



## War Veterans Village [Narrabeen] RSL sub-Branch

Through an active membership we keep the ANZAC spirit alive and growing

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### PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Happy New Year to all! We do hope that each of you and your friends & families managed to have as best a Christmas as possible. 2021 promises to be better than 2020 and your Committee is committed to ensuring this is true for our sub-Branch.

Our Membership Officer Jan has been very busy since our last meeting and there are some new memberships being processed. We do hope to be able to introduce them to you at our February Monthly General Meeting. Yes, the meeting is scheduled to go ahead.

With no new cases of CORONA Virus on the Northern Beaches we are expecting the Village to relax some restrictions and open up more facilities. This will enable us to make more progress on the social calendar for the year. As indicated last year, the Committee is planning and budgeted for some bi-monthly activities, both at our meetings and off site.

Looking ahead we are also hoping to have a very significant fund-raising event which will involve both residents and non-residents alike. The final format and timing of this event will be dependent upon the lifting of all restrictions but be assured it will happen.

By the time you receive this correspondence the second sub-Branch office will have been relocated to the Keith Hoyer Centre. This will be a great asset for us as it will provide a more efficient environment to conduct the various aspects of committee life. A positive move forward. Our thanks to management for facilitating this for us.

It is with great regret to advise that our Treasurer, John Hillard, has resigned for personal reasons. In thanking John for his service, we recognise it is more important for him to concentrate on himself at this time. We are currently looking at identifying a replacement.

I look forward to seeing you at our February meeting and for your valuable input into our decision-making process as we plan for a positive and active 2021.

Lest We Forget, Bob Durbin, President

Address Label

READ YOUR EDITION AND ENJOY



We are holding our General Meeting  
Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February at 9.30am  
Montgomery Forecourt  
Morning tea to follow  
NOTE YOUR DIARY NOW!

### WELFARE REPORT

How wonderful now that we are free of 2020 and all the hassles it brought! Now looking forward to restrictions being relaxed a little more going into 2021.

I'm sure many of you have had a very different Christmas this year but I hope you had someone with you to share in the joy of the season.

What some of you have told me is 'we have got into the habit of being confined to home, due to Covid and that now it feels like a huge effort to get back out there.'

It is very important for our mental health that we keep in touch with those around us, even if just a phone call to a friend. Consider that there are some who go an entire day without speaking to anyone, please don't let that be you, pick up the phone and 'dial a friend'.

Equally why not be the person who makes someone else's day by calling them, just to say hello! How are you going?

I hope to catch up with as many as I can by phone - wishing you a brighter and more connected new year.

Bev Ash, Visitation Officer

### BELIEVE IT OR NOT

If a statue in the park of a person on a horse with both front legs in the air, the person died in battle; if the horse has one front leg in the air, the person died as a result of wounds received in battle; if the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.

## SO MUCH FOR A QUIET LIFE

### The Military Life of LT. Col. Philip Calvert.

My interest in the Military began as a cadet at Barker College, after which I joined 7 Field Regt. of the CMF, at the end of two years I was promoted to Bombardier. With this as background I applied for a cadetship at the Royal Military College, Duntroon.

My four-year course at Duntroon began in 1955, where the sixty of us were spread equally among five Companies - I was allocated to Alamein Company. Studies comprised about one and a half years of civil subjects and two and a half years of military work. I disliked the civil work but did enjoy, in particular the practical aspects of the military training. Included in the course much time was spent on physical training and hours on the Square on drill. In my final year I was one of six to gain a civilian private pilot licence. I graduated as an average student and was presented with a Certificate by Field Marshal Sir William Slim.

As a brand-new 1st. Lieutenant I was posted to 13 National Service Training Battalion where I was responsible for over one hundred men - from all walks of life. After thirteen weeks they were all the same. The next venture was into the real Army as a Gun Position officer with 1st. Field Battery, which held much historical significance. After a year of gunnery, I was sent with four officers to 16 Air OP. Flight - a RAAF unit training Army Pilots, on the military version of Cessna 180 aircraft. After half the course we were all posted to Amberley in Queensland and became the first Army Aviation Unit - in particular with Army Survey Units operating in the Outback!

After two years of flying, I was reposted to 'A' Field Battery where, soon after, we were flown by Qantas 707 to Singapore. With wives and children, we re-embarked for Terendak Garrison near Malacca. It was here - in the course of Confrontation with Indonesia - we became the third battery of the British 45 Field Regiment supporting three infantry battalions - one from each Australia, Britain and New Zealand - of 28 Commonwealth Brigade. I spent little time with the battery as I - with dependants in Malacca - was dispatched as a Captain to A4 4th Infantry Brigade located on the East Coast of Borneo at Tawau. This was an interesting chapter of my military operational experience. On completion back to 'A' Battery, only to be reunited and sent with my family to Singapore as a Staff Officer on HQ Australian Army Force. While in Singapore I was detailed to 1/43 ARVN Infantry Regiment - in South Vietnam as an advisor/artillery observer for a relatively short period.

