



War Veterans Village [Narrabeen] RSL sub-Branch

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to another special edition of Dispatches. I would think that most have heard the news that I am retiring from my position as Chaplain at The War Vets. After 13 ½ years Lesley and I have decided the time is right for us to have more quality time as a couple and with our family. My resignation will be effective from Friday 5th April with my last working day being Sunday 7th.

As a sub-Branch there will be decisions to be made as to my replacement. In the meantime, Vice President Roy will be the Acting President.

As advised in the Secretary's Report, we have some options open to us.

1. The preference for continuation would be that someone within our membership will accept a nomination to become the next president.
2. In the absence of electing a new president, the sub-Branch members may choose to become a Chapter of another sub-Branch on the Northern Beaches.
3. The final option is to wind up the sub-Branch, which I would like to think you, the members, would not want to happen.

There will be a lot of work to be done and I ask that you continue to support your Executive and Committee as they lead you through the process. It will only be by working together that you will achieve the desired outcomes.

In the meantime, remain positive, attend your meetings (if you can), support the organised functions and activities.

Thank you for your support of our veteran family here at The War Vets. Continue to be there for/with each other.

I have been honoured to serve as your President and will miss your camaraderie. Thank you.

Lest We Forget
Bob Durbin
President

Address Label

READ YOUR EDITION AND ENJOY

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

At 31st January 2024

Service –	49
Associates -	16
Life Member -	2
Life Subscriber-	2
Affiliate -	61
Total -	130

Please note – we are currently matching our records with RSL NSW and assessing where some previous members should be counted when they are away from the Village for extended periods.

PROMOTIONAL NOTE FOR DISPATCHES

PLEASE NOTE DETAILS FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS

March – Thursday 14th - **10.00AM** Lone Pine Lounge.
There is no general meeting – speaker Ramon Berkovic on his T.S. Endeavour sailing experience – followed by morning tea. Refer to article in the March Village Voice for a detailed outline of the talk.

April – Thursday 11th - **9.30AM** Lone Pine Lounge – General meeting followed by morning tea.

May – Thursday 9th - **10.00AM** Lone Pine Lounge – Presentation by the War Museum – a full promotional item will be in the May Village Voice.

June** – Thursday 13th – **9.00AM** – Dardanelles Vivian Bullwinkel Lounge – Breakfast and a general meeting perhaps with speaker or speakers.

July – Thursday 11th – **9.30AM** – Lone Pine Lounge-general meeting.

** Please note – Arrangements for a breakfast in the Dardanelles Lounge are in their early stages and it would be good if members could indicate if they would like this for a change. The caterers would be the same that 'did' our Christmas Lunch which was enjoyed by those who attended. We will need to organise transport for those who need it to get to the meeting but this problem can be solved.

April Meeting for 2024

Thursday 11th April 2024 at 9.30am in the
Lone Pine Lounge
Morning tea follows the meeting.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

At the February general meeting you, the members, approved for the sub-Branch executive to investigate the option of becoming a Chapter of another sub-Branch. Several discussions have already taken place to clarify the options facing the sub-Branch of which becoming a Chapter is one of three – the other two being 'to close' and 'find a President.' Your executive believe the Chapter becomes the second-best choice due to the extensive time-consuming process to become a Chapter and the fact we have a good structure in place with more than 50% of our able members attending meetings and other activities. If we can continue to operate as we have over the last ten years why not continue as we are rather than go through the 'hoops' involved with becoming a Chapter.

CONCLUSION – we need your help and influence to identify a President. RSL LifeCare has been made aware of our situation and it is hoped management can again (it has done this with the last two Presidents) find someone in the organisation to fill this role. You will be kept informed of progress and we hope to have more information to pass on following the March talk by our T.S. Endeavour scholarship holder at the gathering on Thursday 14 March in the Lone Pine Lounge at 10AM – note time 10.00AM – please make every effort to be there if you can.

For those not at the last meeting, please make yourself familiar with the Veteran Well Being Centre on Level 4 at the Dee Why RSL Club. This is staffed by RSL LifeCare Veteran Services personnel who are always available to assist with enquiries regarding DVA matters and are happy to have a chat. The Manager Craig Horner gave a brief presentation of their services at our last meeting.

