



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

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

Editor: Doug Smyth – email: [dougmysyth44@gmail.com](mailto:dougmysyth44@gmail.com) Mobile: 0429 988 880.  
sub-Branch - email: [War-Veterans-VillageSB@rslnsw.org.au](mailto:War-Veterans-VillageSB@rslnsw.org.au) Phone: 8978 4266.  
Office Hours: Monday to Friday 9.30am – 12pm.

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Another successful month for our sub-Branch. Many of you would have attended the September Monthly General Meeting at which Lindsay Dufty received the RSL 75-year Membership Certificate. Our State President Ray James OAM presented this award to Lindsay, noting it is the first time he is aware of anyone receiving this award.

This month will see Vice President Roy and me attending the Annual State Congress and State Branch AGM in Newcastle. While there are not many motions to consider I am sure there will be many interesting presentations from various guest speakers. I would encourage you to look at the RSLNSW website to see the agenda. This will be an agenda item for our October Monthly General Meeting. If you have any questions regarding any motions to be considered please contact Secretary John.

I am hoping you have all taken the opportunity to vote for the incoming Board. The latest issue of *Reveille* contains the information you need but if you have any problems doing this, please contact John. While some Board members are seeking reelection, there are new nominees with a range of experience which would benefit the League. This is your opportunity to shape the Board and the direction we need to take.

Lest We Forget, Bob Durbin, President.

The link to the RSLNSW website is as follows:

<https://rslnsw.org.au/members-suite/congress/>

### October General Meeting

This General Meeting is to be held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 9.30am in the Lone Pine Lounge. Morning tea follows the meeting.

So that the meeting can commence sharp at 9.30am would members please be sure they arrive before this time, sign in, collect their name badge, and raffle tickets and are seated ready for the meeting to start.

Address Label

READ YOUR EDITION AND ENJOY

### SECRETARY'S REPORT

Our September general meeting was a little more special than most with the presentation of a 75-Year Membership Certificate by RSLNSW President Ray James OAM to our Lindsay Dufty. Lindsay joined the RSL as a serving member of the Army in 1944 so he is coming up to 80 years of membership – what an achievement. It was nice to celebrate with a cake sign-written with Lindsay's name and "75 years RSL."



Thank you to all those members who have returned the questionnaire. The results are now being tabulated to assist in planning our 2024 program. We are hopeful of having a copy of the program in your letter box before the end of November so you can plan ahead for activities in 2024.

We have received 27 completed questionnaires which is not altogether a good response from the 100 delivered. Can I encourage you if you have not returned your copy yet, please try and drop it into the office ASAP. The more representative the results are will mean a better and more balanced program for next year.

As mentioned in previous Dispatches, our Editor Doug Smyth who does a terrific job planning each month's newsletter (there is a lot of work in putting this together) is looking for more articles which will be of interest to all our members. You do not have to be a journalist or writer of any note – it is just a matter of putting pen to paper and I am happy to assist getting it into a format for Doug to "play with."

Secretary, John Sowden

## An ANZAC Memorial well worth a visit

On a recent visit to the Mid-North Coast, we drove to Dooragan National Park near Laurieton, which features walks, picnic facilities and toilets. The scenic views from iconic North Brother summit are breathtaking. The highlight of the loop walk is really the gallery of birds-nest ferns, epiphyte orchids, and other plants on the southern part of the walk. There is also an amazing example of a strangler fig close to the track, near the carpark end of the southern side of the loop walk. The northern end of this loop track is wheelchair accessible.

What was surprising was the imposing ANZAC Memorial at the North Brother carpark.

This monument was erected to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Landings of Gallipoli on the 25th of April 1915. This site was chosen as it is the highest coastal point in the Lyne electorate. The spirit of the men from Lyne who served during WWI looks out upon the towns, waters, and farms from whence they came.

The monument features a time capsule containing memorabilia from Ex Service Organisations within the Lyne Electorate and was unveiled to Commemorate ANZAC Day 2015. It will be opened in 2115.

The black stone obelisk standing approximately 1800mm high with a base of 800 x 800mm sitting on a 1200 x 1200mm slab. The memorial is decorated on each side.



Front - 1904 Gold Rising Sun with a picture of ANZAC Cove beneath it. Further inscription on the front describes the monument and information about a time capsule enclosed in it.

Left - a picture of the Victoria Cross and information about the 10 recipients of the award during the Gallipoli Campaign.

Right - a picture of Simpson and his Donkey with information about what they did during the Gallipoli Campaign.

Back - the RSL logo and inscription commemorating Indigenous military service in the First World War. Lest We Forget

Thanks to Leigh Haines for this interesting article.

