RSL Organisation during his tenure and will set the League well for the future.

With a series of excellent speakers already on the program for the Branch Congress, the Branch President, Peter Eveille, offered cameo appearances to others to round out what was an informative day. A highlight of the Congress, was the award of Life Membership to Bob Cremer and Mike Taylor, both of whom were recognised for many years of dedicated service to the Sub-Branch, and to the veteran and general communities.

During the past several months, the workloads in the VSC continued to grow in both the numbers and complexity of the cases. The E&A Team now has about 16 pension officers and advocates working to varying levels and with varying availability, albeit that some share their time with other ESOs. They have developed a close team that mentors and assists new volunteers develop their knowledge and skills in ways that will fit well with the new training and development regime that is due for full release later this year.

Similarly, the Community Support area continues to attract new clients from a range of sources and each with unique issues to be addressed. The two key tasks in this area are first; help clients access the appropriate support to meet their needs and to this end, we continue to work with Defence, Legacy, ACT and Federal Government providers, and civilian organisations; and second provide the basic welfare for which the RSL and the Sub-Branch is well known.

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These latter tasks include hospital visits and general assistance; there is also a need to broaden this range of capabilities to include other visit programs and provide a higher level of welfare support from trained volunteers, particularly as they link with the professional colleagues and organisations.

While the capabilities required to meet the growing range of services that could be provided by or through the VSC may seem daunting, I hope we can continue to meet the challenge, within the Sub-Branch and in a leadership role for the Branch as a whole. In all respects, Woden Valley Sub-Branch and others within the Branch will still be asked to provide basic support to our members but with the benefit of having the moral and practical support of the VSC to encourage them.

The VSC will continue to develop its governance and management skills, policies and practices to ensure its smooth transition to a separate entity in due course. We also have to find volunteers for the key leadership and support roles essential to meet the forecast requirements; and also liaise with Defence and other organisations to build the team and encourage optimal co-operation within the Veteran Community.

The Eddison Day Club continues to support a core group of senior members and others at the Irish Club each Friday. While the Club's members and volunteers continue to enjoy a wide range of activities and the camaraderie. There are plenty of opportunities for new volunteers to join and help those who have well and truly earned some respite. In this regard, we continue to liaise with Defence to see if we can attract some Service spouses to assist this excellent cause.

As I have noted in previous editions, if you haven't been to see the Day Club at work and play, I recommend you visit them and see whether or not you might be able to assist the present team of volunteers.

At a Sub-Branch level, we again supported and provided a range of activities relating to ANZAC Day. While these will be reported separately, I offer particular thanks and congratulations to those who arranged and supported these special events. At the ANZAC and Peace Ceremony, it was a pleasure to hear the New Zealand Deputy High Commissioner, Mr Llewellyn Roberts, address the group, and see how he related to the children, many of whom had participated in the Schools Essay Competition. Major General Michael Crane [Retd] entertained and informed us at the ANZAC Eve Dinner. As usual, the dinner provided a good lead into the morning service at the Yamba Club, and the dawn service and march at the AWM. A smaller than usual team of collectors did well during the ANZAC Appeal to provide much needed funds and promote the RSL to the general community.

In thanking our volunteers for their effort during the past several months, I again note the contribution the staff make on a daily basis. On several occasions during the past few months the staff rallied to successfully meet unexpected but urgent challenges and did so most willingly.

On a disappointing note, I advise that the efforts of Branch and ourselves to secure the funding to sustain the development of the VSC, the Sub-Branch and the Branch have thus far been unsuccessful.

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Clearly, this limits our options to secure the accommodation that will be required when the Yamba facility is demolished towards the end of next year.

Again, I thank the Executive and the Board for their efforts to maintain the momentum and provide the leadership the Sub-Branch needs to meet its objectives. The manner in which they continue to consider options, offer advice and implement plans in a dynamic environment is most welcome. I also thank the Branch Board for their continuing efforts as we continue to challenge some boundaries to optimise the support we are able to offer to our members and the Veteran Community as a whole.

In closing, I note with much sadness the recent passing of two of our long standing and much respected members, Mr Jan Szpunar and Mrs Thea Smith, both of whom reflect the success and spirit that is such a part of the Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch. On behalf of all members, I wish their families my deepest condolences at this sad time and offer my thanks for their contributions over many years.



### *FALL IN*

**A warm welcome is extended to the following new members.**

Terrence Ahearne, Brian Doherty, Keith Goodwin,  
Alexander Meiliunas, Ian Prior



Apart from all the others who attended on the day at the 2016 ANZAC & Peace Ceremony at Eddison Park were former Warrant Officers, ACT RSL President, Peter Eveille, Jack Aaron and Rev Mick O'Donnell.

ANZAC Day 2016, and at the 8.00AM Sub-Branch service, prior to the march, the following message was read by MLA Zed Seselja for and on behalf of the Prime Minister.



PRIME MINISTER

**MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER**

**ANZAC DAY 2016**

To all who have gathered to mark Anzac Day 2016 at the Woden Valley RSL Remembrance Ceremony, my best wishes for your commemorations.

On Anzac Day, we pause to remember all Australians who have served our nation in war and peace.

Over more than a century, almost a million men and women have answered the call to defend our nation and our freedom. More than 100,000 have given their lives, and many more have been wounded.

We acknowledge the pain and suffering they endured, the sacrifice of their families, and the lives of those who were lost.

We pay tribute to those who long ago forged the Anzac tradition, and to those who uphold it now.

The best way to honour the servicemen and women of past conflicts is to support our current Australian Defence Force and our veterans, as well as their families. All of them serve with the same values of mateship and sacrifice as their ANZAC forebears of 1915.

The courage and dedication of men and women prepared to risk their lives in the service of our liberty is an inspiration to us all.

Shortly after World War One, Lieutenant-General Sir John Monash said in a Christmas message to our returned troops: “You diggers have learnt during the war the value of comradeship, self-sacrifice, mutual trust between your leaders and yourselves, and how to labour in a common cause. These are lessons you have purchased dearly. It is up to you and me ... [to] never to forget these lessons.”

May we, in our turn, do all that we can to ensure their memory is always honoured.

Lest we forget.

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP  
Prime Minister of Australia

April 2016

## ***Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch Annual General Meeting 2016 Annual Report January - December 2015***

The highlight of 2015 for the Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch was the opening of its extended premises at the Yamba Sports Club on 1<sup>st</sup> April, by the Sub-Branch Patron, His Excellency, Mr Chris Seed, New Zealand High Commissioner to Australia, and the RSL National President, Rear Admiral Ken Doolan [Ret'd]. The Branch President, Mr Peter Eveille, assisted the two guests of honour with the formalities prior to joining about 60 members and guests to celebrate the occasion.

The new premises provide for the Sub-Branch's functional areas, including those that form the Veterans' Support Centre [VSC]. The expansion was made possible with the financial assistance of the Branch and the City of Canberra Sub-Branch without whose support the Sub-Branch could not have committed to the increased rental costs or the fit out of the facilities. In addition to some smaller donations from ACT Sub-Branches, ESOs and some private sources, James and Julie Morris provided office furniture that met many of the immediate needs. These developments provide a good base for the continued growth of the VSC as the main service delivery arm of the ACT Branch. They have been well used as the VSC's workload remains high. In thanking our principal donors, several Sub-Branch volunteers contributed many hours to complete the refurbishment and fit out. The Canberra Southern Cross Club confirmed its long term association with the Sub-Branch as it extended the lease at favourable terms.

The main service delivery focus to the Veteran Community is provided by the Entitlements and Advocacy [E&A] team that attracted more than 300 new clients during the year. With several new members, and the provision of training and development for its members, 10-12 pension officers and advocates provided a solid core of support throughout the year. Ross Thomas continued to guide and oversee the team, while supporting clients as its principal advocate.

