



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

It with great sadness that I commence this report by advising that our esteemed member Stuart Doyle, WWII veteran and former member of the RAAF, passed away on Friday 22nd April. At the time of writing Stu's funeral details are not known.

By the time you receive this issue of Dispatches ANZAC Day would have been commemorated. Our Wednesday Service commenced with a 'march' from Peter Cosgrove House to the Memorial Wall of the Montgomery Theatre. It was a great day and once again we were most fortunate to have the NSW Mounted Police lead the procession. Members of HMAS Waterhen and ARA Members from Victoria Barracks once again assisted in pushing wheelchairs of Residential Care Veterans. A great sight to see! We did have good coverage on Channel 9 News.

This year our very own Commander Arthur Skene RAN (retired) was the Master of Ceremonies. Arthur performed this duty with great dignity and respect. Once again, at the time of writing, our ANZAC Day Dawn Service is yet to occur. This year the service will be (was) held at the Montgomery Theatre Memorial Wall.

We extend our most sincere thanks and appreciation to RSL LifeCare for the way in which these two events have been organised and conducted. In particular we thank Kerry Morris for her outstanding efforts.

On Thursday 21st April, four sub-Branch members were invited to Corporate Headquarters to present at the CEO's 'Town Hall' meeting. Each member was asked to give an overview of their service and to then give a short address on 'What ANZAC Day Means to Me'. This presentation was exceptionally well received by both those in attendance and those who watched via ZOOM. We have received many positive comments. Thanks to John Sowden, Pamela Dodd and Arthur Skene who joined me.

Don't forget to look for the upcoming events which Secretary John is organising. A good program is ahead of us.

Continue to keep well.

Lest we Forget.

Bob Durbin, President

Address Label

READ YOUR EDITION AND ENJOY



Taken, Sat. 23 April, before heading off to Rat Park to enjoy the rugby - the players were on the field when we had a brief address then The Ode, last post, minutes silence, reveille and the national anthem. A good afternoon except the Rats lost 17-19. (Secretaries comments Page 2 refers)

NO MEETING on Thursday the 12th May

The bus trip on Wednesday the 11th May replaces our normal General Meeting. If you are interested to visit ANZAC Track Memorial Walk at Rhodes and the War Graves Commission Cemetery at Rookwood, please give the office your name as soon as possible. Cost is \$10 for transport and morning tea. You need to pay for lunch. Bus leaves at 9.30am and returns approx. 4.30pm.



SECRETARY'S COMMENTS

The last month has been busy and personally I'm looking to a little less volunteering during the next month. With an outing being planned, invitations from Bunnings and Warringah Rugby Club to be involved in ANZAC activities and of course the two important services here in the Village for ANZAC Day have kept the time passing by rather too quickly at times.

Feedback from members over the last 2 years has indicated that we all are looking forward to getting out and about again as soon as possible but with health and safety still being very important. Well, our outing for May has been approved BUT it will be on WEDNESDAY 11 May leaving at 9.30am and returning about 4.30pm— please give the office your name if interested as soon as possible as it is expected to fill quickly – maximum 24. The cost is \$10 which includes transport and morning tea – you will need to pay for lunch. It will be a visit to ANZAC Track Memorial Walk at Rhodes and the War Graves Commission Cemetery at Rookwood. It will be nice to be driven and enjoy some of the sites of Sydney and see how much construction work is going on all over our city.

Fifteen of us – including fellows working with Homes for Heroes - enjoyed the local Rugby Union derby between Warringah Rats and Manly Marlins on Saturday 23rd April as guests of the Warringah Rugby Club – it was a nice social afternoon out of the Village.

The ANZAC Village service on Wednesday 20th April was well attended and feedback has indicated it was one of the best. The Dawn Service of course was well attended with many village outsiders also enjoying this special occasion after being invited by residents.

The fundraising surrounding ANZAC Day has been well organized and Leigh Haines will report next month on the outcome of this annual event on which we depend for providing the ability to support our member veterans.

There will not be a meeting in May (the bus trip takes its place) so we will keep you posted about the June get together which will be a Christmas in June lunch on our regular meeting day June 9.

John Sowden, Secretary



CHAPLAINS CORNER

Easter was a very full time for us in our village. At a time when the world (Russia) has gone crazy, Easter provided us a time to further reflect on the sacrifices made for each one of us. Christians recognise the greatest sacrifice of all when Jesus gave his life for each one of us on Good Friday. We then rejoiced on Easter Sunday when we celebrated the Risen Christ.

With ANZAC Day following on a week later, we all took time to give thanks for all the others who have sacrificed in some way to enable us to live in this, *The Great South Land of The Holy Spirit*.

We can only enjoy the freedoms and way of life we have today because so many people sacrificed themselves for us. As Arthur Skene will share in his article, it is not only those who fought on the front line who gave so much of themselves. Years ago, I read that in WWII it took 7 people behind the lines to keep one there. In later wars this number has grown to around 14. I do not recall the source for this, but those who have served will understand the philosophy.

One of the points I shared at the CEO's 'Town Hall' meeting, was that it is not only those who wear the uniform that contribute and sacrifice for the betterment of our country. Family members and friends are also part of the greater veteran family. They too are touched by the effects of war. I don't need to go into detail here because I am sure you will know to what I am referring.

The Gospel of John 15:13 (NIV) says, '*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*'. Again, from the Gospel of John 13:34 (NIV) we have these words, '*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another*'.

This is part of the ethos of our veteran family. We are here for each other, regardless of circumstances. God gave us his unconditional love when he gave us his Son on Good Friday. So too should we give our unconditional love for those who have and continue to serve us.