## CHAPLAINS CORNER

From the jokes of last month, we move to a more sobering report. I know I have spoken about this before, but do you have a plan for when you are no longer with us. Not the where or even when of this but what your family or friends need to do to finalise your affairs? I sit with many families who do not know their loved one's wishes which makes it very difficult for them.

At this most stressful time, some families do not cope as well as others. Do you have a list of associations or groups to which you belong who need to be advised when you pass? What about your financial companies – banks etc? Do you have a list of auto renewing subscriptions which will need to be cancelled?

What would you like to have in your final service, regardless of where it is or whether it is Christian or secular? These are all important questions each of us need to prepare our families for.

I am not trying to be morbid but practical.

Please consider what it is you are leaving behind, not your inheritance but your affairs. The more prepared you are, the easier it will be on those left to sort things out.

As always, I am happy to have a chat at any time.

Blessings to all, Bob Durbin, Chaplain

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Total membership - 138

Life Member – 2, Life Subscriber - 3,

Affiliate – 51, Service -59, Associate – 23



Lindsay with his granddaughter Karen and his daughter in law Sue (mother to Karen)





## NEW MEMBERS INDUCTED AT OUR SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING

Presented with their cards and badges by State President Ray James OAM



Barbara Moore - Associate



Ellen Kessel – Affiliate



Lee Evans - Affiliate

Ian Wells – Service Member

### Remembrance Day Fundraising Appeal

There will be a pop-up table in the Gallipoli Building selling a respectful range of poppies, badges, and lapel pins from 10.00am to 2.00 pm on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November and Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup>, Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> and Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November.

Cash or cards accepted.



Poppy & Gold Wattle Limited Edition Lapel Pin

### Sub-Branch Christmas Raffle 2023

First Prize valued at \$500.00

Second Prize valued at \$250.00

Only 500 tickets to be sold

Drawn 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at the Christmas Luncheon

Please contact Leigh Haines 0417 212 424 if you have not received a book of tickets to sell in this major fund raising to support the activities of the sub-Branch.



Lindsay Dufty being presented with his 70th year Membership Certificate by State President Ray James OAM

## LINDSAY DUFTY'S WAR SERVICE by John Sowden

At 9.58AM on 19 February 1942, when the war in the Pacific was just 10 weeks old, Australians were awoken to war on their doorstep with the bombing of Darwin by 188 aircraft of a Japanese naval carrier taskforce. The primary objective was to inflict as much damage as possible on the shipping and port facilities of Darwin Harbour. This first air attack was quickly followed by a second at 11.57AM the same day of 54 land-based aircraft and was directed at neutralizing the RAAF Base at Darwin. The two air attacks brought death, destruction, and confusion of a degree then unknown in Australia.

Located within the confines of Darwin's Harbour at the time of the attacks were 49 ships including a hospital ship, 32 Australian naval vessels and two American naval vessels.

Two hundred and forty-three people were killed, approximately 350 injured. Eight vessels were sunk within the Harbour, a further two were sunk at sea off Bathurst Island, and another two were beached to prevent them sinking. Thirteen other vessels were badly damaged or put out of action. Forty-five aircraft were destroyed and there was great property damage in the port, the township, and the air bases.

The above description sets the scene of devastation in and around Darwin in the middle of February 1942 about 2 months after the bombing of Pearl Harbour. It is believed the aircraft involved in that attack were from the same Japanese naval carrier taskforce as those that attacked Darwin.

Just one month earlier – in fact on 7 January, 1942 – a young 18-year-old Lindsay Dufty fronted up at a military depot off Victoria Avenue, Chatswood and happened to find an old-school mate, Stan Burrows, doing the same thing. They became great mates and have remained so to this day. Lindsay was sent to Georges Heights for a couple of days drill exercises and when asked for volunteers to go to northern Australia to operate some new special equipment he stepped forward and found himself joining a very secretive new unit called R.D.F. (Radar Direction Finder). He and Stan were attached to 22<sup>nd</sup> AA Battery as Gunners and told to be ready to move by 20 January. He spent the intervening time at North Head getting vaccinations and tropical equipment, some time at the Artillery School, a few days at Chowder Bay, some lectures at Beacon Hill, and was given 3 days final leave. On 23 January he took the train to Melbourne and Adelaide where he joined a troop-train to Darwin via Alice Springs on the old Ghan train track. From Alice to Darwin was in Army trucks for several hundred kilometers along corrugated red dust roads before changing to cattle trucks on a narrow-gauge railway at Birdum/Larrimah for the last 500km to Darwin. The cattle trucks had slatted floors (you can guess why?), board sides and a tarpaulin over the top. They had torrential rain with the tarps becoming bellies of water until a bayonet would let it out and continue to give some shade in the heat and humidity.