The Community Support Coordinator, Judy Friend, confirmed good relationships within the broad community support sector that will serve our members and others in this second core area. Concurrently, attempts to strengthen the volunteer rosters that provide the range of general welfare support for which the Sub-Branch is well met with mixed success. The key elements of these services include hospital visits, RSL funeral tributes, and an embryonic phone-a-friend and a home visit program all of which offer opportunities for members and others to volunteer. In noting some synergies within the Branch and other ESOs, the VSC continued to work and liaise with the VSC Belconnen that is the service delivery arm of the VV&VF, Page; and with Legacy, ACT. These teams discuss issues of relevance to pension officers and advocates and share both information and clients. The Sub-Branch tested its training capabilities by hosting several DVA sponsored courses conducted through the Training and Information Program [TIP].

The Community Engagement and Ceremonial element also had a busy year, one of the highlights of which was the ANZAC and Peace Ceremony, and its associated Essay competition. While the ceremony was washed out for what is believed to be only the second time in some 24 years, the quality of essays provided by children from local primary schools was of a very high standard.

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As part of the commemoration of the centenary of World War I, the Sub-Branch assisted two candidates for the *ANZAC Centenary Local Grants Program*. Applications were submitted to a committee chaired by the Member for Canberra, Gai Brodtmann, and included a book detailing Canberra's War Memorials by Chris Jobson, and the enhancement of a memorial garden on Simpson's Hill, and Gilmore and Chisholm schools that started in 1988 and is the fore-runner to the ANZAC and Peace Ceremony now conducted at Eddison Park.

The Sub-Branch conducted three *OGM Dinners* during the year, each with an interesting speaker and a good attendance by members and their guests. These functions are based on cost-recovery and are available to all members of the ACT RSL, others in the Veteran Community and their guests. They provide excellent opportunities for social interaction and to introduce people to the RSL. Attendees at the ANZAC Eve Dinner were impressed by Mercedes Bowers and Peter Alliott, the winners of the Chief Minister's 2014 Gallipoli Prize. These two college students read their entries to a small but enthralled audience that included their parents. The Sub-Branch Christmas party was another social success that saw Jack Aaron at his entrepreneurial and entertaining best.

From a financial perspective, ACT Branch and the Sub-Branch continued to work closely to secure funding to sustain the VSC into the future. While these attempts have yet to bear fruit, work will continue into the new year. In the meantime, the Sub-Branch drew down another \$150,000 from its Asset Management Fund [AMF] to provide the bulk of the financial support required. As the AMF and the Branch funds have finite limits, the future of the VSC and its potential success, depends very much on the Branch and Sub-Branch attracting substantial, sustainable financial support.

The Eddison Day Club continued to support our older members and others from the general community. Some 40-50 clients attended the Day Club each week and were supported regularly by about 12-15 volunteers. While the Club continues to provide an excellent service, it will require new blood if it is to operate at its present rate. Similarly, while Bob Cremer produced four quality editions of *The Serviceman*, he is looking for some assistance, especially as he hopes to retire gracefully from this position.

Significant visitors through the year included the Governor-General, Sir Peter Cosgrove and Lady Cosgrove, who mingled with some of our volunteers at a morning tea in November; the Principal Member of the Veterans' Review Board, Doug Humphreys, and the Registrar of the VRB, Katrina Harry, briefed one of the E&A meetings; and the Deputy President of the Repatriation Commission, Craig Orme dropped in on several occasions. At the 2015 Annual Branch Congress, Peter Dinham was awarded *Life Membership* of RSL in recognition of his service to the Sub-Branch and the National Organisation. Brooke Thorpe and Judy Webster were both awarded Certificates of Appreciation for their work as members of the Sub-Branch Executive. Having worked with us in various roles for some four years, Samar Thompson finished in December and moved with her young family to Far North Queensland in January. Andrew Properjohn cemented his position as the administrative assistant in the E&A Team, and we welcomed Florence Sofield and Lynnda Livesey to the shared role of receptionist in September.

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In closing the report, I thank the members of the Sub-Branch Executive and our Board of Management for their efforts and patience in planning, implementing and doing much of the work outlined in this report. I also acknowledge the support that ACT Branch and some Sub-Branches provided to us during the past 12 months.

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## ***CANBERRA HONOURS VIETNAM VETERANS' PROGRAM OF EVENTS AUGUST 16<sup>TH</sup> - 19<sup>TH</sup> 2016***

The ACT and Districts Vietnam Veterans have collaborated with the Federal and ACT Governments, Australian War Memorial (AWM), Ainslie Football Club and Southern Cross Club to honour Vietnam Veterans on this the *50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan* with a program of events over the period August 16-19 2016.



The program of events include continual display of images from the Vietnam War projected onto the façades of the AWM with names and ages of the 521 KIA from the Battle of Long Tan.

***Wed 17<sup>th</sup> - 4.00PM - AWM HALL OF MEMORY*** - John Schumann singing “I was only 19”.

***Wed 17<sup>th</sup> - 4.55PM - AWM ‘LAST POST CEREMONY’*** - Story of Private Ken Gant will be read with event supported by the Federation Guard.

***Wed 17<sup>th</sup> - 6.30PM - RECEPTION*** in Great Hall Parliament House. The Australian Government will be issuing invitations to this event. If you wish to attend, an expression of interest is required stating name, address, email, and phone contacts. Limited invitations available so get in early by emailing: [vietvetsday@gmail.com](mailto:vietvetsday@gmail.com) with details.

***Thu 18<sup>th</sup> - 5.30AM - AWM VIETNAM VALE*** - Commemorative Area will open and the names of the 521 names on the Vietnam War Roll of Honour will be read. Visitors may like to place a poppy on the Roll of Honour.

***Thu 18<sup>th</sup> - 7.00AM - AWM - STAND-TO SERVICE*** - Stone of Remembrance.

***Thu 18<sup>th</sup> - 7.30AM - BREAKFAST IN THE PARK - Reid Oval*** - Courtesy ACT Government and Lions Club.

***Thu 18<sup>th</sup> - 10.00AM - VIETNAM VETERANS’ REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE*** - Vietnam Memorial on ANZAC Parade. Hosted by ACT and Districts Vietnam Veterans. The service will include a flyover of familiar aircraft. Seats must be taken by **9.30AM** ready for official arrivals.

***Thu 18<sup>th</sup> - 12.00PM - CAMERADERIE AFTERNOON*** - Ainslie Football Club.

***Thu 18<sup>th</sup> - 4.55PM - AWM ‘LAST POST CEREMONY’*** - Story of Lieutenant Gordon Sharp.

***Fri 19<sup>th</sup> - 12.00PM-3.00PM - ‘MUSIC BY THE LAKE’*** - On the lawns at Southern Cross Yacht Club. Wind down with local band ‘Old 45’ playing Vietnam era rock’n roll music. Food and drinks available. Marquee will be available if weather is inclement.

For updated and further information see website: [www.vvaa.org.au](http://www.vvaa.org.au)

## *Canberra Hospital ANZAC Commemoration Wed 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 Veterans' Remembrance Garden*

A Remembrance Service was held at the Canberra hospital with MC Ron Sheargold, Requiem by Sub-Branch President, Jim Gilchrist, ANZAC Address by His Excellency, Mr Paul Maddison, High Commissioner of Canada, and The Ode by Jack Davis.



***Private Barry Francis Haworth***  
***Service No. 1/2259***  
***2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment***  
***Operational Area: Korea - 1950-1953***  
***Killed in Action - 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1953***  
***Buried - United Nations Cemetery, Busan, Korea***

***A Story by his Brother - James Haworth on a visit to  
Canberra to participate in the 'LAST POST' Ceremony  
at the Australian War Memorial.***



A nephew recently found out that the Australian War Memorial had planned to do a **'LAST POST'** Memorial Service to honour my young brother, Barry, who had been killed in Korea. When the family heard of this they thought it would be a good idea if I attended the service as the last remaining sibling. They approached the Australian War Memorial for details, also contacting the local RSL and the RSL in Canberra. The Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch was very helpful arranging suitable accommodation as I am classified as slightly handicapped.