Three sub-Branch polo shirts are available for purchase from the office – 2 X XL and 1 X L sizes. Just give me a call or visit the office any morning between 9.30 and Noon.

Please refer to a separate notice in this Dispatches for a summary of the next 3- or 4-months meeting dates and times – there are some changes which you should note. Among these is a meeting in June (13th) which could include a breakfast provided by outside caterers (same as Christmas lunch). The local Augusta bus timetable would enable all members to catch it to the Dardanelles which is where we would prefer to hold such a function.

Thank you to those members who have passed on information about new residents in The War Vets Village who have served in the ADF. The sub-Branch has developed a welcoming letter to drop in their letterbox inviting them to consider joining our sub-Branch as a Service member.

I look forward to seeing you at the talk in the Lone Pine Lounge on Thursday 14th March.



The Significance of ANZAC Day

25 April is the National Day of Commemoration of Australia and New Zealand for victims of war and for recognition of the role of their armed forces. It marks the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War.

ANZAC stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. The soldiers in those forces became known as ANZACs. Anzac Day is a commemoration of the landing of Australian and New Zealand troops at Gallipoli Turkey on 25th April in 1915. When Great Britain declared war against Germany for its invasion of Belgium in 1914, Australia and New Zealand, as Dominions within the British Empire, regarded themselves automatically also at war.

At dawn on 25 April 1915, the first of approximately 70,000 soldiers from the Allies landed at Gallipoli. The objective was to drive through to Istanbul, take Turkey out of the war and to provide supplies to Russia in its fight against Germany. Out of these 70,000 soldiers, more than 20,000 were Australian and New Zealand soldiers. What had been planned as a bold stroke became a stalemate after the invading troops failed to reach their objective on the first day. For the next eight months they clung to the land they had captured, before eventually withdrawing at the end of 2015.

After both sides had suffered heavy casualties, the Allied forces evacuated. It is estimated that 8,700 Australian and 2,700 New Zealanders were killed. One year later, in 1916, the first anniversary of the landing was observed in Australia, New Zealand and England and by troops in Egypt. That year, 25 April was officially named 'Anzac Day' by the Acting Australian Prime Minister, George Pearce.

Today we speak of an 'Anzac tradition,' meaning the ideals of courage, endurance and mateship that are still relevant to this day.



Max Marvin - Celebrating a great milestone



YOUR SUB-BRANCH OFFICE HAS MOVED
YOU WILL NOW FIND US
IN THE FRONT OFFICE
LOWER GROUND FLOOR
GALLIPOLI BUILDING

The next get together for 2024
Thursday 14th March 2024 our normal meeting
day but there is no meeting.
However, our Guest speaker from The Pittwater
House School talking about his sailing
experience under the TS Endeavour scholarship
will be advertised as a village wide event.
10am in The Lone Pine Lounge.
Please encourage your friends to come along.
Morning tea follows.

CHAPLAINS CORNER

When your President goes, so does your current Chaplain. My time here has been one of both challenge and opportunity. As chaplain, I have been blessed to participate in our Village commemoration services. With the support of many, we have refined these services to be more reflective of THE RSL and for our village veterans.

As your Chaplain, I have sat at the bedside with many as they have prepared themselves for their last days on earth. I have shared with them, their families, and friends as we have collectively grieved the passing of a loved one. It has also been a privilege to share in many services of celebration as we have heard some of the life stories of some incredible people. It is always sad to think that it is not until these services, do we really find out what people have contributed to the lives of so many, either in the local community or our nation.

The RSL Tribute is something I hold dear and while not every family wishes to have this recognition it has been an honour to present the Tribute for those who do.

Outside of our Village I have also been privileged to be part of many other commemoration services within the veteran family in the broader Sydney area. Each has been advised of my departure and it will be sad not to be able to participate in these significant events.

As this will be my last report, to each and every one of you, I simply say, 'Thank You.'

May the comfort and peace of God be with you all.

Blessings to all

Bob
Chaplain



**LETTERS FROM THE FRONT
WORLD WAR ONE - continued**

PART 2.