Lest We Forget

Grace & Peace

Bob Durbin, Sub-branch Chaplain

VISITATION REPORT

April can be a sad time for many of our members but it can also bring out the best. The best stories, the best memories and often brings the best out of our ourselves and our friends. Sadly, we have had two of our members pass away in April, Rodney Doust and Stuart Doyle. We are fortunate to still be able to see Stu's lovely smile just by pulling up the documentary where he shared himself with the children. (Old people's home for 4 yr. old's).

I'd like to compliment and thank Arthur Skene for his very successful role as MC at our ANZAC service and a shout out to the Village Management for a well-planned and respectful support of all our Veterans. A very successful Village March 2022 and here are some photos to remember the day.

Bev Ash Visitation Officer



MEMBERSHIP REPORT



President Bob Durbin introduces new members:
Margaret Christensen (top left). David Picknell (top right) and Linda Byron (left).
Each were presented with their RSL Badge, Membership Card and RSL Diary.

Current total Membership = 120

Life Members	3
Life Subscribers	3
Service	49
Affiliate	44
Associate	21

Please ignore the previous advice of my resignation which endured for one week. Back in the saddle again!

We mourn the sad passing of our esteemed Service member Rodney Doust and Life Subscriber Stuart Doyle who were amongst our WWII Veterans. Stuart previously played a highly active Committee role in the operations of our sub-Branch. Sadly, Affiliate members John and Margaret Burton have now left the Village to return to their home in Gosford and have resigned.

The following new members were inducted at our April Meeting and are included in the numbers above.

Linda Byron – Service
Margaret Christensen – Affiliate
David Picknell – Affiliate

The following new Members will be inducted at our next meeting and are included in the above numbers.

John Heald – Service
Cyril Laverack – Associate
Randall Jones – Associate
Peter Hackett – Service

Happily, a further considerable number of prospective members have shown interest and their applications are in process.

Jan Slater,
Membership Officer

WHAT IS A VETERAN?

In the past it was commonly accepted that a military veteran is a person who has significant experience in the skills needed to fight and win a war, and a war veteran is someone who has served directly in combat. Over time, this ‘definition’ has changed. The accepted meaning today is, a veteran is anyone who has served in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) for at least one day. In Australia certain entitlements can only be provided to ADF veterans who have served in prescribed wars and conflicts in recognition of the specific effects, risks and privations associated with service on operations.

I believe there should only be one meaning, that is “a veteran is anyone who has served in the ADF for one day” and all veterans should therefore be eligible for all entitlements applicable to any action, incident, injury, wound or stress regardless of whether incurred during direct action with an enemy, during training, or performing any lawful duty required of the veteran. Why?

The ADF exists to protect Australia and its peoples from any aggression from any source. The principal and primary aim is to fight the war and win the war. To do this we recruit only the best and provide our sailors, soldiers and airmen with the best training and equipment available, and continuously strive to improve both.

From day one the respective recruit schools instil in trainees the core elements of training, military values, fitness and esprit de corps to excel in their duties individually and as part of the team, unit or command. Even at this early stage in their careers they face danger as they learn to use the weapons of war, from handling personal weapons, learning to work as a team, and being exposed to the equipment of war, field guns, tanks, ships, aircraft. They then go on to learn specific skills which will enable them to be part of their own service ‘fighting’ or ‘support’ units.

Not all servicemen and women are called upon to face the enemy, but they all train and are prepared to do so. Those at the frontline need to know they are supported by the best there is, from maintenance of equipment, supply of ammunition, fuel, spares, rations, medical services, and trained replacements. Units whether on the ground, upon or beneath the sea, or in the air, continuously train to have the instinctive skills needed to fight and win the war.

Training for war can often be more dangerous than face to face combat. Mistakes in training are made and they can be costly.

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On the evening of 10 February 1964, the aircraft carrier HMAS *Melbourne* and the destroyer HMAS *Voyager* were performing manoeuvres off Jervis Bay, when the destroyer was given the task of plane guard in preparation for night flying, she inexplicably passed in front of the carrier. It was clear senior personnel onboard *Voyager* were not paying attention to the manoeuvre in passing in front of the bow of *Melbourne*, resulting in a collision and sinking of *Voyager* with a loss of 82 killed. If not for the training of nearby support craft and *Melbourne*’s own boat crew the loss of life would have been greater. The Navy’s greatest peacetime disaster.

On the night of 12 June 1996 six Black Hawk helicopters with 24 aircrew from the 5th Aviation Regiment and 43 soldiers of the Special Air Service were conducting a live-fire airmobile assault on a simulated terrorist position at the High Range Training Area near Townsville, when two helicopters collided. Eighteen soldiers were killed and a further 12 were injured. Again, if not for the training of those around them, the number of dead would have been higher.

Lessons were learnt from both incidents, and changes made to ship manoeuvres and in night-time helicopter operations. However, on 3 June 1969 during exercise Sea Spirit in the South China Sea, the destroyer USS *Frank E. Evans* sailed under HMAS *Melbourne*’s bow, where *Evans* was cut in two, and 74 of *Evans*’s crew were killed.

On 29 November 2006 an Army Black Hawk helicopter crashed while operating with HMAS *Kanimbla*. Two were killed with nine being recovered from the sea.

All four incidents highlight the dangers in training. The ships and aircraft involved were crewed by fully trained professional sailors, aviators and soldiers, many of whom had faced the enemy in wartime and warlike operations. Unfortunately, humans are not infallible and errors are made, and this is recognised and the ADF trains, trains and trains, to reduce the risk. The profession of arms is a dangerous profession. From day one of a recruit’s training to the end of their military career, all ADF personnel recognise they may be called upon to face and respond to the inherent dangers of their profession and be called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice. They are all veterans.

Arthur Skene
Commander RAN (Retd)