My daughters, Colleen and Louise arranged with QANTAS for special consideration in boarding and for a wheelchair that could be taken on the plane. My doctor certified me fit to travel, but with a companion carer, and as my daughter Colleen, a Registered Nurse, was able to fill in. The morning of our departure started with an early 6.00AM start but I was still asleep when they arrived. However, with a bit of scrambling we got to the airport on time, checked in and waited for our departure from Brisbane. An uneventful flight had us arriving in a much cooler Canberra where my daughter Louise had hired a car and drove us to the Great Western Tall Trees Motel in Ainslie, not far from the AWM. On Sunday we went to the Memorial where we were greeted by the very friendly and helpful staff. At the entrance they had an enlarged photo of Barry, enlarged from a photo that he had sent home to our mother, and a placard with details of the **'LAST POST'** Ceremony.

Other relatives, a brother-in-law, his wife and sons, a couple of cousins and a third daughter Karen were also there. The RSL had prepared several wreaths for us to lay during the ceremony. With time until the ceremony we had a look at the amazing displays in the Memorial. I had been to the Memorial a few years previously but there were a lot of changes to see including memotoes from the more recent actions. At about five, we again gathered in the hall where we were briefed on the protocol to be followed during the ceremony and moved down to the 'Pool of Reflection' where the photo of Barry was set up. An attendant pushed my chair up and down ramps placed on the steps. I was positioned to the left of the pool with the remainder of the family at the bottom of a small flight of steps. The ceremony was streamed over the internet. On the dais at the far end of the pool a spokesperson gave a summary of what was about to happen and spoke of Barry's life and death, and coincidentally it was the anniversary of his death. With the crowd respectfully quiet, a piper played while we laid our wreaths, me supported by my daughters.

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With our wreaths laid we returned to our position near the pool as other family members laid their wreaths. An Army Officer recited the ODE. The ‘**LAST POST**’ was sounded followed by a couple of minutes of sombre reflection. This was the final ceremony of the day and very tastefully performed. The crowd then dispersed.

We returned to our motel where we relaxed and by the grace of mobile phones discovered that other family members, who had not been able to attend had watched the ceremony via the internet - very pleasing. On Monday we returned to Canberra airport where QANTAS staff were again very helpful and wheeled me directly onto the plane. On arrival in Brisbane I was wheeled to the lower level where we regained our luggage and continued home, and although very tired, but very grateful and thankful for a wonderful family and some very helpful officials.



Thank you all for **A FITTING CLOSURE** and to a special knowledge that I had carried for years.

### ***Seymour Baths*** *Les Cook*

Seymour can be a very cold place in winter. The old camps, relics of the first war, were fairly primitive and it was apparent that little attention was paid at that time to the need for people to wash. On the other hand, perhaps they were a much tougher race of people than us.

Those of us who had enlisted from the Melbourne area were given leave to go home every second weekend, which meant that we took this opportunity to have a bath. I don't know how the country people got on. After a few weeks of this, the CO, taking the high moral ground befitting his august position, pointed out the importance of hygiene and the error of our ways. Cleanliness, he said, was next to Godliness, and while he might not be able to do much about the latter he certainly could do something about cleanliness. To this end, there would be a compulsory bath parade each week for the rank and file. So that this would not interfere with training, it would be held after the evening meal. Bath parades were organised by Companies, each comprising about one hundred men. The facilities consisted of several (perhaps ten) galvanised iron tubs about 40 cm diameter and 20 cm deep each containing about 6 litres of water. These were lined up in a soldierly fashion equi-spaced on the ground in the open with hot water provided from Soyer stoves at the kitchen.

We paraded dressed only in overcoats and boots (unlaced) and carrying a cake of soap and towel. As each detail stepped forward to the tubs the men removed their coats and boots and stood in the tubs to wash themselves. The operation was supervised by an officer who held a hurricane lamp after dark so that he could see that it was being done properly. It was freezing! The strong wind blew the soap dry on the top half of the body before one had time to rinse it off. I well remember the relief at getting back into my overcoat at the end. I cannot remember how long this went on, but it wasn't very long because a large number ended up in hospital with flu or bad colds and this had an even more detrimental effect on the training schedule.

## *Chief Minister's Award Ceremony*

On the 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2016 at a presentation at the Canberra Hellenic Club in Phillip, awards were presented to various Canberra individuals and organisations.

Chief Minister Andrew Barr MLA, announced that Narelle Hargreaves OAM is the 2016 Canberra Citizen of the Year for her achievements working with children, as a principal in ACT schools and as Director of Schools and International Education for over a decade.

The Minister also recognised the commitment of many individuals and organisations in the ACT Community who have made positive long-term changes to the city with the presentation of the Canberra Gold Awards.

The Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch was awarded a Chief Minister's Canberra Gold Award in recognition of their 50 years in the ACT.

A morning tea followed the official presentations. The event was attended by Sub-Branch members with President, Jim Gilchrist.



Chief Minister's

# Canberra Gold Award

## 50 Years in the ACT

*presented to*

### Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch

*in recognition of 50 years  
in our community.*



*Andrew Barr*

Andrew Barr MLA  
ACT Chief Minister



11 March 2016

## *The Molonglo Mystery*

*Extract of a review of a book with the above title, by local author  
Alan Foskett, published in the Canberra Times in July 2006.*

In early 1918, the war-weary citizens of Queanbeyan couldn't help noticing a small army of workmen arriving to erect what looked like a vast barracks town in what was then called Federal Capital Territory. For all the racket the men generated, they were supposedly working in secret. This inspired *The Queanbeyan Age* to dub their worksite '*The Molonglo Mystery*,' giving us the intriguing title of this new work of local history.

What they were building on the site of present day Fyshwick was Canberra's first big residential project, the Molonglo Camp, originally constructed for civilian internees in World War I and later a workers' settlement for early builders of our city and one of several ghost towns that were built over as post-war Canberra began to sprawl.

It started with a request from the British Government to intern about 3,000 German and Austrian civilians, mostly residents of China caught by Peking's rather nominal 1917 entry into the war. However, German threats of reprisals forced a change of plan. By then the camp had already been built, with 40 prefabricated tenement blocks fanning out about where Wollongong and Kembla Sreets now are, and a watchtower to remind everyone that this wasn't a holiday facility. So it was instead used, for less than a year from 1918-19 by about 200 internees transferred from Berrima and Bourke. Most had originally been scooped up from British and German colonies in Asia and the Pacific, and a few naturalised British citizens with Australian-born spouses.

The arrival of the first inmates by train in May 1918 attracted a crowd of curious locals. Internees left detailed accounts that help reassure that Molonglo wasn't a gulag, despite being unashamedly called a concentration camp, under the stewardship of Brigadier-General Reginald Spencer Browne, supported by a *Dad's Army-style guard*. Apparently they were a good deal more relaxed than their counterparts at the bigger, rougher Holsworthy internment camp near Sydney. When the Swiss Consul toured the facility, he reported electric power, good water, a school and even an orchestra, and was asked by internees to pull strings to prevent their transfer elsewhere. It even appears that they were allowed to wander, and occasionally shopped in the big smoke of Queanbeyan.

After the war more than half the buildings were removed for use elsewhere, but as Canberra finally started to grow in earnest the rest were duly transformed into temporary accommodation for construction workers and their families. Despite once being called 'jerry-built man holders', they were considered a big improvement on the tents earlier workers put up with. By 1926 Molonglo had nearly 800 residents, making it the biggest population centre in the territory. It boasted the second biggest school (after Telopea Park) and the first police station. The only physical traces today are the remains of a reservoir and a line of pine trees planted along Tennant Steet by Molonglo schoolchildren for Arbor Day.

Alan Foskett seems to have packed every available skerrick of information on the Molonglo camp into this nicely designed book.