From the door of my hut, I can see the historic blocks of stone – Stonehenge – it being about a mile distant. I walked over yesterday to study it more closely. Things are fairly strict here but not as bad as we were led to believe in Australia. The daily routine is Reveille 6.30am; Fall-in 6.45 to stables till 7.30; Breakfast 7.45, peas, and bacon; Fall-in again 9am to 12.30pm during this time so far have been digging in the garden but should be gun drill. Dinner 12.45pm Fall-in again 1.30 to 5.30pm then off if not on guard, to 10.15 when “lights out” is sounded. No weekends, work Saturdays and Sundays just the same except an odd Saturday or Sunday afternoon.

Any number of German prisoners working on the road – they are paid according to International Law about 1-1/2d an hour and as they work 12 hours a day, they get more than the Tommy sentries over them. These Tommie’s by the way are too soft, seem afraid to make the Huns work. I believe the Australians were put as guards over them for a time, but the Huns complained to authorities that the Australian sentries knocked them about and so were taken away. The authorities agreed to increase their pay if Australian sentries were posted but the Huns said they would rather forgo the increase.

November 1917

We left our camp in rural England in August and on one sunny morning about three hundred of us, all artillery reinforcements, formed up and amidst cheers from the remainder of Camp, we started off with all our equipment past historic Stonehenge to board a train for Southampton where we quickly embarked a ship to take us to the land of mud and shell holes. The ship was an ordinary peace-time cross channel steamer, perhaps a little larger than our own Newcastle steamers “Hunter” and “Namoi.” The ship presented an animated scene of human ‘food for cannon.’ The ship was crammed to its utmost capacity with about four or five thousand men aboard, Aussies, Canadians, Tommies, etc. It was interesting to note the manner in which various groups occupies themselves. I noticed most of the old hands, that is men returning from leave, dived below to avail themselves of the coziest and warmest sleeping spaces. Tommies sprawled about playing cards, housie, etc. and chattering in their various dialects.

A ‘select’ party of Australians quickly developed the national instinct and almost immediately converted a portion of the deck into a ‘two-up’ school, other groups opening bully-beef tins and biscuits. But by far the greater proportion remained on deck and enjoyed the scenery as we glided down the Solent to the Isle of Wight. The river near the mouth one could see Cowes (famous yachting town) and the Island seems dotted with huge mansions and beautiful gardens,

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the residences I suppose of the Lords and Dukes of which England breeds such a quantity and could well do without.

I found a corner of the deck and slept on some biscuit boxes until we found ourselves alongside at Le Havre. Before evacuating the ship, we were afforded an exhibition of Coming French Amour when a French girl shuffled along the wharf in clogs, and greeted her awaiting sailor beau by throwing her arms around his neck and showering him with a profusion of kisses in front of all and sundry amidst the continued applause for the ship’s company and calls for an encore.

Our Australian contingent threaded our way through the great wharves and docks on our six mile walk to the Australian Base Camp. Working everywhere under French sentries are German prisoners, who knock off work and scowl at us, with hands in pockets. The Tommies march past in silence in their splendid discipline, or submission whichever you prefer. I guess Fritz has no love for Aussies. These particular men were a fine type physically – make two of the French or Tommy.

After remaining at the base for a week, I was selected with a draft for the second Division artillery. We marched back the six miles to Le Havre then joined a troop train for the north. This time all had a significant addition to our equipment – one gas respirator, one gas mask, one steel hat and our bandoliers full of small-arm ammunition – getting closer you see! After laying in a stock of bully beef and biscuits for three days, the train moved off. We slept on the seats, awoke as we passed the large city of Amiens and got off the train at Rouen where we had breakfast and the day off. Did not get to see the magnificent cathedrals but just watched the swift moving barges on the river of which there are thousands as well as observing the various types of Frenchmen and women, not to mention the Mademoiselles.

We eventually crossed into Belgium and arrived at the partly ruined town of Popperinghe where we were accommodated in the top floor of what appeared to be a two-story warehouse. We were about eight miles behind the lines but the occasional long-range shell and a few bombs would be dropped during the night. The next morning, we marched through ever increasing signs of war and eventually arrived at our ‘horse lines’ near the ruins of a large town called Dickebusch and was allotted to the Howitzer Battery. The horse-lines where the horses, wagons, ammunition, drivers, and spare and resting gunners reside, is generally about 3 miles behind the guns, the wagons going up to the gun pits each night, or as occasion demands, with shells for the gunners. I was in the wagon lines for a couple of weeks before going forward to the guns.

November 1917 to be continued

Compiled by John Sowden.