Continued next Page

Lindsay arrived in Darwin on 1<sup>st</sup> February 10 days after leaving Sydney and was allocated to Larrakeyah Barracks where he settled in by cleaning out the accommodation, washing and sleeping.

Life in Darwin commenced with morning drills, RDF lectures in the afternoon and sometimes a movie after dinner in the open air on canvas seats and would see the glow worms along the side of the road on the way back to barracks.

In February the Harbour was full of supply ships and a troop transport convoy. Some flights over the city, at high altitude, had been noticed with little action taken to identify them although the alarm was sounded on 17<sup>th</sup> February. On 19<sup>th</sup> February at 0958 while on the parade ground all hell broke loose. Bombs started falling all around, wave upon wave of bombers passed overhead and fighters streaked across at rooftop level. There really was no defence of the airfield. Some American Kittyhawk's (with some still in the air) were caught on the ground by the Japanese Zeros and did not stand a chance, having landed for refueling.

All senses were overwhelmed by the destruction that followed. All shipping in the Harbour was either sunk or burning, the town was a shambles and a great pall of smoke hung over the scene. After the noise of the bombing, aircraft and anti-aircraft fire, the silence was rather eerie. The job now was to right overturned vehicles and clear debris from the streets. A second wave of bombers followed with the main target being the airfield. Between the two raids on the airfield, Lindsay's section of Gun layers replenished the ammunition (shells) for the guns in the gun pits.

The attack on Darwin had been anticipated and most civilians had been evacuated further south. Immediately after the bombings all except essential personnel were withdrawn from the town. After only six weeks in the Army, Lindsay and Stan found themselves on very active service in a war zone. Not long after the second raid, a ship at the wharf which was carrying ammunition including depth charges was burning and suddenly there was an almighty explosion – sections of the ship were scattered over a wide area and a huge column of smoke shot skywards with an incredible smoke ring formed in the upper atmosphere.

For some days after the 19<sup>th</sup>, bodies continued to be washed up on the beaches. However, the recovery of bodies did not have a high priority so the stench soon became quite unpleasant. The anti-aircraft sites were restocked with ammunition and recommenced operating. They were soon allocated the job at the RAAF aerodrome of clearing the airstrips of debris and when in early March they were strafed by three Zeros it soon became clear how exposed one can feel on an airstrip. Fortunately, there were slit trenches to ensure some protection from the hail of bullets thudding into the ground.

“What were we young guys thinking – food was scarce, rice became the regular ration each day, invasion was considered imminent, we were vulnerable.

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10 rounds of .303 ammunition, a packet of 6 Sao biscuits, a pinch of tea and salt were issued to be used only in an emergency. In the event of an invasion, we were ordered to fight for as long as we were able and in an extreme situation, spike our guns, then every man for himself. After the raids on 19<sup>th</sup> February, air cover was nil but morale was excellent. I was now incorporated into the gun crews and lived in camouflaged shelters against the gun revetments. It was so hot and humid I wore only shorts or lap-lap, boots, and hat. The Japs seemed to pick on lunch time for a visit with between 7 and 27 bombers accompanied by fighters. One raid stands out – April 2, a cloudy day, and after getting one salvo away were heard the ripping sound of bombs falling and were ordered to ‘take cover’ – not easy in a gun pit full of H.E. (high explosive) shells. On the 4<sup>th</sup> April the first salvo hit the point of the formation, three bombers fell behind streaming thick white smoke, one falling and one blowing up in mid-air.

The next salvo scattered the remainder in all directions. I observed one chap bail out with his parachute on fire plunging all the way down to the beach.”

Later in 1942 the air defences were vastly improved after General MacArthur had given Darwin top priority. The R.D.F. equipment Lindsay was originally sent to Darwin to operate never arrived. On moonlit nights it was frustrating that the guns were not allowed to fire so as not to give away the positions of the fighters and bombers hidden in their revetments along the highway. On one occasion when foraging for firewood Lindsay found a downed aircraft with the pilot's body still in the cockpit having been burned and with his battered and burned flying goggles (now in the War Vets Museum). All guns were manned seven days a week and when the alarm sounded you were expected to be at your allotted station immediately regardless of your dress or undress - let your imagination run wild for all the options. By 1945 less anti-aircraft was required so it was back to N.S.W. for infantry and mortar training before being found after a medical check-up to be unfit for further service.

The fact that a small group of very young men with basically no Army training went on active service in a war zone within 6 weeks of enlistment must surely be unique. From the above story taken from Lindsay's memoirs, one can understand why so many of the school children who come through the War Vets War Museum stand in awe as Lindsay relates his story when describing some of the memorabilia and other items that relate to the ‘Raid on Darwin.’ Lindsay turned 100 on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and has recently been presented with a rather unique Certificate by RSL Australia to acknowledge 75 years of membership - a feat few can achieve.