***Veterans and Officials from the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste visit the Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch Veterans' Support Centre***

On Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016, a group of Veterans and officials from Timor-Leste visited the Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch Veterans' Support Centre for discussions regarding the setting up of a similar support service for veterans in Timor-Leste. The delegation of Snr Cesar dos Santos da Silva, Snr Joao de Jesus Soares Varela, Snr Inocenciu F C de Gama, Snr Francisco Martins, Ms Luisa Alves sar Mento and Mrs Rosa Baptista Cabral, pictured with the Sub-Branch President, Jim Gilchrist and RSL ACT Executive Officer, James Davidson.



## ***Remembering Brigadier Bill Rolfe AO (Retd)***

*The Hon Dan Tehan MP*

*Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC*

*Minister for Defence Materiel*

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Dan Tehan, on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2016, paid tribute to a distinguished Australian, Brigadier Bill Rolfe AO (Retd), who had died after a long illness.

"I offer my sincere condolences to Brigadier Rolfe's family as they mourn the loss of a man who served our nation and the community, particularly the ex-service community, with distinction," Minister Tehan said.

"Brigadier Rolfe was a Royal Military College Duntroon graduate who served as a platoon commander with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion in South Vietnam and was mentioned in dispatches for his service. During operations in Vietnam, he suffered injuries that led to the amputation of both legs below the knee. However, testament to his determination, Brigadier Rolfe overcame this setback, gaining a law degree from the Australian National University and continuing his military career in a variety of legal officer positions."

In 1982, Brigadier Rolfe was the first Australian officer to attend the Graduate Course at The Judge Advocate General's School U.S. Army, in Charlottesville, Virginia. He was then appointed Director of Army Legal Services in 1986 and Director General of Defence Force Legal Services in 1989.

Brigadier Rolfe retired from the Australian Defence Force in 1992, when he joined the National Security Branch of the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Legal Practice.

In 1997, he was appointed as head of the Veterans' Review Board, an independent statutory tribunal responsible for review of Repatriation Commission decisions on entitlement to, and assessment of, disability pensions. He resigned in 2007 to become Commissioner of the Repatriation Commission and a Member of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, retiring in July 2010. Brigadier Rolfe was appointed as an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours List in 2008 for services to veterans.

The Minister said Brigadier Rolfe, a highly respected member of Australia's ex-service community, was involved with the Department of Veterans' Affairs until his death, most recently in relation to advocacy review work.

"As a result of this work, the creation of a new Advocacy Training and Development Program was endorsed by the ex-service community and the Government in late 2015," Minister Tehan said. "Brigadier Rolfe retired as President of Legacy Canberra on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016 due to his ill health. During this sad time, my deepest sympathies are with Brigadier Rolfe's widow, Joan Susanne, to whom he was married for more than 40 years, and their three children."

## *2016 - ANZAC & Peace Ceremony at Eddison Park*

Favourable weather on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April enabled us to conduct a very successful Combined Schools ANZAC and Peace Ceremony.



This very popular Ceremony was well attended on the day with the ACT Combined Schools Band, The Light Horse Contingent, Sub-Branch President, Jim Gilchrist with Mrs Pam Yonge and her daughter, Sue, and Guest Speaker, New Zealand Deputy High Commissioner, Mr Llewellyn Roberts. On the dais MC Mike Taylor, Ms Meredith Whitten, Deputy Director-General of the ACT Education Directorate, President Jim Gilchrist and Essay Competition winners, Harrison Biddell, Josephine Connors, Josephine Dendrinis and Haley Bissett at the presentation ceremony as well as hundreds of local school children.



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***ANZAC & Peace Schools Ceremony Essay Competition  
Winning Essay — 2016***

***Harrison Biddell - St's Peter and Paul Primary School - 5/6 White***

***The Australian Home Front in the World Wars -  
How did the Nation cope?***

My Great Grandmother - Betty Stubbs passed away on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2016, she was ninety years old. Affectionally known as Beppy, at the start of World War II she was a young teenager. Through talking with 'Beppy' over the years her family came to understand how she lived her life during this War. These are some of the stories she told us.

Beppy was one of fourteen children - she had nine brothers, six of which were called away to war, whilst the remaining three and five sisters stayed back in their home town of Cowra. Beppy's family were not unfamiliar with separation as before the war, sometimes her parents would be forced to leave their children and travel to find work. However, with the older brothers gone, the simple hard working life they led suddenly became more challenging.

Although Australians did not suffer the miseries like many other countries did during WWII, they did face years of fear, grief and shortages. In 1942, rationing was introduced for food and clothing. Even though it was difficult, rationing was fully supported because it applied to everyone equally. In addition everyone understood that Australian troops overseas had to be a priority to receive food from Australia.

Rationing was not the only change at home, many men left their jobs to join the military which led to many vacancies. Women young and old took charge and stepped into both existing and new roles. They drove trucks, made uniforms and weapons and helped to build military assets. They also stepped into farming jobs in order to keep up the food supply of Australia. Many men and women volunteered with the Red Cross and many worked to build up border defences. At the same time, the government introduced war loans to raise money for the war effort and even though money was short everyone supported it. Children worked hard every day too, and helped to salvage and recycle anything they could find.

Beppy would say that life was very tough but Australians were tougher!

Everyone banded together to support each other and the troops. It didn't matter if you were a man, a woman, or a child at home - you were an Australian and you worked, gave and went without for the cause.

I am so proud of my Great Grandmother and so thankful for the courage of that generation both at home and away - they are all Hero's!



## LEST WE FORGET

**“The price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance”**

*“They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning  
We will remember them.”*



Francis Pascoe, Albert Steele, Jan Szpunar,  
Ronald Mertin, Thea Smith

**Westfield**

**2016 POPPY  
DAY APPEAL**



**VOLUNTEER SELLERS ARE NEEDED AT  
WODEN PLAZA AND COOLEMAN COURT  
from Mon 7<sup>th</sup> to Fri 11<sup>th</sup> November.**

We seek volunteers, members and/or their family, who can give a few hours of their time to assist in this worthy cause. Please leave your name and contact details at the Sub-Branch office, phone: 6285 1931, or email: [admin@rslwoden.org.au](mailto:admin@rslwoden.org.au).

Our pool of volunteers is dwindling and we would greatly appreciate any additional assistance in either of the above centres during the periods indicated above.



***ANZAC & Peace Ceremony  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place Essay Competition***

*Josephine Connors - St Bede's Public School*

***The Australian Home Front in the World Wars  
How did the Nation cope?***

During World War II, Australian soldiers on the frontline left many family members behind on the home front. I spoke to my grandparents about how those at home coped while loved ones were away fighting the war.

My grandmother remembered that it was hard to be left in Australia because communications was very difficult. Her father was a prisoner in Changi, but for many months nobody knew if he was even alive. It was a joyous day when his name appeared on the list of prisoners. The letters sent to, and received from him were all heavily censored, delayed and even lost. Many men like him would not, or could not, talk about the awful war. These men were often very sad when they came home because of the terrible things they had seen. Their wives and children had to work hard to love them and support them back to mental and physical health.

Food back home was scarce. Ration 'tickets' were issued and had to be presented when trying to buy food staples such as butter, eggs and flour. Often there was none available. Some farmers were not allowed to 'join up' because they were needed at home to produce food for the people in Australia and also to help feed people in war-torn Europe who were starving. My grandmother's husband Obi remembers as a young boy taking food parcels containing flour and seeds in calico bags and posting them to his relatives overseas.

Pop's dad and Obi's dad worked in the mines and so they were also not allowed to enlist because mining, like farming, was a 'protected industry'. The coal, steel, zinc and copper were essential to maintain industry and help build ships, planes and other equipment needed for the Australian soldiers. My other great grandfather was an Anglican priest and therefore refused to go to war to fight because he did not believe in killing people, a 'conscientious objector'. Such men on the home front sometimes had a hard time in Australian communities where most families were losing men on the front line.

The mothers and sisters left at home had to work in factories, drive trucks, and take up many of the jobs the men used to do, keeping many industries and businesses going.

The resilience of those on the home front helped the Allies to win the war and also changed Australian society forever.