Back to Australia, on promotion to Major, with a British General Service Medal and an Australian medal for Service in Vietnam, I was part of the Staff of Defence Land/Air Warfare. In the course of these duties, I was tasked with bringing the Australian Army Aviation Corps into existence. In due course I was then back to RAAF Amberley to take part in the foundation of the School of Army Aviation training non-pilots in their skills.

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It was during this period that I undertook courses on the Pilatos Turbo Porter and the Bell Sioux helicopter -some 200 flying hours and furthermore a separate flying course, sponsored by the School of Artillery, which resulted in the awarding of the Air Observation Post wings - I was the last officer to receive this brevet.

It was then my turn to return to Vietnam as Officer Commanding 161/Independent. Recce Flight. Here I had control of the airfield and three Porter and six Sioux aircraft. My main task was approving tasks for pilots and unit administration but I also managed about 500 hours of operational flying. At the end I was awarded ARVN Vietnam Campaign Medal and was mentioned in a Dispatch.

After a year or so back at the School of Army Aviation teaching graduate pilots how best to apply their knowledge to support ground forces in an operational environment. I then went to Queenscliff in Victoria to attend Staff College for a year and finally to yet another Staff appointment in Adelaide, where I eventually resigned from the Australian Regular Army, after 20 years of service.

After two years back with the CMF as an Infantry Officer I resigned again and moved with family to N.Z. My first appointment was working as a Staff Officer to NZ Chief of General Staff. I did well there and soon after was posted as 2 I/C then Commanding Officer of 16 Field Regiment for over three years. During my time with the Regiment, I undertook a self-funded tour (with the help of the South Korean Army) to my Regiments areas of operation in the Korean War. In addition, I was sent to Germany to undertake a daunting project (including a visit to Berlin when the Wall was still in place). On completion of my project, I spent an hour or so with the Commanding General, Sir William Scotter, who subsequently wrote a letter of Commendation to the NZ CGS.

In the course of over four years with 16th Field Regiment I had the opportunity to travel to Hawaii to participate in training exercises with the Army of the USA.

During my time at 16th Field Regiment a group of soldiers went to Hawaii to train with their Artillery and in return a battery of American gunners came to NZ where I provided them with some NZ artillery practices.

On leaving the Regiment, in my next appointment I then had the opportunity to go to Hawaii to take part in Brigade beach exercises.

My last two years in NZ was with Defence Management Services. During my time in NZ, I put into practice my philosophy that training should be as interesting as possible for soldiers - included in this was parachute training. While at 16th Field Regiment I trained as many soldiers as possible - including myself - I completed the course but in total my log shows 26 jumps.

*Editor: Thanks to Jan Slater for the article above which was given to her by Philip Calvert at the time of his Service membership application.*

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Happy New Year to all our members and let us hope this year does turn out to be better in many ways than 2020. At present, things are looking rather doubtful – but one must always be positive and look on the optimistic side of things.

Having been previously – more than 30 years ago!! – involved with organisations that require committees to keep the wheels turning, I recall more often than not the difficulty of encouraging members prepared to be elected to these committees. “No, I’d rather leave that to others, just let me be an Indian rather than a Chief” would often be the response. Well, you can imagine it becomes more difficult when the members are all “seniors” who have “done it all before and it’s time for a rest”. Yes, that’s pretty well a fair description of your sub-Branch and probably most sub-Branches.

We need to say a big thank you to our Treasurer, John Hillard, for a great job since taking over last March who is now standing down so that some health issues can be looked after and we must all accept that individual health must always take precedence over a committee “job”. We all wish him well and look forward to his presence at a general meeting soon.

When will our next general meeting be? Who knows? COVID-19 is playing havoc with forward planning for lots of organisations and it is difficult to rationalize the rules and restrictions with real life activities. I enjoyed two days at the Australia v India cricket at the SCG and to be honest felt “Covid safer” there (alone in my row of seats and outside in the fresh air) than I do when shopping at Woolworths or on public transport.

Thank you to members who have paid their subs for 2021. There is a reminder to those who are yet to pay their \$10 for this year in this issue of Dispatches. It would be appreciated if any outstanding fees could be paid as soon as possible. The cutoff date before being classified ‘unfinancial’ is February 11, the date for our February meeting.