*ANZAC & Peace Ceremony  
Equal 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Essay Competition*

*The Australian home front in World War II*

*Josephine Dendrinis - Year 5 Holy Trinity*

The home front, in World War II was a very hard time for our nation. To help us cope, the government re-introduced some of the rules from World War I. They were rationing and censoring. The role of women changed significantly and many families were separated by conscription.

The Australian government re-established rationing in 1942 for two reasons. One, to make sure there was enough produce to go round. Secondly to help Australians save money. These savings were beneficial to our country. The items that you would have found on your rations card were clothing, tea, meat, butter, sugar and eggs. Furthermore, private cars were cut back to 2,000 miles per year. Interestingly, even though people didn't like being restricted by rationing it was found to have health benefits.

Censorship was a crucial addition to protect Australia's home front. The government did this to stop sensitive information about the war getting back to the enemy countries, like Germany or Japan. In addition they didn't want to affect the Australians by telling them if our army wasn't going so well or getting their hopes up too high if we were. Most significantly the government was trying to have as little effect on the community as possible.

The biggest change that came with the home front was the role of women. At first the community, especially men, weren't sure of the women doing traditional male jobs but soon a majority of women were working. Women showed their work in four different ways - voluntary work, Defence Forces, farming and employment. Remember that not all women wanted to change. So to help promote them, there were lots of posters saying things like 'a vital war job .. a healthy open air life', 'We could do it with a thousand more like you..' All this meant that mums weren't home with the children, so some kids stayed at home or with grandparents, while others would go to work with their mother. Women made a big difference to the home front and afterwards everyone thought differently about women and especially their capabilities.

Having conscription introduced had one of the biggest effects on the home front out of everything. Families were anxious and scared that the beloved men of the household would be sent away. Unlike choosing to go to war if your name got selected you had to go, and if you didn't you would go to jail for the period of the war. So either way you would not be with your family.

Overall, the home front would have been a hard time for families not knowing if your dad would be taken to war or having friends leave. Being unsure of the truth about how the war was going and not having freedom over what you ate. The war resulted in great changes to women which has influenced the way we live today. During this essay, I have tried to imagine what it would have been like on the Australian home front.

***ANZAC & Peace Ceremony  
Equal 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Essay Competition***

***The Australian Home Front in the World Wars  
How Did the Nation Cope?***

*Haley Bissett  
Years 5/6 Chapman Primary School*

In both of the World Wars it wasn't just the soldiers fighting abroad who served Australia with courage and bravery. The Australians left at home did everything they could to help our country.

When World War I broke out, a lot of men were sent halfway around the world to fight in the war without any certainty of ever coming home. The women, children and men, mostly weaker and older, who remained in Australia, were left with the job of starting and running factories to supply clothes, weapons and ammunition for the soldiers in the Great War.

One of the many consequences of war is that a lot of money that would otherwise be spent on services goes towards military equipment and supplies. Not only did the troops fighting across the seas have small rations of food and water, but so did the Australians on the home front.

During World War II, most people in Australia received ration booklets full of coupons entitling them to a small amount of food, clothes and other everyday items. The public thought well of this idea because everyone got equal rations. It was fair.

Both of the World Wars were influential times for women. Most of the men being away meant more opportunities for employment. Up until the First World War, many women could only work as maids and nannies to earn their living. Opportunities to work in industrial environments helped open doors to women's lives being about more than domestic service.

During the wars, the Government asked people to be as self-sufficient as they could. They started farming animals and crops to help feed their families and communities while a lot of taxes were going to supplies for the troops.

The two World Wars were very difficult times, but the nation coped. It had to. Australians who didn't fight did what they could to help the war effort while still trying to live their everyday lives.

## *The Gallipoli VC Rest Area — Holbrook NSW*

*Faye Powell*

Next time you are driving south on the Hume Highway be sure you pull into Holbrook for a ‘*Revive & Survive*’ break and to visit the new Gallipoli VC Memorial Rest Area. Holbrook is already known for its land-locked submarine, HMAS Otway, and the Gallipoli VC memorial was opened in April 2014 to mark the WWI Centenary and a century of Australian submarines.



The illustrated panels tell the story of the 9 Australians awarded the VC at Gallipoli - Albert Jacka, Hugo Throssell, Alfred Shout, Frederick Tubb, Alexander Burton, William Dunstan John Hamilton, Leonard Keyser and William Symons. In addition the Memorial also honours Commander Norman Holbrook, the world’s first submariner to win the Victoria Cross and after whom the town was renamed in 1915.

Hugo Throssell landed at Gallipoli on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1915. He first saw action in the desperate Battle of the Nek during a postponed attempt by British and ANZAC troops to widen the strip of foreshore between the two bridgeheads at Anzac and Suvla by capturing the hills near Anafarta. Hill 60, a low knoll, lay about half a mile from the beach.

Hampered by confusion and lack of communication between the various flanks, the battle had been raging for a week with heavy losses.

*“On 29-30 August 1915, at Kaiakij Aghala (Hill 60), Second Lieutenant Throssell, although severely wounded, refused to leave his post during a counter-attack or to obtain medical assistance until all danger was passed, when he had his wounds dressed and returned to the firing line until ordered out of action by the Medical Officer. By his personal courage and example he kept up the spirits of his party and was largely instrumental in saving the situation at a critical period”.*

Whilst recuperating in London he was introduced to Katharine Susannah Prichard, an Australian journalist who had recently won a significant novel competition and would go on to be a famous author and socialist. He eventually returned to active service, rejoining the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse in the Middle East where he fought in a number of engagements and achieved the rank of Captain. He returned home in 1918 and in 1919 married Prichard.

Throssell was an outspoken opponent of war and claimed that the suffering he had seen had made him a socialist. His stance on the futility of war outraged many people, especially as they were coming from a national war hero and son of a respected and conservative former premier. His very public political opinions badly damaged his employment prospects and he fell deeply into debt. On 19<sup>th</sup> November 1933, he killed himself while his wife was on a trip to the Soviet Union. In 1983, his son Ric Throssell presented Hugo’s Victoria Cross to People for Nuclear Disarmament. The Returned and Services League of Australia bought the medal and presented it to the Australian War Memorial where it is on display.

## *Centenary of ANZAC Celebrations World War I Nurses Project*

*Mike Taylor*

As part of the Centenary of ANZAC celebrations, Mac Weller AM, President of the Belconnen Sub-Branch, undertook research into nurses from the Canberra region who served overseas during World War I. The result was a very large frame containing four photos and an accompanying second frame with short biographies of the six nurses identified. These are now on a Remembrance Wall at Calvary Hospital, Belconnen.

Mac Weller kindly gave the Woden Valley Sub-Branch the above details and a set was produced for the Veterans' Lounge at the Canberra Hospital. The photo taken at the unveiling shows Mike Taylor, the Project Coordinator, with Betty Mills, a former Lieutenant Nurse in Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps during the Malaysian Crisis.

In conjunction with the Canberra Hospital's annual Nursing and Midwifery Week, the Nurses Project was unveiled in the Veterans' Lounge on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016 by ACT Health Chief Nurse, Mrs Veronica Croome, and Sub-Branch President, Mr Jim Gilchrist.



# Canberra Southern Cross Club



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For the information of members and guests

## *ANZAC Eve Dinner 2016*

A pleasant evening for our traditional ANZAC Eve Dinner. Guest speaker Major General Michael Crane DSC & Bar, AM spoke of the changes he has observed during his service career. Jack Aaron once again performed at his usual best as the Master of Ceremonies for the evening formalities.



Attending guests enjoyed the evening and dinner. This is usually an early night with the anticipated early start the next day for the ANZAC Day Dawn Service and commemorations.



## ***Day Club Report.***

*Peter Sutton - Co-ordinator - Eddison Day Club*

We are still averaging around 40-55 members each week although the weather has been indifferent at times. As you can see we have a wide and varied range of entertainment for the Club, mainly due to the efforts of Ms Julie Cronin and her ever expanding number of contacts. She has worked very hard to arrange topical, varied and interesting entertainment.

Since the last report for the first edition of *The Serviceman* earlier this year, we have had some regulars and new entertainers and speakers give their time freely to attend.

At our 12<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party on 5<sup>th</sup> February, the 'Young at Heart' singers presented many songs that members remembered. The next week a Valentine's Day theme, where members were paired off with people they did not know very well and spoke of subjects that were dear to them. Ms Kath Holtzapffel from the National Botanic Gardens came along the next week to tell us of the new gardens being established. Next Mr Graeme and Mrs Joy Rickert gave a presentation of their travels to Canada. In early March, Mr Geoff and Mrs Jean Roberts along with Mrs Sue Faulkner sang Austrian, Swiss as well as songs sung in English.

On 14<sup>th</sup> March the Governor-General, Sir Peter Cosgrove and Lady Cosgrove attended, although it was pouring rain. Sir Peter spoke of his role and challenges of his new position after 40 years in the military. He was gracious enough to present long-service pins to four of our volunteers. We had an Easter Hat Parade the following week and, as Good Friday was the next Friday and consequently no Day Club.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April, one of our regular variety groups, 'Connections' dressed up and sang some standards as well as modern songs. Mr Alan Foskett spoke the following week about Canberra's early days, post 1913. He was followed by Mr Ian Meikle from the free newspaper, the 'City News', who spoke of the challenges of publishing in the ACT. An ANZAC theme the following week had two volunteers at the Club read the four winning essays from the competition run in conjunction with the ANZAC and Peace Ceremony held earlier in the month. The following week Ms Julie Chater spoke of 'My Vision - A World Powered by Renewable energy'. The next week a Mother's Day theme where members brought along photographs of their mothers and spoke of the memories and the effect of their mothers on their lives.

The following week the 'Canberra Celtic Choir' came to sing traditional songs. On 20<sup>th</sup> May Graeme and Joy Rickert returned to complete their talk on their trip through the Canadian Rockies. Mr Garry Tongs came the next week to speak of his work with the 'Kokoda Foundation'. On 3<sup>rd</sup> June, Mr John Hall came and sang popular songs to his own guitar accompaniment. The next week was a Queen's Birthday celebration with a talk on fire safety by ACT Fire and Rescue. On 17<sup>th</sup> June, our regular Sing-along artist, Mrs Liz Lumb came to play popular songs that allowed members to sing along, and on 24<sup>th</sup> June, we had another variety group, 'Kebilou' entertain us with traditional and popular music and song. As you can see, we have had a wonderful range of visitors so far this year and most Fridays are taken up for the rest of the year. >>>

We continue to try and attract new members and especially volunteers to the Day Club. We meet each Friday, between 10.00AM and 2.00PM at the Irish Club in Parkinson Street, Weston. The cost is \$11.00, for morning tea, a cooked lunch and a ticket in the raffle.

If you, or anyone you know might be interested, then come along. You or they can stay for while, check us out and hopefully join us, especially if you would like some company and interaction with others. Members or volunteers do not have to have any connection with the Services. Call the Sub-Branch on 6285 1931 for details if you would like to become involved.

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### *Battle of the Somme*

At a ceremony at the Thiepval Memorial, near the battlefields of the Somme, Prince Harry read the poem, *'Before Action'* by Lieutenant William Noel Hodgson, MC. Lieutenant Noel Hodgson and the men of the 9<sup>th</sup> Devons were to attack the German Front Line at Mametz on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. Lieutenant Hodgson was killed several days later.

By all the glories of the day  
And the cool evening's benison  
By that last sunset touch that lay  
Upon the hills when day was done,  
By beauty lavishly outpoured  
And blessings carelessly received,  
By all the days that I have lived  
Make me a soldier, Lord.

By all of all man's hopes and fears  
And all the wonders poets sing,  
The laughter of unclouded years,  
And every sad and lovely thing;  
By the romantic ages stored  
With high endeavour that was his,  
By all his mad catastrophes  
Make me a man, O Lord.

I, that on my familiar hill  
Saw with uncomprehending eyes  
A hundred of thy sunsets spill  
Their fresh and sanguine sacrifice,  
Ere the sun swings his noontday sword  
Must say good-bye to all of this;  
By all delights that I shall miss,  
Help me to die, O Lord.

### *Words*

*From 'The Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels  
and other verses'  
by Sapper Bert Beros*

*Dedicated to Brigadier Irwin,  
known to us all as "Frankie".*

Snow is on Lebanon's heights,  
It is a wintry clime,  
So we have taken a language course  
To while away the time;  
'Mars selemi' means 'good-bye',  
'Sibeeda' 'How do you do';  
There are other words we should not know,  
Which are so easy, too.

*Written at Badaoui, Lebanon*

*Major Irwin stated language courses  
for us - French and Arabic -  
but the Japs coming into the war  
put an end to it.*

## ***Jan Szpunar - Long serving member of the Sub-Branch***

*Born 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1916 — Died 23 June, 2016 — Aged 99 Years 6 Months*

### ***Reprint of an article from 'The Serviceman' ANZAC Edition April 1993***

The first member of our Sub-Branch to go into action in WWII must surely have been Jan Szpunar, because he was right on the spot where it began.

Jan was born in Lancut in the South of Poland and, as was the case with so many young people of that generation, his fortunes suffered as a result of the great economic depression. Jan joined the Army in 1937 as a member of an anti-tank unit. When the German Army invaded Poland, Jan's formation was in Cracow waiting and ready to fight. Jan's unit advanced to meet the Germans and the first battle of the War was fought at Jordanow. The German blitzkrieg was so powerful that the Polish Army was forced to retreat fighting up to the last battle at Lwow. The Russians then invaded from the east and in seventeen days it was all over.

Jan's unit withdrew to Hungary where they went into an internment camp. Hungary became an ally of Germany, so it was imperative to escape to avoid becoming a prisoner of war. Jan and his officer organised an escape for their troops to get to France. Some were successful but Jan was caught and tortured. He eventually succeeded in escaping and joined up with the newly formed Polish Army in France under General Sikorsky.

In June 1940, Jan's brigade was ordered to join the French XVII Corps to defend the west wing of the French X Infantry Division. Their first battle on the Western Front was at Montmirail, about seventy miles east of Paris. Jan's anti-tank unit fought strenuously against the German Panzers, their last battle being at Montbard on 24 July when, after heavy fighting, the Germans broke through and advanced on Paris.

Jan's unit was ordered to withdraw to the French coast for possible evacuation. They reached Bordeaux only to find that it was occupied by the Germans, but at a little fishing port a few miles to the north, they found two British naval vessels, and were taken on board. Jan still remembers the names of their rescuers: HMS Royal Scotsman and HMS Glen Fergusson. Four days later he disembarked at Liverpool.

The Polish Army gradually reformed in Britain and were equipped with modern weapons. They trained and waited impatiently for the Second Front and the invasion of Europe. When that time came, Jan's 1st Armoured Brigade fought on through France, Holland and Belgium, and was at Wilhelmshaven in Germany when the war in Europe ended. He spent two years in the Occupation Army at Essen, then went to England and was discharged from the army after eleven years of service. He later left England for Australia.

On arrival in Australia, Jan went straight to Canberra and worked in the Department of Trade and Customs. He later started his own photography business, and established for himself the reputation of one of Canberra's leading professional photographers.

>>>>

Jan received many decorations and awards from Britain, Holland, Belgium, France and Poland including the highest Polish decoration, the *Virtuti Militari*.

Jan Szpunar's service to the League and to Woden Valley Sub-Branch in particular has been invaluable. He joined the RSL Canberra City Branch in 1950. Three years later he transferred to Woden Valley Sub-Branch being closer to his home. The efforts of himself and his wife Nicky during the Poppy Day Appeals over the past three years has resulted in more than twelve thousand dollars being raised by these two alone. He is a member of the Hospital Visiting Team and is always ready to lend a hand with any Sub-Branch project without being asked to do so. We are indeed fortunate to have Jan as a member of this Sub-Branch.