Your committee is attempting to put together an outline of activities/meetings for this year following the feedback from our December general meeting. In broad terms it looks like this – general meetings outside winter, will be held in the Montgomery Forecourt: The March AGM will be at 0830 and will be preceded by a brief general meeting and then followed by breakfast with a guest speaker in the Lone Pine Lounge: a visit to Anzac Memorial Hyde Park South in May (including morning tea/lunch):

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Breakfast meeting with a guest speaker in July: possible visit to Rookwood War Graves Commission Cemetery and the Anzac Memorial Walkway at Rhodes in September: and breakfast meeting with guest speaker in November.

Please pass on any comments, positive or negative, and any suggestions you may have so these can be discussed and included in future planning. In the meantime, we await RSL LifeCare’s next advice regarding possible easing of meeting number restrictions and other changes to make life generally closer to what was normal.

John Sowden, Secretary

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

At the end of 2020 – Total Membership = 100

All members were financial.

Life Members	2
Life Subscribers	3
Service	46
Affiliate	30
Associate	19

The following new members were welcomed and inducted at our General Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December and are included in the numbers above:

Philip Calvert – Service  
Janette Williams -Associate  
Ross Fairhall – Associate  
Bobbi Fairhall - Affiliate

Application for new membership is in progress for:  
Pamela Meyers – Affiliate

We already have some prospective members in train for the New Year and are optimistic that our numbers will grow as the year progresses.

Jan Slater, Membership Officer

## CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

These certificates are awarded for special recognition for services rendered to the League.

At our 10<sup>th</sup> of December Meeting, President Bob Durbin presented Certificates to:

Norm Ziegler, Shirley McLaren and Shirley Beggs.  
Congratulations to each of the recipients.

\*Just heard about a new restaurant that opened on the moon. The food’s great but there’s no atmosphere!

\* Hired a handy man the other day and gave him a list of jobs. When I got home only jobs 1, 3 & 5 were done. Turns out he only does odd jobs!



### AUSTRALIA DAY 2021 HONOURS

In the honours announced on Australia day it was a real thrill to see one of our sub-Branch members -

#### **Shirley McLaren**

announced as recipient of the Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia (General Division) for service to veterans and their families, and to the community.

The following are some of Shirley's achievements and service for which she has been recognised:

- \* Life membership of the Defence Force Welfare Association
- \* Patron of the Women's Royal Australian Air Force (WRAAF) Sydney.
- \* Leading the WRAAF in the Sydney ANZAC Day March up until 2019
- \*President of the Ex-Service Women at ANZAC War Vets Village Narrabeen
- \*Coordinator of the Northern Beaches War Widows Guild
- \*Legacy supporter
- \*Supporter for Home for Hero's programme at ANZAC War Vets Village Narrabeen
- \*Participant in the 2019 ABC TV Documentary series "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds"



\*Received a Certificate of Achievement, in 2014, from the War Widows Guild of Australia NSW Limited, for her outstanding commitment in fulfilling the aims of the Guild for more than 50years.

\*Participant in 2019 in the second Honoring Women and Families United Defence Service (HWUDS), by laying a wreath at the Australian War Memorial. Then attending the dinner held in the Great Hall at Parliament House, being one of the VIP Veterans and Widows honoured on the night

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\*Presented medals for swimming at the 2018 Invictus Games held in Sydney

Holds the following honours and awards:

- \*Australian Defence Medal – July 2006  
(Campaigning from 1995 for women who had served in the WRAAF to be awarded the Australian Defence Medal)
- \*Airman's Code Medallion – presented in February 2020

On behalf of the Committee and all sub-Branch members, our hearty congratulations to you Shirley, for being honoured with the OAM.

Editor: Doug Smyth

### CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Here we are in 2021 and we still don't know what the year holds for us. It was pleasing to hear our Prime Minister, during one of his recent press conferences, say that as Australians we share more blessings than we do struggles. When we look at our nation, we are indeed blessed to be living in Australia. The moral, social, ethical and dare I say spiritual values on which our country was founded have held us in good stead during a couple of very difficult years.

As we work through the COVID-19 pandemic, we should never forget the years leading up to it and the challenges with which we were faced. Neither should we forget that the basis of our success has been working for the common good, a philosophy adopted by almost all living here.

In our village we have been blessed by the continued caring attitude of our fellow residents, many of whom provide comfort and support in their own way.

As your Chaplain I have been privileged to share time with many of our members, both in Residential and Independent living. The period leading up and going through the Christmas period was difficult for so many but together we managed to get through. Fellow Christian groups and the Cumberland RSL sub-Branch provided us with packages of fruit & veg, non-perishable items and bread. It was a privilege for those delivering these items to be able to stand in someone's doorway letting them know that there are those who care for them, even if they don't personally know them.

As the year unfolds, be assured that we will continue to be there for each other.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything you need, even if just a chat over a cuppa.

Blessings always

Bob Durbin, Chaplain