*Jan was made a Life Member of the League in 2004 - 'The Serviceman' August 2004 - Ed.*

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### ***Bungendore Rotary Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum***

Sub-Branch President, Jim Gilchrist accompanied by Welfare Officer Florence Sofield participated in the Bungendore Rotary Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2016. Along with Soldier-On and other organisations promoting Mental Health, we were invited to share an information table. Bungendore Medical Practice gave a series of short talks on aspects of Mental Health and their treatment followed by a panel discussion with audience participation.



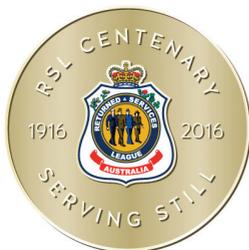
Participants were encouraged to move around the hall and inspect the Health Promotion information stalls during supper after the talks.

Although it was a very cold night about 80 people attended.





Limited edition pins  
exclusive to  
RSL members



Many other items  
available to the public  
through retail stores

## RSL IS PROUD TO RELEASE A **NEW** **RANGE OF PRODUCTS** TO CELEBRATE THE CENTENARY.

There are items in the range that are exclusive to RSL members and we anticipate will become highly collectible.

Other items are available through retail stores to those who want to support our organisation and recognise our centenary.

The funds raised will be used by National, State and Territory branches to help veterans and their families in those local communities.

These pins and other RSL Centenary products are available from [www.rslshop.org.au](http://www.rslshop.org.au) or phone 02 9264 8188.

[WWW.RSLSHOP.ORG.AU](http://WWW.RSLSHOP.ORG.AU)

## *Leongatha — Avenue of Honour*

*Faye Powell*

When travelling around Australia one is constantly reminded of the impact that war, particularly World War I, had on small regional towns. The loss and grief drove many communities to extraordinary efforts to remember each and every soldier through tree planting projects known as ‘Avenues of Honour.’

We have visited many towns that planted trees as lasting reminders - from the oaks and elms of Ballarat to the bottle trees of Roma. Here is the story of one such Avenue of Honour in Leongatha, Victoria.

*“On Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1918, the community of Leongatha and District gathered near the Leongatha Butter Factory to plant an avenue of trees in a single day. The Progress Association decided to plant a row of trees along the Yarragon Rd from the butter factory to the Labour Colony, on the corner of Horn St, and for a short distance along Wild Dog Valley Rd. This avenue was to honour all those from the West Riding of the Shire of Woorayl who enlisted to serve in the Great War. The 250 elms and oaks were provided by the Mossvale nursery and were to be planted alternately. The local MP, Mr. Mackay planted a tree in honour of General Birdwood who led the ANZACs from 1914 until early 1918. Relatives of the men were asked to care for the tree that bore their soldiers nameplate. The youth of the area were asked to treat the trees as sacred.*



*Over the years some of the trees have died or were removed. When trees were removed others were planted elsewhere in their place. The Avenue today is a unique living historic feature of the town.*

*The original nameplates were replaced in the 1930s and finally removed in 1968 because they had deteriorated and been damaged by mowers. In 2015 the names were placed on panels in the adjacent park.*

*Originally 250 soldiers were honoured. Recent research has uncovered more names and these names have been included on the new panels. The names of all those from the wider Woorayl Shire who enlisted to serve in the Great War have been shown on marble plaques in the Leongatha Memorial Hall since 1926”.*



Leongatha Avenue of Honour Plaques.



*Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital Commemoration*



To commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the hospital, (1941-2016) a commemorative plaque was unveiled in March 2016, by the Hon Jenny Macklin MP, Member for the Victorian Electorate of Jagajaga.

Pictured with Jenny Macklin is Terri Lessels, who commenced her nursing career in 1944 and later a Nursing Sister at 115 Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital.



[left] Terri Lessels with former Nursing Sister Neta Meagher.

The following page is a transcript of the hospital plaque.

## **HEIDELBERG REPATRIATION HOSPITAL**

*'The Duckboard Hospital'*

*75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1941-2016*

In May 1940 the Australian War Cabinet agreed to the erection of a 240 bed Pavilion Hospital. One month later, Cabinet approved plans to build the permanent brick hospital on the same site. Additional facilities were added in the process.

The new Military Hospital spread out horizontally. By 1945 there were 38 single storey pavilion wards housing over 2000 beds, one permanent brick ward block with 500 beds, two sets of operating theatres, staff quarters and in total over 90 separate buildings linked by interconnecting walkways that became known as the Duckboards, and an internal road system.

115<sup>th</sup> Heidelberg Military Hospital opened for admissions on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1941. The hospital was officially opened by Senator John Leckie on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1941.

### ***1941-1947 Australian Army 115<sup>th</sup> Heidelberg Military Hospital***

“Nothing for the nursing staff at Heidelberg was too good for us, or too much of an imposition on them. They just gave us love and understanding, and gradually we got better,” said Sir John Gorton, Prime Minister of Australia, Veteran and Patient.

### ***1947-1994 Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs Repatriation General Hospital Heidelberg***

In the 1970s the hospital was opened up to the treatment of civilians.

### ***1995-2016 Victorian Government Austin Health Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital***

In 1939 the crisis came and Heidelberg was to change  
The Army and builders replaced the cows  
And the place was never the same.

What can be said about The Repat?  
The care, the compassion and community  
The names, the images and the memorabilia  
Why does the magic still remain?

**CARE                      COMPASSION                      COMMUNITY**  
***A Community within a Community***

## NOTES FOR THE DIARY IN 2016



**Sub-Branch Meetings:** 7.00PM 30<sup>th</sup> Aug, 27<sup>th</sup> Sep, 25<sup>th</sup> Oct, 29<sup>th</sup> Nov.

**Board Meetings:** 7.00PM 11<sup>th</sup> Aug, 8<sup>th</sup> Sep, 13<sup>th</sup> Oct, 10<sup>th</sup> Nov, 8<sup>th</sup> Dec.

**Remembrance Day Service:** Fri 11<sup>th</sup> Nov - 8:00AM

**Christmas Dinner:** Wed 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec, 12 for 12:30PM CSCC - Orion Room CSCC

**Closing Date for Christmas edition of 'The Serviceman' :** Fri 14<sup>th</sup> Oct.

### *Hospital Visiting*

The Sub-Branch is in need of volunteers to participate in the Hospital visiting program. The commitment is for one half-day each week, on a two-months per year basis, [eg., March and September]. This is not an onerous task for participants, but is comforting to those in hospital at the time and who greatly appreciate the visits as many of the patients are not always from the local Canberra area.

Advice is given on how to perform the task with visitors normally working in teams of two. For further information contact our Sub-Branch office — 6285 1931



**Donate now**  
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### **LEGACY BADGE WEEK** **Sun 28<sup>th</sup> Aug to Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> Sep, 2016**

**Please buy a badge and wear it with pride.**

The Legacy Family in Canberra has over 1600 widows, children and disabled adults enrolled. Legacy receives some Government assistance by way of grants for special projects. However, to maintain its services, Legacy is heavily dependent on public support.

## *From a Dane to a Digger — Twice*

*Peter Neill*

How could a man born in Harboore, Denmark, in 1889, become an Aussie Digger by telling Huntruths, not once, but twice giving false identities on both occasions? Many of us can tell a story about someone we knew who was able to take advantage of the lack of checking to enlist in either WWI or WWII, and in many cases, both wars. My father, who I knew as Peter Jamieson Neill, was one of the latter.

My father spoke of being at Gallipoli and being wounded there. He had a scar on his right cheek and his right ear lobe was missing, but did not mention any other casualty or his service in WWI.

In 1940, he pretended to be four years younger to enlist, as the maximum age for NCOs was 50, an age he passed in 1939. As children, we put trust in what our parents tell us and we Neill children, all ten of us, were no exception. It wasn't until well after Dad passed away in 1953, that his true identity and War Service came to light, thanks to the digital facilities now available. Research has shown that no person by the name of Peter Jamieson Neill served in WWI, but certainly did in WWII, and I often went to visit him in camps in Melbourne, with my mother.

Dad's Attestation Paper of 1940, in answer to previous Military Service, shows the entry "WWI. Warrant Officer II, 24<sup>th</sup> Btn." In 1942, new Service Numbers were allocated and an additional requirement was previous "Service Number". No 809 was inserted. I was not aware of this until 1999, and that No 809 was allocated to Neil Wood, a natural born British Subject from Glasgow, Scotland. No date of arrival in Australia was required, but enquiries drew many blanks in relation to Neil Wood through all the usual avenues in Australia and Scotland.

In 2014, as a result of a document on Wood's file which bore the name Neils Peter Jacobsen, with a friend I began a search. This revealed that Niels Peter Jakobsen was born on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1889, in Harboore, a fishing village in Denmark, by the North Sea. In 1911, he arrived in Melbourne as an unassisted passage, and was granted British Subject status in 1913, under the anglicised variation of "Jacobsen." He was on the Electoral Role in 1914 residing on a farm in Yarram Yarram, in the Gippsland area of Victoria, the only occasion he appeared on an Australian Electoral Roll.

Although Denmark was a neutral country, and bordering Germany, many Scandinavians had, over the years, moved into Germany for employment. With a name like Jakobsen or Jacobsen, he probably considered the name would be a barrier, hence the name Neil Wood with no questions asked. In March 1915, Neil Wood enlisted at Broadmeadows, Victoria, was allocated No 809, and deployed to the 24<sup>th</sup> Division. The Book "The Red and White Diamond", by J W Fraser is the history of that Division.

On 26<sup>th</sup> December 1916, Neil Wood married Constance Adele King (Nee Pescott) whilst recuperating from arm wounds in Liverpool, England. They arrived in Australia in 1919, with a daughter, and lived in Hawthorn in Melbourne. Neil and Constance Wood, were on the electoral Roll of 1922, residing in Kyabram, Victoria, but only Constance was thereafter.

>>>

Neil Wood's WWI file has a letter attached from a Lt Owens, Kyabram, to Army Records in 1922 asking for a check on a person claiming to be an ex-serviceman and giving two names, Neil Wood and Neil Peter Jacobsen. The reply stated Neil Wood was No 807 in the 24<sup>th</sup> Battalion, but no record was held for Jacobsen.

Wood had been negotiating to buy a property at Tongala, near Kyabram, under the auspices of the Soldier Settlement Scheme that year but did not see the deal through as he and his wife had separated in January 1922. They had a son born in 1920, who died in December of that year from severe gastro-enteritis, and each blamed the other for neglect. Further evidence states that in 1924, he met my mother, changed back to his original name, Peter Jamieson Neill, on the pretence he was Scottish born.

The question then arises, why, prior to WWI did he change from Jakobsen to Wood, then change his name, and in 1940 re-enlist under a false date of birth. I surmise that, although Denmark was a neutral country when WWI commenced, he enlisted after Germany entered the War. Denmark lies on the north west of Germany, and he had a mother and four siblings living there and he may have feared for their safety.

In WWI, according to his military file, he was wounded on a number of occasions and suffered gas poisoning three times, but survived. At the conclusion of the War, he recommenced writing (in Danish) until 1920/21.

He did not re-enlist until May 1940, and I suspect not before anguishing over the matter. A few weeks earlier, Germany invaded Denmark, but allowed the Danish Government to continue in power. They did however, on the pretence of protecting them from a British invasion, control the coast off Jutland. The bunkers are still in place to this day.

Although he had lost contact with his family, he would have had concerns for them. He did tell my mother he did so to protect his family. I wonder which of the two he meant, if not both!

In 1943, approaching his army age of 50, he was discharged.

In about 1949, he formed the Maribyrnong Sub-Branch of the RSL and was the inaugural President.

Dad was an intelligent man who spoke and wrote impeccable English. I have been informed that he was an excellent student in Denmark.

I wonder how many Danes can say, "I was a Dane who became a Digger - twice".

I would suggest not many.

## RAASC VIETNAM SUPPLY PLATOONS ASSOCIATION

Attention Galloping Green Grocers [aka RAASC-RAAOC] Food stuffs Platoon members. The RAASC Vietnam Supply Platoons Association was set up in part to network with other Foodie mates, regardless of where you served. Why not join us and connect with old mates. We have regular reunions, regular newsletters and more. Why not contact us? Phone Christina on 0430 125 195 or write to PO Box 207 Mitchell ACT 2911.

Email: [bamberb01@bigpond.com](mailto:bamberb01@bigpond.com) or,  
website: <http://raascsupply.asn.au/> for more information.

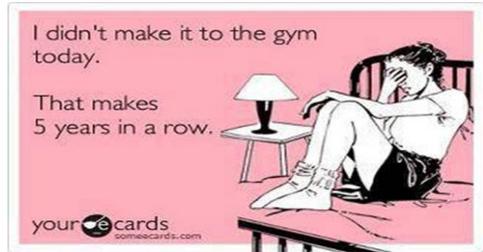
Russ Morison

Secretary

RAASC Vietnam Supply Platoons Association

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**PROUDLY SUPPORTING THE VETERAN COMMUNITY**

# SUB-BRANCH SERVICES

**Sub-Branch Office Hours.** The office is open from 9:00AM until 3:00PM Monday to Friday, except public holidays. The services of the Sub-Branch are available to all Sub-Branch members, and all serving and former members of the Australian Defence Force and overseas defence forces.

**Office Administrator.** Joyce O'Brien administers the Sub-Branch office and is responsible to the Executive for the efficient day-to-day routine of the office. She is usually the first contact on the telephone and will attend to all Sub-Branch matters including membership, correspondence, functions and access to Sub-Branch services.

**Veterans' Support Centre (VSC).** The office is open from 9:00AM until 3:00PM Monday to Friday, except public holidays, and at other times by appointment. The services of the VSC are available to all Sub-Branch members, and all serving and former members of the Australian Defence Force and overseas defence forces.

**Entitlement and Advocacy (E&A).** A team of highly trained advocates and entitlements/pension officers, both male and female, is available to provide assistance with applications for disability and pensions under the Veterans' Entitlement Act 1986 (VEA), the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (SRCA), and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA). We also provide support and advice to war widows and widowers in regards to pensions. Andrew Properjohn, the E&A Administrator, will assist you with your enquiries.

**Community Support.** The Community Support co-ordinator arranges the provision of community support to Sub-Branch members and their families. Advice is available on matters such as DVA Gold and White Cards, travel, Veterans Home Care, residential and transitional care, HACC services, DVA Housing and financial information.

**Hospital Visiting:** Every Thursday one or two volunteers visit each of the three southern hospitals, Canberra, John James Memorial and Canberra Capital Private. They aim to visit every veteran, RSL member and Legacy widow.

**Hospice Visiting:** Visits can be arranged for Sub-Branch members in Clare Holland House.

**Christmas Visits:** In December each year, all Sub-Branch members 80 years of age and over, and all Sub-Branch widows and widowers receive a home visit and a gift.

## **Other Services:**

**Health and Fitness Program.** Through an arrangement with the Canberra Southern Cross Health and Fitness Club, the Sub-Branch subsidises gym attendance for financial Sub-Branch members, with members making a co-payment of \$100 per calendar year. The program is for the Over 50s classes only and a medical fitness certificate from a doctor is required before participation is permitted. Contact the office with any enquiries.

**Sub-Branch Publication.** The Sub-Branch Publication, *'The Serviceman'* is published three times per year and distributed free to all Sub-Branch members and widows. A special edition is also published for schoolchildren attending the annual ANZAC and Peace Ceremony at Eddison Park.

**Eddison Day Club.** Sponsored by the Sub-Branch, the Day Club caters for retired members, their spouses, widows, widowers and the general community. It meets every Friday from 10:00AM to 2:00PM (except Good Friday) from mid-January to mid-December at the Irish Club, Parkinson Street, Weston.

**If you know of any member who would benefit from any of these services, but is reluctant to apply, please let our office know.**